Reconstructing the Kantian Ends of Reason: Holiness Analytically Entailing Beatitude in an Eternal Highest Good

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RECONSTRUCTING THE KANTIAN ENDS OF REASON: HOLINESS ANALYTICALLY
ENTAILING BEATITUDE IN AN ETERNAL HIGHEST GOOD

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
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PROGRAM IN PHILOSOPHY

BY
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I am in my mid-fifties, with a family and a full-time job. I was incredibly lucky to have had Andrew Cutrofello as my Director, and I could not have done this without his expert and sympathetic guidance.
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INTRODUCTION

In the “Canon” section of the Critique of Pure Reason (A805/B833),\(^1\) Kant poses three questions:

*What can I know?*

*What should I do?*

*What may I hope?*

These questions seek to identify the final ends of reason, and Kant’s critical project is designed to answer them.\(^2\) This dissertation takes up Kant’s third eschatological question: What may I hope? As I read Kant, he understands this question and its answer to fall under the purview of moral theology, and his most succinct answer appears in the second Critique, where he identifies the unconditioned object of hope as “happiness distributed in exact proportion to morality” (5:110). Kant also states in the second Critique that this proportionality – which Kant most frequently employs to define the highest good and which I will refer to as *the standard account* – unites the unconditional and intelligible good of holiness (*Heiligkeit*) with the conditional and

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\(^1\) Unless otherwise indicated, all citations from Kant are from *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*.

\(^2\) Kant’s answers to the first question are pure mathematics, pure natural sciences, and the appearances of objects of possible experience – the temporally and spatially ordered representations that Kant calls phenomena – once such appearances have been schematized by the imagination and subsumed under the categories of the understanding, which are *a priori*, general concepts that secure knowledge of particulars. Kant’s answer to the second question is that I should promote the highest good by respecting the moral law and following the categorical imperative.
sensible good of happiness (*Glückseligkeit*), thus representing the culmination of the interests of reason as a whole.

However, Cheng–Hao Lin has claimed that “[a]cross his works, Kant endows this concept [of the highest good] with different definitions and descriptions.”³ I agree with Cheng-Hao Lin. For example, Kant sometimes posits the objective of the highest good as an individual responsibility and personal achievement: “Virtue and happiness together constitute possession of the highest good in a person” (5:110). Conversely, Kant sometimes posits the objective of the highest good as a collective responsibility and shared achievement: “a universal republic based on the laws of virtue” (6:98). These discrepancies prompt us to pose the question: Is the highest good the object of an individual or collective pursuit? Alternatively, Kant’s initial question can legitimately be construed as two questions: What may I hope for myself, and what may we hope for ourselves?

The “different definitions and descriptions” do not stop here. There is the further question of where the highest good finds its realization. For example, Kant sometimes posits the realization of the highest good in the empirical world of sense when he says that we proceed “in the continuous advance and approximation toward the highest possible good on earth” (6:136). Conversely, Kant sometimes posits the realization of the highest good as only possible in a future world: “Concerning the expectation, very natural to the human being, that as regards happiness his lot will be proportionate to his moral conduct, especially in view of the many sacrifices of happiness that must be undertaken for the sake of moral conduct, this teacher [rational theology]

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promises a reward for such sacrifices in a future world” (6:161). Thus, Kant’s writings posit two more questions: Does the highest good find its realization in this world, or is it realized in a future world?

Taken together, Kant advances four possible conceptions of what it means to pursue the highest good: (1) it’s an individual objective realized in this world; (2) it’s an individual objective realized in a future world; (3) it’s a collective objective realized in this world; (4) it’s a collective objective realized in a future world. I affirm conceptions two and four.

At this point, I will introduce claims about the location of the highest good and what type of object it is that will be further defended throughout the dissertation. The highest good, which unifies unconditional and conditional ends, is the greatest object of desire for sensible, rational agents. Within the secondary literature, the realization of this coveted object has been almost exclusively characterized by two different accounts: The highest good is an immanent object realized in our phenomenal world, or the highest good is a transcendent object realized in a future noumenal world. These questions – is the highest good realized in the current, immanent world of phenomenal appearances, or is it realized in a future, noumenal world of things in themselves? – continue to be debated within the secondary literature.

I will intentionally refrain from only employing the concepts immanent or transcendent when characterizing the highest good because these concepts have proven to be reductive and, thereby, have prompted persistent problems. In order to show why these two concepts are troublesome, I will first rehearse the distinction between an immanent and transcendent object.

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When securing knowledge is concerned, Kant states that the categories of the understanding are “wholly immanent, because they have as their subject only the possibility of experience” (A308/B365, emphasis is Kant’s). Since the categories apply to objects of possible experience for beings with discursive understandings, they apply to what appears as a finite series of objects intuited spatially and temporally.\(^5\) Thus, the world as a whole is not an object of possible experience for Kant. Every object in this series is conditioned insofar as it is contingent on a prior object or objects that serve as a cause. Therefore, immanence is restricted to objects of possible experience, which are always part of a potentially, though not actually, infinite series and are subject to strict natural causality. Therefore, human beings experience the current world immanently, that is, always from a position within it.

Kant characterizes the attempt to apply the categories to objects beyond possible experience as the transcendent use of the understanding. A central claim of the first Critique is that the categories of the understanding must be confined to objects of possible experience to legitimately obtain knowledge. Thus, objects of possible experience provide the limits for the proper use of the understanding. However, reason, in principle, commands us to think beyond the limits of the understanding: “But a principle that removes these limits – indeed, even commands us to step beyond them – is called transcendent” (A 296/B352, emphasis is Kant’s). Reason demands that we posit the idea of the unconditioned – a totality of all conditions – because everything in a series that is conditioned and contingent must logically terminate in a non-contingent, and thus necessary, condition in order for the series to reach completion. Since only

\(^5\) The solution to the dynamical antinomies is that the series of objects is potentially, though not actually, infinite. Even though this is not strictly the same thing as being finite, when considered from the perspective of each sensible, rational being, only a finite series of objects is available.
conditioned objects can be met in experience, the unconditioned is not an object of possible experience; consequently, it cannot be known. Nevertheless, it can be reasonably thought. Thus, reason’s principle to think the unconditioned determines the transcendent use of the understanding. Hence, the immanent is restricted to objects of possible experience within the phenomenal world, while a transcendent object exceeds any possible experience within a phenomenal world. As such, immanent objects pertain to a phenomenal world, while transcendent objects are problematically entrusted to a future world outside of sensible conditions.

My position is neither an immanent highest good in our current phenomenal world nor a transcendent highest good in a future noumenal world can, one their own, satisfy the synthetic proportionality of holiness and happiness that defines the standard account of the highest good. Specifically, while an immanent highest good in our current phenomenal world possesses the necessary conditions for the possibility of happiness (the conditional aspect that completes the standard account of the highest good), it can neither allow for holiness of the will (the unconditional and supreme aspect of the highest good), which I contend is only possible outside of sensibility altogether, nor can it provide either the logical or real possibility of unifying these two final goods that are different in kind in our phenomenal world. Furthermore, while a transcendent highest good, as a fully supersensible end, possesses the necessary conditions for the possibility of holiness, it cannot allow for the real possibility of happiness, which is necessarily an empirically conditioned form of well-being, nor can it provide for the synthetic proportionality of these two goods (because synthesis of the empirical and the intelligible is not on offer in a fully supersensible world).
Nevertheless, it is my contention that the highest good can only be realized in a future world. Significantly, Kant endorses the belief in a future world when he advances the practical need for a future life. Even though this future life receives its fullest treatment in the second Critique with the positing of the immortal soul postulate, the practical need for a future life and a future world is already advanced several times in the Canon section of the first Critique:

1. The shortness of life [is] so ill-suited to it [approximating holiness], there is likewise to be found sufficient ground for a doctrinal belief in the future life of the human soul” (A827/B855).
2. Only in the ideal of the highest original good [i.e., God] can pure reason find the ground of the practically necessary connection of both elements of the highest derived good, namely of an intelligible, i.e., moral world. Now since we must necessarily represent ourselves through reason as belonging to such a world, although the senses do not present us with anything except a world of appearances, we must assume the moral to be a consequence of our conduct in the sensible world; and since the latter does not offer such a connection to us, we must assume the former to be a world that is future for us. (A811/B839)
3. The belief in a God and another world is so interwoven with my moral disposition that I am in as little danger of ever surrendering the former as I am worried that the latter can ever be torn away from me. (A829/B857)

These claims establish that Kant acknowledges the practical need for, at least, one future world. In fact, Kant believes that the existence of a future world cannot “be torn away from” him or any other sensible, rational being who freely privileges reason’s practical interest. Furthermore, Kant’s second claim makes clear that this future world is a morally, intelligible world and not a sensible or phenomenal world, which nicely corresponds to my position that our final end is realized in a noumenal world outside of sensibility. However, I will extend Kant’s position on the need for a future world by arguing that Kant’s philosophy implies more than one practically necessary future world. In fact, this dissertation will argue for three logically possible and practically necessary future worlds that are implicitly posited by Kant’s philosophy, with the last two worlds representing alternative conceptions of the highest good.
But before I introduce my three future worlds, I will rehearse what a world is for Kant. A world is one of three absolute, unconditioned totalities logically generated by reason – the soul (psychology), the world (cosmology) and God (theology) – that Kant labels transcendental ideas. On the theoretical front, the absolute totality of a phenomenal world, defined as “the mathematical whole of all appearances and the totality of their synthesis” (A418/B446), is not an object that can be met through experience. As such, sensible, rational beings cannot be said to know a phenomenal world because it is not an object of possible experience. Hence, while we can only know the appearances of particular objects that constitute the world, we cannot know the sum of all appearances (A334/B391) that is the world. Kant distinguishes the world (as the sum of all appearances) from nature, “insofar as it [nature] is considered as a dynamic whole and does not look at the aggregation in space or time so as to bring about a quantity, but instead looks instead at the unity in the existence of appearances” (A418-9/B446-7, emphasis is Kant’s). Thus, a world relates to the mathematical categories of quantity and quality, and nature relates to the dynamical categories of relation and modality.

Nevertheless, sensible, rational beings can think, at least in principle, a phenomenal world without contradiction as a transcendental idea: “If the conditioned is given, then the whole sum of conditions, and hence the absolutely unconditioned, is also given” (A409/B436). However, this is only a regulative principle of thought and not of constitutive principle of knowledge. Since sensible, rational beings cannot know the “absolutely unconditioned,” we have to settle for always seeking further conditions within the natural world when concerned with increasing our knowledge of the world. In this way, Kant distinguishes himself from the rational cosmologist who claims that the world as a whole is a knowable object. Thus, reason necessarily
calls on us to logically think transcendental ideas, like phenomenal worlds, without contradiction, but we cannot know such a world without falling into contradiction or dialectical illusion.

Correspondingly, Kant advances two types of speculative possibility: logical and real. For something to be logically possible, it needs to comply with the law of non-contradiction:

The concept is always possible if it does not contradict itself. That is the logical mark of possibility, and thereby the object of the concept is distinguished from the nihil negativum. (A596/B624n)

Thus, if something can be thought without contradiction, then it is a logical possibility. Conversely, for an something to be really possible, it has to be an object of possible experience that “agrees with the formal conditions of experience (in accordance with intuition and concepts)” (A218/B265). If something rests on the principles of possible experience and not on the principles of analysis and, thereby, can potentially be known, then it’s a real possibility. Since phenomenal worlds are not objects of possible experience and cannot be known, they cannot be said to be real possibilities. Nevertheless, given that reason allows us to think phenomenal worlds without contradiction, they can be said to be logical possibilities. Therefore, at minimum, my first three worlds can be said to be logically possible.

Furthermore, a noumenal world, understood as the totality of things in themselves governed by noumenal (or timeless) duration, is also not an object of possible experience and, hence, cannot be a real possibility. Yet such a world can also be thought without contradiction—as Kant does in his late essay “The End of All Things” (1794)—and, as such, a noumenal world
can be said to be a logical possibility, too. Therefore, all four of my proposed worlds can be said to be logically possible worlds.

However, just because something is theoretically conceivable does not make it necessarily worthy of our faith. For example, in the Third Antinomy Kant is very clear that all he was able to secure was freedom’s mere conceivability; however, it’s not until we recognize reason’s practical interest that freedom becomes an ethical duty and not just a theoretical possibility. Since the moral law is a fact of reason (and pure practical reason is primary), freedom’s status goes from mere theoretical conceivability to a necessary practical demand to unconditionally heed the moral law and do one’s moral duty. Similarly, with regard to God and the soul, theoretical reason can merely establish such totalities as necessarily thinkable (and helpful in the pursuit of epistemic progress). However, it is not until they are posited as postulates of pure practical reason and, therefore, become necessary objects in unifying the ends of reason and establishing the highest good that God and the soul become worthy of our faith.

Even though we can theoretically conceive of the totality of the world as a coherent idea, until such a conception becomes a practically necessary condition for unifying the ends of reason and establishing the plausibility of the highest good, it remains a morally empty pure concept of the understanding. However, when Kant transitions from the soul as a mere idea to be thought to a postulate of pure practical reason to be believed, a future world acquires practical significance.

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6 In Allen Wood’s “Translator’s Introduction” to “The End of All Things,” he claims that the essay “is couched in the form of a sly, bitter satire, which approaches its political theme only indirectly” (219). Wood suggests that the essay should be read as a veiled polemic against the censorious nature of the Prussian religious authorities that Kant experienced with the publishing of Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason. I will remain silent about the extent to which this essay is a rebuke of royal actions taken against Kant’s religious writings. I will simply utilize this essay for the philosophical and religious claims that it advances; anything beyond those will be left aside.
as a condition for the possibility of our practically necessary future life. Thus, my three future worlds are not only *logically possible*, but I contend that they are also *practically necessary* for the possibility of unifying the ends of reason.

In my proposed four-world system, World One (W1) is our current phenomenal world. I will forcefully contend that due to the utterly heterogeneous and thoroughly non-causal relationship between duty and the experience of happiness, it is neither logically nor really possible for the highest good to be realized in this world. However, it is possible for sensible, rational agents to renounce radical evil through a dispositional rebirth and begin their resolute pursuit towards holiness in W1.

Furthermore, W1 is not finite: if it was, then the theses of the mathematical antinomies would be true. Nor is W1 infinite: if it was, then the antitheses of the mathematical antinomies would also be true. As the mathematical antinomies intend to show, a phenomenal world can neither be claimed as either finite or infinite. What is finite in this world is the span of a human life. Thus, and unlike Worlds Two and Three, W1 is demarcated by the natural death of the body.

Lastly, providence is clearly operative within W1. Kant has nature equipping humans with certain dispositions that, if developed properly, can lead to an ethical cosmopolitism with regard to juridical, historical and political matters and even the possibility of perpetual peace. For greater explication on this matter, see the essays “The Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim” (1784) and “Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch” (1795). Further, from a moral standpoint, Kant’s position is that nature is providentially subordinate to the exercise of human freedom, and, thereby, humanity, as not fully determined by nature’s causality, represents
the final end of the natural world. Yet, as we shall see, the level of providential activity increases in the two following worlds.

World Two (W2) is the first of two intermediary worlds. Like W1, it is also not finite or infinite. It remains a phenomenal world populated by sensible, rational beings with discursive understandings, and time and space continue to be transcendentally ideal. W2 and World Three are intermediary because they bridge our initial, phenomenal existence in W1 and our final, noumenal existence in World Four. And while these two intermediary worlds remain phenomenal, they exhibit providential features that are not on offer in W1 or World Four. Specifically, a fundamental feature that defines both intermediary worlds is the divinely sustained existence of resurrected bodies that are impervious to entropy and natural death. I will forcefully contend that these resurrected bodies not marked by a natural death are necessary in order for agents to legitimately place moral duty over empirical inclination in W2 and, thereby, exhibit “endless” moral progress. Without such bodies, it would be impossible to exhibit continuous moral progress, which requires freely subordinating the inclinations (self-love) to duty (love of the moral law). In order to actually subordinate inclination to duty, one needs a body subject to the pull of inclination. Thus, and just like W1, the utterly heterogeneous and thoroughly non-causal relationship between moral action and the experience of happiness remains in W2.

W2 is where agents resolutely stive to become “well-pleasing to God” by “endlessly” placing duty (worthiness to be happy) over inclination (the experience of happiness itself). Of course, the existence of such a body must be the product of God, which is a type of providential activity not on offer in W1. Therefore, while both W1 and W2 have providential activity
occurring within them, the amount of providential activity necessary to sustain the resurrected bodies of W2 is quantitatively higher when compared to that of W1.

World Three (W3) is my second intermediary world. As in W1 and W2, W3 cannot be said to be either finite or infinite; it also remains populated by sensible, rational agents with discursive understandings, and time and space also continue to be transcendentally ideal. The existence of resurrected bodies also continues in W3. However, W3 differs from the other worlds insofar as it is here that the synthetic proportionality of *imputed holiness* (understood as the highest level of virtue possible for sensible, rational beings but still not holiness itself) and happiness is finally realized through providential intercession. Thereby, in W3, agents found well-pleasing to God due to their resolute struggle towards holiness in W2 are graciously awarded happiness proportional to worthiness. Thus, W3 is distinct from W2 insofar as such synthetic proportionality is *not* on offer in W2, where duty and happiness remain distinct in order for moral progress to be effectively exhibited. In this way, the level of providential activity transpiring in W3—resurrected bodies *and* the synthetic proportioning of happiness to worthiness— is quantitatively higher when compared to that of World Two.

W3 represents the standard account of the highest good. However, I recognize the need for a temporally conditioned body as an explicit feature of the standard account of the highest good. Specifically, if happiness is proportioned to worthiness, then agents would have to possess a body operating in time in order to effectively experience happiness, which for Kant is an empirical experience. My proposed W3, with its sensible setting and temporally conditioned bodies, possesses the necessary empirical conditions for the experience of the non-moral final good of happiness to be synthesized with the moral good of imputed holiness.
It is problematic, however, to label the highest good in W3 as “immanent.” Thus far in the secondary literature, immanent accounts have the object of the highest good getting realized in W1. And even though W3 remains a phenomenal world, its providentially grounded features—divinely sustained resurrected bodies and the synthesis of morality and happiness undertaken by God—render it sufficiently distinct from W1. Hence, I refrain from invoking the “immanent” qualifier for the highest good transpiring in W3.

Additionally, it is even more mistaken to construe the highest good in W3 as a transcendent object. A transcendent highest good cannot allow for the necessary empirical features—an embodied sensible, rational being capable of the experience of happiness—because a transcendent object is outside sensible conditioning altogether. Thus, I have decided to label the highest good in W3 the standard highest good because the qualifiers of immanent and transcendent do not adequately represent its features. On my account, W3 represents the penultimate Kingdom of Ends. As we shall see shortly, our final end is the eternal highest good, which a properly transcendent object occurring in noumenal World Four.

Let us draw some initial conclusions about what distinguishes the first three phenomenal worlds. The fundamental feature that distinguishes W2 from W1 is that the former has bodies impervious to a natural death, yet everything else remains the same. Furthermore, the fundamental feature that separates W3 from W2 is God’s synthetic proportioning of happiness to worthiness. Thus, what distinguishes (and defines) these three phenomenal worlds is the amount (and forms) of providential intercession. With each world, the amount of providential activity increases; otherwise, these three phenomenal worlds remain the same.
Unlike the first three worlds, World Four (W4) is a fully noumenal world of things in themselves. In this final world, the resurrected body is jettisoned, as is sensibility in general. Hence, this world is not populated with sensible, rational beings possessing discursive understandings who form appearances of objects of possible experience through the synthesis of intuitions and concepts. As the title of Kant’s essay “The End of All Things” conveys, reason posits humanity’s temporally conditioned existence as ultimately finite. Hence, when Kant states in the second Critique that holiness “can only be found in an endless progress” (5:122, the emphasis is Kant’s), this statement is not precisely true. Such endlessness would necessarily end with the transition into eternity’s noumenal duration that defines the end of all things, which is a non-temporal state of affairs where change and, thus, progress become impossible. Put simply, an end makes any claims of endlessness problematic.

World Four has the agent transitioned out of time in order to finally experience holiness analytically entailing beatitude (Seligkeit) in a final noumenal world entirely governed by pure reason. Here the two-aspect character of a sensible, rational being is finally jettisoned because sensibility ceases to exist. Hence, only fully rational, non-embodied beings remain.

How long will agents that have been found well-pleasing to God in W2 spend in W3’s penultimate highest good? It is impossible to say. The best I can offer is that agents that have been found well-pleasing in W2 will spend an indeterminate amount of time in W3 before they are finally transitioned into the noumenal duration of World Four where all sensible objects, including the body, are jettisoned. Thus, “resurrected” signifies the embodied agents’ unquantifiable temporal duration in W2 and W3 before their final transition into a supersensible and eternal highest good.
To explain this claim more fully, it is worthwhile to consult “The End of All Things.” Rachel Zuckert calls this “an essay on the Christian conception of the last judgment.” I agree with Zuckert’s characterization, and I will have much more to say about Kant’s essay throughout the dissertation. But for my immediate purposes here, in this essay Kant contends that reason inevitably posits that temporally conditioned existence will finally cease. Since it is impossible to know when such a moment of reckoning will occur, quantifying the length of time that embodied agents will experience in W3 before their final transition into a supersensible highest good is also impossible. Therefore, while the amount of time that agents spend in W3’s penultimate highest good is finite, the specific length of time must remain unquantifiable.

Without question, beings with discursive understandings can have no knowledge whatsoever of such a world governed by noumenal duration; in fact, it is even difficult for a sensible, rational being to think noumenal duration. Therefore, epistemologically speaking, W4 is utterly different from the previous three worlds and is a total mystery. Nevertheless, as I will argue, reason presents this mysterious noumenal world as our final end. This entirely supersensible object has holiness – defined as “completely conformity to the moral law” (5:122) – analytically entailing beatitude – defined as “complete well-being independent of all the contingent causes in the world” (5:123n). Beatitude, as a fully intelligible form of well-being, is different in kind and not merely in degree, from happiness, which is a fully sensible form of well-being. W4 is a noumenal world of ends in themselves grounded in pure reason and governed by fully analytic relations.

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As an opening summary, I will make some claims about these worlds and their relationships that will be defended throughout the dissertation. Sensible, rational agents with discursive understandings populate the first three worlds. Consequently, time and space are transcendentally ideal in these worlds, too. In the first two worlds, agents strive to privilege the rational over the sensible with the hope of becoming well-pleasing to God. In the third world, agents graciously find well-pleasing enjoy the perfect proportionality of the sensible to the rational.

The first three worlds exist simultaneously, yet an agent can only be a member of one world at a time. As such, each of the three worlds coexists yet is joined by agents in succession. Given Kant has a conception of time as both transcendentally ideal and empirically real, there's no reason for transcendental idealism to preclude the possibility of speaking of worlds standing in relations of simultaneity and succession. Thus, after the natural death of an agent in W1, that agent transitions into W2 and the future life that allows for the continuous pursuit of holiness. If

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8 Kant advances three Analogies of Experience that intend to show the transcendental or a priori function of the schematized categories of substance and causality. The analogies are principles that correspond to both the relational categories – subsistence, causality and community – and the modes of time – duration, succession and simultaneity. These analogies are designed to establish an objective order (or the empirical reality) of time: thus, their goal is to show that objects, and not merely our representations of them, are also in time. The first analogy argues that all change occurs within an unchanging and unitary time. However, because time itself cannot be perceived, there must exist a principle that remains objectively permanent throughout the ever-changing subjective manifold of inner sense. Substance itself is what objectively subsists throughout all the changes that occur within the substances (as well as within our representations). The second analogy argues that the principle of causality requires a succession of causes and effects that occur within an objective order of time. The second analogy presupposes a priori causal laws that determine a subsequent effect from a prior cause. The third analogy, which concerns community and reciprocity, posits the coexistence of simultaneous substances that have reciprocal causal (and thus temporal) relations with one another. In the first Critique, these three principles are explicitly framed within intra-world relations. However, there’s nothing to preclude such principles to be applicable to inter-world relations, too. If these three principles – (1) substances subsist in time; (2) causality requires an objective order of temporal succession, and (3) community needs the temporal coexistence of reciprocal objects – obtain within the idea of a single phenomenal world, then why can’t they hold across the idea of other phenomenal worlds, too?
an agent, through her resolute pursuit of holiness in W2, is graciously found well-pleasing to God, that agent transitions into W3 to finally experience happiness in exact proportion to worthiness. However, when the “end of all things” is at hand, the agents that have been found well-pleasing make their final transition into noumenal W4 to be part of a fully rational Kingdom of Ends. The instantiation of W4, thereby, brings the first three worlds to a final close. Lastly, insofar as an agent’s moral behavior in a previous world determines their transition into the next world, the worlds can be said to have a causal connection.

Therefore, against a phenomenal and noumenal two-world account that posits immanent and transcendent versions of the highest good that have dominated the discourse within the secondary literature, I am advancing a four-world account. The last two worlds posit two different instances of the highest good. W3 is the initial and standard highest good for agents who have been graciously found well-pleasing to God and, thereby, get to experience happiness proportional to worthiness through divine synthesis in the last phenomenal world. W4 is the eternal and final highest good where holiness analytically entails beatitude in a final noumenal world.

Finally, I contend that realization of the standard and the eternal highest goods is both an individual and collective undertaking. Consequently, I will argue that there is no incompatibility between the aforementioned two conceptions: the pursuit of the highest good is an individual objective realized in a future world, as well as a collective objective realized in a future world. However, I want to initially offer more specific arguments against the two conceptions that support an “immanent” highest good in phenomenal W1. These arguments should help clarify and bolster my thesis that is meant to answer Kant’s question about hope: I (and we) may hope
for an eternal highest good, as the culmination of the interests of reason as a whole, that
analytically enjoins holiness and beatitude in a noumenal world.

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Since I maintain that the standard account of the highest good is impossible in W1, before I mount my defense for the standard highest good in W3 and the eternal highest good in W4, I will make my arguments against W1 being a possible location for the highest good. The first major reason for my skepticism of realizing the highest good in this world is Kant’s position that not only are morality and happiness merely heterogeneous goods in the world of sense, but also there is no causal relationship between them whatsoever: “any practical connection of causes and effects in the world . . . does not depend upon the moral dispositions of the will but upon knowledge of the laws of nature and the physical ability to use them for one’s purposes” (5:113). The laws of nature in-and-of-themselves simply cannot guarantee that virtue is rewarded with happiness because the causality of the natural world is entirely mechanical and does not take morality (and the causality of freedom that governs a sensible, rational agent’s intelligible character) into account. Hence, since there is no necessary natural connection of virtue and happiness, one should not expect happiness to follow from virtue in the natural world.

Further, while there is no natural connection of worthiness to be happy and happiness itself, practical reason inevitably pits one against the other, and when agents find themselves in such a situation, Kant understands it to be an unconditional mandate of reason to place respect for the moral law and our worthiness to be happy before the experience of happiness itself. Reason’s demand to act dutifully thereby calls on us to subordinate happiness, which is always conditional, to worthiness. This hierarchy necessarily prioritizes the categorical imperative and
moral demands over hypothetical imperatives and prudential demands. In fact, this hierarchy is at the crux of Kantian ethics for sensible, rational creatures operating in nature: one should not act morally because one contingently wants to (whether directly or indirectly).\textsuperscript{9} Rather, one should act morally because one ought to. As a result, reason, which is not determined by natural laws, allows us to choose for practical purposes the subordination of experiencing or even pursuing happiness if it conflicts with morality. Therefore, prior to the realization of the highest good in W3, there is never an intentional, proportional relationship between worthiness to be happy and happiness itself. Such a lack of proportionality occurs for two reasons: nature provides no connection between happiness and worthiness, and morality dictates that the pursuit of happiness should always be subordinated to duty.

Furthermore, Kant explicitly claims that virtue and happiness can only find unity in an “intelligible world” that fulfills the pure practical postulates of God and the immortal soul. I will offer two unequivocal passages in support of this claim:

1. [O]nly in the ideal of the highest original good [i.e., God] can pure reason find the ground of the practically necessary connection of both elements of the highest derived good, namely of an intelligible, i.e., \textit{moral} world. Now since we must necessarily represent ourselves through reason as belonging to such a world, although the senses do not present us with anything except a world of appearances, we must assume the moral to be a consequence of our conduct in the sensible world; and since the latter does not offer such a connection to us, we must assume the former to be a world that is future for us. Thus God and a future life are two presuppositions that are not to be separated from the obligation that pure reason imposes on us in accordance with principles of that very same reason. (A811/B839)

2. Thus happiness in exact proportion with morality of rational beings, through which they are worthy of it, alone constitutes the highest good of a world into which we must without exception transpose ourselves in accordance with the precepts of pure

\textsuperscript{9} Kant also points out in the first section of the \textit{Groundwork} that when someone consciously sets out to pursue happiness for happiness’ sake, such a pursuit ironically tends not to deliver the experience of happiness but its opposite.
but practical reason, and which, of course, is only an intelligible world, since the sensible world does not promise us that sort of systematic unity of ends, the reality of which can be grounded on nothing other than the presupposition of a highest original good, since self-sufficient reason, armed with all of the sufficiency of a supreme cause, in accordance with the most perfect purposiveness, grounds, conserves and completes the order of things that is universal though hidden from us in the sensible world. (A814/B842)

The forthrightness of these claims about happiness in exact proportion to morality, which is the “systematic unity of ends” that defines the highest good, only being possible in a future, “intelligible world” sufficiently anchored in “a supreme cause,” provides strong, prima facie evidence against the highest good being realizable in the sensible world.

In his political writings, Kant does argue that the laws of nature direct humanity into “a perfect civil union of mankind” (Political Writings 51). However, “a perfect civil union of mankind” is qualitatively different from a moral world and, thus, should not be conflated with “happiness distributed in exact proportion to morality.” The former falls under the “doctrine of right,” which concerns the establishment of peace through a providentially guided sovereign that establishes a just system of laws and institutions that clearly articulate the political rights and obligations of its citizens, while the latter falls under the “doctrine of virtue,” which concerns the establishment of the highest good that ultimately unifies the interests of reason. The former deals with political rights and duties and the civil harmony that can be established, and the latter deals with moral rights and duties and the unity of reason that can be established. And while both doctrines are practical and are subsumed under the categorical imperative – do your duty – the duties are extremely different. The duty that attends the doctrine of virtue is to promote the

10 For example, see “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose,” “Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch,” and the second essay of “The Conflict of Faculties.”
highest good by following the moral law for its own sake. However, the duty of the doctrine of right is to promote a well-organized state by obeying its positive laws. As Kant says in “Perpetual Peace,” the former requires morality, while the latter does not:

Thus it is only a question of a good organization of the state (which does lie in man's power), whereby the powers of each selfish inclination are so arranged in opposition that one moderates or destroys the ruinous effect of the other. The consequence for reason is the same as if none of them existed, and man is forced to be a good citizen even if not a morally good person… The problem of organizing a state, however hard it may seem, can be solved even for a race of devils, if only they are intelligent. (PW 112).

The necessary legal and cultural requirements for a genuinely republican government that can secure a civil society as well as an international order in which perpetual peace obtains, simply do not require the resolute pursuit of virtue that morality demands. Therefore, “the possibility of perpetual peace rests only on the gradual enactment of coercive laws [by a sovereign], and not the virtue of individuals.”

Kant understands perpetual peace to be an international phenomenon; therefore, no single sovereign could usher in such a condition. Thus, individual sovereigns would need to work in tandem and form some sort of international confederation in order to achieve it. Whether or not one agrees with Kant’s conception of sovereignty, let us assume that a sovereign international confederation could usher in perpetual peace as the supreme political good. Even so, each individual sovereign (or a Sovereign Confederation) would still not be able to deliver happiness in exact proportion to morality – which is the definition of the highest good – for two reasons: first, the virtue of citizens is not necessarily under the purview of the government, and second,

11 It does, however, require a conception of providence that is necessary for the political ends of history to be achieved.

even the most successful sovereign(s) could not unite the non-causally related, and thus heterogeneous goods, of morality and happiness in the natural world. As a result, a fully successful government could conceivably afford domestic peace, yet even the most successful, divinely-sanctioned sovereign could not afford happiness in exact proportion to either morality or legality. Crucially, the highest good is a moral and, therefore, a metaphysical concept, not a political one. Political answers cannot solve moral or metaphysical questions, which is an analogue of Kant’s assertion that “transcendental questions admit only transcendental answers” (A637/B665).

Looking at the first reason more closely, Kant makes a clear distinction between a state (whose sole concern is the legal correctness of its citizen’s actions) and a church (whose primary concern is the inner character of its members’ wills). Frederick Beiser corroborates this exact point: “Kant does not think that the highest good can be a political ideal, one achieved through the state. The highest good… involves knowledge of a person’s inner dispositions and motives. But such an internal realm can never fall under the jurisdiction of the state, whose laws direct and control only external actions.”¹³ Juridical duties, which are externally legislated, are within the purview of the state; one’s moral disposition and ethical duties, which are internally legislated, are not. The former duties compel us to engage in or refrain from certain types of behavior in order not to be punished; the latter duties compel us to impose final ends on ourselves: we must seek our own perfection, strive to ensure the happiness of others, and place

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the highest good as the final end. On Kant’s account, the sovereign branch of government has purview over the former and not the latter.

Looking at the second reason more closely, even if a sovereign could successfully appeal to its subjects to act morally, and not merely civilly, such a state of affairs could secure a healthier civil society, which should be welcomed. Yet, bringing forth the “systematic unity of ends” that defines the highest good is not within the purview of even the most dedicated government attempting to instill a moral vision within society because no divinely-guided sovereign could proportion happiness with morality. Such proportionality that defines the final end of the highest good requires God’s direct intervention (and not some providentially-guided, sensible surrogate) as the only force that can unite these two heterogeneous and causally incommensurable goods. Kant says that the moral law

must also lead to the possibility of the second element of the highest good, namely happiness proportioned to that morality, and must do so as disinterestedly as before, solely from impartial reason; in other words, it must lead to the supposition of the existence of a cause adequate to this effect, that is, it must postulate the existence of God as belonging necessarily to the possibility of the highest good (which object of our will is necessarily connected with the moral lawgiving of pure reason). (5:124, emphases are Kant’s).

God is the only “cause adequate” to the “effect” of “happiness proportioned to morality,” and since the highest good is defined by this exact proportionality, then such a state of affairs can only be realized by God and not by a providentially-guided human surrogate because such a surrogate could not possess the productive metaphysical force – “a being that is the cause of nature by understanding and will” (5:125, emphases are Kant’s) – necessary to bring the two incommensurable goods of worthiness to be happy and happiness itself together. Only God, as a transcendent, omnipotent, perfectly rational being, is capable of achieving that kind of unity.
Nevertheless, many commentators attempt to reconceive the highest good in purely naturalist and secular terms. For example, Andrews Reath’s “Two Conceptions of the Highest Good in Kant” is one such attempt: “I want to argue that the Highest Good need not be viewed as a theological notion, and that the proportionality of virtue and happiness is not essential to the doctrine… Kant thought that, ultimately, we cannot fully understand how even the secular version of the Highest Good would be possible without the postulate of a moral author of the world, who orders the laws of history in a certain way. Even so, a reasonably complete description of this state of affairs can be given in naturalistic terms.”14 First, I simply don’t understand how anyone who has read Kant could claim “that the proportionality of virtue and happiness is not essential to the doctrine” of the highest good. This claim either disregards or excises most of what Kant says about the highest good. Reath’s attempt (and others who adopt a “naturalistic” position) to replace “happiness distributed in exact proportion to morality” with “a perfect civil union of mankind” as what constitutes the highest good is a prime example of illegitimately conflating the moral (the doctrine of virtue) with the political (the doctrine of right). Further, even “a perfect civil union of mankind” is not a purely secular notion for Kant because the work of the sovereign is naturally guided by the providential hand of a moral author. Kant does have a naturalistic account of the possibility of perpetual peace, insofar as he judges nature to have a teleological structure. However, he does not have a purely naturalistic account of the moral duty to realize the highest good, in so far as that duty requires reason’s capacity for transcendental freedom and the moral imperatives that follow, which are, for Kant, ineluctably

bound with religion: “morality thus inevitably leads to religion, and through religion it extends itself” (6:6). Reath’s naturalistic account removes the theological underpinnings of Kant’s moral answer to the question – What may I hope? – and therefore is, in my opinion, overly reductive.\textsuperscript{15}

To be sure, in Part Three of Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason, Kant does advance the concept of an immanent “ethico-civil” community rooted in the church (against a “juridico-civil” society rooted in the laws of a sovereign) that aims to universally elevate the “good principle” (adopting the maxim of holiness) over the “bad principle” (not renouncing radical evil) by placing such a community under divine ethical laws. Kant says such an ethical community is necessary because

\begin{quote}
however much the individual human being might do to escape from the dominion of evil, he would still be held in incessant danger of relapsing into it. – Inasmuch as we can see, therefore, the dominion of the good principle is not otherwise attainable, so far as human beings can work toward it, than through the setting up and the diffusion of a society in accordance with, and for the sake of, the laws of virtue – a society which reason makes it a task and a duty of the entire human race to establish in its full scope. – For only in this way can we hope for a victory of the good principle over the evil one (6:94).
\end{quote}

This ethical community would work to transition from a mere historically situated (and thus empirical) “ecclesiastical faith” to a “pure religious faith” that universalizes the church and its ethico-divine laws into a “universal religion of reason” attempting to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. (6:122). Yet, Kant goes on to say that even though the ethical community of the church is necessary to extend the “laws of virtue” to the greatest extent possible within the public sphere, ultimately, religion remains a private affair: “for, inasmuch as it is based on moral faith, religion is not a public condition; each human being can only become conscious of the advances

\textsuperscript{15} Of course, Reath is not the only commentator who follows this line of argumentation; many others do so, too. For example, Reath’s dissertation director, John Rawls is arguably the foremost progenitor of an account that essentially attempts to remove moral theology from Kant’s philosophy. Moreover, Rawls has had many students and followers.
which he has made in this faith only for himself” (6:124). Thus, each dispositional rebirth to the
good principle must be individually undertaken and autonomously motivated, and the faith of
each agent in the postulates of pure practical reason that make the highest good possible, which
is the final end of reason that the moral law promotes, must also be individually undertaken and
autonomously motivated. However, once an agent has made the change of heart and pledged
their faith in the objects necessary for the final end of reason to be a plausible hope, then the
ethical community of the church can assist each member in retaining their moral focus and
collectively advocate for “a society which reason makes it a task and a duty of the entire human
race to establish in its full scope.”

Furthermore, in *Religion* Kant argues that the ethical community of the Church should
only be understood as *ideal*: “The sublime, never fully attainable idea of an ethical community is
greatly scaled down under human hands…[H]ow could one expect to construct something
completely straight from such crooked wood?” (6:100). Just as holiness of will is impossible for
any finite, rational agent, an absolutely holy ethical community or church is equally impossible.
The church can do more to further “the dominion of the good principle” than any individual
agent, and it can assist each member in not “relapsing into evil;” however, even the most
successful ethical community will still fall short in establishing a total victory of the good
principle over the bad in W1.

Moreover, while Kant argues for the necessity of such a church-led mission to further the
good principle (which attempts to approximate the Kingdom of God on earth), he does not hold
out the possibility of such a state being able to deliver “happiness distributed in exact proportion
to morality,” which is the definition of the highest good:
But as regards happiness, which constitutes the other part of the human being’s unavoidable desire, he [God] told them from the beginning that they could not count on it during their life on earth. He prepared them for the greatest tribulations and sacrifices; yet (since total renunciation of the physical element of happiness cannot be expected of a human being, so long as he exists) he added: ‘Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in Heaven’ (6:134/5).

Consistent with my argument, “the greatest tribulations and sacrifices,” which frequently coincide with moral action, do not proportionally deliver the experience of happiness: “But as regards happiness… [God] told them from the beginning that they could not count on it during their life on earth.” Interestingly, this account closely parallels that of Christ’s example on earth. According to Kant, Christ’s divine will was in complete conformity with the moral law. Yet, even though Christ possessed a holy will in a sensible world, and thus came to serve as the prototype for humans striving towards holiness (6:119), he was still not able to enjoy the non-moral and conditional good of happiness in proportion to his moral and unconditional possession of holiness. God “has taken up humanity” (6:61) in Christ; he was born; he aged; he experienced hunger, thirst, pain, immense suffering, and he died. Even Christ’s purely moral and, thereby, prototypically exemplary will did not experience proportional happiness in the immanent setting of the natural world. This is yet another, and very provocative, instance of the highest good’s unity of happiness in exact proportion to morality not being obtainable in the natural world — not even by God incarnate.

In sum, Kant posits two possibilities within the natural world: first, well-ordered governments juridically organizing for perpetual peace between nations, and second, the ethical community of a church endeavoring to extend the good principle over the bad. The first is a juridical and the second is a moral accomplishment. And while these accomplishments are attainable within the natural world, there can be (and has been) no instance of happiness in exact
proportion to morality, which is the *type of unity that defines the standard account of the highest good*, occurring in the world of sense. For these reasons, this dissertation dismisses the secular and naturalistic accounts of the highest good realization in this world.

This leaves the aforementioned second and fourth conceptions of the highest good open: the highest good as an individual pursuit realized in a future world and the highest good as a collective pursuit realized in a future world. As I said earlier, I take both of these conceptions to be interrelated, non-contradictory and, thus, compatible.

On the individual pursuit front, Kant believes that the fundamental dispositional rebirth necessary to overcoming radical evil that makes the objective of the highest good a viable possibility in the first place *requires the adoption of the maxim to resolutely pursue holiness*. If this is the case, then the individual pursuit of the highest good clearly is a component of Kant’s conception. Kant defines a maxim in the *Groundwork* as “the subjective principle of volition” (4:402), and it is therefore the object of an individual decision. For a maxim to be moral, however, it must conform to a universal practical law: “*act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law*” (4:421, the emphasis is Kant’s). For example, a person may choose a maxim to lie to benefit themselves or others; nevertheless, such a maxim would not withstand the test required by the categorical imperative because one “could indeed will the lie, but by no means a universal law to lie” (4:403). Thus, maxims, as subjective moral principles, are adopted individually, yet in order to pass moral muster, they must be able to be universalized.\(^\text{16}\)

\[^{16}\text{Another requirement that a maxim must meet in order to be moral is that it must legitimately promote and be included in the Kingdom of Ends.}\]
The individual adoption of the maxim to pursue holiness is tantamount to the commitment to strive to perfectly follow the categorical imperative. Further, if a church’s responsibility is to help perfect the wills of its members, then it is an organization that aids its members in carrying out their dispositional rebirth and so overcoming their radical evil. Therefore, the initial maxim adoption of the good principle over the bad must ultimately be an individual subjective choice, yet a church can do everything in its power to encourage its congregation about the importance of adopting the good principle, as well as go on to aid its members to further their pursuit of holiness of the will.

In Religion, Kant discusses the collective nature of the highest good:

[W]e have a duty *sui generis*, not of human beings toward human beings but of the human race toward itself. For every species of rational beings is objectively – in the idea of reason – destined to a common end, namely the promotion of the highest good as a good common to all. But, since this highest moral good will not be brought about solely through the striving of one individual person for his own moral perfection but requires rather a union of such persons into a whole toward that very end, [i.e.] toward a system of well-disposed human beings in which, and through the unity of which alone, the highest moral good can come to pass (6:97-8).

The highest good has two collective aspects. First, while we are striving to be less pathological in our moral deliberations, the ethical community that the church represents, which is concerned with its congregation’s souls and the ethical laws the members enforce on themselves, aids us to our “destined common end.” Second, the highest good cannot “be brought about solely through the striving of one individual person for his own moral perfection” because Kant conceives of it as “a system of well-disposed beings;” therefore, it takes many individual wills to promote and comprise such a systematic and collective end for rational beings. Hence, the collective church aids in promoting our final collective end. In this sense, we are all in it together. Nevertheless, the adoption of the good principle over the bad, even though it is aided by the ethical community
of the church and realized in ethical community of the highest good, must ultimately be an individual and autonomous change of heart: Radical evil is a person’s “original guilt [that] cannot be erased by anyone else. For it is not a transmissible liability” (6:72). For these reasons, I take both the individual and collective conceptions of the highest good to be complementary conceptions.

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In his “Kant’s Conception of the Highest Good, the Gesinnung, and the Theory of Radical Evil,” Mathew Caswell says commentators who wish to in some way affirm the value of the highest good, against commentators who argue that the concept is either redundant or too riddled with contradictions and thus should just be jettisoned altogether, can be divided into the revisionists, secularizers and maximalists. The commentators who wish to discard the concept, such as Lewis White Beck, argue against Kant’s position that the moral law commands us to promote the Highest Good (5:114). Beck states that none of the formulas of the categorical imperative – universal law, the end in itself, and the kingdom of ends – have the highest good as its content. Further, in The Metaphysics of Morals, the highest good is also not one of the ends that are also considered duties: striving towards one’s own perfection and taking the happiness of others into account. Next, Beck argues that the Highest Good does not exist independently of the moral law: “For suppose I do all in my power . . . to promote the highest good, what am I to do?

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Simply act out of respect of the moral law, which I already knew.”\textsuperscript{19} Beck draws the following conclusion: “The . . . highest good is not a practical concept at all… It is not important in Kant’s philosophy for any practical consequence.”\textsuperscript{20}

Revisionists believe that the highest good is a welcome concept because it solves problems within Kantian ethics that would remain without it. For example, Silber argues in “The Importance of the Highest Good in Kant’s Ethics” that the formal nature of the categorical imperative is too abstract and the Highest Good rectifies this problem: “the concept of the highest good, while following from the moral law, adds content to the abstract form of the categorical imperative and gives direction to moral volition.”\textsuperscript{21} For Silber and other revisionists, the Highest Good’s amendments improve Kant’s overall ethical theory.

As I already touched upon with Reath, secularizers seek to liquidate remnants of rational theology by removing the pure postulates of practical reason and any need for a transcendent world.\textsuperscript{22} Some secularizers recognize that Kant believes that rational theology provides the answer to his question \textit{what may I hope}. Consequently, these commentators do not fully attribute their secular position to Kant but use certain aspects of Kant’s thought as their springboard. However, other commentators argue that their secular position is, in fact, Kant’s position. I am much more amenable to the first set of commentators.

\textsuperscript{19} Beck, \textit{A Commentary on Kant’s Critique of Practical Reason}, 244.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 245.

\textsuperscript{21} Silber, “The Importance of the Highest Good in Kant’s Ethics,” 193. One could also just disagree with Silber here because Kant explicitly says that the second formulation of the categorical imperative does “add content to the abstract form” of the first formulation.

\textsuperscript{22} For a more substantial discussion on secularist commentators, consult Caswell, “Kant’s Conception of the Highest Good, the Gesinnung, and the Theory of Radical Evil,” 184–209.
Lastly, maximalists attempt to affirm the concept of the Highest Good by providing the most coherent articulation of Kant and other applicable secondary texts.\textsuperscript{23} Hence, they attempt to maximize what is directly stated, premised or implied within Kant’s original writings. Adopting Caswell’s distinctions, the goal of this dissertation is best described as maximalist. I understand my attempt to provide the most coherent account of the highest good as our final end realized in a transcendent world to be a reconstruction of Kant’s concept and not a fundamentally new conception. There is nothing in my account that is not directly stated, premised or implied within Kant’s original writings. And while there’s little question that Kant’s overall articulation of the highest good as an individual and collective task that finds its final expressions in future intermediary (W3) and eternal (W4) worlds could have been undertaken with more clarity and precision, he has left us with everything I need to offer a comprehensive articulation of the standard highest good as a penultimate world and the eternal highest good as a transcendent final end.

Finally, with regard to setting up my thesis, if the ends of reason that comprise the highest good aim to answer Kant’s question about hope, and if I am going to extend the secondary literature on the topic, then I must offer answers that differ from what tends to be construed as Kant’s standard account. First, and as a percussor to my thesis, I must establish a penultimate highest good that finally proportions the highest level of possible virtue (imputed holiness) and happiness in a synthetic \textit{a priori} relationship made possible through God’s gracious imputation and metaphysical power. However, this world where imputed holiness is

\footnote{For a more substantial discussion on maximalist commentators, further consult Caswell, “Kant’s Conception of the Highest Good, the Gesinnung, and the Theory of Radical Evil,” 184–209.}
synthetic proportioned through divine intervention – what I have labelled W3 – is not our final end. My thesis represents the final hope and end for sensible, rational beings: *I (and we) may hope for an eternal highest good, as the culmination of the interests of reason as a whole, that analytically enjoins holiness and beatitude in a noumenal world*. If my reconstructed account, which rests on what I take to be sound Kantian premises, validates this thesis, I believe that Kant’s concept of the highest good will exhibit greater consistency, clarity, and coherence.

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Strictly speaking, my thesis applies to the eternal highest good in W4. Of course, throughout the dissertation, I will need to provide persuasive accounts of all four worlds and their relations. Nevertheless, at this point, I will initially emphasize three tasks that need to be addressed that bear directly on W4. First, I need to show how God’s gracious imputation of holiness initially provides access to the standard highest good in W3 and the eventual incorporation into the eternal highest good in W4. Next, I need to illustrate how beatitude is our final, non-moral good in W4. Furthermore, I need to demonstrate that holiness analytically entails beatitude in W4. Each of these claims is interrelated: the establishment of the second claim rests on the effective demonstration of the first, and the establishment of the third claim rests on the effective demonstrations of the first and the second.

Kant states in the *Critique of Practical Reason* that the highest good is comprised of two interrelated final goods: the “*supreme*” good, which is the unconditional moral good, and the “*complete*” or “*perfect*” good, which is the conditional and non-moral good (5:110-111). These two final goods differ in my standard and eternal versions of the highest good. *Imputed holiness* is the supreme good, and *happiness* completes or perfects the highest good in W3; while *holiness*
is the supreme good, and beatitude completes or perfects the eternal and final highest good in W4. Moreover, I am proposing a link between the two “supreme” final goods: When God finds a sensible, rational agent well-pleasing and graciously imputes holiness, which is the divine recognition of an agent achieving the greatest level of virtue possible, the agent’s mode of existence will eventually be transformed from that of “endless” temporal succession in W3 into a state of being characterized by time’s elimination, the noumenal duration of eternity in W4, that finally makes holiness and beatitude possible. I say “eventually” because when an agent is found well-pleasing and is graciously imputed as holy, that agent will first experience happiness proportionate to the greatest level of possible virtue in the highest good of W3. This state of affairs will “eventually” be followed by the transition into eternity that marks “the end of all things.” When this transformation into eternity, which makes the fully intelligible goods of holiness and beatitude possible, will exactly occur is outside of all human cognition and, thereby, remains a mystery.

Holiness, as the supreme good of W4, describes a will that does not deviate from the moral law: “[I]n such a will the complete conformity of dispositions with the moral law is the supreme condition of the Highest Good… Complete conformity of the will with the moral law is… holiness” (5:122). Because Kant demands “complete conformity” of the will with the moral law, which is nothing less than perfected (and thus absolute) virtue, Kant elevates two theoretical transcendental ideas of reason – the immortality of the soul and God – into postulates of pure practical reason that must be posited and assented to in order for the supreme condition of the highest good to be a possibility. Crucially, Kant argues that holiness is “a perfection of which no rational being of the sensible world is capable at any moment of his existence,” yet “[s]ince it is
nevertheless required as practically necessary, it can only be found in an *endless progress* toward that complete conformity” (5:122, emphasis is Kant’s). Because holiness “can only be found in an *endless progress,*” Kant goes on to posit the postulate of the immortal soul, which allows for the “endless progress” of an agent in order to strive for what is “required as practically necessary.” But, as we shall soon see, even the endless progress of a resolutely struggling will (that an immortal soul provides) *cannot by itself* secure holiness. Ultimately, it will take God’s gracious imputation of holiness to a “well-pleasing” agent.

In *Religion,* Kant posits God’s grace as necessary for a resolutely struggling will to be imputed holy. When a will is divinely recognized as permanently incorporating a maxim to pursue holiness, God can fill the gap between disposition (the will to pursue holiness) and deed (the inextirpable disparity between the will and its complete conformity with the moral law that subsists within every sensible, rational creature) by extending grace:

> Here, then, that surplus over the merit from good works for which we felt the need earlier, one which is imputed to us by *grace.* For what in our earthly life (and perhaps even in all future times and in all worlds) is always only in mere *becoming* (namely, our being a human being well-pleasing to God) is imputed to us as if we already possessed it in full. (6:75)

A will that is “well-pleasing to God” [*Gott wohlgefällig*] may receive gracious imputation. By “well-pleasing to God,” Kant means an agent’s unyielding commitment to pursue ever-greater virtue made possible through a dispositional rebirth, which is defined by the adoption of a maxim to pursue holiness. It is necessary to recognize that Kant’s use of “as if” (*als ob*) reveals that God is treating us as though we had achieved something that still has not been achieved. As such, holiness is “imputed to us *as if* we already possessed it in full.” Hence, God forgives the inherent disparity between disposition and deed – “that surplus” – through an act of grace that *counts* the
resolute pursuit of moral progress that accords with the adoption of a holy disposition *not as equal* to perfected holiness itself but as the recognition that the sensible, rational agent has achieved the greatest level of virtue possible.

As will become clearer later in the dissertation, my account of God’s gracious imputation of holiness is indebted to Allen Wood’s prior account. However, where my account stands distinctly apart from Wood’s (and the other secondary literature concerning God’s grace) is my contention that when God finds a sensible, rational agent well-pleasing and *graciously imputes holiness* (which is the recognition of the greatest level of virtue possible for such an agent) that agent will first enjoy happiness proportionate to virtue in the standard highest good before incorporating into the noumenal duration of the eternal highest good.

There are two primary reasons why I conceive of God’s gracious imputation of holiness eventually entailing the removal of from sensible coordinates entirely. My first reason is the incommensurability of a holy will operating within a phenomenal world. The only instance of a holy will operating in a phenomenal world is God in the form of Christ. The Son of God’s divine will, by its very nature, was thoroughly immune to acting on inclinations. As such, Christ singularly possessed a *holy will* that was not (as is the case for non-divine sensible, rational creatures) subject to the categorical imperative.\(^{24}\) In this way, we distinguish a holy will from a

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\(^{24}\) This state of affairs poses an interesting question: If sensible, rational beings cannot become fully holy like Christ, but we ought to (and ought must imply can), how can we solve this dilemma? What we ought to do is strive as resolutely as possible to get ever-closer to holiness by placing love of the moral law over self-love in order to become potentially well-pleasing to God. Our faith in God sustains our hope in God’s gracious imputation of holiness and our eventual transition to eternity and holiness itself. In this way, we supply the “ought,” by doing our duty, and God’s grace supplies the “can” through his gracious intervention.
“good will,” whose duties are determined by its respect for moral law and the restraint human reason can place on sensible desire:

It is the presence of desires that *could* operate independently of moral demands that makes goodness in human beings a constraint, an essential element of the idea of ‘duty.’ So in analyzing unqualified goodness as it occurs in imperfectly rational creatures such as ourselves, we are investigating the idea of being motivated by the thought that we are constrained to act in certain ways that we *might* not want to simply from the thought that we are morally required to do so.\(^{25}\)

As sensible creatures that inexorably possess imperfect rationality, we possess a qualified goodness, and it is our very finitude and its intractable limitations that make a holy will, which is *absolute*, an impossibility.\(^{26}\) Therefore, our non-absolute, temporally conditioned nature is incompatible with the absolute, unconditioned state of holiness, and this incompatibility grounds our ontological limitations that make the moral perfection that is holiness impossible in our sensible lives occurring Worlds 1, 2 and 3. For sensible, rational beings, holiness and a phenomenal world are simply incompatible.

Furthermore, in “The End of All Things,” Kant argues that reason itself compels us to believe that a will’s final destination is noumenal duration:

> [W]hen we pursue the transition from time into eternity (whether or not this idea, considered theoretically as extending cognition, has objective reality), as reason does in a moral regard, then we come up against the *end of all things* as temporal beings and as objects of possible experience – which end, however, in the moral order of ends, is at the same time the beginning of a duration of just those same beings as *supersensible*, and consequently as not standing under the conditions of time (8:327).

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\(^{26}\) Another way to frame this discussion is that it comes down to the in-completability of an infinite series. If this sense, God performs a form of integral “moral calculus.”
Kant goes on to ask, “why do human beings expect an end… at all?” (8:330) His answer is as follows: “The ground . . . appears to lie in the fact that reason says to them that the duration of the world has worth only insofar as the rational beings in it conform to the final end of their existence; if, however, this is not supposed to be achieved, then creation itself appears purposeless to them, like a play having no resolution and affording no cognition of any rational aim” (8:331). If the empirical character continues infinitely, “creation itself appears purposeless” due to sempiternity’s (understood as infinite or never-ending duration) inability to afford a resolutely striving will the realization of holiness, and such an indefinite deferral is incommensurate with reason’s need for resolution. Thus, when holiness is imputed through a divine act of grace, this gracious imputation will be eventually accompanied by a lift outside of sensibility altogether into a fully transcendent world as the rational culmination where “henceforth there shall be no alteration” (8:333). Kant is fully aware that reason’s pre-eternal cognitive state shudders at such a final end because of its utterly un-cognizable nature. Nevertheless, he is equally aware that reason inevitably posits such a transcendent end because without it, the concept of a final end becomes incoherent, and holiness remains an impossibility. Thus, for Kant, we are reasonably drawn to think a transcendent final end, which is entrusted to a future supersensible world that is amenable to holiness of the will as the supreme aspect of our final end. This claim that holiness requires a noumenal world and a corresponding eternal highest good will continue to be defended in greater detail throughout the dissertation.

On the standard account, happiness is the non-moral good that completes the highest good. Happiness, defined as “the sum of satisfaction of all inclinations” (4:399), is the sensible condition that completes (or perfects) the highest good by bringing a synthetic unity to the
unconditional and the conditional. And while the non-moral condition of happiness cannot be expected to exist without the supreme condition (and is thus conditional), Kant understands that both are necessary aspects of the highest good: “For, to need happiness, to be also worthy of it, and yet not to participate in it cannot be consistent with the perfect volition of a rational being” (5:110). As previously discussed, Kant understands such a synthetic relationship to be impossible in the natural world and thereby requires God’s intervention for it to become possible in the highest good (5:224). In this sense, God underwrites the proportionality between the intelligible/rational and the empirical/sensible in the highest good because God is both fully intelligible/rational as well as the author of the empirical/sensible.

However, there is a problem with such an account. The problem resides in the difficulty of reconciling the synthetic a priori relationship between holiness (which is fully rational and requires a noumenal world) and happiness as “the sum of satisfaction of all inclinations” (which is fully sensible and requires a phenomenal world). Specifically, since holiness (as the supreme and unconditional aspect of the highest good) necessitates a supersensible setting, and happiness (which is conditional and completes the highest good) necessitates a sensible setting, it is unclear how these two heterogeneous ends can be compatible. How can a sensible good be actualized in a supersensible setting?

Swapping beatitude for happiness, however, solves this problem. Kant defines beatitude

1. as complete independence from inclinations and needs (5:119)
2. as complete well-being independent of all the contingent causes in the world (5:123n)
3. as attainable only in an eternity (5:129)

In her essay, “Making Sense of Kant’s Highest Good,” Jacqueline Mariña argues for a transcendent highest good that proportions beatitude to holiness. Hence, my claim is not original. Later in this dissertation, I will examine Mariña’s essay in detail, confronting both our similarities and differences.
Beatitude is complete independence from inclination and contingency, which is an absolute form of well-being only applicable to the non-temporal, noumenal duration of eternity. Since beatitude demands independence from sensible conditions and happiness demands dependence on sensible conditions, it would be a misnomer to refer to beatitude as a type of happiness that is intractably subject to fortune (as the etymologies of the English word “happiness” and the German word Glücklichkeit suggest) and is sensibly conditioned. Kant does speak of self-contentment – Selbstzufriedenheit – which is a form of negative satisfaction that does not rely on satisfying inclinations: “we can understand how consciousness of this ability of a pure practical reason (virtue) can in fact produce consciousness of mastery over one's inclinations, hence of independence from them and ... thus can produce a negative satisfaction with one's state, that is, contentment, which in its source is contentment with one's person” (5:117). However, this type of contentment, unlike beatitude, is a partial independence from inclination through self-mastery in a sensible setting. This is the type of well-being that a resolutely striving finite, rational agents’ experiences as they get closer and closer to (while never quite reaching) complete conformity with the moral law. For sensible, rational agents, however, beatitude is the kind of well-being that corresponds to eternity’s super-sensibility.\footnote{Christ represents the only instance of the experience of beatitude in a phenomenal world. I will have more to say about this throughout the dissertation.} As a result, I understand happiness, self-contentment and beatitude to all be forms of well-being; however, since beatitude is incompatible with sensibility, it should be understood neither as a form of happiness nor as self-contentment.
If God’s gracious imputation of holiness eventually delivers a person into a noumenal world and an eternal highest good (represented as the end of all things), then beatitude, and not happiness, would be the form of well-being that completes or perfects the eternal highest good. Beatitude, “as complete well-being independent of all the contingent causes,” is a supersensible condition “attainable only in an eternity” that logically concurs with the supersensible condition of holiness, “as complete conformity to the moral law.” Holiness and beatitude each require complete independence from sensibility and its temporal condition, and it is their purely intelligible natures that do not pose the inherent heterogeneity and incompatibility of holiness and happiness.

Lastly, demonstrating that holiness (as the unconditional moral condition) and beatitude (as the conditional non-moral condition) are the two final goods that find unity in a transcendent highest good allows me to make my final central claim: *holiness analytically entails beatitude*. Holiness, as the moral and supreme condition, and beatitude, as the non-moral condition that completes the highest good, are both fully intelligible final goods of a supersensible end. I will contend that holiness, as “complete conformity with the moral law,” analytically contains beatitude, as “complete well-being independent of all the contingent causes in the world attainable only in an eternity,” within it. Hence, my reconstructed version of an eternal highest good as a fully analytic and thus non-discursive state does not suffer the problems that hinder the standard account of the highest good.

As already stated, I attempt to solve this problem with my introduction of W3, which remains a phenomenal world. As such, it possesses the necessary conditions for the experience of happiness proportional with imputed holiness. However, in order to access W3 and W4
respectively, a sensible, rational agent must first be found well-pleasing to God. In order to be found well-pleasing, agents must resolutely strive towards holiness in W2. As such, it is to this world and the continuous moral progress that it affords that I will now turn.
CHAPTER ONE
THE RESURRECTED BODY AND THE RESOLUTE QUEST FOR HOLINESS

Kant has holiness as the supreme condition of the highest good: “[T]he complete conformity of dispositions with the moral law is the supreme condition of the Highest Good… Complete conformity of the will with the moral law is… holiness” (5:122). However, holiness is “a perfection of which no rational being of the sensible world is capable at any moment of his existence,” yet “it is nevertheless required as practically necessary” (5:122) Such a requirement poses an important question: Why does Kant require holiness, understood as a disposition that is in complete conformity with the moral law, and not merely virtue as the supreme condition of the highest good? If the former is not realizable by sensible, rational creatures on their own accord and the latter is, why shouldn’t virtue be the supreme condition? The answer to these questions has to do with the moral law itself:

The moral law is holy (inviolable). A human being is indeed unholy enough but the humanity in his person must be holy to him. In the whole of creation everything one wants and over which one has any power can also be used merely as a means; as human being alone, and with him every rational creature, is an end in itself: by virtue of the autonomy of his freedom he is subject to the moral law, which is holy (5:87, emphasis in original).

Our freedom to act morally subjects us to the holy moral law, and such autonomy renders each person a noumenal “end in itself” that ought not to be treated merely as a “means” in a sensibly conditioned causal chain. A rational creature must recognize “the humanity in his person” as the capacity for autonomy that justifiably subjects that being to the moral law. Since both the moral law and human reason are not confined by the dictates of nature, we have a holy law and a
rational creature with the rational capacity to heed it by seeking perfected virtue. Therefore, for
Kant, human beings, as sensible, rational creatures, are never at any specific moment in
possession of a holy will; however, our consciousness of the moral law makes it our duty to
pursue such complete conformity.

Further, in the second Critique, Kant argues that consciousness of the moral law is a fact
of reason. In the Third Antinomy of the first Critique, Kant establishes that the idea of
transcendental freedom (or the causality of freedom) and an intelligible character do not
contradict the causality of nature and an empirical character. Transcendental freedom allows for
the spontaneous initiation of a new causal chain that is unencumbered by antecedent conditions.
While we cannot know that we are transcendentally free, we can think such an idea without
contradiction. In the Groundwork, Kant deduces the moral law from the causality of freedom.
However, in the second Critique, Kant changes course and argues that our consciousness of the
moral law is a fact of reason that requires no deduction:

- Consciousness of this fundamental law may be called a fact of reason because one cannot
  reason it out of antecedent data of reason, for example, from consciousness of freedom
  (since this is not antecedently given to us) and because it instead forces itself upon us
  itself as a synthetic a priori proposition that is not based on any intuition, either pure or
  empirical... it must be noted carefully that it is not an empirical fact but the sole fact of
  pure reason which, by it, announces itself as originally lawgiving (5:31).

(1) Consciousness of the moral law is a fact of reason; (2) the moral law commands complete
conformity; (3) holiness is the complete conformity that the moral law commands. For these
reasons, mere virtue always falls short of perfection. Such a fact cannot be limited or dismissed
as maximalist because reason itself necessarily recognizes both the moral law and our practical
autonomy to pursue it. In this way, reason establishes holiness as a practically necessary ideal.
Additionally, overcoming radical evil, Kant’s doctrine whereby each will (Willkur)\(^1\) initially chooses the bad principle (the selfish pursuit of happiness) over the good (the pursuit of moral ends), necessitates the pursuit of holiness over mere virtue. As Henry Allison remarks, “[g]iven the doctrine of radical evil, it is clear that a genuine resolution to break with evil, that is, to cease yielding to that inextirpable propensity, must consist in a resolution to seek holiness, understood as perfect purity of disposition. To settle for anything else would amount to a capitulation to evil.”\(^2\) Adopting the maxim to pursue holiness, which is the radical rebirth necessary to become “well-pleasing” to God, cannot be a half-hearted search. The moral law’s holy nature coupled with the fact that we are conscious of it, propel us to pursue holiness as the supreme condition to our final object and end that is the highest good.

However, even if reason directs us to resolutely pursue holiness because the moral law commands complete conformity with its decree, Kant is unequivocal that achieving a holy will at any particular moment in time is not a possibility for sensible, rational creatures. As I stated earlier, our non-absolute, temporally conditioned nature is incompatible with the absolute, temporally non-conditioned state of a holy will, and this incompatibility grounds our ontological imitations that make absolute nature of moral perfection (holiness) impossible in our sensible lives. Radical evil is another reason the reason of sensible, rational creatures can never be

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\(^1\) Kant uses two words when referring to the will: \textit{Wille} and \textit{Willkur}. \textit{Wille} is the capacity to freely choose a maxim outside the bounds of natural causality, \textit{Willkur} is the capacity to choose a maxim that conforms with the moral law or not. \textit{Wille} legislates that a sensible, rational creature has the capacity \textit{not be} governed by natural causality and thereby possesses transcendental freedom and an intelligible character. However, just because sensible, rational creatures have this capacity does not mean that they will execute it. They can choose to place happiness over worthiness or vice versa; that is, they can choose to be sensibly motivated by their empirical character or place themselves under a practical law through their intelligible character. \textit{Willkur} designates a will’s choice. Therefore, \textit{Wille} is the capacity to choose and \textit{Willkur} concerns if the actual choice is moral or not.

understood as absolute: human evil is radical “since it corrupts the [initial] ground of all maxims” (6:37). From a holistic perspective, since each will initially chooses the evil principle over the good, an absolute holy will is an impossibility from the outset: “[H]owever steadfastly a human being may have persevered in such a [good] disposition in a life conduct conformable to it, he nevertheless started from evil, and this is a debt which is impossible for him to wipe out” (6:72).

It is for these reasons that Kant posits holiness as “a practical idea, which must necessarily serve as a model to which all finite, rational beings can only approximate without end and which the pure moral law, itself called holy because of this, constantly and rightly holds before our eyes” (5:32). Thus, as sensible, rational creatures, humans remain only partially rational, and thereby unholy, creatures.

Therefore, the pursuit of holiness is the command of reason; however, the realization of holiness requires the aid of the practical postulates of pure reason: the immortal soul (and the endless progress of the will that it affords) and the existence of God (and his gracious imputation of holiness). The immortal soul, God and the highest good should not be construed as the determining grounds for a will’s pursuit of holiness. The moral law, as a fact of reason, and its indissoluble relationship with freedom are the only morally legitimate determining grounds of the will. Anything less is heteronomous and would therefore detract from the value of the will. However, while these two postulates are not determining grounds of the will, the Highest Good, as the final object of any will determined by the moral law (and its consonant freedom), requires the immortal soul and God as postulates to make this final end possible. So, the strict adherence to the moral law and its consonant freedom determines a will that rationally desires the ideal object of the Highest Good as its final end, which is only possible on the conditions of an
immortal soul and God. We will now turn to the immortal soul postulate and the moral progress it affords.

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Kant argues that the progress of the immortal soul affords each individual will the opportunity to conform ever more closely to the moral law, while never being able to achieve the complete conformity to the ideal of holiness, which “is a perfection of which no rational being in the sensible world is capable at any moment of his existence.” Consequently, Kant goes on to claim that complete fitness “can only be found in an endless progress toward that complete conformity… of the existence and personality of the same rational being continuing endlessly” (5:122). It should initially be recognized that such endless progress must remain a temporal process of alteration: “only endless progress from lower to higher stages of moral perfection is possible” (5:123). This continuous progress “from lower to higher stages” is necessarily a succession from one state to the next; for progress, as a form of succession and alteration, is change, and change is impossible without time.

Of course, Kant is concerned with moral progress, which poses the question: What if the progress of a will could take place through *noumenal acts of freedom*? I will specifically address the issues of noumenal change and moral progress soon, when I argue that Kant does not endorse the idea of noumenal change and that moral progress can only make sense for a will acting under sensible conditions, but for now, I will continue examining the general relationship between time and change.

One novel feature of Kant’s Copernican Revolution is the conception of time’s relationship to succession. Properly speaking, and against the prevailing view of time from Plato
and Aristotle onward, time as the *a priori* form of inner sense is not merely succession, movement or change. Instead, time is the universal and immutable formal condition for the possibility of succession, movement or change to transpire. So, while time itself does not change, it is the condition that makes change possible. Gilles Deleuze calls this Kant’s first “great reversal:” “[e]verything which moves and changes is in time, but time does not change, does not move… It is the form of everything that changes and moves, but it is an immutable Form which does not change… It is now movement which is subordinate to time… Time is no longer related to the movement which it measures, but movement is related to the time which conditions it: this is the first great Kantian reversal in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.”

3 Without time, there is no change or movement, and accordingly, the experience of progress would be incomprehensible.

In the Second Analogy, which is defined as the “principle of temporal sequence according to the law of causality” (A189/B232), Kant argues that all appearances are conditioned by our *a priori* form of inner sense and thereby transpire as a succession in time. In our subjective sequence of perceptions, one appearance follows another, and they must be connected: “This connection must therefore consist in the order of the manifold of appearance in accordance with which the apprehension of one thing (that which happens) follows that of the other (which precedes) in accordance with a rule (A193/B238). Cause A precedes effect B in time, and “[a]ll alterations occur in accordance with the law of the connection of cause and effect” (B223). The law of causality states that the preceding time necessarily determined the succeeding time: “[I]t is a necessary law of our sensibility, thus a formal condition of all perceptions, that the preceding

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4 This is why in “The End of All Things” Kant defines noumenal duration as the form of non-temporal eternity where alteration is impossible.
time necessarily determines the following time (in that I cannot arrive at the following time except by passing through the preceding one” (A199/B244). Hence, Kant concludes that “alteration can take place only in time and it is not thinkable without presupposing it” (8:333). Change is successive alteration, and progress is a form of successive alteration invariably conditioned by our pure intuitive form of inner sense that is time, which is invariably subject to natural causality as discussed in the Second Analogy.

When we turn to the moral terrain of reason, Kant advances another form of causality that differs from natural causality; it is the causality of freedom. This form of causality is transcendental freedom: the capacity to act without being determined by antecedent causes and thus “begin a series of occurrences entirely from itself” (A534/B562). Specifically, Kant’s solution to the Third Antinomy makes transcendental freedom conceivable. The thesis of the Third Antinomy states that “[c]ausality in accordance with the laws of nature is not the only one from which all appearances of the world can be derived. It is also necessary to assume another causality through freedom in order to explain them” (A444/B472). The antithesis states that “[t]here is no freedom, but everything in the world happens solely in accordance with laws of nature” (A445/B473). Unlike the mathematical antinomies, where both the theses and antitheses are shown to be false, the dynamical antinomies, of which the third antinomy is one, have their theses and antitheses shown to be potentially true and non-contradictory. The dynamical antinomies concern the conception of a dynamical whole, which is different from the mathematical sum total posited in the mathematical antinomies. This dynamical whole seeks to

5 It could be said that the mathematical antinomies treat phenomena as if they were noumena, while the theses of the dynamical antinomies treat noumenal concepts as if they were concepts of phenomena.
explain the complete series of conditions in a way that the mathematical (i.e., spatiotemporal) whole does not. As an explanatory concept of the whole (or of an absolute totality), the dynamical whole is not strictly limited to empirical explanations. When applied to the antithesis, which concerns the regress of appearances that must be explained empirically, the possibility of transcendental freedom must be rejected. In this way, the antithesis is true.

However, the thesis can be also true because a transcendentally free cause falls outside of an empirical series of causes due to reason’s capacity to spontaneously initiate a new causal chain that is not conditioned by antecedent activity. So, the thesis and antithesis are compatible and therefore conceivably true with regard to their specific subject matter: a phenomenal explanation has no room for an unconditioned cause, while the conceivability of a noumenal explanation does. Furthermore, the compatibility of the thesis and the antithesis opens up the possibility that the initiating ground of any series of temporally conditioned appearances could be a non-sensible and non-temporal, noumenal cause. In this way, “causality through freedom is at least not incompatible with nature” (A558/B586), and transcendental freedom, the ability to initiate a new causal series through the spontaneity of non-temporal reason, becomes conceivable.

Kant’s solution to the Third Antinomy makes it conceivable that we possess an intelligible (or noumenal) character and an empirical (or phenomenal) character; the former is determined by the causality of freedom, while the latter is determined by the causality of nature. However, the former can conceivably ground the latter. The intelligible character’s moral decision to commit to a particular maxim is free of the natural causality established in the Second Analogy: “Reason is present in all the actions of men at all times and under all circumstances,
and is always the same, but it is not itself in time, and does not fall into any new state in which it
was not before. In respect to new states, it is *determining, not determinable*” (A556/B584).
Transcendental freedom allows for the spontaneity of reason to determine a new causal series
that transpires in time through a decision, itself outside of time and natural causality, which
serves as the initial, unconditioned cause, while the moral effects are necessarily carried out by
an empirical character in a sensible setting.

It is imperative not to conceive of a non-temporal, and thus unconditioned, moral
decision as a form of change; more properly, it should be conceived of as a “first beginning from
freedom in a series of natural causes is clearly and visibly evident…i.e., a freely acting cause,
which began this series of states first and from itself” (A451/B479). This unconditioned
beginning, which is a noumenal act of freedom made possible by our non-temporal, intelligible
character, initiates a temporal series of phenomenal events undertaken by our empirical character
(i.e., our bodies), and this type of cause and effect has the spontaneous *determining* decision in
the intelligible/non-temporal realm and the *determinable* moral progress transpiring in the
empirical/temporal realm. As such, “the “freely acting cause” begins a “series of states” that is
temporally conditioned and represents the moral progress initiated by the non-temporal,
transcendentally free decision. In this way, moral progress entails the temporal process of an
empirical character.

Kant’s most essential instance of not conceiving a non-temporal, and thus unconditioned,
moral decision as a form of change occurs with the choice of a Gesinnung “as an inborn natural
constitution [that] does not here mean that it has not been acquired by the man who harbors it,
that he is not the author of it, but rather, that it has not been acquired in time… Yet this
disposition itself must have been adopted by free choice” (6:25). Kant infamously argues in
*Religion* that humans are inherently and originally good, yet through an act of noumenal
freedom, all humans initially choose a maxim of evil that grounds an evil disposition, which is
the reason Kant characterizes man as “radically evil:”

We cannot start out in the ethical training of our connatural moral disposition to the good
with an innocence which is natural to us but must rather begin from the presupposition of
a depravity of our power of choice in adopting maxims contrary to the original ethical
predisposition; and, since the propensity to this [depravity] is inextirpable, with
unremitting counteraction against it (6:51).

Such an initial choice of disposition does not, however, render humans incapable of further
adopting a maxim of holiness, even though this adoption does not fully extirpate evil (it will take
God’s gracious imputation of holiness to do that). For when we “begin with the incessant
counter-action against it,” we are making a choice to adopt a maxim towards holiness against the
initial maxim towards evil. Such a free choice, or “rebirth” (6:47), which is an absolute
precondition (as we shall soon see) for becoming well-pleasing in the eyes of God, is also not
temporally conditioned and should not be construed as a form of change: “The rule for the
practical use of reason in accord with this idea thus says no more than that we must take our
maxims as if, in all alterations from good to better going into infinity, our moral condition,
regarding its disposition (the *homo Noumenon*, “whose change takes place in heaven”) were not
subject to any temporal change at all” (8:334). The adoption of a maxim to strive toward holiness
amounts to a radical conversion of our disposition (*Gesinnung*) outside of the immutable form of
time that conditions all change. Such an intelligible dispositional conversion goes on to ground
“all alterations from good to better going into infinity,” while in-and-of itself it is “not subject to
any temporal change at all.” Therefore, the spontaneity of reason allows for a noumenal decision
(outside of the sensible form of time and the conditions of natural causality) that Kant argues should not be construed as a form of alteration, which serves as the initial, unconditioned ground for the various moral alterations (or instances of progress) that are carried out by an empirical character (an embodied person) transpiring in a sensible setting. Kant’s understanding of a “disposition (which is not a phenomenon… but something supersensible, [and] hence [is] not alterable with time)” forecloses on the concept of noumenal change (8:334).

The adoption of a maxim to pursue holiness, which is a will’s rebirth from radical evil and the precondition of being well-pleasing to God, occurring outside of time and hence natural causality is one of his most challenging claims to understand. A fair question can be asked of Kant: Since there’s a before and an after an agent’s adoption of a maxim to pursue holiness, how can such a transition not be thought of in temporal terms? There is a before and an after in maxim adoption; nevertheless, transcendental freedom posits the capacity for a will to act without being determined by antecedent causes. Such a capacity does not mean that the antecedent causes disappear or have never existed; rather, they are rendered causally non-efficacious due to a “freely acting cause, which began this series of states first and from itself” (A451/B479). The ability to initiate a beginning not conditioned by antecedent causes seems to represent an instant where time and natural causality are bracketed: there is a suspension of (or cut in) temporality where what has previously occurred is non-determining and what is to transpire is in the offing. So even if there is a before that has transpired in time and an after that will transpire in time, the instant, which is a non-temporally conditioned break in the succession of time that allows for the suspension of natural causality, constitutes a freely chosen new beginning that is in Kant’s words determining yet not determinable. An essential aspect of my
argument is the recognition that this non-temporal instant, which is the point of moral maxim adop-
tion that serves as an unconditioned cause, determines the positive effects (or moral progress) that enviably transpire empirically in time. Therefore, the demonstration of moral progress – that what is determinable – requires sensible, rational and temporally conditioned beings striving to be less pathological in assessing and carrying out their duties.

In fact, in Ethics of the Real: Kant and Lacan, Alenka Zupančič asks this very question: “if the soul is immortal, it is – upon death of the ‘body’ – no longer a denizen of the world of space and time; and if the soul is no longer subject to temporal conditions, how are we to understand ‘continuous and unending progress?’” Zupančič correctly answers that “if the presupposition of the eternity of the soul included continuous change (for the better) – then we would be dealing not with an eternal but with a temporal mode of existence. The notion of change makes sense only within time.” Zupančič concludes that “the immortality of the soul postulates… an infinite duration of the sensible which remains dependent on the ‘temporal condition.’” Zupančič is absolutely correct: The immortal soul and the endless progress of the will that it affords must be a temporally conditioned process.

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While more controversial, it is equally important to my argument that I demonstrate that moral progress also requires a sensuous body that feels the pull of inclinations as necessary for reason’s struggle to be increasingly in control of its moral deliberations and, thereby, place duty

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7 Ibid., 80.
8 Ibid., 77.
over inclination. Thus, the resurrected body is the key feature of my temporally conditioned W2. Subsequently, I will need to show how the very same body is also a necessary feature of W3, in which imputed holiness is synthetically proportioned with happiness through God’s metaphysical power because the experience of happiness proportionate with duty also requires a body operating with temporal conditions. Nevertheless, at this point, I will advance my position that a resurrected body is a necessary condition for the possibility of the endless moral progress I have transpiring in W2.

The claim that an agent exhibiting moral progress must also be embodied has also been advanced by Zupančič:

[H]ow are we to understand ‘continuous and unending progress’? We might also ask why the soul, delivered of all ‘bodily chains,’ would need such progress, for in this case holiness could be accomplished instantly. And if not – if the presupposition of the eternity of the soul included continuous change (for the better) – then we would be dealing not with an eternal but with a temporal mode of existence. The notion of change makes sense only within time. What are we then to think of this paradoxical ‘deduction’ of the postulate of the immortality of the soul? These questions lead us to the inevitable conclusion: What Kant really needs to postulate is not the immortality of the soul but the immortality of the body. The presupposition ‘endless progress from lower to higher stages of moral perfection,’ as Kant puts it, cannot yield an immortal soul but, rather, an immortal, indestructible, sublime body.9

I again wholeheartedly agree with Zupančič that Kant’s endless moral progress requires a sensible, rational and, thus, embodied creature striving to be more dutiful within a natural environment replete with mechanistic laws and sensuous solicitations. An immaterial soul cannot fulfill this requirement because duty is defined by an agent placing the unconditional moral law over the conditional satisfaction of their sensible desires:

**Freedom in the practical sense** is the independence of the power of choice from necessitation by impulses of sensibility. For a power of choice is sensible insofar as it is

9 Ibid., 79/80.
pathologically affected (through moving-causes of sensibility), it is called an animal power of choice (arbitrium brutum) if it can be pathologically necessitated. The human power of choice is indeed arbitrium sensitivum yet not brutum but liberum, because sensibility does not render its action necessary, but in the human being there is a faculty of determining oneself from oneself, independently of necessitation of sensible impulses. (A534/B562, emphases are Kant’s)

What distinguishes finite, rational beings from mere animals is the ability to place duty over inclination, and a necessary condition such moral privileging is a body that feels sensible impulses yet refrains from acting on them in the service of the moral law. Thus, Kant’s process of endless moral striving would have to look much as it does on Earth: (1) a rational will (2) united with a sensible body (3) operating in a natural setting (4) striving to improve its utilization of reason and do its duty (5) in order to reach ever higher stages of moral development.

Perhaps surveying the moral situation of angels will help confirm my claim that only embodied souls can exhibit moral progress, even though, beginning in Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics (1766), Kant refused to countenance the real possibility of disembodied spirits. As disembodied creatures, angels would not experience the world through our a priori intuitions of space and time; as such, they would not be subject to sensuous desires or inclinations. However, as finite, rational creatures, they would be bound by the mandates of the moral law. Yet in what precise sense could angels be subject to the moral law if they do not have inclinations? The answer can only be that they, unlike us, would be capable of diabolical evil, and so must be ordered to have respect for the moral law, which is something we cannot help but do. In this precise sense, good angels would choose to follow the moral law.

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10 Here is how Kant dismisses the possibility of diabolical evil for human beings in Religion: “To think of oneself as a freely acting being, yet as exempted from the one law commensurate to such a being (the moral law), would amount to the thought of a cause operating without a law at all (for the determination according to natural law is abolished on account of freedom): and this is a contradiction. – Sensuous nature therefore contains too little to provide a ground of moral evil in the human being, for, to the extent that it eliminates the incentives originating in
Therefore, if angels could be morally bound, yet not have any contravening desires, they would not experience the continuous struggle that sensible, rational creatures do in choosing reason over sensible well-being. Nevertheless, they would have the autonomy to succumb or not to diabolical evil, a possibility that Kant believes to be impossible for sensible, rational creatures.

Kant distinguishes between radical evil (which is a universal human condition) against diabolical evil (which is a condition that Kant contends is impossible for human beings). Radical evil is the human propensity, due to our autonomous nature and our imperfect reason, to choose pathological incentives over moral ones. Diabolical evil is not merely placing a non-moral incentive over a moral one, it is establishing evil itself as the sole incentive of the will. For Kant, we are incapable of doing evil for evil’s sake; when we choose a false incentive, reason is simply not living up to its potential. Yet the potential for reason to do otherwise and honor the moral incentive is always open. However, if one accepts the concept of diabolical evil, such acceptance removes the possibility to choose for the good, and freedom is removed from our moral deliberations, which (unlike angels) is something that Kant was not willing to countenance for humans.

Satan is the paradigmatic example of an angel who chooses diabolic evil. Angels are determined to follow – or oppose – the moral law *tout court*, and such determination is grounded in their disembodied status. Thus, as disembodied creatures, angels are not capable of moral progress; they have a one-off, dispositional decision between diabolic evil or the moral law.

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freedom, it makes of the human o purely animal being; a reason exonerated from the moral law, an evil reason as it were (an absolutely evil will), would on the contrary contain too much, because resistance to the law would itself be thereby elevated to incentive (for without any incentive the power of choice cannot be determined), and so the subject would be made a diabolical being. – Neither of these two is applicable to the human being” (6:35). The existence of the moral law, as a fact of reason, and our autonomous capacity to heed its mandates makes a diabolical being an impossibility for sensible, rational beings.
Once that dispositional decision has been made for the good, their lack of inclinations means that there is nothing remaining to pull them from the moral law. Conversely, if the dispositional decision is made for the bad, there is nothing remaining to pull them back to the moral law. Thus, only an embodied creature that conditions its experience through its *a priori* intuitions of space and time can make moral progress.

Of course, God is neither subject to the moral law nor the categorical imperative. However, what also separates God from angels is that the latter do not possess an *intuitus originarius*, a divine productive intuition that produces the objects it thinks. The only similarity that angelic and human intuitions would share is that they would both be passively affected by given objects; thus, they would both possess an *intuitus derivativus*. Nevertheless, only an embodied creature that conditions its experience through its *a priori* intuitions of space and time could make moral progress, and, as such, the postulate should be understood as the *immortality of the embodied soul* despite the fact that Kant is not explicit about this.

Zupančič realizes that a body operating in time must be included in order to render Kant’s postulate internally coherent, but she ultimately argues that a belief in a such a body amounts to a Lacanian *fantasy* rather than a necessary metaphysical component of the postulate: “This would be a body that exists and changes through time, yet approaches its end, its death in an endless asymptotic movement. This is what justifies our saying that the postulate in question is a ‘fantasy of pure practical reason,’ a fantasy in the strictly Lacanian sense of the word.”\(^{11}\) Lacanian psychoanalysis is notoriously obscure. As a result, I only need to engage with Lacanian thought enough to exhibit that transcendental idealism could never recognize the postulates to be

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fantasies. Rather, from a transcendental idealist perspective, the postulates are objects that we must posit, take to be true, and place our faith in for the ends of reason to be realized.

Zupančič cites Lacan’s essay “Kant with Sade”\(^\text{12}\) as the paradigmatic instance where both Kant and Sade engage in parallel fantasies of immortality. She argues that although Lacan “does not discuss the immortality of the soul, we could say that it is precisely in relation to this postulate that his assertion that ‘Kant should be read with Sade’ finds its most convincing illustration.”\(^\text{13}\) She contends that Sade’s torturers are confronted with, and devastated by, the limit of torture they can inflict on their victims, which equally limits the amount of pleasure they’re able to experience. That very limit is the human body itself and what it can endure: “Pleasure – that is, the limit of a suffering that a body can endure – is thus an obstacle to enjoyment.”\(^\text{14}\) Fantasy is exactly what allows the torturers to transcend the limits of the tortured person’s body and thus transcend the limits on the pleasure they derive from inflicting pain:

> There is no enjoyment but the enjoyment of the body, yet if the body is to be equal to the task (or duty) of jouissance, the limits of the body have to be ‘transcended’… Sade’s answer to the impossibility of surpassing the limit is fantasy, the fantasy of infinite suffering: the victims are tortured endlessly, beyond all boundaries of imagination, yet they go on living and suffering, and even become more and more beautiful, or more and more ‘holy.’\(^\text{15}\)

The Sadean account consists of (1) an initial perishable body (2) with a sensible limit ultimately defined by death (3) that prompts the apparent capacity to transcend such a limit by (4) positing a sensible body utterly impervious to the sensible condition of death (5) that allows the impervious
body to achieve higher and higher stages of progress (getting ever closer to Sade’s perverse ideal of the highest evil).

Zupančič declares that Kant is doing the very same thing with his postulate:

Kant’s postulate of the immortality of the soul (the truth of which is, as we saw, the immortality of the body) implies precisely the same gesture, the same ‘solution.’ Its function is to institute the coordinates of time and space, outside of time and space, and thus enable an infinite, endless progress, from lower to higher stages.¹⁶

The Kantian account equally consists of (1) an initial perishable body, (2) with a sensible limit ultimately defined by death, (3) that prompts the apparent capacity to transcend such a limit by, (4) positing a sensible body utterly impervious to the sensible condition of death, (5) that allows the impervious body to achieve higher and higher stages of progress (getting ever-closer to holiness). As a result, the resurrected body must be logically posited in order to provide coherence within Kant’s particular system (and the very same can be said for Sade and his system).

However, even though the resurrected body is a necessary object for both systems, Lacanians also understand it as an instance of the “fundamental narcissism by which the human subject creates fantasy images of both himself and his ideal object of desire.”¹⁷ First, it is extremely important to recognize that Kant and Sade’s “ideal object of desire” is different: for Kant the ideal object of desire is the highest good, and it does not in any way convey a “fundamental narcissism” through the creation of “fantasy images.” Conversely, for Sade, the ideal object of desire is a body impervious to material destruction that can withstand evermore

¹⁶ Ibid., 82.

¹⁷ https://cla.purdue.edu/academic/english/theory/psychoanalysis/definitions/imaginaryorder.html
torture. For Kant, a body is a necessary feature for the moral progress that defines the resolute pursuit of holiness. Without it, it is difficult to see how a sensible, rational agent can properly place autonomy (freedom) over heteronomy (inclination), which is what morality’s struggle towards holiness demands. Thus, for Kantians, a body is necessary to strive to be ever closer to holiness in the attempt to become well-pleasing to God, which Kant understands the central condition to access the ultimate object of desire that is the highest good. Conversely, for Sade, the impervious body is the final object; there is nothing greater to be had over-and-above the endless torture “beyond all boundaries of imagination” that such a body affords the torturers.

I will examine the faculty of desire in Kant’s moral philosophy in a much more systematic manner later in the dissertation. At this point, I will state some initial claims about desire in order to distinguish Kant from both Sade and Lacanians like Zupančič. First, for Kant, the faculty of desire is determined by reason, and it posits representations of objects (or states of affairs) of how things ought to be. Furthermore, Kant contends that through the faculty of desire, finite, rational agents have the capacity to realize their desired objects by means of representing those very objects. These can be representations of both sensible and moral objects because we rationally desire that both our sensible and moral needs are met. Of course, if there is ever a conflict between the desire to satisfy a sensible or a moral need, the moral object takes precedence through reason’s capacity to place autonomy over heteronomy. If representations of empirical objects of sensible desire are achieved (or progress is made in their direction), the agent feels the pleasure of happiness; if representations of intelligible objects of moral desire are achieved or progress is made in their direction, the agent experiences non-empirical self-contentment. Since reason governs the faculty of desire and that faculty prompts representations
of what ought to be, the desires of sensible, rational agents (even though the desire for moral
objects takes priority over sensible objects) represent legitimate *needs* that reason asks to be met.

Lacanians have a completely different perspective on desire: “Desire begins to take shape
in the margin in which demand rips away from need.”\(^{18}\) As Lionel Bailly has succinctly stated
“one needs what is essential, but one desires what is not” for Lacan.\(^{19}\) The reason why Lacan
decouples desire from need is because he believes desire is impossible to satisfy.\(^{20}\) The reason
for this impossibility is that Lacan locates desire outside of the subject, which no other or object,
whether big or small (“The Big other” or “*l’object petit a*”), can fill. Lacanian desire is defined
by a structural lack that resides in both the language of the subject and the object or put another
way, in a structural lack that resides between the ego and the other:

Desire is what manifests itself in the interval demand excavates just shy of itself, insofar
as the subject, articulating in the signifying chain, brings to the light his lack of being
with his call to receive the complement of this lack from the Other – assuming that the
Other, the locus of speech, is also the locus of this lack.\(^{21}\)

Because desire is grounded in an ineluctable lack located in the language of both subject and the
object (the ego and the other), no matter how much one tries to satisfy it, one will always be
disappointed because on Lacan’s telling, there is neither an agent nor an object that can do the


\(^{20}\) Happiness is another issue where Kant and Lacan fundamentally disagree. While Kant defers happiness proportional to virtue, in my account, until W3. Kant does not believe happiness is impossible. Before W3, happiness is experienced; it is just not proportional with duty. Conversely, for Lacan, the experience of happiness is impossible. In his *Seminars VII*, Lacan says that “that is something to remember when the analyst finds himself in the position of responding to anyone who asks him for happiness… Not only does not he have that Sovereign Good that is asked for him, but he also knows there is not any” (300).

satisfying. As such, Zupančič states that the satisfaction of human desire is unachievable “since desire opposes itself, in its very nature, to the realization of desire.”

Since Zupančič locates desire in a lack of the other, desire is indefinitely deferred because we desire something that cannot be truly given to us: it can only be represented in fantasy. Hence, Zupančič’s contention that the immortal soul postulate is a “‘fantasy of pure practical reason,’… in the strictly Lacanian sense of the word” is ultimately a claim that the immortal soul postulate is akin to the staging of the impossible. Fantasy, which is none other than the fictitious staging of our desires, is the Lacanian way that we can posit an unrealizable object: “Let us say that, in its fundamental use, fantasy is the means by which the subject maintains himself at the level of his vanishing desire, vanishing inasmuch as the very satisfaction of demand deprives him of his object.” For Lacanians like Zupančič, desire is always in a state of perpetual deferment and constant suspension because when one attempts to access this lack within the other, one is trying to access something that the other doesn’t have to give in the first place. Thus, one is futilely engaging in an elusive activity that can never culminate. As such, fantasy, which is none other than the fictitious fulfillment of unrealizable desires, represents the staging of the impossible.

Here is the striking difference between Lacanians and Kantians. For Kant, reason’s ultimate interest culminates in the highest good, which finally unifies the moral and non-moral interests of reason. Consequently, reason’s ultimate interest to proportion and unify what were

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24 This is the converse of Lacan’s quip about love: “Loving is to give what one does not have” (*Seminar VIII*, 34).
heretofore two incommensurable goods is *reason’s greatest object of desire*. For Lacanians, such a final end remains impossible; for Kantians, such a final end is a rational requirement. Of course, the chief reason Kant elevates the transcendental ideas of the immortal soul and God into postulates of pure practical reason is that they become necessary objects of faith for the conceivability of the highest good. Thus, transcendental idealism demands sensible, rational agents place their faith in the practical postulates.

_Glaube_ is a German word that can be translated either as “faith” or “belief,” two words that are nearly synonymous except for the fact that “faith” implies a stronger sense of conviction. In the _Canon_ section, Kant distinguishes faith or belief from opinion – “belief” in the weaker sense is implied by the Greek word _doxa_ – and knowing. Opinion is both subjectively and objectively insufficient and therefore can be achieved through mere persuasion, while knowing is both subjectively and objective sufficient and therefore corresponds with certainty. Faith, by contrast, involves “taking something to be true [that] is only subjectively sufficient and is at the same time held to be objectively insufficient” (A822/B851). Kant goes on to say that “[o]nly in a practical relation can taking something that is theoretically insufficient be true” (A823/B851). If persuasion corresponds with opinion, and certainty with knowing, conviction (Überzeugung) corresponds to faith.

Kant advances three types of faith: pragmatic, doctrinal and moral (A823/B851-A831/B859). At this point I am going to bracket pragmatic and doctrinal faith, which carry with them higher levels of contingency and thus lower levels of conviction and focus on moral faith because that is the form of belief that concerns us here. Reason’s capacity to think transcendental ideas, the putative objects of which are unknowable due to the fact that they cannot be sensibly
met in experience (and are thereby “objectively/theoretically insufficient”), are nevertheless practical necessary because the objects of such ideas – God and the immortal soul – serve as practical postulates of pure reason that need to be posited in order for us to strive to achieve the ends of reason. These practically necessary, yet supersensible, articles of rational faith, which are beyond the speculative limits of knowledge, are thus subjectively sufficient and can rationally be taken to be true. Consequently, moral faith comes with supreme conviction, even though it is a form of assent that does not rise to the level of knowledge. As a result, it is permissible to say that “I am morally certain that the practical postulates are true,” but it’s impermissible to say that “[i]t is morally certain that the practical postulates are true” (A829/B857). Moral faith is a speculative proposition that only becomes assertoric (taken to be legitimately true) and apodeictic (necessary) through the practical determination of the ends of reason and is a form of assent that is subjectively (though not objectively) equal to knowledge. It is in this way that Kant finds “it necessary to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith” (Bxxx): faith accords with practical matters (which for Kant take philosophical priority 5:119-22), just as knowledge accords with theoretical matters.

For Kant, we place our rational faith in the postulates as existing objects because it is necessary to believe that an immortal soul and God exist in order to sustain our final hope of unifying the ends of reason. In this way, postulates fundamentally differ from transcendental ideas; the latter must be thought for reason’s epistemological demand to always seek further conditions; however, with an idea an object is never posited as actually existing. Conversely, with a postulate, which is an existential judgment, the object is actually posited. This postulation of actual objects (and not mere ideas) compels our rational faith, outside the bounds of
knowledge, because without such objects, our final end is found illusory. Essentially, we *subjectively* need the existence of the embodied, immortal soul for reason to reach its proper culmination; without it, reason remains ununified and incomplete.

Moreover, Kant does recognize that it will take the additional postulate of God’s existence to effectively mediate and finally unite in W3 the two incommensurable goods of worthiness and happiness through a gracious imputation of holiness. The proportionality of these two goods “must lead to the supposition of the existence of a cause [God’s existence] adequate to this effect [happiness proportional to worthiness]” (5:124). Without divine intervention, our desire for the final object of reason is in a state of grand deferral; it is only God’s gracious intervention that finally secures the satisfaction of our ultimate desire to unify the two conditions of reason. Nevertheless, and just like the immortal soul postulate, Zupančič would characterize this type of divine positing necessary to realize our final object and satisfy our ultimate desire as another instance of staging the impossible through fantasy.

I have utilized Zupančič’s scholarship because I completely agree with her claims that the moral progress that the immortal soul postulate affords must be a temporal one, and this temporal process of ever-greater moral progress must be undertaken by embodied agents. Nevertheless, I do not affirm Zupančič’s Lacanian position on desire as grounded in an intractable lack that must be filled through fantasy, which is an attempt to represent the unpresentable and posit the impossible. I agree with Kant’s transcendental idealist claims that objects of desire are governed by reason; they represent objects or states of affairs of how things ought to be; finite, rational agents have the capacity to realize their desired objects by means of representing them, and such
representations provide viable incentives, if they coincide with the moral law, to act in accordance with duty and aid in making possible our final end.

Thus, Kantians will not ultimately find Zupančič (or Lacanians, generally) to be an ally in philosophically defending the resurrected body. Those allies, as we shall see a little later in the dissertation, are Aristotle and scholastic neo-Aristotelians, such as Dante and Aquinas. But before I get to Aristotle and his medieval supporters, I will turn my attention to two other thinkers who have correctly recognized that Kant’s moral progress must be an embodied process.

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While holding very different philosophical commitments than Zupančič, Yirmiyahu Yovel – who staunchly advocates for a collective, secular and naturalist conception of the highest good in his book *Kant and the Philosophy of History* – similarly argues that if one adopts a transcendent conception of the highest good and affirms the practical postulate of the immortal soul, then a body would logically have to be included within the postulate: “If virtue is not a holy will but a good disposition in conflict – and the adversary in this conflict is always natural inclinations – then the attainment of virtue would also require the immortality of the body…”25 Yovel, like Zupančič, affirms the necessity of the body throughout the process of endless striving for Kant’s postulate to be, at least, internally coherent. Nevertheless, the very phrase after the afore-cited quotation Yovel declares, “which is a strange Schellingian notion that could have never entered Kant’s mind.”26 Yovel says nothing after this; we are merely left this “strange”


26 Ibid.
notion that Kant needs for internal consistency, yet it is equally a notion that Kant could never have countenanced.

In fact, Yovel spends very little time appraising the type of body that the postulate requires, even though he thinks it is logically necessary for Kant’s postulate. He only addresses the body three times in his book and each time in a very cursory fashion as to suggest the need for such a body is damning evidence against the immortal soul postulate generally. His second mention reads, “virtue is defined as ‘moral disposition in conflict,’ not a ‘holy will.’ It entails the constant overcoming of the incentives of the natural will, and so the attainment of virtue will require the immortality not only of the pure soul but of the empirical self, the body, as well!” I read his exclamation point as a rhetorical marker for “whoa, that’s ridiculous,” which mirrors his “a strange Schellingian notion” claim. His third mention is not any different. Unlike Zupančič, who dismisses the possibility of such a body on Lacanian grounds, Yovel, who finds the concept of such a body patently absurd, dismisses it on purely naturalist grounds.

For Yovel, the highest good is “the regulative idea of history” that promotes “our own world brought to perfection.” Yovel is clearly concerned with humanity’s historical experience on earth: “moral history ought to be forwarded by clear design; its ideal goal, the highest good on earth, must be pursued intentionally, both in its ethical and political dimension.” Since Yovel

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27 It seems that Yovel is metaphysically open to the possibility of the immortality of an immaterial soul; however, because he correctly realizes that Kant’s postulate requires a body for it to be internally coherent, he calls the entire postulate into question.


29 Ibid., 72.

30 Ibid., 269. Emphasis is Yovel’s.
adopts such a collective, immanent position, he dismisses the practical postulate of God as “deus ex machina,” and he (re)conceives of the endless progress of the will as a collective historical process that does not require either individual immortal souls (or corresponding bodies) or any kind of future life. For these reasons, W.H. Walsh states in his review of Yovel’s book that the postulates of pure reason are “nothing more than a set of barren assurances” for Yovel.32

Since Yovel’s highest good is the culmination of a historical process that humanity can achieve over millennia, he dismisses any need for the postulates of pure practical reason (while accepting the transcendental ideas for their epistemic value). However, through Yovel’s broad dismissal of the postulates as metaphysically extravagant and unnecessary, we can infer his basic argument against such a body (which he grants as necessary for the postulate’s internal consistency) as an incoherent concept on essentially materialist grounds. Because such a body is a sheer empirical impossibility, it must be dismissed. The idea of a biochemical body that is not prone to the entropic laws of physics (and the consonant decay) can only be deemed logically and really incoherent. On Yovel’s account, to believe in such a body operating with the laws of nature would contravene what we know to be empirically true; thereby, it is irrational and impossible.

Both Yovel and Zupančič are allies of mine for their recognition that Kant logically needs a resurrected body for his postulate to hold; however, they are equally forthright of their estimation of such a body, which they both dismiss as impossible for their own (very different) reasons. For Zupančič, it is a Lacanian instance of signifying the impossible through fantasy, and

31 Ibid., 109.

32 W.H. Walsh’s review of Kant and the Philosophy of History by Yirmiahu Yovel, History and Theory 20, no. 2 (May 1981): 201.
even though the positing of such an impossible object is necessary for situating and deferring desire, such positing can never fulfill our desire because such fulfilment is unattainable. For Yovel, it defies both the empirical laws of nature and his conception of rationality, and since he dismisses Kant’s postulates as metaphysically profligate and pointless, it is equally impossible for him, too.

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Patrick Shade is another commentator who recognizes that a body must accompany Kant’s immortal soul postulate. Nevertheless, and contrary to the examples of Zupančič and Yovel, he denies the need to provide any further explanation on the subject. Instead, Shade believes it is enough to establish that such a body is rationally bound up with the postulate, and he then goes on to bracket any further exploration or explanation of such a body.

Shade’s term for the necessity of a body during the temporal process of achieving ever-greater levels of moral progress is *rephenomenalization*: “My thesis is that, while Kant himself does not recognize it, rephenomenalization is nevertheless an implication of the… *summum bonum*.” Shade’s arguments for Kant’s internal need for such a body are in-keeping with the arguments already rehearsed earlier. However, while both Zupančič and Yovel offer differing

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33 Patrick Shade, “Does Kant's Ethics Imply Reincarnation?” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 33, no. 3 (1995): 347–60. Oddly enough, Shade does not in any way take up the question of reincarnation with regard to Kant in his essay. From my perspective, it is possible that Worlds One and Two could be collapsed into one world if I thought that Kant would affirm the concept of reincarnation. On this account, an agent would be reincarnated until they were found well-pleasing and graciously granted access to W3, where imputed holiness is proportioned with happiness. Such an account makes sense. However, there is nothing to suggest that Kant was a supporter of the Buddhist and Hindu concept of reincarnation. Furthermore, as I will argue later in the essay, a resurrected body is a commonplace concept in Christianity. Therefore, the type of *rephenomenalization* that I am advocating seems to be more in-keeping with Kant’s religious heritage.
reasons against for the possibility of a body (with Zupančič offering a far more extensive Lacanian explanation), Shade chooses to simply bracket the discussion entirely:

Kant cautions that ‘[w]e know nothing of the future, and we ought not to seek to know more than is rationally bound up with the incentives of morality and their end’ (Rel. 149 footnote). To seek more than this is to tread the dangerous waters of speculative metaphysics. My thesis, however, is not the result of such speculation; it neither requires nor entertains any explanation of how rephenomenalization is possible. Rather, it is restricted to what is rationally bound up with the *summum bonum*. Consequently, my thesis is that a proper understanding of the *summum bonum* requires that rephenomenalization is necessary. All that is ‘known’ (in the sense appropriate to the postulates, as articulated above) about rephenomenalization is that it is so required.\(^{34}\)

I disagree with Shade that the only requirement is the recognition that rephenomenalization is rationally bound up with the highest good. It is completely fair to ask the following question: If rephenomenalization is rationally bound up with the highest good, then how is this rephenomenalization philosophically justified? Unlike Shade, it is incumbent upon a Kantian commentator attempting to elucidate the concept of the highest good as clearly as possible to forthrightly take up this question.

But to be fair to Shade, I am not only disagreeing with him; Kant himself chose to basically bracket discussions of the speculative determinations of the supersensuous.\(^{35}\) Lewis White Beck, when pointing out “the two puzzles which are present in Kant’s theory of immortality”\(^{36}\) – the need for the process of endless striving to be a temporal one and the

\(^{34}\) Ibid., 355.

\(^{35}\) I am fully aware of the long footnote in Division Two of Part Three of *Religion* where Kant does take up the question of the body after death. The context of the footnote is Jesus’s “underserved yet meritorious death,” his resurrection and subsequent ascension. Here, Kant argues that embodied souls in heaven are not amenable to reason and would essentially be needless. This footnote is an example of Kant engaging in speculative determinations of the supersensuous, and it will receive extensive treatment later in this dissertation.

\(^{36}\) Beck, *A Commentary on Kant’s Critique of Practical Reason*, 270.
incommensurability of holiness and happiness (which are the very same puzzles in Shade’s analysis) – says that Kant was simply not interested in such issues:

    I doubt very much that these objections to the conception of life after death would have troubled Kant. He was not concerned with any theoretical determination of the supersensuous, because it would be impossible on theoretical grounds and empty of practical significance.\textsuperscript{37}

It is true that Kant remained silent on the specific machinations of the immortal soul and its endlessly striving will; thus, at no point in his philosophy does he posit the necessity of a body prone to inclination operating in sensibility as necessary for an agent striving to be evermore resolute in assessing and carrying out its duties. In fact, in “Dreams of a Spirit-Seer,” Kant explicitly warns against engaging in such metaphysical speculations about the nature of a future life in a future world:

    Let us, therefore, leave all these clamorous theories about such remote objects to the speculation and care of idle minds. These theories are, indeed, a matter of indifference to us. And although the illusion of reasons for or against may perhaps win the applause of the schools, it will scarcely decide anything relating to the future fate of people of honest character. Nor has human reason been endowed with the wings which would enable it to fly so high as to cleave the clouds which veil from our eyes the mysteries of the other world. And to those who are eager for knowledge of such things and attempt to inform themselves with such importunity about mysteries of this kind, one can give this simple but very nature advice: that it would probably be best \textit{if they had the good grace to wait with patience until they arrived there}. (2:373, emphases are Kant’s)

This citation provides plausible proof that Kant would deem this dissertation to be an instance of “speculation” by an “idle mind” who is worrying too much about “all these clamorous theories about such remote objects.” Since “human reason [has not] been endowed with the wings which would enable it to fly so high as to cleave the clouds which veil from our eyes the mysteries of the other world,” any attempt “for knowledge of such things” would be ill-advised. First off, I

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 271.
fully recognize that there cannot be any “knowledge of such things.” I understand that I am operating within the purview of thinking and faith rather than knowing and certainty.

Furthermore, it should be recognized that Kant wrote these words twenty-two years prior to advancing the postulates of pure practical reason in the second *Critique*. I contend that the postulates are not esoteric aspects of Kantian philosophy: they are posited to plausibly secure the ends of reason. Thus, thinking the postulates as clearly as possible is a judicious undertaking. It is for this central reason that I believe it ill-advised to use this earlier essay to relegate the practical postulates to be “clamorous theories about such remote objects.”

Let me clarify this claim by asking and answering two questions. Question One: Does the moral progress made possible by the immortal soul require an agent to place duty (governed by the causality of freedom) over happiness (governed by the causality of nature)? The Kantian answer is undoubtedly “yes.” Question Two: In order to exhibit such moral progress, would not the agent that is placing duty over inclination need to be embodied in order to make the inclinations a real incentive that must be subordinated in order for moral progress to ensue. I maintain that the Kantian answer to this question must be “yes,” too. I can see no valid way of placing worthiness to be happy over happiness itself unless one has a body to occasion the empirical experience of happiness itself. These questions and their answers, which concern the endless moral progress necessary to become well-pleasing to God, should not be deemed examples of idle metaphysical speculation.

38 Furthermore, I will go on to argue, the very same body is necessary to experience the happiness proportionate to virtue in W3 because happiness loses all relevant context without a body.
I will return to Beck’s assertion about the practical insignificance of thinking the supersensible. His contention that “theoretical determinations of the supersensuous [are] impossible on theoretical grounds and empty of practical significance” does not adequately consider what Kant has said about the question – What may I hope? The reason for Beck’s oversight has to do with Kant’s answer – the highest good – which is an object that Beck thinks “is not important in Kant’s philosophy.”

In the Canon section of the first Critique, Kant defines hope as “simultaneously practical and theoretical, so that the practical leads like a clue to a reply to the theoretical question and, in its highest form, the speculative question” (A805/B833). The answer to the question – What may I hope? – is thus “simultaneously practical and theoretical” because “with respect to the practical and the moral law it [hope] is the very same as what knowledge and the natural law is with regard to theoretical cognitions of things. The former finally comes down to the inference that something is (which determines the final end) because something ought to happen; the latter, that something is (which acts as the supreme cause) because something does happen” (A805-6/B833-4). From Kant’s perspective, and against Beck’s contrary assertion, speculative and practical interests are inextricably interwoven into the question of hope and the answer that reason provides.

The question of What can I know? is purely speculative: it distinguishes between what can actually be said to be known versus what can legitimately only be thought. The question of What should I do? is purely practical: what reason calls on one to do is not decided theoretically; it is decided morally. However, the question of What can I hope? is “simultaneously practical

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39 Beck, A Commentary on Kant’s Critique of Practical Reason, 270.
and theoretical:” if one does what one ought, then one can one legitimately posit a final end as an ultimate hope. For Kant, if we are found morally worthy, then we can reasonably conceive of a non-moral desert that completes the highest good and unifies the ends of reason.

The theoretical ideas of the immortal soul and the highest good can only be thought without contradiction but can never be known without contradiction (or even imagined, except through the presentation of aesthetic means). Thereby, any proclamation of knowledge regarding the soul would lead to an unwarranted inference, and since Kant is only making room for faith and not for rationalist metaphysical proofs, he might think to say anything more specific on a speculative level is gratuitous because to offer anything more specific on this front is simply beyond the capacities of human reason. Thus, when Beck says that “any theoretical determination of the supersensuous would be impossible,” he is formally correct.

While claims to metaphysical knowledge regarding the soul are fallacious, it is, nevertheless, an inherent function of reason to think transcendental ideas as coherently as possible, so “they contain no intrinsic impossibility (contradiction)” (5:4). Since we are called on by reason to think theoretical ideas, such as the supersensuous, as coherently as possible, it is with this mandate that we realize that a resurrected body is a necessary requirement to make Kant’s theoretical ideas of an immortal soul and the highest good as internally coherent as possible. And since this is a speculative requirement for ideas to rationally hold, then the follow-up question – How is rephenomenalization justified philosophically? – is an appropriate and even necessary one. If rephenomenalization is rationally bound up with the highest good, it is with this mandate that a body is posited as a necessary requirement to make Kant’s theoretical
idea internally coherent. Furthermore, the more comprehensively an idea is expressed can only aid in sustaining our rational faith in the postulate of the immortal soul.

Moreover, against Beck’s second contention that speculative determinations of the supersensuous are “empty of practical significance,” I hold that providing a non-contradictory answer to this question about the body, which as Shade has correctly surmised is “rationally bound up with the *sumnum bonum*,” has clear practical significance.\(^4\) If it is practically necessary (as Kant forcefully contends) for us to place our *faith* in the postulates because they allow us to plausibly *hope* for the ultimate object of reason’s desire (the highest good), then our motivation to promote the good would benefit from making as much sense as we can of the postulates of pure practical reason.

Having said this, I acknowledge Kant’s reticence about introducing potentially extraneous and distracting speculative concepts that might be practically damaging. Nevertheless, what I am engaging in here is governed by the principles of Kantian philosophy: If doing one’s duty constitutes placing the causality of freedom over the causality of nature (and thereby privileging the moral law over the satisfaction of the inclinations that elicit the empirical experience of happiness), then a body prone to the pull of the inclinations is required to meaningfully place our love of the moral law over self-love. From a Kantian perspective, sensible, rational agents must place their faith (*Glaube*) in the immortal soul postulate, and in order for that postulate to remain internally coherent, we must conclude that a resurrected body is

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\(^4\) I understand that Beck is arguing that the highest good itself has no bearing on our practical agency in any definite way. His point is that we should do our duty regardless of the highest good, and, as such, the highest good itself is empty of practical significance: “The . . . highest good is not a practical concept at all… It is not important in Kant’s philosophy for any practical consequence.” I disagree with this position, and what follows attempts to show why.
contained within that postulate. Simply put, without such a body the consistent privileging of morality over inclination that the postulate is designed to deliver loses all its muster. Therefore, I completely agree with Shade that “rephenomenalization is necessary” and “is rationally bound up with the *summum bonum*.”

Furthermore, a body would *also be a necessary condition* for the experience of happiness proportional with morality that occurs in W3. Thus, the standard account of Kant’s highest good would also require the existence of an embodied agent. How could an agent experience the sensible satisfactions that inform happiness proportionate to virtue without a body? I take it to be a serious oversight on Kant’s part (as well as the secondary literature) not to have recognized that the immortal soul postulate and the conception of the highest good that proportions happiness to duty both require the existence of a body. However, against Shade, I believe that a philosophical justification for a resurrected body is necessary, even if that justification ultimately contains a metaphysical mystery, something Kant forthrightly acknowledges and affirms in *Religion*.41

I am well-aware that none of my three commentators who affirm Kant’s need for a body shares my own conclusion: Zupančič and Yovel, who both understand such a body to be necessary for Kant’s philosophy to remain internally coherent, also believe it (for different reasons) to be impossible, and while Shade does not overtly say that it’s impossible, he intentionally refuses to supply any philosophical justification. There is not some clever rhetorical card up-my-sleeve in bringing these three commentators into my service. Rather, I am utilizing these three philosophers out of pure necessity. Their examples go to show the lack of

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41 In *Religion*, Kant explicitly acknowledges three metaphysical mysteries. I will examine these in greater detail a little later in the dissertation.
commentary within the secondary literature that has both affirmed, on squarely Kantian grounds, the need for a resurrected body and have tried to provide a forthright philosophical justification for it. In fact, as far as I can tell, there has not been a forthright acknowledgement of the necessity for such a body and a philosophical justification for it within the secondary literature. That is something I am trying to accomplish here.

I want to be clear what I am (and what I am not) advocating: I am not advocating a naturalist explanation of Kant’s conception of a future life. As we shall see, there is no naturalistic explanation; on this front, a resurrected body remains a metaphysical mystery. As a result, I am under no illusions that the philosophical justification that I am about to posit will be persuasive to those who reject Kant’s eschatology altogether on the grounds that it is incompatible with naturalism. Yet I do think it will be persuasive to commentators who take Kant to be a theistic philosopher attempting to answer the question – What may I hope? – within the purview of rational theology and moral faith. So even though a material explanation will remain a metaphysical mystery, a philosophical justification for the position remains possible. Moreover, since Kant (and subsequent commentators) have not provided one, I will utilize elements of other philosophers’ works to answer the heretofore unanswered Kantian question: If rephenomenalization (which must take bodily form) is rationally bound up with the highest good, then how is it justified philosophically? Answering this question is extremely relevant to the purposes of this dissertation because the validation of W2 and W3 requires such a philosophical justification.

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The idea of a resurrected body or “glorification” is a Christian commonplace. All forms of Christianity affirm the idea of bodily resurrection, whether it be Christ’s or his followers. The Apostle’s Creed states that “I believe ... in the resurrection of the body.” In his First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul states that “the dead will be raised imperishable” (1 Corinthians 15:52). Additionally, in a Letter to the Romans Paul states believers are “waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23). I could easily offer more general examples, but I do not think it is necessary: I take the idea of a resurrected body or “glorification” to be a non-controversial, Christian conception.

Regarding Kant’s Pietist Lutheran tradition, Chris Surprenant, who also addresses Yovel’s dismissal of such a body, says that the concept of a resurrected body has its place in that tradition, too:

While Yovel may believe that holding such a position [of a resurrected body] is absurd, this belief is consistent with many Lutheran movements, including Pietism. Franz Albert Schulz, a leading figure of the Pietist community in Königsberg during Kant’s time, as well as an individual who personally influenced the religious beliefs of Kant’s mother and his family, held this position. Specifically, he believed that an individual’s soul was immortal, his body was immortal, and that he would experience everlasting life. Therefore, it could be argued that it is no coincidence that Kant’s theory contains some aspects of Lutheran doctrine that greatly influenced those around him.42

Even though Kant never addresses the need for a body to accompany his postulate, Surprenant’s historical claim suggests that such a concept would not be foreign to Kant because it was an integral part of the Pietism that was espoused in Königsberg during Kant’s time. For all its potential problems, Wikipedia reports that Kant was one of Franz Albert Schulz’s students at The

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University of Königsberg. Of course, none of this historical information suggests that Kant ever affirmed the concept of a body accompanying his postulate, yet it does suggest that Kant was aware that such a concept existed within his theological background.

The resurrected body received its greatest attention in the Middle Ages. Metaphysical defenses for it appeared both in literature, perhaps the greatest example being Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*, as well as in philosophy, perhaps the greatest examples coming from neo-Aristotelian scholastics such as Aquinas, Ockham and Scotus. Each of my four examples were, of course, motivated to give the most coherent account of such an important Christian claim: an *embodied* soul lives on after death. Additionally, all four of my examples were prompted to (re)address this question due to a recent position on the soul that was advanced by Averroes, the Twelfth Century Andalusian philosopher. John Ciardi, a translator of *The Divine Comedy*, describes Averroes’s position on the soul, and why it disturbed both Dante and the scholastic philosophers so much:

Averroes postulated a generalized universal rationality from which all men could draw rational faculties during their lives, but which was lost to them at death. It must follow, therefore, that no individual and rational soul could be summoned to eternal judgment, since the soul would have lost its possible intellect (rationality) at death. Church scholars would necessarily be required to reject such a doctrine since it denied the very basis of free will and just reward and punishment.

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43 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_Albert_Schultz

44 For an excellent examination of each philosopher’s position, see Marilyn McCord Adams’s, “The Resurrection of the Body According to Three Medieval Aristotelians: Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, William Ockham,” *Philosophical Topics* 20, no. 2 (Fall 1992): 1-33.

45 John Ciardi’s notes to his translation of Dante’s *Divine Comedy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 507.
Of course, not only “[c]hurch scholars would necessarily be required to reject such a doctrine since it denied the very basis of free will and just reward and punishment,” but Kant himself would also reject such a doctrine: Kant’s commitment to autonomy and divine judgment would definitely place him in the very same camp as Dante, Aquinas, Ockham and Scotus (even though there’s no evidence that Kant was familiar with the thought of any of these medieval thinkers, Averroes included). Indeed, if Kant’s philosophical commitments put him on the anti-Averroist side of the argument, and his philosophy needs a body just as much as Aquinas, Dante, Ockham and Scotus, then rehearsing a reasonable scholastic argument on behalf of the resurrected body is in Kant’s best interests.

Nancy Lindheim argues that Dante’s *Divine Comedy* is an artistic refutation of Averroes’s position on the soul philosophically informed by Aquinas:

Dante of course has enlisted himself in Thomas’ battle against Averroes by the most basic donnees of his poem: only personal immortality will allow him the individual salvation, final judgment, and recognizable souls that are necessary to the work. The entire *Commedia* could not have taken shape if Averroes were right about the existence of a collective intellect to which all individual intellects or souls return after the death of the body. This pervasive argument with Averroes, which rises to the surface in *Purgatorio* XXV, can be seen as the subtext of *Paradiso* VII (individual immortality is the necessary result of God’s creation of both body and soul), and also later in *Paradiso* XIV, in the spirits’ response to Solomon’s evocation of their resurrected bodies.46

In chapter XXV of *Purgatorio*, the Pilgrim asks Virgil the following question: How have all the souls that they have witnessed when visiting both Hell and Purgatory been able to retain their bodies in various states of physical contortion consonant with the corrupt states of the souls? (19-21). Virgil is not up to the challenge of answering this question, so the poet Statius takes it up. In

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his copious and insightful notes to *The Divine Comedy*, Ciardi divides the discussion into three sections: “The Nature of the Generative Principle” (31-51), “The Birth of the Human Soul” (52-78) and “The Nature of Aerial Bodies” (79-108). As Lindheim affirms, Statius’s answer is deeply informed by Aquinas’s position on the issue. As a result, I will rehearse Aquinas’s answer to the Pilgrim’s question about the existence of embodied souls after death. And since Kant needs a philosophical justification for the embodied immortal soul to bolster both the internal consistency of his transcendental idea and the believability of his postulate, and Aquinas provides one, then Aquinas should be brought into Kant’s service.

However, if Statius’s position on the embodied soul is informed by Aquinas, Aquinas’s position is equally informed by Aristotle’s *De Anima*, from which Aquinas gets his conception of the soul:

> [T]he soul is actuality in the sense corresponding to sight and power in the tool; the body corresponds to what is in potentiality; as the pupil plus the power of sight constitutes the eye, so the soul plus the body constitutes the animal... From this it is clear that the soul is inseparable from the body... (413a1) [I]t is the soul which is the actuality of a certain kind of body. Hence the rightness of the view that the soul cannot be without a body. (414a1)

Aristotle takes the soul and the body to be one entity and not separable components, and this Aristotelian conception of the soul grounds Aquinas’s position that the soul is the substantial form of the body. “Substantial form” is contrasted to “accidental form;” the former is *per se* or through a substance’s essential nature, while the latter is *per accidens* or an incidental attribute of a substance; the former is always essential, while the latter is always accidental. For Aristotle

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47 John Ciardi’s notes to his translation of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, 506-8.

and Aquinas, for a person to be alive is to be an embodied soul. Living is not accidental to a particular substance. To be an embodied soul is to be a substantial living form:

Soul in the principle of vital activities... The soul is that whereby we primarily live, perceive, and think – primarily because of what we said of living substances. To be alive is not an accident of a substance. Soul cannot be accidental form. It is, then, a substantial form.49

The reason the soul is called a “form” is due to its immateriality. Substantial forms or souls are immaterial and receive their matter from the body itself: hence, “it remains that soul is a substance of the form or species of such a body, namely, a physical body having life in potency.”50

A significant disagreement between Aristotle and Aquinas surrounds what happens to the substantial, immaterial soul at the physical death of the material body. For Aristotle, since the soul is the substantial form of a particular body, it is not capable of existing without that body.51 Without the materiality of the body, the soul has nothing left to animate and thus can no longer meaningfully exist. Therefore, for Aristotle, the soul ceases to be upon bodily death.

Conversely, in the Prima Pars, Question 75, Article Six, Aquinas defends the immortality of the human soul in the absence of the human body:

One must claim that the human soul, which we call the intellective principle, is incorruptible. For a thing is corrupted in one of two ways, either (a) per se or (b) per accidens. But it is impossible for anything subsistent to be generated or corrupted per accidens, i.e., generated or corrupted because something else is generated or corrupted. For being generated and being corrupted belong to a thing in the same way as does its esse, which is acquired through generation and lost through corruption. Hence, that which

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49 Ralph McInerny, A First Glance at Thomas Aquinas (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1990), 114, 116.

50 Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on De Anima, Book Two, Lesson 1. https://aquinasonline.com/texts/

51 There is, however, the age-old debate as to whether Aristotle thought that the active intellect survived the death of the body. I will not weigh in on this issue here.
has \textit{esse per se} can be generated or corrupted only \textit{per se}, whereas things that do not subsist, such as accidents and material forms, are said to be made and corrupted through the generation and corruption of composite things. Now it was shown above (a. 3) that only human souls... are subsistent \textit{per se}. Hence... the human soul could not be corrupted unless it were corrupted \textit{per se}. However, this is wholly impossible—not only in the case of the human soul, but in the case of any subsistent thing that is just a form. For it is clear that what belongs to a thing because of its very self (\textit{secundum se}) is inseparable from that thing. But \textit{esse} belongs \textit{per se} to form, i.e., to actuality. This is why matter acquires \textit{esse} in actuality to the extent that it acquires form, whereas corruption occurs in it to the extent that form is separated from it. But it is impossible for a form to be separated from itself. Hence, it is impossible that a subsistent form should cease to exist.\textsuperscript{52}

Since the \textit{esse} (or the being) of the substantial form (that is the soul) is \textit{per se} – “what belongs to a thing because of its very self is inseparable from that thing” – being belongs inherently to substantial form. Matter thereby acquires being to the extent that it acquires the substantial form of the soul. Matter loses its animating power when that substantial form of the soul is separated from it, but since an immaterial substantial form cannot be separated from itself, it is not subject to dissolution. In this way, Aquinas defends the \textit{formal} existence of the immaterial, immortal soul.

Yet even though (and against Aristotle) Aquinas affirms the formal possibility of an immaterial, immortal soul that is not subject to bodily dissolution, he also believes it to be an \textit{unnatural} state of affairs that cannot be sustained indefinitely because the soul finds its most natural formal expression when it is embodied. Therefore, Aquinas does not only utilize formal causal arguments to defend the immortal, embodied soul; he also utilizes Aristotle’s conception of a final cause to justify his position. On Aquinas’s telling, there is a temporal space between

\textsuperscript{52} https://www3.nd.edu/~afreddos/summa-translation/Part%201/st1-ques75.pdf
the death and resurrection of the body. However, Aquinas believes that the soul’s divorce from 
the body represents an unnatural state of affairs that cannot remain indefinitely:

   For it is clear that the soul is naturally united to the body and is departed from it, contrary 
to its nature and *per accidens*. Hence the soul devoid of its body is imperfect, as long as it 
is without the body. But it is impossible that what is natural and *per se* be finite and, as it 
were, nothing; and that which is against nature and *per accidens* be infinite, if the soul 
enures without the body.\(^5^3\)

Due to the loss of its animating form, a pre-resurrected (and, thus, soulless) dead body is 
especially a lump of decomposing flesh. This state of affairs is “contrary to nature and *per 
accidens*,” and, as such, this “imperfect” situation cannot remain infinitely. Conversely, since the 
embodied soul is both natural and *per se*, it can (and should) remain infinitely. Thus, the final 
cause, or teleological end, for Aquinas is the body and soul properly unified.

   Aquinas advances another final cause argument to specifically address Averroes’s 
position of a universal soul that eliminates personal responsibility and divine justice:

   Man naturally desires his own salvation; but the soul, since it is a part of man’s body, is 
not an entire man, and my soul is not I: hence, although the soul obtains salvation in 
another life, nevertheless, not I or any man does. Furthermore, since man naturally 
desires salvation even of the body, a natural desire would be frustrated.\(^5^4\)

When an individual is judged worthy of salvation or not, that individual – or person – is not 
merely a body or simply a soul; rather, that individual is a body and a soul. The individual 
human being as a complete unity receives punishment or reward. In this way Aquinas makes 
room for individual divine judgment, something that Kant undoubtedly affirms, and provides a 
Christian rebuttal to Averroes.

\(^5^4\) Thomas Aquinas, *Com. I Cor.* 15.2.934. https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~1Cor.C15.L2.n924.4
What becomes clear is that when Aquinas justifies the resurrected body unified with an immortal soul, he does so by only advancing formal and final causal arguments. As Aquinas states in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (4.81.14), the material and efficient causes are both provided by God and remain a metaphysical mystery: “The resurrection is natural as to its end inasmuch as it is natural for the soul to be the form of the body; but its active principle is not natural, but is caused solely by divine power.”\(^5\) Aquinas fully realizes that there is no natural, material cause; as such, that task falls squarely to God. He equally realizes that there is no natural efficient cause for the embodied soul after death; therefore, God is the only being with the power to satisfy such a task: “the active cause of the resurrection is God alone.”\(^6\) In the end, formal and final causal arguments are the only ones that can philosophically justify the unity of the resurrected body and the immortal soul.

I contend that we can nicely map Aquinas’s justification onto my concerns about Kant’s failure to answer the question: If a body is rationally bound up with the highest good, then how is it justified philosophically? First, for Kant (just as for Aquinas before him) the material and efficient causes (to retain the Aristotelian language) for the resurrected body are both provided by God and remain a metaphysical mystery. Kant, in the “General Remark” section that concludes Book Three in *Religion*, advances three metaphysical mysteries: the mystery of the divine call, the mystery of atonement and the mystery of election. While I will not summarize what these three specific metaphysical mysteries entail, I will define what a mystery is for Kant, and when and where mystery is applicable.


\(^{6}\) Thomas Aquinas, *Com. 1 Cor*, 15.5. 969. https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~1Cor.C15.L5.n969.3
For Kant, a mystery is something “holy;” as such, it is a necessary object of practical reason that cannot be demonstrated theoretically but should be affirmed subjectively. Thus, it is an object that deserves our rational faith. Kant specifically argues that we are led into holy mysteries when we try to conceive of the final object of practical reason (the highest good). Since “by himself the human being cannot realize the idea of the supreme good” (6:139), the postulate of God becomes necessary. With this duty to promote the highest good, a person finds themselves driven to believe in the cooperation or the management of a moral ruler of the world, through which alone this end is possible. And here there opens up before him the abyss of a mystery regarding what God may do, whether anything at all is to be attributed to him and what this something might in particular, whereas the only thing that a human being learns from a duty is what he himself must do to become worthy of that fulfillment, of which he has no cognition or at least no possibility of comprehension. (6:139)

Mysteries, because they invariably align with the postulate of God, pose the unanswerable questions: (1) What will God do in order to aid in the fulfillment of sensible, rational creatures’ final end? (2) How will God do what is necessary to aid in the fulfillment of sensible, rational creatures’ final end? In short, we place our rational faith in God’s intitus originarius – a divine productive power to produce the objects it thinks – to do what is necessary for reason’s final end to be realized, and that is all we can do because we cannot provide adequate answers to such questions.

With regard to our particular question: If a resurrected body is rationally bound up with the highest good, then how is it justified philosophically? As Aquinas has correctly surmised, there is no naturalistic explanation for such a body. God must be the efficient and material cause for such a body to exist; therefore, we are left with nothing more than the following answer, which would be absolutely appropriate from sound Kantian principles: I rationally hope that God
will produce such a body for the final end of reason to be realized. How God makes that body materially work, however, remains a legitimate metaphysical mystery for Kant (as well as Aquinas).

Furthermore, on the formal and final causal fronts, I can also map Aquinas’s justifications onto my concerns about Kant’s failure to address the postulate’s need for a body. As I have previously stated, I fully agree with Zupančič, Yovel and Shade that a body is necessary for Kant’s immortality postulate to remain internally coherent. Moral progress requires a *sensuous body* that feels the pull of inclinations as necessary for reason’s struggle to be increasingly in control of its moral deliberations. Moral progress is placing worthiness over happiness, and for sound Kantian reasons, the proper form of an immortal soul that is progressing morally must be an embodied immortal soul. In this formal way, Kant’s philosophical project needs a resurrected body just as much as Aquinas’s does. Moreover, as Shade has correctly argued, such a body “is rationally bound up with the *summum bonum*,” and since the highest good is Kant’s final end, then the body is equally necessary for a final cause argument. Put simply, Kant needs the resurrected body for formal and final reasons just as much as Aquinas did before him.

It would have been preferable for Kant to have forthrightly recognized these three necessary aspects of the immortal soul postulate: (1) the postulate requires a body to be internally coherent; (2) there is no naturalistic explanation for such a body; therefore, the responsibility falls to God and thereby remains a metaphysical mystery, yet (3) there are sound formal and final *Kantian arguments* that justify the resurrected body. Nevertheless, Kant recognized none of these, perhaps because his Pietistic upbringing did not avail him to the
speculations of Catholic theologians. In any case, and with a little help from Aquinas, I have tried to show how these three aspects ultimately strengthens Kant’s postulate of the immortal soul.

At this point I hope to have established two central claims. First, Kantian moral progress – made possible by the immortal soul – remains dependent on the temporal condition. And second, moral progress necessitates a body. Furthermore, it is through this moral progress that a resolutely striving agent potentially becomes well-pleasing to God. Importantly, Kant understands Jesus Christ (in the form of the Son of God) to be the ideal of what it means to be well-pleasing, so it is to Christ’s example that I will now turn.
CHAPTER TWO
THE SON OF GOD AS THE IDEAL OF A WELL-PLEASING WILL

In the Gospel of John, we are told that the “Word became a human being… as the Father’s only Son” (1:14). I believe that Kant would prefer a reformulation: *The Father’s only Son is the sole instance of pure practical reason become a human being*. With Jesus Christ, as God incarnate, we have the singular instance of a person with a holy will operating under sensible conditions. As such a model, Jesus Christ (or the Son of God, as Kant prefers) serves as the ideal to finite, rational agents renouncing radical evil and striving to be pleasing to God by resolutely pursuing holiness: the Son of God is the “ideal of moral perfection… the prototype of moral disposition in its entire purity… This human being [is] alone pleasing to God” (6:61-60).

In the Son of God, sensible, rational beings have their model of moral perfection.

Bernard Reardon summarizes the central role that the Son of God plays for rational beings with imperfect wills endeavoring to convert from the “bad” (the initial choice of radical evil) to the “good” (adopting a grounding maxim to pursue holiness) principle:

Kant turns to the doctrine of the incarnation as alone expressing the humanly realized moral ideal in all its perfectness… The historical example thus sets before us, as of one who goes about disseminating good by both word and deed, is completed by the afflictions, even to the extreme of an ignominious death, which he endured wholly undeservedly for the sake of the world and even of his enemies… [Kant] insists that the only way for man to please God and gain salvation is through a practical faith in the incarnate Son of God; a faith, that is, whereby he makes his own the disposition of which the incarnate is the ideal exemplar.  

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1 Following Kant’s lead in *Religion*, I will primarily use the Son of God when referring to Jesus Christ/Jesus of Nazareth.

There are three interconnected terms operating here: God “the father,” God “the Son” and man. Of course, the third term of the Christian Trinity is the Holy Spirit. However, Kant understands the Holy Spirit as transpiring within the ethical community of the Church, which is the institution that fosters the good principle within the wills of its congregation and spreads it as widely as possible. Of course, the institution of the Church, which Kant believes most resembles the structure and relations of a family, is ultimately comprised of people. Hence, the ethical community that constitutes the Church (conceived as the divine domain of the Holy Spirit) and the individual people who populate it (who spread the divine spirit) can be read as essentially interconvertible terms.

As Reardon’s quotation makes clear, man needs to please God the Father in order to possibly gain salvation. The way man pleases God the father and potentially gains salvation is by first adopting and then resolutely pursuing the maxim to attain a holy will. The need for a dispositional rebirth and the resolute striving toward holiness, which are both demands of reason, is made further evident to each person through the paradigmatic example of the “humanly realized moral ideal in all its perfection” that is the Son of God. In this way, the Son of God is the archetypal example for our renunciation of evil and our pursuit of a holy will.

It is vital to recognize, however, that this individual renunciation of evil – understood as a purely internal change of heart made possible through reason and the Son of God’s example – occurs outside of time and space (as I have argued earlier in the dissertation). Conversely, the ethical community of the Church, functioning under the auspices of the Holy Spirit and tasked with extending the good principle, operates within the coordinates of time and space. Herein lies an important distinction: man revolutionizes himself both through reason and the prototypical
example of the Son of God, and the Church aids the revolutionized in both their continual striving toward holiness and their establishment of the good principle to the greatest extent possible within the world of sense.³

In *Religion*, Kant argues that the Trinitarian relations between God the Father, God the Son and the ethical community of the Church are analogous to the relations that structure the family:

As church, therefore, i.e., considered as the mere representative of a state [ruled] by God, an ethical community really has nothing in its principles that resembles a political constitution. Its constitution is neither monarchical (under a pope or patriarch), nor aristocratic (under bishops or prelates), nor democratic (as a sectarian illuminati). It could best of all be likened to the constitution of a household (a family) under a common though invisible moral father, whose holy son, who knows the father’s will and yet stands in blood relations with all the members of the family, takes his father’s place by making the other members better acquainted with his will; these therefore honor the father in him and thus enter into a free, universal and enduring union of hearts (6:102, emphases are Kant’s).

On this familial model, the “holy son” knows his “moral father’s will” and thus “takes his father’s place by making the other members [of the Church] better acquainted with his [father’s] will.” Further, the holy son, who “stands in blood-relationship with all the members of the family” (or the members of the Church), allows these members to “honor the father in him.” And it is this honoring of the Father through the Son that lets the members of the ethical community of the church “enter with one another into a free, universal, and enduring unity of hearts” that symbolizes the workings of the Holy Spirit.

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³As I stated earlier in the dissertation, in *Religion*, Kant states that the ethical community of the Church is ideal: “The sublime, never fully attainable idea of an ethical community is greatly scaled down under human hands…[H]ow could one expect to construct something completely straight from such crooked wood?” (6:100). So just as holiness of will is impossible for any individual, sensible, rational agent, an absolutely holy ethical community or church is equally impossible.
The symbolic representation of the Trinitarian familial relations between the Father, the Son and the people of the Church (the temporal embodiment of the Holy Spirit) is not simply one rhetorical device among many for Kant:

The doctrine of the Trinity, taken literally, has *no practical relevance at all*, even if we think we understand it; and it is even more clearly irrelevant if we realize that it transcends all our concepts. Whether we are to worship three or ten persons in the Deity makes no difference: the pupil will implicitly accept one as readily as the other because he has no concept at all of a number of persons in one God (hypostases), and still more so because this distinction can make no difference in his rules of conduct. On the other hand, if we read a moral meaning into this article of faith…, it would no longer contain an inconsequential belief but an intelligible one that refers to our moral vocation (7:38-9, the emphasis is Kant’s).

If a symbolic representation is not provided and the Trinity is “taken literally,” then the divine three-in-one only remains an “irrelevant” metaphysical idea (and unsolvable mathematical conundrum) to be merely mulled over (yet never comprehended), but it will never be a theological representation that illustrates our practical responsibilities and facilitates moral behavior. This is why Kant argues in *Religion* that the Trinity remains an utter mystery if it is only represented as a pure theoretical concept:

[I]f this very faith (in a divine Trinity) was to be regarded not just as the representation of a practical idea, but as a faith that ought to represent what God is in himself, it would be a mystery surpassing all human concepts, hence unsuited to a revelation humanly comprehensible, and could only be declared in this respect as mystery. Faith in it as an extension of theoretical cognition of the divine nature would only be the profession of a creed of ecclesiastical faith totally unintelligible to human beings or, if they think that they understand it, the profession of an anthropomorphic creed, and not the least would thereby be accomplished for moral improvement. – Only what we can indeed thoroughly understand and penetrate in a practical context, but which surpasses all our concepts for theoretical purposes (for the determination of the nature of the object in itself), is a mystery (in one context) and can yet (in another) be revealed (6:142).

God, in any form, is unknowable for Kant. However, the pure concept of God as the *Ens Realissimum*, or the most real being, remains only thinkable through speculative reason (even
though in the practical context, God must be understood as the perfectly moral being).

Nevertheless, when the Trinity (as the three interrelated forms of God that “surpasses all human concepts”) is introduced, if it remains on the level of a pure theoretical idea, it is an *unthinkable mystery*. That is to say, on a purely theoretical level, reason does not know what to make of the Trinity; as such, it shudders at its ineffability. The only way that the theoretical mystery of the Trinity can be thought of in any meaningful way and have any real-life applications whatsoever is to grasp it as a practical idea, and the most effective manner to grasp this practical idea is through a symbolic representation that illustrates the structural and familial associations between the three forms of God and their relationship to human beings. Therefore, with regard to the Trinity, symbolic representation helps make what was otherwise theoretically unthinkable both practically revealed and morally actionable. Put simply, moral theism requires symbolism: that is to say, a moral theist would fall short by not symbolizing God and remaining content with Judaism’s sublime prohibition of graven images. Symbolism is one essential theological procedure that positively distinguishes Christianity from Judaism for Kant. As a result, a good deal of this chapter is designed to show how symbolism practically represents the pure concept of God (in each Trinitarian form) in order to further humanity’s moral vocation.

Due to their interrelated yet ultimately differing roles, it’s worthwhile to further distinguish between God represented as “the Father” and God represented as “the Son.” A perfectly moral law-giver and a perfectly moral law-abider are ideas of reason that can be thought without contradiction. From a practical point of view, the concept of *God the Father* – as the particular instantiation of the idea – represents the *ideal of a perfectly moral law-giver* (situated entirely outside of sensibility and never subject to pathological incentives) who may
judge us for our moral failings or grant salvation to those who faithfully undergo a dispositional revolution and resolutely pursue holiness. As such, God the Father is the ideal giver of laws and ideal judge of our compliance to those laws.

Equally, the concept of *God the Son* — as the particular instantiation of the idea — represents the ideal of a perfectly moral law-abider (situated within a sensible world and thus theoretically susceptible to sensuous inclinations) who serves as the prototype of a person with a holy will worthy of our emulation. As such, God the Son is the ideal follower of moral laws and the ideal practitioner of holiness operating within sensibility.

Thus, the symbols of “Father” and “Son” distinguish between a perfectly moral law-giver and absolutely fair judge and a perfectly moral law-follower and the archetype of a holy will operating in sensible conditions. With this distinction, we have the essentially Christian representation of God as both a law-giving father and a law-following son pleasing to the father. Such a representation grounds the claim that “the only way for man to please God [the Father] and gain salvation is through a practical faith in the incarnate Son of God” as the singularly represented individual worthy of the title perfect law-follower and, thereby, eminently worthy of our emulation. Thus, it is our duty to resolutely raise ourselves in the direction of the Son of God’s moral perfection by renouncing radical evil and adopting a maxim to holiness, which is an absolute precondition for becoming pleasing to God. Through “steadfastly cling[ing] to the prototype of humanity” as “the personified idea of the good principle” (6:60), one can hold two interrelated, rational hopes: the possibility of a dispositional change of heart that marks the

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4 Our respect for the moral law determines our change of heart and our pursuit of holiness. In this way, the moral law is the determining ground of the will. Yet the ideal of the Son of God, and the prototypical example that it presents, provides us with the hope that our dispositional change and pursuance can render us “well-pleasing” and thus make our final end plausible.
transition from the evil principle to the pursuit of holiness and the further possibility of becoming a worthy “object of divine pleasure.”

Kant is clear that the Son of God, as “the prototype of moral disposition in its entire purity,” is the ideal for human wills striving for holiness and striving to be “pleasing to God:”

Now it is our universal human duty to elevate ourselves to this ideal of moral perfection, i.e., to the prototype of moral disposition in its entire purity, and for this the very idea, which is presented to us by reason for emulation, can give us force… In the practical faith in this Son of God (so far as he is represented as having taken up human nature) the human being can thus hope to become pleasing to God (and thereby blessed); that is, only a human being conscious of such a moral disposition in himself as enables him to believe and self-assured trust that he, under similar temptations and afflictions (so far as these are made the touchstone of that ideal), would steadfastly cling to the prototype of humanity and follow the prototype’s example in loyal emulation, and he alone, is entitled to consider himself not an unworthy object of divine pleasure (6:61-2 emphases are Kant’s). Since the object of an idea of reason cannot be known but can only be thought (we cannot know a holy will; we can only think it without contradiction and believe in its practical worth), God, in any symbolic form, can only serve a regulative function with regard to our thoughts and actions: “The concept of a highest being is a very useful idea in many respects; but just because it is merely an idea, it is incapable all by itself of extending our cognition in regard to what exists” (A601-2/B629-30). Because all pure concepts, including ideas of reason, are independent of sensibility and thereby are outside the parameters of knowledge, such concepts cannot be said to be constitutive because they do not establish objects of knowledge. Nevertheless, we can recognize such concepts as regulative because even though ideas do not theoretically present us with objects of possible experience, they do elicit the necessary speculative task to always seek further conditions of the objects of our knowledge. Of course, the task of pursuing holiness of the will (which the idea of a perfectly moral agent posits) is a purely practical one, so instead of seeking further speculative conditions, one seeks to become decreasingly susceptible to
pathological incentives when engaging in moral deliberations (and thus closer to holiness).

Further, when transcendental ideas are necessarily embraced as postulates of pure practical reason, we are called on to place our rational faith in the existence of the objects of the ideas – God and the immortality of the soul – in order to make the final end of reason possible.

However, when we’re concerned with a practical ideal such as the Son of God – as individual instance of an idea – such an ideal is not merely worthy of our faith but is equally worthy of our emulation: “the prototype of moral disposition in its entire purity… is presented to us by reason for emulation.” The Son of God is an “ideal” insofar as it is an individual instance of the “idea” of a being within sensible coordinates in possession of a holy will. Kant defines an ideal as an “idea, not merely in concreto, but in individuo, that is, as an individual thing, determinable or even determined by the idea alone” (A568/B596). Just as we are theoretically called on to always seek further conditions by the idea of something unconditioned, so we are practically called on to become ever-closer to the perfection of the ideal. This practical call applies to both the hypothetical imperatives that we conditionally adopt in order to achieve some desired end, and the unconditional categorical imperative that ultimately doesn’t concern conditional ends. For our specific purpose here, we are practically called on to strive ever-closer

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5 As the quotation attests, Kant unambiguously states in Religion that the Son of God “is presented to us by reason for emulation” (6:61). However, he also says in the very same text that “he himself [the Son of God] could not be presented to us as an example to be emulated, hence also not as a proof that so pure and exalted a moral goodness can be practiced and attained by us” (6:64-5, the emphases are Kant’s). These seem like two contradictory statements on emulation. The second claim is appended by a long footnote that argues that we can only understand the Son of God analogically because the gulf between our imperfect will and Christ’s perfect will is too great for us to ever rise to his standard of moral perfection. In the second instance, Kant is attempting to mitigate against the misunderstanding that a sensible, rational agent could ever achieve a holy will like Christ’s, and the use of “emulation” (understood as a false belief that we can achieve what the Son of God achieved) could illicitly fuel such a misunderstanding. However, if we take the act of emulation as the positing of a regulative practical ideal that represents a never-reachable horizon that nonetheless points the moral way forward, then we are on more secure ground. I take the word emulation to represent the latter, acceptable, case.
to the pure holiness of the Son of God in order to potentially become pleasing to God the Father. Therefore, as a regulative concept operating under a regulative principle, the ideal of the Son of God is worthy of our *emulation*. A distinction can be drawn: a putative object of an idea, as a practical postulate (such as God or the immortal soul), demands our *faith*, and the ideal, as the individual instantiation of the object of the idea, demands our *emulation*.

At the outset of *Kant and Religion*, Allen Wood introduces the claim about the need to present God symbolically, whether as an object of an idea to be believed (the pure concept of a necessary and perfectly moral law-giver or law-follower) or more importantly for Wood, as a religious ideal to follow (the individual instantiation of a pure concept): “For Kant it is only through symbolism that the pure concept of God can be presented in a way that is meaningful to human beings and therefore truly religious.” Wood is absolutely correct that there is no other type of representation available to us than to interpret Kant’s references to the Son of God symbolically.

At this point, I will state two reasons why representing the Son of God symbolically is practically necessary; however, in what directly follows, I’ll offer a more sustained defense of these reasons. First, by construing Kant’s references to the Son of God symbolically, we lessen the risk of conceiving Christ as an object of possible experience, namely, in the person of the

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7 Wood, *Kant and Religion*, 7. Interestingly, Kant never denies the Son of God as a historical example set before us; however, as Allen Wood perceptively states in *Kant and Religion*: “It is striking, however, that there are precisely zero occurrences of the name “Jesus” in the entire text of the *Religion*; and the title “Christ” (German: *Christus*) is used only twice, in both cases merely reporting scriptural statements” (116). Even though Kant never explicitly discounts the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth, he ultimately believes that because the Son of God is a divine ideal and thereby outside of possible experience and only presentable as a symbol, rational theology is within its rights to downplay (if not deny) the historical existence of the son of God.
historical Jesus. In this way, we are less susceptible to the specters of “subtle anthropomorphism” (28:1046) and fanaticism. Additionally, by construing God “the Father” as the perfect giver and judge of laws and God “the Son” as the perfect follower of such laws, the latter, as an ideal, carries with it the practical significance of accomplishing actual moral tasks that exceeds the mere theoretical recognition of a non-contradictory idea. Therefore, the specter of deism, which conceives the divine as a mere logical possibility and not a practical necessity, is also mitigated through symbolic representation of the divine. Thus, symbolic representation helps guard against three illicit ways of conceiving our relationship with the divine and, thus, aids us in promoting the moral theism that is so important to our possible realization of our final end. Second, I will additionally argue that by presenting the Son of God symbolically, the practical significance of our relationship to the divine is made clearest, and such clarity grounds a moral theism proper for finite, rational beings striving to achieve their rational end.

In the third Critique, Kant introduces the concept of “hypotyposis,” the process by which concepts are presented sensibly, which can either take a schematic or symbolic form:

All hypotyposis (exhibition, *subiectio sub adspectum*) consists in making [a concept] sensible, and is either schematic or symbolic. In schematic hypotyposis there is a concept that the understanding has formed, and the intuition corresponding to it is given *a priori*. In symbolic hypotyposis there is a concept which only reason can think and to which no sensible intuition can be adequate, and this concept is supplied with an intuition that judgement treats in a way merely analogous to the procedure it follows in schematizing; i.e., the treatment agrees with this procedure merely in the rule followed rather than in terms of the intuition itself, and hence merely in terms of the form of the reflection rather than its content (5:351).

Schematic hypotyposis directly applies to particular empirical objects (intuitions) that are subsumed under the categories of the understanding (concepts). Schematic hypotyposis thereby
affords constitutive knowledge of objects by making determinant judgments possible. Angelica Nuzzo provides a concise explanation of a determinant judgment:

If the universal law, rule or principle “is given” by the understanding as the faculty of principles, then the faculty of judgment’s task is simply – and exclusively – that of “subsuming” the particular case under the given universal. To be sure, in this situation, what is given to the faculty of judgment is not only the rule but also the case – both the particular and the universal are given. Provided with both, judgment has the task of bringing the particular instance to the universal under which it is contained. Thereby the particular is thought precisely as an instance of the given law. Kant names this activity of judgment “determinant” (Bestimmende). The general concept is determined by the particular case to which it applies as the rule for that instance; the case is determined as a case of that law.\(^8\)

Since the particular intuition and the universal concept are both given with schematic hypotyposis, thereby allowing the particular to be subsumed under the universal, we have all the necessary components to objectively secure knowledge and render a determinant judgment.

However, since God is not an object of possible experience, the idea of God cannot be schematized and thereby requires symbolic hypotyposis.

God… does not belong to the world at all, but is entirely external to it… The divine existence… can never be thought as determinable through time; for then we would have to represent God as a phaenomenon. But this would be an anthropomorphic predicate, unthinkable in an ens realissimum because it contains limitations in it…[I]t is most necessary to leave all the conditions of time out of the concept of God, because otherwise we could be misled and accept a number of anthropomorphic consequences. (28:1043–4).

For Kant, there cannot be either an empirical cognition or an intellectual intuition of God. If one falls prey to this cognitive error, then one is in danger of engaging in the empirical delusion of “subtle anthropomorphism,” which not only conceives the divine as a human object but one that is saddled with pathological inclinations and is thus imperfect. Furthermore, symbolic

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hypotyposis can also ward off fanaticism in both its empirical and rational forms. Fanaticism, in its empirical guise, conceives of the divine as an object of possible experience that we can directly communicate with and that can sensibly determine our experience. Conversely, fanaticism, in its rationalist guise, conceives of human beings as able to have a non-sensible and non-discursive intellectual intuition of God, thereby securing direct access to the noumenon that is God. For these reasons, Wood argues that any presentation of the purely rational concept of God can only be symbolic: “Symbolism is needed in the exhibition or presentation (Darstellung) of all pure rational ideas [so] we can have religious cognition of the divine only through symbols.” For Wood, non-empirical or supersensible putative objects (such as God) need to be symbolized because the symbol sensibly presents the ideal in a way that mitigates against either conceiving of God as an object of possible experience that is empirically cognizable or as conceiving of humans as being capable of forming an intellectual intuition of the divine. Symbolization thus represents the divine in a practically meaningful way that does run into the aforementioned problems.

Symbolic hypotyposis is formally “analogous” to schematic hypotyposis, insofar as there is an intuition supplied in the form of the symbol that indirectly presents the ideal. Yet since the symbol is not the actual object, what is similar between these two forms of hypotyposis is the formal rule that is followed and not the content that is established. Thus, as Howard Caygill nicely explains, these two forms of hypotyposis render two different kinds of judgment:

In the Prolegomena (S857-8) and the third Critique (S859), he [Kant] contrasts the symbolic/analogical with the schematic/logical judgment. Logical judgments involve the direct presentation of a concept to an object of intuition, while analogical judgments apply ‘the mere rule of reflection upon that intuition to quite another object’ (CJ S859).

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9Wood, Kant and Religion, 119/121.
This is the classic restriction of the scope of analogy to the relations between terms, and not the terms themselves: for Kant, cognition by analogy ‘does not signify (as is commonly understood) an imperfect similarity of two things, but a perfect similarity of relations between two quite dissimilar things’ (P 858).\(^\text{10}\)

For the same essential reason, the judgments made through symbolic hypotyposis are “reflective” and “relational.” Analogy allows for the possibility of apprehending relations between two different objects (or terms), but it cannot provide the objective knowledge that schematic hypotyposis affords, where a singular intuition is subsumed under a universal concept. Since we are outside any proper claims to knowledge, determinant judgments are not on offer. However, since we can reflect upon the relation of an “intuition to quite another object,” we can make a reflective judgment on the “perfect similarity of relations.”

Further, God is the primary object requiring to be thought about through analogy. When we utilize reason about God analogously through symbolic hypotyposis, we are not concerned with God as a direct object of intuition because we cannot have an empirical cognition of such an object. Nevertheless, symbolization is capable of sensibly presenting God as an indirect object in a practically comprehensible fashion; in this way, symbolization helps constitute an ideal as an object that we can put into some practical relation to ourselves. For example, if we examine the Father and Son distinction that I staked out earlier, we can see how this “perfect similarity of relations between two quite dissimilar things” works. Since God is rationally conceived as a perfect lawgiver, then he can be symbolized as the “Father.” This picture is supplemented by God’s relationship with his “Son” who, as a perfectly moral law-follower, is pleasing to God. Since it is both of duty and in our rational best interest to become well-pleasing to the Father,

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\(^{10}\) Howard Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary* (Wiley Online Library, 2019), 66.
and the Son provides us with the paradigmatic example of such a well-pleasing figure, then it is both our duty as well as in our rational best interest to follow (to the greatest extent possible) the paradigmatic example of the Son of God. Therefore, even though we have “two quite dissimilar things” – on one hand, the Son (who possesses a holy will) and on the other hand, finite, rational beings (who do not) – the relationship of the Son (as well-pleasing to the Father) and finite, rational beings (as attempting to be well-pleasing to the Father) provides us a picture of our practical duties far more clearly than any non-symbolic representation of the Trinity (as three forms of one God) is capable of providing.

In the *Anthropology*, Kant further explains how analogy is the form of indirect presentation that informs symbolism: “Symbols are merely means that understanding uses to provide the concept with significance through the presentation of an object for it. But they are only indirect means, owing to analogy with certain intuitions to which the concept can be applied” (7:191). A symbol represents (or sensibly stands in for) the supersensible object that otherwise could not be intuited; as a result, the symbol (as the stand-in empirical object) can be presented through analogy as the “indirect means” that relates the symbol (as a representation of the supersensible non-intuited object) to the ideal, which allows us to reflect on the practical significance of the relationship between the two. As Wood remarks, “the Son of God is a religious symbol for the change of heart or, more specifically, for the good disposition resulting from it” that initiates the process of “moral striving for which we hope [which] is represented symbolically as our striving to become well-pleasing to God” (125). The Son of God is a symbol of the ideal of a holy will operating in a sensible setting and, as such, a symbol of a perfected humanity. Since we should always be striving to get ever closer to this ideal, we first need to
renounce radical evil, which is symbolized as “a rebirth” (6:47), and then resolutely strive to be well-pleasing to God, which itself is a symbolic representation. Clearly, we do not possess a holy will like Christ; as such, there is no similarity or any direct relation. However, it is possible to illustrate our analogous relationship with the ideal through symbolic representation that allows us to formally comprehend our practical tasks at hand in a sensible manner which is meaningful to us. Moreover, not only is it possible, for Kant this is both the appropriate and necessary way for finite, rational agents to understand their relationship with the divine.

Consequently, a symbol provides sensible significance to a pure concept. In our present case, the sensible significance of the pure concept attains practical importance with the Son of God serving as the symbol of perfected morality and, accordingly, representing an ideal to people without a holy will. Thus, it is through symbolization that we find a sensible way of practically representing what had previously been a purely rational ideal, and, in so doing, the Son of God correlates with practical features found in us: our respect for the moral law and our consonant need to strive for holiness of the will. Therefore, symbols, as indirect (and thus analogical) representations of specific ideals, imbue such ideals with a religious message that carries practical significance for finite, rational beings.

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11 Borrowing from Ephesians 4:22-4, Kant also symbolizes our dispositional change against radical evil in Religion as “putting off the old man and putting on the new.”

12 In the Prolegomena, Kant distinguishes between dogmatic and symbolic anthropomorphism. The former is illicit because it attributes human imperfections to God (in this way, it’s synonymous with subtle anthropomorphism, which I will have more to say about a little later in the dissertation); however, the latter is permissible and necessary because it symbolically, and thus indirectly, relates the ideal to us in an analogous way that does not taint the divine with our imperfections.

13 Of course, the idea of the moral law as the determining ground for moral behavior already has practical significance even without any presentation of someone who perfectly follows it. Nevertheless, symbolizing the ideal of a will perfectly in tune with the moral law – the Son of God – provides an additional religious example that
It is also vital to distinguish between having faith in what the symbol symbolizes versus the symbol itself. We do not directly place our faith in the symbol itself (that would be idolatry); rather our faith is indirectly placed in the object of the idea that the symbol (as the stand-in sensible intuition that is not otherwise on offer) “brings to life” (so to speak). Our faith remains in the putative object of the supersensible idea (as a practical postulate), but that faith is aided by exhibiting the supersensible putative object of the idea in an indirect way that relationally extends the practical import of the idea. And, as I have already discussed, the ideal, as the individual instantiation of the object of the idea, demands our emulation.

By utilizing reason’s ability to judge analogically and successfully employ symbolism to represent divine ideals, one removes the risk of engaging in the faulty interpretations of anthropomorphism. And even if these faulty interpretations start out as theoretical issues, such theoretical problems carry serious practical consequences.

Kant distinguishes two forms of anthropomorphism: “vulgar” and “subtle.”

Anthropomorphism is usually divided into the vulgar kind, when God is thought of in human shape, and the subtle kind, where human perfections are ascribed to God but without separating the limitations from them. The latter kind of anthropomorphism is a particularly dangerous enemy of our pure cognition of God; for the former is too obvious an error for human beings to be fooled by it very often. But we have all the more to turn our power against anthropomorphismus subtilis, since it is easier for it to creep into our concept of God and corrupt it (28:1046).

Here Kant is being a little too loose with his treatment of vulgar anthropomorphism. It seems that the Incarnation – the word become flesh – is a form of vulgar anthropomorphism. Moreover, the incarnation would also have to be an acceptable form of vulgar anthropomorphism. Kant never

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further emphasizes and, thus, aids in our task to resolutely pursue holiness. It is worthwhile to have an example of how something works.
denies the Son of God as a historical example set before us. Even though, as Allen Wood perceptively states in *Kant and Religion*, Kant definitely shies away from representing the Son of God as an historical figure: “It is striking, however, that there are precisely zero occurrences of the name ‘Jesus’ in the entire text of the *Religion*; and the title ‘Christ’ (German: *Christus*) is used only twice, in both cases merely reporting scriptural statements.”

Even though Kant never explicitly discounts the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth, he ultimately believes that *because the Son of God is a divine* ideal and thereby outside of possible experience and only presentable symbolically, rational theology is within its rights to downplay (but not outright deny) the historical existence of the son of God. Therefore, the incarnation qualifies as the only legitimate instance of vulgar anthropomorphism because God clearly assumes human form. Other than this singular example, it is not permissible to think of God taking human shape.

The subtle form, which Kant understands to be more dangerous, arises when we attribute empirically imperfect attributes to a morally perfect God. Specifically, if we represent God in a non-symbolic and sensible manner, we run the risk of conceiving God as an omni-powerful being that is nevertheless subject to the pathological inclinations of a human will. In this way,

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15 We could possibly avoid anthropomorphism by not providing *any images* of God, as either a moral law-giver or a moral law-abider; however, this lack of an imagining has other risks. Kant believes that the best way to make the divine practically tangible to sensible, rational beings is through symbolism. If we do not utilize symbolism with regard to the divine, we render the divine to be a mere logical possibility bereft of any practical significance. This contention informs Kant’s criticism of Judaism. Here is how Sidney Axinn summarizes Kant’s criticisms of Judaism in his essay “Kant on Judaism” found in *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 59, no. 1 (July 1968): 9-10: “Kant’s view of religion is presented most directly in his book, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*. He develops what he calls ‘the pure religion of reason,’ and explains the connections between this position and the historical religions. He holds that there is really but one religion, and various faiths. In one passage he argued that, in its original form, Judaism was really not a religion at all, but merely a political entity. Three points were offered by way of ‘proof’ that Judaism was not essentially religious. First, its commands relate merely to external acts and lay no requirements ‘upon the moral disposition.’ The commands are directed to nothing but outer observance, he holds. However, he also makes the point in passing that ‘the Ten Commandments are, to the eye of reason, valid as ethical commands even had they not been given publicly.’ Second, that Judaism limits reward and punishment to this
God, who is fully rational, gets illicitly tainted with the empirical imperfections that saddle sensible, rational wills. When presenting and interpreting God as an object of possible experience, which is both a speculative error (God is not an object of possible experience) and a practical error (one should not illicitly replace a proper moral theology with a faulty theological morality), we run the risk of representing God dogmatically and naturalistically as a cosmic force that rules our world arbitrarily or even tyrannically. Non-symbolic, direct presentations of God as an object of possible experience carry the threat of misunderstanding God as such an experiential authoritarian (Do as I command, or face my wrath!), as opposed to a perfect moral being not encumbered by pathological limitations. However, since symbolism is analogical and relational, with the symbol providing an example of how the ideal is practically relevant while not conceiving of the ideal itself as an empirical cognition, such a threat is significantly mitigated.

It should also be noted that the Son of God’s very existence should not be interpreted as an instance of subtle anthropomorphism. Of course, Jesus existed within sensible world and, as such, was subject to inclinations. However, even though the inclinations on offer theoretically posed a moral threat, since Jesus can be regarded as having had a holy will, he can be regarded as having been completely resistant to all temptation. If subtle anthropomorphism is essentially defined as saddling God with pathological inclinations and, thus, tainting the divine with empirical limitation, this is not a concern with the example of Jesus Christ as the Son of God.
because his perfectly holy will was up to the challenge of any inclination according to the stories reported in the Gospels.

Furthermore, by utilizing symbolic hypotyposis to represent God, one necessarily moves beyond the prohibition against graven images, which is when one only conceives of God as purely theoretical possibility that renounces any meaningful practical and personal elements of God:

Whoever accepts only transcendental theology is a deist. The deist will certainly concede that there is a cause of the world; but he leaves it undecided whether that cause is a freely acting being… It can now be seen that *theologica transcendentalalis* is set up by pure reason alone, wholly pure of any admixture of experience… [T]ranscendental theology represents God to me wholly separate from any experience. For how could experience teach me something universal? In transcendental theology I think of God as having no limitation; there I extend my concept to the highest degree and regard God as a being infinitely removed from myself. But do I become acquainted with God at all in this way? – Hence the deist’s concept of God is wholly idle and useless and makes no impression on me if I assume it alone (28:1002-3).

For Kant, if one takes the pure concept of God to be nothing more than the impersonal cause of the existence of the world that can be thought without contradiction, then one is putting forth a deistic concept of God.\(^{16}\) Because deists stop at God as a purely speculative idea of a possible impersonal cause, they refuse to countenance the practical significance inherent in God by not going on to posit God as necessary practical postulate that carries with it indispensable moral significance.\(^{17}\) By simply representing God as a non-personal author of existence that can be thought without contradiction, the deist never moves beyond presenting a legitimate theoretical

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\(^{16}\) If one makes the Kantian leap from understanding God not only as a transcendental idea of reason but also as a postulate of pure practical reason that deserves our faith, that person has gone well beyond deism.

\(^{17}\) Again, this seems inform Kant’s critique of Judaism. It is prohibition of symbolic representations of the divine renders it inconsequential with regard to individual moral matters.
proposition. So, while an anthropomorphist errs in turning God into a sensible object of experience replete with human failings, a deist errs in leaving God as a mere logical possibility with no moral significance whatsoever. In this sense, the former goes too far in their representations of the divine, while the latter does not go far enough with their respective representation. By symbolizing the transcendental idea, it goes from being a pure concept that is merely thinkable to a representation that provides sensible significance to a pure concept. Importantly, such sensible significance also carries with it moral and religious significance because, as Allen Wood correctly surmises, “symbolism involves the faculties of the imagination and reflection that make possible aesthetic experience and arouse the feelings and emotions that connect our thinking and rational action.” Symbolism allows us to think the idea in a practically meaningful fashion.

Furthermore, in “Observations on the Feelings of the Beautiful and Sublime,” Kant defines fanaticism (Schwärmerei) as believing “to feel an immediate and extraordinary communion with a higher nature” that grounds an “illusion of a supernatural community” (2:251). Kant goes on to say in “Essay on the Maladies of the Head” that the fanatic is “properly a deranged person with presumed immediate inspiration and a great familiarity with the powers of the heavens. Human nature knows no more dangerous illusion” (2: 267). When compared to anthropomorphism and deism, fanaticism is a greater threat to moral theism.

Perhaps it might be helpful to conceive of rational and sensible forms of fanaticism. The rational form of fanaticism attributes to discursive beings the ability to form an intellectual intuition of God, yet this type of fanatic never goes as far as to claim any actual supernatural

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18 Wood, *Kant and Religion*, 120.
communication (or “a great familiarity with the powers of the heavens”) occurring between the divine and sensible. On the other hand, the sensible grade of fanaticism contends that “an immediate and extraordinary communion” occurs between the believer and the divine. Such a communion is tantamount to a belief that one can directly engage with disembodied spirits, and such communication is believed to determine the contents of a fanatic’s mind. Therefore, sensible religious fanatics are guilty of not only believing that the divine is either an object of possible experience or cognizable through intellectual intuition, but they also hold that direct communication between the divine realm and the phenomenal occurs.

Perhaps two historical examples may be helpful here. Leibniz is a “rational fanatic,” while Swedenborg is a “sensible fanatic.” Leibniz’s dogmatic metaphysics rest on his succumbing to transcendental illusion. Nevertheless, while Leibniz claimed to have *an intellectual intuition* of God, he did not believe that he (or anyone else) *communicated* directly with the divine or the immaterial realm. Swedenborg, on the other hand, was not a dogmatic rationalist; he was committed to a form of parapsychological phenomena that allowed for a direct, mystical, and divine revelation through *sensible intuition*. Kant believes fanaticism of this sort is the most dangerous consequence of not realizing that one cannot *know* God at all. For Kant, we cannot know whether or not there is a God that transcends sensibility, and thus any belief in direct and determinative communication between the divine realm and the mind of a sensible, rational being with a discursive understanding is a grave danger. Thus, Kant holds that

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19 For Kant, *all* sensible, rational beings are prone to transcendental illusion. Hence, transcendental illusions parallel optical illusion: no one can shake the illusion that a half-submerged stick appears bent. Most of us, however, come to realize that the stick is not actually bent. On Kant’s account, Leibniz refuses to realize that the stick is straight.
Swedenborgian fanaticism – the false belief that one can directly communicate with the divine realm – represents the most dangerous delusion.

Conversely, Kant has many positive things to say about the enthusiasm (Enthusiasmus) that is occasioned by the idea of God: “genuine enthusiasm always moves only toward what is ideal and, indeed, to what is purely moral, such as the concept of right, and it cannot be grafted onto self-interest” (7:86). However, because of the unresolved disagreement about glossing Schwärmerei as both fanaticism and enthusiasm, I will almost entirely bracket a discussion – except for the short treatment that follows – of enthusiasm and its relationship with the divine.

The Cambridge Edition of Kant’s Collected Works glosses Schwärmerei as both fanaticism and enthusiasm and thus tends to treat them interchangeably. I, however, am inclined to concur with Peter Fenves who acknowledges Kant’s attempt to distinguish between fanaticism and the enthusiasm: “Kant… never tired of trying to distinguish a thoroughly repugnant Schwärmerei from an Enthusiasmus without which ‘nothing great in the world could take place.’” Furthermore, Rachel Zuckert’s chapter “Kant’s Account of Practical Fanaticism” in Kant’s Moral Metaphysics: God, Freedom, and Immortality examines the historical use of both Enthusiasmus and Schwärmerei by Kant (and various other philosophers) and argues that there is an important distinction to be made.

Zuckert is not alone in recognizing the problems in glossing Schwärmerei as both enthusiasm and fanaticism; Robert R. Clewis argues for this distinction in his book The Kantian

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20 Peter Fenves, Raising the Tone of Philosophy, ed. Peter Fenves (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), xi.

Sublime and the Revelation of Freedom and in his chapter “The Feeling of Enthusiasm” in Kant and the Faculty of Feeling. Clewis and Zuckert have mounted a persuasive intervention on this issue. In the Cambridge Kant Lexicon (2021), Clewis unambiguously pairs the German word Enthusiasmus with enthusiasm and thus attempts a correction the conflation in The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. I am inclined to concur with Peter Fenves who acknowledges the significant difference between the fanatic and the enthusiast. I think we should take Kant at his word when he says that “genuine enthusiasm always moves only toward what is ideal and, indeed, to what is purely moral, such as the concept of right, and it cannot be grafted onto self-interest” (7:86). Nevertheless, it would require more space than this dissertation has to address this issue properly, and since this issue does not bear significantly on the ultimate success of this dissertation, I will just say that I think that genuine enthusiasm has been falsely tainted by its conflation with fanaticism and leave it to further scholarship to settle the score.

Nevertheless, I fully affirm Wood’s perceptive central argument that symbolism allows one to safely, that is within the acceptable parameters of moral theism, stretch one’s imaginative powers by sensibly representing ideals in a way that can spur the mind to advance the cause of the good principle more fervently:

If the function of the symbol is to enhance our practical cognition of the object symbolized, the symbol must add to our thought of what is symbolized those thoughts and feelings that can accomplish this, and the sameness in the way of thinking must achieve this enhancement of meaning and emotion. Symbolism involves the faculties of

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24 Wood, himself, is guilty of such a conflation. See “The Son of God” chapter in Kant and Religion for proof.
the imagination and reflection that make possible aesthetic experience and arouse the feelings and emotions that connect our thinking and rational action.\textsuperscript{25}

Wood makes the exact same point when he claims that an analogy, which is the rhetorical mechanism that governs symbolism, “presents what is symbolized in a way that enhances the practical or emotional significance for us of the reality symbolized.”\textsuperscript{26} Symbolic hypotyposis is the most effective way to make our practical tasks clear to us by showing our relationship with the divine in a sensible fashion that “arouse(s) the feelings and emotions that connect our thinking and rational action.” Moreover, the conscious implementation of symbolic hypotyposis diminishes any delusional slide into schematic hypotyposis: thus, protecting ourselves from illicitly conceiving of God as imperfect (subtle anthropomorphism) or as a mere logical and impersonal possibility (deism) or as a knowable through an intellectual intuition (lower/lesser fanaticism) and/or a sensible being that communicates directly with humans (higher/greater fanaticism). Therefore, an indirect, symbolic presentation of the ideal that is the Son of God can safely motivate our transformation from the bad principle to the good, as well as provide us with an example of what holiness in a sensible setting looks. The Son of God’s motivating example augments our reason and also provides us with the hope that the end of reason is possible and the faith in ourselves to realize it.

My latest mention of faith points to another vital aspect of the revolutionary change of heart (that is the dispositional transformation from the bad to the good principle) that should be grasped: a person \textit{can never be entirely certain} that the conversion has occurred. We can only

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\item Ibid., 120.
\item Ibid., 125.
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know ourselves insofar as we appear as a phenomenon in time. However, and as I have argued earlier, the dispositional rebirth occurs in a noumenal, and thus atemporal, realm: hence, its effect is not accessible through introspection, and we cannot legitimately claim direct knowledge of the transformation. While this may be a speculative concern, it is a speculative concern with widespread practical consequences. If the change of heart cannot be known – yet this change is an absolute practical precondition for one to plausibly hope for the final object of reason – here again, rational faith needs to play an essential role. Kant understands that we have to have rational faith in the practical postulates of pure reason if the final object of reason – the highest good – is to be deemed capable of being attained. However, we equally have to place rational faith in ourselves that we have achieved a transformational rebirth. In this sense, we need to have every bit as much faith in ourselves as we need in the immortal soul and God for the final end to be a plausible hope. For whatever reasons, this former type of faith tends to get far less treatment in the secondary literature; nevertheless, it is equally as important to achieving our final end.

However, even the most responsible, faithful and successful pursuer of holiness cannot realize a holy will. In Religion, Kant advances three forms of evil: fragilitas, impuritas and perversitas (6:29-30). The first form of evil is the frailty of the will that motivates a decision against the moral law. It usually takes two forms: the decision against the moral law is either encouraged in order to achieve some form of sensible pleasure or societal advantage or not to have to face the difficult consequences that may attend the making of a moral decision. The second form of evil is the impurity of the will that motivates someone to do what is in accordance with the moral law but not for moral reasons. For Kant, actions of this sort do not show the proper respect for the moral law, even if such actions may be “legal” because they do
coincide with the mandates of the moral law; however, they cannot be said to be moral because the motivation for the act is not pure. The third form of evil is the perversity that informs the initial choice of radical evil. Moreover, this perverse, initial choice does not go away when one turns to the good principle through the renunciation of radical evil; the initial choice continues to taint the newly restored will because the past mistake also rules out the possibility of an absolutely pure will. Even though we cannot know of our dispositional rebirth, we can have the faith in ourselves that the third type of evil can be reversed by a finite, rational agent, while equally conceding that the initial mistake can never be erased.

The following conclusions should be drawn. Even if an agent has a dispositional rebirth, the other two forms of evil—fragilitas and impuritas—persist: “a human being, who incorporates this purity into his maxims, though on this account [is] still not holy as such (for between maxim and deed there still is a wide gap)” (6:46/7). The first two forms of evil will never be absolutely overcome no matter how much time elapses and effort are expended. Furthermore, while perversitas can be reversed by adopting a maxim towards holiness, the initial transgression cannot be erased, thus ruling out any absolute purity on this score, too. Holiness entails that all three forms of evil are overcome, which is a state of affairs simply not attainable for even the most dedicated person striving for its attainment.

This state of affairs is why Kant invokes the concept of God’s grace in Religion. Holiness is graciously “imputed” to a person because the gap between disposition and deed can never be absolutely closed. I will have much more to say about this later. However, for our purposes here, the ideal of Christ as well-pleasing to God assists in our dispositional rebirth through example;
however, such a dispositional rebirth does not eliminate our frailty or impurity. It will take God’s direct and gracious imputation of holiness on behalf of an individual agent’s will to do that.

Lastly, it is worthwhile to both revisit a point that I have already made as well as confront an important ensuing issue, both of which will receive greater treatment later in the dissertation: These issues concern the form of well-being appropriate for a holy will. As I have already stated, even though Christ possessed a holy will in a sensible setting, he did not receive a proportional level of happiness (which would be complete happiness) while he was alive. In fact, Christ actually experienced significant suffering during his time on earth. As a result, we have no instance of happiness being proportional to virtue in a sensible setting; in fact, such a proportionality was even not available to God incarnate.

Furthermore, this lack of proportionality begs a question: Did Christ desire happiness proportional to virtue? Christ’s fully holy will would always represent moral desires (how things ought to be through freedom) over sensible desires (the contingent satisfaction of the inclinations). Since, this is the case, happiness (while it would not be entirely shunned by Christ because that would be irrational) would always be subordinated to morality when necessary. 27 Thus, a plausible conclusion to draw is that only finite, rational creatures, whose reasons and wills are not absolute, desire happiness in proportion to virtue.

There is still another very important issue that needs addressing, and in order to do so, it would be helpful to restate my thesis: I may hope for an eternal highest good, as the culmination of the interests of reason as a whole, that analytically enjoins holiness and beatitude in a

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27 For example, in John Milton’s Paradise Regained, Satan offers Jesus a banquet after Jesus has fasted for forty days and nights. Jesus says he could be moved to taste it, depending on who the giver was. Since he knows who Satan is, he does not touch it.
noumenal world. However, how can we square the Son of God’s beatitude with the obvious suffering that Christ endured on earth? The answer lies in Kant’s position on Stoicism. In the second Critique, Kant claims that the Epicurean position that happiness is virtue is “absolutely false” (5:114, emphasis is Kant’s), while the Stoic position that virtue is happiness, no matter how much suffering the virtuous being endures through moral action, is “conditionally false” (5:115, emphasis is Kant’s). The reason the Stoic position is “conditionally false” is not because they take virtue to be sufficient for happiness, it is that Kant thinks such a position is impossible for human beings:

The Stoics… had chosen their supreme practical principle correctly, namely virtue, as the condition for the highest good; but inasmuch as they represented the degree of virtue required by its pure law as fully attainable in this life, they not only strained the moral capacity of the human being, under the name sage, far beyond all limits of his nature and assumed something that contradicts all cognition of the human being, but also and above all they would not let the second component of the highest good, namely happiness, hold as a special object of the human faculty of desire but made their sage, like a divinity in his consciousness of the excellence of his person, quite independent of nature (5:126-7, emphases are Kant’s).

There is one instance, however, that satisfies Kant’s depiction of a Stoic sage – “a divinity in his consciousness quite independent from nature [with] the degree of virtue required by its pure law” – and it is the Son of God. The Stoic ideal, impossible for finite, rational beings, is entirely possible for the Son of God. In fact, this ideal is what defines the Son of God.

Insofar as the Son of God’s suffering is concerned, Kant says this:

Thus one may always laugh at the Stoic who in the most intense pains of gout cried out: Pain, however, you torment me I will never admit that you are something evil…; nevertheless, he was correct. He felt that the pain was an ill, and his cry betrayed that; but he had no cause whatever to grant that evil attached to him because of it, for the pain did not in the least dimmish the worth of his person but only the worth of his condition (5:60).
This precisely explains why Christ’s suffering is not incompatible with the experience of beatitude: “he had no cause whatever to grant that evil attached to him because of it, for the pain did not in the least dimmish the worth of his person but only the worth of his condition.” Even though Christ’s flesh experienced suffering, such sensible suffering did not compromise his beatitude. Thus, Christ’s suffering is not incompatible with Christ’s beatitude because the suffering merely affects the sensible body but not God’s absolute and eternal holy will and its corresponding well-being.

Even though sensible, rational agents: (1) possess an intelligible character and, consequently, enjoy the corresponding autonomy to renounce radical evil and resolutely pursue holiness; (2) have recourse to the Son of God as the archetype of holiness operating within sensibility, and (3) can belong to a church that is called on to collectively further the good principle over the bad, such beings will never possess a holy will at any moment in time. Only God incarnate can possess such complete conformity with the moral law in a phenomenal world. A major claim that I am advancing is that holiness analytically entails beatitude. Nevertheless, holiness is not possible for sensible rational beings at any specific moment in time; therefore, the Son of God is the only instance of such an analytic entailment in the phenomenal world.

Sensible, rational beings will require God’s gracious imputation of holiness and the eventual transition out of time to finally achieve holiness and the analytic entailment of beatitude. In the next chapter, I will examine God’s gracious imputation of holiness, which transitions an agent from W2, in which agents resolutely strive to become well-pleasing to God into W3, where agents finally delight in imputed holiness – which remains incomplete (“as if”)
holiness but is credited by God through the recognition that a sensible, rational being as achieved the highest level of virtue possible – and happiness.
CHAPTER THREE
GOD’S GRACIOUS IMPUTATION OF HOLINESS

The very fact that Kant posits God’s gracious imputation of holiness to a person who is resolutely striving for holiness testifies that no matter how much individual time is spent and effort is made, holiness of the will is not possible for sensible, rational agents on their own accord in W2. The revolutionary adoption and resolute adherence to the goal of pursuing holiness do not culminate in complete fitness to the moral law because as Kant says in *The Doctrine of Virtue* in *The Metaphysics of Morals*: “it is an ideal which is unobtainable, while yet constant approximation to it is a duty” (6:409). However, as we shall see, the revolutionary adoption and resolute adherence, nevertheless, allow for the possibility of God’s gracious imputation of holiness on Kant’s account. Therefore, the immortal soul is not a “stand-alone” postulate; without God’s gracious imputation of holiness, the “endless” progress would never culminate in holiness, and such an indefinite deferral is incommensurate with Kantian reason.

To address the issue of attaining holiness, Kant introduces *God’s grace* in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. However, before I address what I understand God’s grace to entail, I will first address what it does not. The radical change of heart that transforms a person’s will from the bad to the good principle should *not* be interpreted as being directed or motivated by God. Kant’s militant commitment to autonomy means that the conversion from the bad to the good principle is the sole work of the individual person centrally directed by reason’s respect for the moral law. Clearly for Kant, the moral law – and not God – is the determining ground for
morality, and if respect for the moral law (as the determining ground of the will) is understood as primary, then this respect is all that is needed for our dispositional conversion from radical evil to the resolute pursuit of holiness. Such respect can be aided by the archetypical example of the Son of God (as the sole illustration of what a holy will in a sensible setting looks like), as well as the moral support provided by the ethical community that comprises the church. Nevertheless, neither God the Father, nor the Son of God, nor the Church is ultimately responsible for the renouncing of radical evil. Individual agents are ultimately responsible for their dispositional rebirths.

Kant makes this very explicit at the very outset of Religion:

So far as morality is based on the conception of the human being as one who is free but who also, just because of that, binds himself through his reason to unconditional laws, it is in need neither of the idea of another being above him in order that he recognize his duty, nor, that he observe it, of an incentive other than the law itself. At least it is the human being’s own fault if such a need is found in him; but in this case too, the need could not be relieved through anything else: for whatever does not originate from himself and his own freedom provides no remedy for a lack of his morality. – Hence on its own behalf morality in no way needs religion (whether objectively, as regards willing, or subjectively, as regards capabilities) but is rather self-sufficient by virtue of pure practical reason (6:3).

With regard to God’s role with respect to an agent’s moral deliberation, one has no need “of the idea of another being above him in order that he recognize his duty.” As such, one requires no more “incentives” or “capabilities,” either objectively or subjectively, “other than the law itself” and the possession of “pure practical reason” that binds us to the moral law. Further, strictly speaking, “morality in no way needs religion;” in fact, it is the other way around: for religion to be worthwhile, it has to first be rooted in pure practical reason, which requires individual moral autonomy. Moreover, the church is the religious community comprised of individuals who have independently committed themselves to doing their moral duty. Thus, without either God or the
religious community of the church, finite, rational agents have everything at their disposal to heed the unconditional mandates of the moral law. All the moral heavy-lifting (the revolutionary dispositional conversion) must first come from the autonomous agent because it is the agent’s will and not that of God or the church that chooses the good principle. The dispositional change of heart must be seen as an individual act of volition undertaken solely by an imperfect will revolutionizing its disposition and not as an act of either divine or communal volition. Therefore, the individual agent “binds himself through his reason to unconditional laws” and, thereby, internally legislates the moral law to himself, with externalities like God or the church exempt from such considerations.

Yet, things do get complicated. Previously, I assigned to God the Father the label of perfectly moral (and thus ideal) law-giver as well as the perfectly fair (and thus ideal) judge. I will bracket the judge depiction for now because it does not pose the same questions and potential problems that the law-giver depiction does. The central question (that elicits various derivative questions) becomes who is the primary giver of laws? Kant’s moral claim is that each agent gives the moral law to himself. This autonomous and unconditional binding to the moral law through the practical reason of each agent is absolutely essential to Kantian ethics. If this is the case, how can God be the primary, perfect law-giver if Kantian ethics is predicated on each individual will unconditionally submitting itself to the moral law? And are not Kant’s religious claims based on a “moral argument” stipulating that only if moral philosophy takes precedence, then, and only then, can a proper theism be legitimately erected on this primary ethical framework? I need to address these questions and reconcile the potentially contentious issue of
how we can both recognize that finite, rational agents give the law to themselves, without the aid any direct divine intervention, while also characterizing God as the perfect moral law-giver.

This reconciliation is possible through examining Kant’s argument against theological morality, where theology illicitly grounds (and thus takes priority) over morality: “Theological morality [theologische Moral], contains moral laws, which presuppose the existence of a supreme ruler of the world” (A632/B661). Kant fervently believes that this order needs reversal: morality (or moral philosophy) must ground theology. Ultimately, since a theological moralist constructs an ethic grounded in divine commandments, they succumb to heteronomy rather than autonomy. For Kant, the practical reason of the moral agent has to be the legislative ground for it to count as autonomous. As a result, the theological moralist’s belief that God is the legislative ground from which moral laws and their ethical demands are derived is an ethic grounded in heteronomy because, for Kant, God goes not legislate morality, the autonomous, finite, rational agent does.

Theoretical reason is incapable of determining either God’s existence or his nature. Consequently, we are concerned with faith and not knowledge. Further, our faith in God provides the autonomous, finite, rational agent with the possibility of the highest good and not the possibility of moral action, which is provided by practical reason. Because theological moralists believe that God grounds morality and not the possibility of the highest good, they also lack a practicable concept of the highest good and, as such, the ends of reason, too.

Conversely, moral theology has moral philosophy grounding its theological claims and religious commitments: ‘moral theology [Moraltheologie] ascends to a supreme intelligence, as the principle of all moral order and perfection… a conviction of the existence of a supreme being
– a conviction which bases itself on moral laws” (A632/B661). The moral law and our respect for it is a Kantian fact of reason (not at all predicated on divine volition), and this fact goes on to inform our beliefs about the nature and existence of God. The existence of the moral law, which falls under the purview of moral philosophy and not theology (because even the most militant atheist is just as aware of the moral law’s existence as the most devout theist), is the starting point from which we must derive our theological claims and religious commitments.

Kant believes that the moral law demands that we promote the highest good, which is the unification of the conditional, non-moral, final good with the unconditional, moral final good. However, such proportioning of the non-moral with the moral requires that we postulate God as the only being with the power capable of realizing this state of affairs:

[All duties] must be regarded as commands of the Supreme Being because we can hope for the highest good (to strive for which is our duty under the moral law) only from a morally perfect (holy and beneficent) and omnipotent will; and therefore, we can hope to attain it only through harmony with this will (5:129).

God becomes a postulate of pure practical reason because the highest good – which the moral law promotes – cannot be thought of as possible without first positing and putting our faith into God as the being with the power of bringing worthiness and happiness into proportion. On this telling, God does not directly incentivize moral behavior; we harmonize with God’s will through our own autonomous moral deliberations and actions. However, if we do what we should morally and adopt “a disposition of true devotion to duty,” we can “legitimately hope” that God will make good on “that what lies outside his power:”

[Reason does not leave us altogether without comfort with respect to the lack of righteousness of our own (which is valid before God). Reason says that whoever does, in a disposition of true devotion to duty, as much lies within his power to satisfy his obligation (at least in a steady approximation toward complete conformity to the law), can legitimately hope that what lies outside his power will be supplemented by the
supreme wisdom *in some way or other* (which can render permanent the disposition to this steady approximation) (6:171).

We are not obligated to bring about the highest good; we are only obligated to promote it to the best of our moral abilities. God is the only being that can bring about the highest good. And while God is in no way *obligated* to do so, God is the only agent that can make good on the ought-implies-can principle with regard to realizing the final end of reason, and if we keep up our end of the moral deal, our faith in God rationally sustains our *hope* that “the supreme wisdom *in some way or other*” will take the necessary measures for us to realize the end of reason.¹

Nevertheless, Kant understands that the divine supplementation does not necessarily stop at bringing morality and well-being into proportion; divine assistance *could* also extend to our resolute pursuit of holiness. In fact, Kant explicitly leaves the divine cooperation thesis open: “whether this cooperation only consist in the diminution of obstacles or be also a positive assistance” (6:44). Of course, Kant goes on to immediately stipulate that “the human being must nonetheless make himself antecedently worthy of receiving it” (6:44). Yet even if divine assistance is possible in our consistent pursuit of holiness (for we cannot know God and, hence, what God can or should do) Kant argues that it is in our moral best interests to *not worry about* such considerations:

[T]he presupposition of a *practical* employment of this idea [God’s direct assistance in our pursuit of holiness] is wholly self-contradictory. For the employment would presuppose a rule concerning what good we ourselves must *do* (with a particular aim [in mind]) in order to achieve something; to expect an effect of grace means, however, the

¹ For Kant, reason dictates that if something ought to happen, then it must be possible. If the unity of reason, as our final end, ought to be achieved, then it must be possible. God is essential in making this end possible. However, it would be utterly presumptuous on the part of the finite, rational agent to think that God is under some sort of obligation or duty to realize our final end. As we will see a little later in the dissertation, placing an obligation on God is a sin. The most that we can hope for is that if we live up to the unconditional mandates of the moral law to the greatest extent possible (and, thus, do not sin against God), then we have a legitimate hope that God in his infinite fairness and power might act. That is all we are entitled to hope.
very contrary, namely that the good (the morally good) is not of our doing, but that of another being – that we, therefore, can only come by it by doing nothing, and this contradicts itself. Hence, we can admit an effect of grace as something incomprehensible but cannot incorporate it into our maxims for either theoretical or practical use (6:53).

If an agent wholeheartedly believes that God’s direct assistance is the cause of achieving holiness of will, then “the good (the morally good) is not of our doing, but that of another being – that we, therefore, can only come by it by doing nothing, and this contradicts itself.” Why work at something if God will make it happen? Therefore, Kant is not ready to rule out the possibility of such assistance, yet since it is beyond theoretical reason to know if such assistance will occur and downright dangerous to practical reason to believe that such assistance will occur, it is in our moral best interest to believe that “the human being must make himself antecedently worthy.” Such worthiness falls entirely under the purview of practical reason, and without the primacy of practical philosophy, we have no rational theological grounds for the hope of any divine assistance.

At this point, I will draw some conclusions about divine assistance. First, with regard to our conversion from the bad to the good principle, there is no divine assistance. The individual agent must autonomously renounce radical evil and individually incorporate the grounding maxim to resolutely pursue holiness of the will through practical reason. Next, with regard to our resolute pursuit of holiness, Kant does not foreclose the possibility of divine assistance, but since theoretical reason cannot know this to be true and practical reason is severely hampered by positing such assistance, it is in our best moral interest to not consider such divine aid. Of course, after we have made our dispositional change and are in pursuit of holiness, we can justifiably draw on the inspiration of the Son of God’s archetypal example and rightfully utilize the power of the ethical community of the church to further the good principle over the bad. Lastly, with
regard to establishing the proportionality between morality and well-being that defines the highest good and constitutes the ends of reason, we must posit and place our faith in God as the only being capable of actualizing such a unified state of affairs. On this score, divine assistance is absolutely required.

Here is a pertinent question that requires an answer: How can we both recognize that finite, rational agents give the law to themselves, without any direct divine intervention, while also characterizing God as the perfect moral law-giver? The answer lies in Kant’s claim in the second Critique that “[r]eligion is the recognition of all duties as divine commands, not as sanctions, i.e., arbitrary and contingent ordinances of a foreign will, but as essential laws of any free will as such” (5:129). Practical reason, which is always primary for Kant, demands that we autonomously give “essential [moral] laws of any free will” to ourselves. Since finite, rational agents possess free wills, each agent understands the obligations to recognize and abide by these moral laws. In this practical philosophical sense, each finite, rational agent primarily gives the law to him or herself.

However, once agents give (and submit to) moral laws on their own behalf, these agents are rationally bound to promote the highest good, which only becomes a possibility by postulating and believing in the objects of the immortal soul and God. With these postulates and beliefs, we transition from practical philosophy to moral theology or from the strict purview of autonomous morality to how autonomous morality (which always remains primary) informs religion. When we frame our moral commitments or duties within the framework of “rational religion” we are thinking about our moral duties religiously—that is, we are representing them as divine commandments. We are representing the radical evil in our nature as disobedience of
these commands, therefore, as sin – as a wrong committed specifically against God.”

2 When we transition from pure practical reason to moral theology and place our faith in God as a morally perfect legislator, an absolutely fair judge and an unconditionally powerful agent, we also recognize that such a being has the same moral expectations of us that we have of ourselves. When we do not utilize our practical reason properly, not only are we not living up to reason’s demands (and, thereby, letting ourselves down), but we also believe that we are not living up to God’s expectations of us and, as such, committing a sin.

Therefore, from a purely philosophical and practical standpoint that answers the question – What should I do? – we alone give moral laws to ourselves. Yet when we transition to moral theology in order to answer the question What may I hope?, we still conceive of ourselves as autonomous, yet we posit the existence of a morally perfect being that has the same expectations (in the form of moral laws) that our reason individually demands of us, and we further realize that not living up to reason’s moral demands is not just an individual moral failing but also a sin against the perfect being in which we have pledged our faith.

3 Consequently, the renunciation of radical evil and the dispositional conversion are entirely on the side of the finite, rational agent, who must faithfully incorporate a maxim to pursue holiness to the greatest extent possible:

[A] human being should become not merely legally good, but morally good (pleasing to God) i.e. virtuous according to the intelligible character [of virtue] (virtus noumenon) and thus in need of no other incentive to recognize a duty except the representation of duty

2 Wood, Kant and Religion, 135.

3 For Kant, an atheist is able to answer the purely practical question of what should I do? The moral law is a fact of reason, full stop. It is unconditionally binding for both believers and non-believers alike. However, atheists would not be able to answer the rational theological question of what may I hope? Their lack of faith does not allow them to plausibly envision and hope for the ends of reason. So, for Kant, atheists can be moral (by doing their duty) but still not fully rational due to their failure to conceive of rational ends.
itself – that, so long as the foundation of the maxims of the human being remains impure, cannot be effected through the gradual reform but must rather be effected through the revolution in the disposition of the human being (a transition to the maxim of holiness of disposition). And so a ‘new man’ can come about only through a kind of rebirth, as it were a new creation... (6:47).

This revolutionary “new creation” or “rebirth” supplants the initial choice of an evil disposition, and this immutable dispositional change grounds the resolute pursuit to get ever closer to holiness. As such, this dispositional “rebirth” is the initial and utterly necessary task to becoming well-pleasing to God and potentially being imputed as holy.

When a will is divinely recognized for permanently incorporating a maxim to determinedly pursue holiness and goes on to carry out that task to the greatest extent possible (while always falling short), it is God that may benevolently forgive the gap between disposition (the will to pursue holiness) and deed (the inescapable disparity between the will and the application of the moral law) by extending grace:4

Here, then, that surplus over the merit from good works for which we felt the need earlier, one which is imputed to us by grace. For what in our earthly life (and perhaps even in all future times and in all worlds) is always only in mere becoming (namely, our being a human being well-pleasing to God) is imputed to us as if we already possessed it in full (6:75, emphases are Kant’s).

4 Kant maintains in Religion that if and when God extends grace by forgiving the inevitable difference between pure disposition and imperfect deed and imputes holiness to a person’s will, that person must be receptive to the offer: “[R]eceptivity is all that we, on our part, can attribute to ourselves, whereas a superior’s decision to grant a good for which the subordinate has no more that (moral) receptivity is called grace” (6:75n). Thus, Kant is working with two different, yet interpenetrated, aspects of grace: divine and non-divine. Divine grace occurs when God imputes the agent as holy, even though the moral action that transpires in sensibility is never to be perfected. Non-divine grace occurs when we are receptive to God’s gracious imputation. Non-divine grace is, of course, contingent on divine grace, and the relation is presumably based on the principle that a subordinate should not disagree with a superior’s decision, which is a symbolic way of saying a newly minted holy will is not entitled to disagree with a perfect being’s judgment. Considering that Kant demands that we should be receptive to God’s grace, it could be plausibly argued that the last moral choice we make is, in fact, a heteronomous act: We don’t achieve holiness autonomously; it is achieved by accepting God’s gracious imputation. This situation poses the question (that I will not take up here but will at least posit): If an ethical system that prioritizes autonomy culminates in what could plausibly be conceived of as a heteronomous act, to what extent does this potential contradiction mar the ethical system?
Kant’s recurring phrase is that a will “well-pleasing to God” has a chance at receiving grace, and by “well-pleasing to God,” Kant means a will’s unyielding commitment to pursue ever-greater virtue made possible through the radical adoption of a disposition towards holiness. However, Kant’s “as if” (als ob) illustrates that God is treating us as though we had achieved something that we did not, in fact, achieve. As Kant says, such crediting is “imputed to us as if we already possessed it in full.” Hence, God forgives the inherent disparity between disposition and deed – represented as “that surplus” – through an act of grace that imputes the adoption of a holy disposition as a diminished form of holiness, since the moral progress that must transpire within sensibility will never reach the goal of perfected holiness. Thus, imputation, which is defined by its “as if” quality, should be construed as achieving a similarity or a parallel, but similarities and parallels, no matter how profound, should not be construed as constituting the same thing.

In the Lectures on Ethics, Kant defines imputation as a “responsibility…to judge, in accordance with certain practical laws, how far an action is due to the free agency of a person…Generally speaking, responsibility is either imputed as merit (in meritum) or as offense (in demeritum).” Imputation is the responsibility to judge a person on how freely and resolutely he or she upholds practical laws, and if a person is found to be doing so freely and resolutely, the agent doing the imputing – in our case God – judges such a person to be meritorious. Therefore, when God graciously judges a will meritorious and thereby imputes holiness, he has concluded that the will has freely upheld the moral law to the greatest extent possible and accredits it “that surplus” through a divine judgment that counts the free adoption of a holy disposition that decisively strives for holiness as finally being worthy of proportional happiness.

In Religion, while examining the Son of God as the ideal for holiness in a sensible setting, Kant extends his claim by distinguishing one type of dispositional quantity the degree of which always remains deficient) from another type of dispositional quality (what can be said to be holy):

Even the purest moral disposition elicits in the human being, regarded as a worldly creature, nothing more than the continuous becoming of a subject well pleasing to God in actions (such as can be met with in the world of the senses). In quality (since it must be thought as supersensibibly grounded) this disposition can indeed be, and ought to be, holy and conformable to the archetype’s disposition. In degree, however, (in terms of its manifestations in actions) it always remains deficient and infinitely removed from that of the archetype. Nevertheless, as an intellectual unity of the whole, the disposition takes the place of perfected action, since it contains the ground of its own steady progress in remedying its deficiency (6:75n, emphases are Kant’s).

Again, when considered quantitatively or “in degree,” a human being, as a sensible creature, cannot be regarded as attaining the perfect holiness of the Son of God; the best that is available to a sensible, rational agent is becoming ever-closer to the archetype’s holiness. Hence, Kant also states in Religion that the Son of God should not be construed as providing a “proof that [is] so pure and exalted a moral goodness [that] can be practiced and attained by us” (6:64-5, the emphasis is Kant’s). However, when considered qualitatively, since the dispositional rebirth is “supersensiblly grounded” – and occurs outside of sensibility and its causality – the newly reborn disposition is “an intellectual unity of the whole” and “can indeed be, and ought to be, holy and conformable to the archetype’s disposition.” In this way, “the disposition takes the place of perfected action” because it is a unified and fully holy ground. Here's how Henry Allison describes it: “[T]his ‘whole’… turns out to be the ‘immutable Gesinnung’ of the agent, that is, the resolute disposition to achieve holiness. Consequently, Kant’s position…ends up being that
in the eyes of God this disposition… is equivalent to holiness itself.” I disagree with the equivalency claim. Imputed holiness, which is the gracious reward for sensible, rational agents that have freely upheld the moral law to the greatest extent possible, is not equivalent to holiness itself.

“As if holy” is not the same as “is holy.” Kant defines holiness as complete conformity with the moral law. Complete conformity with the moral law cannot be reducible to maxim adoption; it also has to include maxim application. As a result, no matter how purely or resolutely one adopts a maxim to pursue holiness, the application of that adoption, as Kant persistently maintains, will inevitably fall short of complete conformity with the moral law and, thus, holiness itself.

Allison’s equivalency account is echoed by Rachel Zuckert. However, Zuckert does not rely as heavily as Allison does on what Kant asserts in Religion concerning the renunciation of radical evil and a will’s dispositional rebirth. Rather, she relies more heavily on what Kant advances in the second Critique. Nevertheless, she equally puts forward an argument that God’s gracious imputation of holiness is equivalent to holiness itself.

First, here is what Kant says in the second Critique:

For a rational but finite being only endless progress from lower to higher stages of moral perfection is possible. The eternal being to whom the temporal condition is nothing, sees in what is to us an endless series the whole of conformity with the moral law, and the holiness that his command inflexibly requires in order to be commensurable with his justice in the share he determines for each in the highest good is to be found whole in a single intellectual intuition of the existence of rational beings. All that a creature can have with respect to hope for this share is consciousness of his tried disposition, so that, from the progress he has already made from the worse to the morally better and from the immutable resolution he has thereby come to know, he may hope for a further uninterrupted continuance of this progress, however long his existence may last, even

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6 Allison, Kant’s Theory of Freedom, 173.
beyond this life*; and thus he cannot hope, either here or in any foreseeable future moment of his existence, to be fully adequate to God’s will (without indulgence or dispensation, which do not harmonize with justice); he can hope to be so only in the endlessness of his duration (which God alone can survey) (5:123/4, emphasis is Kant’s).

And here's Zuckert’s interpretation:

The postulate of the immortality of the soul responds to a problem concerning the agent’s aim to perfect her own virtue. Kant argues that this aim appears not to be realizable, given human finitude: however strenuously we aim at virtue, it always remains possible to subordinate the claims of the morality to self-love; thus we are never perfectly virtuous. If we hold that our souls are immortal, however, we may understand ourselves to be engaged in endless progress toward virtue, which progress, over an infinite span of time, approximates to perfect virtue… This argument relies already (arguably) also on the postulate of God’s existence: Kant argues that God can see the infinitely approximating soul as equivalent to fully achieved virtue, as infinite approximation to the numerical value of 1 can count as 1.7

Zuckert concurs with Kant that “we are never perfectly virtuous.” As such, we never autonomously achieve holiness of the will. Hence, she employs the language “approximates to perfect virtue” and “the infinitely approximating soul.” The Cambridge English Dictionary defines “approximates” as “not completely accurate but close,” “to be almost the same as,” and “to come near in quality, amount, value, or character.”8 Thus, “approximates” designates “comes close to” or “approaches.” Furthermore, the Cambridge English Dictionary defines “equivalent” as “having the same amount, value, purpose, qualities, etc.” and “equal to or having the same effect as something else.”9 Thus, “equivalent” designates “equal” or “identical.” “Comes close to” and “approaches” should not be construed as “equal” or “identical.” Thus, there is never a 1 to 1 relationship between the disposition and duty of sensible, rational agents at any point in

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8 https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/approximate
9 https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/equivalent
time. Furthermore, even for a being with intellectual intuition such as God who is capable of a type of atemporal, integral, moral calculus, there still remains a gap between imputed holiness and holiness itself. In fact, God’s grace is a result of that gap. Hence, holiness has to wait until our incorporation into the noumenal duration of the eternal highest good.

Whether one focuses on the purity of the dispositional rebirth (like Allison) or the timespan necessary to approximate perfect virtue (like Zuckert), neither argument rises to the level of equivalency. Thus, on my account, imputed holiness is the gracious recognition that a sensible, rational agent has achieved the greatest level of virtue that is autonomously possible, and that agent is benevolently rewarded with proportional happiness. Actual holiness and its corresponding form of well-being, beatitude, will have to wait until an agent transitions into eternity and noumenal duration.

In fact, in a footnote to the passage just quoted from the second *Critique*, Kant explicitly links holiness with beatitude as our final end outside of sensibility:

Conviction of the immutability of one’s disposition in progress toward the good seems, nevertheless, to be in itself impossible for a creature. Because of this the Christian religious doctrine has it come only from the same spirit that works sanctification, i.e., this firm resolution and with it consciousness of steadfastness in moral progress. But even in a natural way, someone who is aware of having persisted through a long portion of his life up to its end in progress to the better, and this from genuine moral motives, may very well have the comforting hope, though not certitude, that even in an existence continuing beyond this life he will persevere in these principles; and although he is never justified here in his own eyes, and can never hope to be justified even given the future increase of natural perfection to which he looks forward – but with it of his duties as well – nevertheless in this progress which, though it has to do with a goal endlessly postponed, yet holds for God as possession, he can have a prospect of a future of beatitude; for this is the expression that reason employs to designate complete well-being independent of all contingent causes in the world, which, like holiness, is an idea that can be contained only in an endless progress and its totality, and hence is never fully attained by a creature (5:124, emphases are Kant’s).
Here, Kant posits “the prospect of a future beatitude” as the genuine “prospect” or legitimate future vision (hope) that an agent “can have.” Kant defines this prospect as the “complete well-being independent of all contingent causes in the world,” and, as such, this future prospect must occur in a noumenal world because it is only in such a world that such a sovereign totality can plausibly occur. Importantly, Kant immediately links this complete form of well-being with holiness: “an idea that can be contained only in an endless progress and its totality.” “Its (holiness’s) totality” designates that the endless progress as a series of discrete temporal moments culminates in the transition to a such a noumenal world. Of course, such a transition to holiness and beatitude “is never fully attained by a creature.” It takes God’s grace to make our final end, where holiness and beatitude unify, a rational hope.

Therefore, on my telling, imputed holiness is not equivalent to holiness (just as happiness proportional to imputed holiness is not equivalent to beatitude). Holiness finally removes the gap between disposition and deed, while imputed holiness is the recognition that a sensible, rational agent has autonomously closed the gap to the greatest extent possible but never completely. Thus, holiness is a totality and imputed holiness is not. Further, holiness is only attainable in a noumenal world (W4); imputed holiness is only possible for sensible, rational beings operating within an intermediary world (W3). When an agent is graciously imputed as holy, that agent receives proportional happiness. When an agent transitions into noumenal duration and holiness itself, that agent receives beatitude. Consequently, contained within God’s initial gracious imputation of holiness is the eventual transition into the transcend highest good where holiness really (and not just logically) entails beatitude in an analytic a priori relation.
The reason for this gap between disposition and deed resides in the distinction between the supersensible and the sensible. Within sensibility, there will always be a quantitative gap defined by an inevitable degree of deficiency between the moral law and its application: “[e]ven the purest moral disposition elicits in the human being, regarded as a worldly creature, nothing more than the continuous becoming of a subject well pleasing to God in actions (such as can be met with in the world of the senses).” However, within super-sensibility, which is conceived of qualitatively and not quantitatively, the quantitative gap ceases to exist, and holiness becomes possible: the “quality (since it must be thought as supersensibly grounded) [of] this disposition can indeed be, and ought to be, holy and conformable to the archetype’s disposition… as an intellectual unity of the whole… [that] contains the ground of its own steady progress in remedying its deficiency.” The supersensible or the transcendent provides the ground – “since it is thought as supersensibly grounded” – insofar as it is completely removed from the causality of nature and its sensible coordinates. Such a transcendent state of affairs allows for a “unity of the whole,” a totality that is not possible in a sensible world. Kant is only affirming the supersensible unity of a holy disposition that “can indeed be, and ought to be, holy and conformable to the archetype’s disposition,” but not the unity of disposition and deed, where a gap will always reside because sensibility is incommensurate with complete holiness (unless you are the Son of God).

For these reasons, imputed holiness falls short of holiness. The latter removes the gap between disposition and deed; the former is the recognition that a sensible, rational agent has closed the gap to the greatest extent possible. Thus, the latter is perfect; the former is not. The latter is only attainable in a transcendent world: what I have labelled W4 the former is possible
for sensible, rational beings operating within an intermediary world: what I have labelled W3. I will continue to mount arguments for the claim that when an agent is graciously imputed to be holy, contained within the gracious imputation is the guarantee of an eventual transition into a state of being – the highest good – in which finite rational agents achieve holiness and, thereby, beatitude.

Yet my immediate objective is to illustrate how the three interrelated and sequential divine acts of recognition, forgiveness and benevolence constitute God’s gracious imputation of holiness. I will further contend that God’s gracious imputation of holiness should not be understood as a form of justice.

God is the only being capable of recognizing the purity of an agent’s dispositional rebirth. As previously stated, due to their discursive cognitive capacities, finite, rational agents are incapable of knowing their dispositional rebirth. Since Kant understands the putting off of the old man and the putting on the new to occur outside of the sensible coordinates of space, time and natural causality, the necessary discursive conditions are not available to claim that we know something has happened because we can only know ourselves insofar as we appear in time as a phenomenon. Moreover, since Kant also believes that we are incapable of intellectual intuition, we necessarily have to take on personal faith that we have undergone the radical dispositional rebirth necessary for the possibility of becoming well-pleasing to God.

However, God is conceived as being entirely outside the sensible coordinates of space and time; thus, God is not confined by discursivity and is capable of intellectual intuition; as a result, God can assess the purity of our rebirth: “But because of the disposition from which it derives and which transcends the senses, we can think of the infinite progression of the good
toward conformity to the law as being judged by him who scrutinizes the heart (through his pure intellectual intuition) to be a perfected whole even with respect to the deed” (6:67). God’s intellectual intuition allows God to “scrutinize the heart.” Such non-sensible scrutiny allows God to recognize the purity of the dispositional rebirth and the consonant commitment to pursue holiness. With this divine assessment, the agent is recognized to have done everything in their practical powers to achieve holiness of will. In this sense, there is no more that the agent can do to realize their moral capacities more fully. As such, God’s gracious imputation of holiness begins with a form of divine recognition.

For Kant, as Wood reminds us, God’s merciful imputation of holiness to agents who are unable to attain such a perfection on their own constitutes a form of forgiveness, which he contends is the sole and central aspect of grace:

Man justifies himself insofar as he does everything in his power to become good; but God, for the sake of man’s disposition to holiness, forgives him the evil, which is not in his power to undo, and by this justifying verdict renders the disposition equivalent to moral perfection, which is the unconditioned component of the highest good.\(^{10}\)

Agents cannot erase their initial maxim towards evil any more than they can erase all the instances in which they did not live up to the mandates of the moral law. These prior infractions do not disappear with the dispositional revolution. On Wood’s account, they require divine forgiveness. Wood goes on to claim that we put our trust in such a forgiving God: “In faith, the moral agent places his rational trust not only in God’s beneficence as world-creator and wise providence as world-ruler, but also in God’s forgiveness as the moral judge and loving and

merciful Father of mankind.”  

Ultimately, Wood argues that what rationally sustains our hope to realize the highest good is our trust in a forgiving God. Approximately, fifty-years later in *Kant and Religion*, Wood makes the very same claim: “The moral structure of Kant’s account of divine grace can be seen to be exactly the same as that of an important moral phenomenon we easily recognize in human life and that we call forgiveness.”

I agree with Wood that God’s gracious imputation of holiness contains the type of forgiveness that he depicts, yet it is not reducible to forgiveness. As I have already stated, a type of divine recognition through intellectual intuition precedes divine forgiveness, and as I will argue next, an act of divine benevolence follows divine forgiveness.

Kant finds it advantageous to examine benevolence insofar as it contrasts with justice:

God’s justice is usually divided into a *justitiam remunerativam et punitivam*, according as God punishes evil and rewards good. But the rewards God bestows on us proceed not from his justice but from his benevolence. For if they came to us from justice, then there would be no *premia gratuita*, but rather we would have to possess some right to demand them, and God would have to be bound to give them to us. Justice gives nothing gratuitously; it gives to each only the merited reward. But even if we unceasingly observe all moral laws, we can never do more than is our duty; hence we can never expect rewards from God’s justice (28:1085).

One pleads for justice: it is a demand that one makes based on a merit that has been achieved. However, as we have seen, God’s gracious imputation of holiness closes the gap between

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11 Ibid., 248.

12 It is interesting that Wood uses the word “trust” here instead of “faith.” Faith works better in this context. I am not sure why Wood made this decision.

13 Allen Wood, *Kant and Religion*, 135 (the emphases are Wood’s).

14 Kant believes that we are not supposed to make any demands on God. On Kant’s account, God is not under any obligation to extend grace. As we shall see, God’s extension of grace is comprised of three sequential and interrelated divine acts: recognition (i.e., judgment), forgiveness and benevolence. For Kant, to put obligations on God is both presumptuous and a sin.
disposition and deed, and since we can never realize holiness on our own accord because of the unimpeachable gap, we are not justified in claiming merit. Since we are inevitably insufficient on this score, justice, which does not concern itself with rewards, would be called on to identify, condemn and ultimately punish such insufficiency. This is made clear when Kant unambiguously says the following about God and justice: “His justice is concerned only with punishments” (28:1086). Since Kant casts justice exclusively in the punitive, it is not in our best interests to hope exclusively for justice with regard to God’s gracious imputation because the ruling will not benefit us in the least.

Benevolence, on the other hand, does not require merit. In fact, it’s precisely the opposite: benevolence is predicated on the realization that one has not fully achieved something (in our case, a perfected will); however, one is, nevertheless, rewarded through an act of kindness or good will by the judge (in our case, by God). Kant says that “God punishes evil and rewards good,” as well as “the rewards God bestows on us proceed not from his justice but from his benevolence.” Therefore, rewards proceed from benevolence, and God rewards the good; thus, benevolence is the rewarding of the good. However, benevolence also entails the realization that one has not fully achieved something, which poses the question: How can this lack or incompleteness with regard to achievement still be a good worthy of reward through benevolence? There is a tension here that needs to be resolved.

Kant defines divine benevolence as “an immediate well-pleasedness with the welfare of others” (28:1076). Thus, when we are found worthy and well-pleasing to God, benevolence is the order of the day. Kant further says that “benevolence… is the special idea whose object is

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15 This may be connected to the fact that the duty of benevolence is imperfect rather than a perfect duty.
happiness… Benevolence in and of itself is without limit, but it has to express itself in the apportionment of happiness according to the proportion of worthiness in the subject” (28:1074, emphases are Kant’s). Here Kant explicitly links benevolence to the highest good; benevolence is tantamount (“it expresses itself”) to God proportioning happiness to worthiness, the state of affairs that defines the highest good. Therefore, one may hope that when God recognizes (through intellectual intuition) that an agent has taken the moral journey toward holiness as far as possible, God may forgive the inevitable gap between disposition and deed and benevolently impute holiness to such a well-pleasing agent. Understood in this way, God’s gracious imputation of holiness, which is a divine reward, is a benevolently divine act.

My account of God’s grace, therefore, has three sequential and interrelating divine acts. It starts with the act of divine recognition (which is an act that can only be done by God through intellectual intuition) of our worthiness, which allows us to become well-pleasing. Without God’s initial recognition that an agent has autonomously achieved the level of morality necessary to render that agent well-pleasing, then the following divine acts of forgiveness and benevolence are not on offer. Thus, the act of divine recognition grounds the next act of divine forgiveness: since an agent has done everything in his or her power to achieve holiness, God forgives such agents for their initial adoption of the evil maxim and the remaining instances when they have not lived up to the moral law throughout their resolute struggle. Therefore, the act of divine forgiveness presupposes the prior act of divine recognition. Lastly, once agents have been recognized for their moral worthiness and forgiven for their past transgressions, God, in an act of divine benevolence, rewards the agent by graciously imputing holiness to the agent.
And since benevolence’s “object is happiness according to the proportion of worthiness in the subject,” the reward is admission into W3.

This tripartite divine intervention provides further evidence that imputed holiness is not equivalent to holiness itself. The last two divine acts – that of forgiveness and benevolence – would not be necessary if God assessed an agent’s will through intellectual intuition as perfectly holy. The very fact that forgiveness and benevolence are necessary is proof that the gap between disposition and deed remains, but God graciously forgives the existing gap and benevolently treats that agent “as if” they were holy. Even though justice plays no role in the account I just advanced, it does not disappear from Kant’s philosophy. Justice is meted out to the agents who do not convert from the bad to the good principle and thereby choose not to resolutely strive toward holiness. Put simply, justice is applicable to agents who choose to remain radically evil.

Furthermore, and importantly, God remains an object of faith in W3, which is another way of saying that no one knows they have been graciously imputed to be holy. Because the beings in this penultimate Kingdom of Ends retain their discursive understandings and are operating within a world that remains sensibility conditioned, God must continue to be unknowable absolute totality and, thereby, a putative object of that still demands our faith.

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There has been a long-running disagreement within the secondary literature about whether finite, rational agents, due to their intelligible and sensible characters, operate in one world (the two-aspect interpretation) or two worlds (the two-world interpretation): “two-world interpretations regard things in themselves and appearances as two numerically distinct entities, whereas two-aspect interpretations take this distinction as one between two aspects of the same
thing.”16 I will essentially bracket the particular arguments for both sides because they are not
directly germane to my objectives. Nevertheless, even the most militant two-aspect advocates
have to acknowledge that, ultimately, Kant is an implicit multiple-world theorist.

In fact, I consider myself to be a two-aspect advocate. Moreover, I do not think that such
a position is incompatible with a multiple world system. Just because sensible, rational beings
have an empirical and intelligible character does not mean they are operating in two separate or
distinct worlds. For example, I am operating in one world; it is a phenomenal world (W1).
However, my intelligible character (which results from my being endowed with reason) allows
me not to be fully determined by (or reducible to) the natural laws of the world in which I am
operating. Thus, sensible rational creatures have an intelligible aspect that allows them not to be
reducible to the natural laws of the phenomenal world. Hence, the empirical and intelligible
characters are two aspects of one sensible rational being operating in one phenomenal world.
This sensible, rational situation remains in W2 and W3: that is, agents in these next two worlds
still retain sensible and intelligible characters (hence, two-aspect theory applies to my first three
worlds). In W2, an agent has to continuously privilege the rational over the sensible in order to
illustrate moral progress. In W3, the sensible and the rational finally realize proportionality
through God’s assistance. Of course, W4 has the agent transitioned out of time and into
noumenal world of pure reason. Here, the two-aspect character is finally jettisoned because
sensibility ceases to exist. In this world only rational beings exist. All this is to say that two-
aspect commentators (like myself) can still logically affirm a multiple world system.

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16 Michael Oberst, “Two Worlds and Two Aspects: On Kant’s Distinction between Things in Themselves
and Appearances.” *Kantian Review* 20, no. 1 (2015): 53. This essay does an excellent job of dissecting each camp’s
position.
Without question, secularists find such multiple-world talk unacceptable. For example, Andrews Reath finds it unacceptable that the “state of affairs [the highest good]… comes about in another world through the activity of God.”\textsuperscript{17} There’s a reason why Kant goes from positing God as a transcendental idea of reason that can be thought without contradiction to a postulate of pure practical reason that represents an actual object that deserves our faith, and the reason is that God is the only object that can bring about \textit{a world} where the moral and the non-moral find proportionality. But secularists like Reath want none of that. He and other secularists, such as Yovel, are simply unwilling to countenance “the existence of another world in which a system for distributing happiness in proportion to virtue is already in place” and thus posits the highest good as a state of affairs achievable in this world.\textsuperscript{18} Conversely, as a non-secularist commentator on Kant, I fully uphold the position that Kant’s philosophy demands the acknowledgment of multiple worlds: an acknowledgement that has not received nearly enough attention in the secondary literature but will play a prominent role in the remainder of this dissertation. Transitioning from one world to another would have to occur for the highest goods to be realized. Hence, I am attempting to logically \textit{think} the objects of these possible worlds and the transitions from one world to the next as clearly as possible.

Kant advances two justifications for what is empirically possible: \textit{logical} and \textit{real} possibilities. A real possibility is ground in our \textit{a priori} conditions of experience: time and space on the side of sensibility, the categories on the side of the understanding, and the schematizing power of the imagination which brings sensibility and the understanding together. These

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Andrews Reath, “Two Conceptions of the Highest Good in Kant,” 601.
\item Ibid., 602.
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\end{footnotesize}
possibilities concern our representations of the world as we actually experience it, while logical possibilities can transpire outside of experience.¹⁹ A logical possibility is one that can be thought without contradiction: it is grounded in sufficient reason for assertoric judgments and the principle of the excluded middle for apodictic judgments. Real possibilities concern objects of possible experience within W1. Logical possibilities concern the thinking of objects that fall outside of phenomenal experience without contradiction in all logically possible worlds. Consequently, my last three proposed worlds fall under the category of what is logically possible, and I am arguing that a broad acceptance of Kant’s moral project justifies thinking about objects in these following logically possible worlds as clearly as possible.

Moreover, even though we can theoretically conceive of a world as a coherent idea, until a world becomes a practically necessary condition for unifying the ends of reason and establishing the plausibility of the highest good, it will remain a practically empty pure concept. Kant endorses a belief in a future world when he advances the practical need for a future life made possible by the immortal soul postulate. A future life implies a future world because it is presumably in this interrelated future life and world that an agent attempts to become well-pleasing to God through the resolute pursuit of holiness. Hence, a belief in a future life contains within it a belief in a future world. As a result, my four proposed worlds are not only logically possible, but they are also practically necessary for the possibility of unifying the ends of reason.

To conclude this chapter, I will rehearse the salient feature of my four worlds.

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¹⁹ For more information on this issue, consult Chapter Seven of Kant’s *Introduction to Logic* (New York: Barnes & Noble Publishing, 2005), 48-56.
World One: The first world transpires on earth. It is “the mathematical whole of all appearances and the totality of their synthesis” (A418/B446). It is a cosmological object and not an object of possible experience. Thereby, it cannot be said to constitute an object of possible experience; as such, it cannot be known to exist for us. Time and space are transcendentally ideal. In this phenomenal world, there is no logical or real coincidence between virtue and happiness. Kant does not think that it is possible for finite, rational agents to become well-pleasing to God during this time in this world: “the shortness of life [is] so ill-suited to it [approximating holiness], there is likewise to be found sufficient ground for a doctrinal belief in the future life of the human soul” (A827/B855). If he did, he would not need to advance the postulate of the immortal soul. Yet, much of what Kant says in Religion (and elsewhere) suggests that the renunciation of radical evil through the adoption of the good principle *should occur* within this initial world through the transformational rebirth; however, to say anything more specific on this score would be overly speculative. Nevertheless, in phenomenal W1, sensible, rational beings are confined by the material death of the body; hence, it cannot provide for the possibility continuous moral progress necessary for the possibility of becoming well-pleasing to God. A rational faith in God and the immortal soul sustains the hope of the standard and eternal highest goods in future worlds.

World Two: This is the first intermediary world, as it begins to bridge phenomenal W1 and noumenal W4. It is the second phenomenal world. Thereby, it cannot be said to constitute an object of possible experience; as such, it cannot be known to exist for us. Time and space remain transcendentally ideal. This world is populated by sensible, rational agents with discursive understandings. In this world, there is still not a logical or a real coincidence between virtue and
happiness, as it allows for continuous moral progress and the potential for agents to be found well-pleasing to God. Therefore, this world, as I have attempted to illustrate by utilizing established Kantian principles, operates very much like the first.

However, there is a fundamental difference that separates W2 from W1: this world is not defined by the horizon of bodily death; rather, it is defined by an embodied agent’s potential to exhibit continuous moral progress. Hence, the moral law continues to demand that happiness must remain subordinate to worthiness in W2. The way that nature is divinely designed in W1 makes such bodies impossible in the first phenomenal world. God is the only being capable of creating and sustaining the state of affairs that apply in W2, which enables embodied, sensible, rational agents operating within an empirical setting to continuously strive to be ever-less pathological in their moral endeavors. In this way, the divine activity operating in W2 exceeds that of W1. Because agents in this world retain their discursive understandings, a rational faith in God and the immortal soul sustains the hope of the standard and eternal highest goods in future worlds.

**World Three:** This is the second intermediary world, as it continues to bridge phenomenal W1 and noumenal W4, and it is third phenomenal world that represents the standard account of the highest good, as happiness is finally proportioned to the greatest level of virtue possible for sensible, rational beings through God’s synthesizing power. It still cannot be said to constitute an object of possible experience; time and space remain transcendentally ideal, and this world remains populated by sensible, rational agents with discursive understandings.

When a sensible, rational agent has been graciously imputed as holy, due to their exemplary moral behavior in W2, that agent transitions into W3 where God synthesizes imputed
holiness and happiness. However, as I have contended throughout, because happiness
(Glückseligkeit), which is irrevocably sensible for Kant, is proportioned to imputed holiness, this
world also requires sensibly conditioned, resurrected bodies because the empirical satisfaction of
the inclinations that defines happiness requires it. The divine grounding of both the resurrected
bodies and the proportioning of happiness and imputed holiness complicate labelling this world’s
highest good as immanent. Thus, I have utilized the phrase standard account to describe the
penultimate highest good in this world.

Furthermore, as I argued, this is a world of imputed holiness and not holiness itself: it is
Kant’s “as if” (als ob) that defines this world and the conditions of the agents’ wills within it.
Specifically, God treats agents as if they have achieved something that they really did not. As
Kant says, such crediting is “imputed to us as if we already possessed it in full” (6:75). Thus,
imputed holiness results from God’s conclusion that a finite, rational agent has attained the
highest level of virtue possible for such a being. As I have contended, holiness and sensibility are
really incompatible for everyone except for the Son of God. Thus, the mystery of the incarnation
represents the only instance of holiness (and beatitude) existing within sensibility. W3 is my
attempt to solve the holiness/happiness problem that has consistently plagued the secondary
literature by replacing holiness with imputed holiness and situating this highest good in a
phenomenal world that allows for the experience of empirical satisfaction.

Even though God proportions happiness to worthiness in W3 (as well as sustaining the
resurrected bodies), it is important to recognize that God remains an object of faith in this world.
Only beings possessing intellectual intuition could know God. However, agents in W3 remain
sensible, rational beings with discursive understandings. This would have to be the case because
only such beings could experience sensible happiness proportional to rational duty; hence, God must remain an object of faith in W3.

However, W3 is *neither* the final end of reason *nor* the final world. In *Religion*, Kant makes it clear that he is more than willing to jettison “the psychological and cosmological materialisms” (6:129n) of body and world, and in “The End of All Things,” he also forthrightly recognizes that the ultimate end of reason prompts sensible, rational agents outside of temporality and sensibility altogether. Therefore, W3 represents the penultimate highest good.

**World Four:** The last world that Kant posits is fully supersensible. Since appearances have to be in time, and this world is not temporally conditioned, W4 is a noumenal world of ends and things in themselves governed by the pure spontaneity of the understanding and reason.\(^{20}\) Hence, in this world, synthesis ceases to exist. I will go on to argue later in the dissertation that knowledge of God as well as knowledge of ourselves as ends in themselves is finally attained in this world. Therefore, in this eternal highest good where holiness analytically entails beatitude, faith is finally jettisoned along with our discursive understandings.

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\(^{20}\) In fact, at this point, it might not be necessary to even recognize this distinction.
CHAPTER FOUR
WELL-BEING, DESIRE AND THE HIGHEST GOOD

Sensible, rational agents desire well-being. This chapter examines the various forms of well-being and their relationship to the faculty of desire. I will begin by surveying happiness and moral contentment as two forms of well-being that sensible, rational beings desire. I will then quickly survey Kant’s three mental faculties, with the goal of illustrating that the faculty of desire, which is determined by the primacy of practical reason (achieving representations of how things ought to be), is our primary mental faculty. Specifically, our desire to achieve the highest good, in both its standard and eternal forms, which are two representations of how things ought to be, is a higher form of desire when compared to our sensible desire to immediately satisfy our inclinations and experience happiness. As such, our desire to realize our greatest objects of desire, which is the highest level of virtue possible and proportional happiness followed by beatitude, compels us – under the jurisdiction and primacy of the moral law – to rationally subordinate happiness to duty.

A primary claim of this chapter is that as agents resolutely strive to become increasingly holy by subordinating happiness to duty, they choose to subordinate their sensible desire for empirical satisfaction to the higher form of moral desire to potentially realize their greatest objects of desire – the two sequential forms of the highest good. Thus, by placing our moral duty over sensible satisfaction (which privileges rational desire and moral contentment over empirical desire and happiness), happiness unavoidably takes a continuous “back seat” to morality in W2.
During this “endless” process of deferring happiness until we are worthy of it, agents become increasingly more adept (and presumably more comfortable) in choosing to deny their sensible desires when situations demand it.

Thus, this chapter will interrogate the following questions: If Kant’s potentially unending process has happiness becoming progressively less desirable to agents because it represents a lower form of desire when compared to their rational desire for representations of how things ought to be achieved through freedom, is it contradictory for Kant to then place happiness finally on a reciprocal footing with holiness in W3? Put a little differently, would agents that have become all the more content in subordinating their happiness to duty continue to hope for happiness proportional to worthiness?

Kant answers “yes.” In fact, if one surveys Kant’s writings, the standard account of the highest good, with the synthetic proportionality between worthiness and happiness, is the conception that gets, by far, his most attention. In this chapter I will maintain that the consistent subordinating of happiness to duty in W2, which is so central to Kant’s account of pursuing holiness of will, posits a trajectory away from sensible happiness and ever closer to supersensible beatitude. Nevertheless, this trajectory towards beatitude does not extinguish a sensible, rational being’s desire for happiness to be proportioned to duty, which is a desire that sensible, rational beings cannot extirpate. Hence, there is a pervasively quixotic aspect to Kant’s immortal soul postulate that should be acknowledged: as agents strive to do their duty, which requires privileging worthiness over happiness when necessary and, thereby, indefinitely subordinating happiness itself, it is *happiness itself* that is the non-moral good contingent on such moral action.
The claim is essentially that if one necessarily denies something long enough, that which has been intentionally denied will make the profoundest reward.

Kant distinguishes three forms of well-being: happiness (Glückseligkeit), contentment (Zufriedenheit) or self-contentment (Seibstzufriedenheit) and beatitude (Seligkeit). Strictly speaking, the last two forms of well-being are not really happiness because they are forms of contentment referring to a person’s intelligible nature. Self-contentment is the moral satisfaction that results from exhibiting ever-greater respect for the moral law by placing one’s duty over inclination. It can be said that self-contentment represents a partial independence from inclination. Beatitude is complete independence from inclination and contingency, which is an absolute well-being only applicable to the non-temporal, noumenal duration of eternity. Since beatitude requires independence from sensible conditions and happiness requires dependence on sensible conditions, it would be illogical to refer to beatitude as a type of happiness. As a result, I understand happiness, self-contentment and beatitude to be distinct forms of well-being: the first utterly dependent on sensibility; the second somewhat independent of sensibility, and the third utterly independent of sensibility.

In the first *Critique*, Kant defines happiness as “the satisfaction of all our inclinations” (A806/B834). In essentially the same language, Kant defines happiness in the *Groundwork* as “the sum of satisfaction of all inclinations” (4:399). In the second *Critique*, Kant says, “[a]ll the inclinations together (which can be brought into a tolerable system and the satisfaction of which is then called one’s happiness) constitute regard for oneself” (5:73). In *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant says that happiness “consists in satisfaction with what nature bestows” (6:387).
Similarly, in *Religion*, Kant says, inclinations “harmonized into a whole [is] called happiness” (6:58).

As is clear from these statements on happiness, defining it requires an additional understanding of what Kant means by “inclination” because the experience of happiness cannot be divorced from inclination. In the *Groundwork*, Kant defines inclination as “the dependence of the faculty of desire on sensation… and this accordingly always indicates a need” (4:414n, emphasis is Kant’s). In *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant says that “habitual desire is called *inclination*” (6:212, emphasis is Kant’s). Inclinations are habituated empirical desires that sensible, rational beings represent as a system of empirical needs; the satisfaction of these habituated empirical desires elicits the sensation of pleasure, which contributes to the experience of happiness with one’s empirical condition.

Even though Kant recognizes that humans naturally possess empirical desires and wish for their satisfaction, he does not reduce humanity to such a heteronomous condition because it would negate any meaningful conception of both freedom and morality. Howard Caygill provides a clear explanation:

> [F]or Kant to possess a will determined exclusively by inclination is to be without spontaneity, merely reacting to stimuli, a condition Kant describes as ‘animal choice (*arbitrium brutum*).’ Human choice can be affected but not determined by inclination, which for Kant serves only to undermine the freedom of the will. Inclination, then, is the source of heteronomy of the will, namely its determination by objects outside of the will; in its case the will ‘does not give itself the law, but the object does so because of its relationship to the will.’ The objects of inclination have only a ‘conditioned value;’ that is, they are not desired ‘for their own sake’ but only for the sake of satisfying ends outside of them, namely the needs of inclination. This for Kant makes them unworthy to serve as principles of moral judgement.¹

The spontaneity of reason, which grounds our intelligible character and is synonymous with the causality of freedom, allows sensible, rational beings to autonomously initiate a new causal chain of events, thus freeing them from the causality of nature. If we were solely determined by empirical objects and their natural causality, we would be reduced to (and indistinguishable from) mere heteronomous animals unable to transcend the natural causality that governs inclination. If this were the case, there’s room for neither freedom nor the morality that it affords. Hence, Kant is completely open to humans being “affected” but not “determined” by inclination: as sensible agents, we cannot eliminate the natural pull of inclination toward pleasurable experiences, but as rational agents, we can rationally free ourselves from their natural pull when the moral law demands that we place duty over happiness. That is how things ought to be.

To be sure, Kant does not advance a cohesive account about how sensible, rational beings are affected by inclination. For example, in some instances, Kant claims that inclinations are good, yet in other instances, he claims that they are burdensome. In Religion Kant says, “Considered in themselves, natural inclinations are good, i.e., not reprehensible, and to want to extirpate them would not only be futile but harmful and blameworthy as well; we must rather only curb them, so that they will not wear each other out but will instead be harmonized into a whole called happiness” (6:58). Conversely, he says this in the Groundwork: “inclinations themselves, as sources of needs, are so far from having an absolute value to make them desirable for their own sake that it must rather be a universal wish of every rational being to be wholly free of them” (4:428). Similarly, in the second Critique, he says, “[f]or the inclinations change, grow with the indulgence one allows them, and always leave behind a still greater void than one had thought to fill. Hence, they are always burdensome to a rational being, and though he cannot lay
them aside, they wrest from him the wish to be rid of them” (5:118). Even though these citations conflict, what we know for sure is that when one does not heed the moral law and act from duty, the inclinations should not be blamed for the failure to act morally. It is not the inclinations’ fault for immoral behavior because it is not nature’s fault that we do not utilize our freedom; it is the fault of the rational agent qua rational agent to not adequately privilege moral obligation and utilize the spontaneity of reason that grounds the freedom that defines our intelligible character.

Thus, happiness, the experience of pleasure that results from satisfying the empirical needs that are our inclinations, is a conditional good. Moreover, in any world in which happiness is attainable, the material conditions necessary for its realization – a natural world and a human body – would also have to exist. Finally, from a practical standpoint, the desire to be happy should never be renounced; it should only be subordinated to duty when a situation demands.²

This subordination poses a question: What affirmative rational feeling does one experience when happiness is subordinated to duty? Kant’s answer is contentment (Zufriedenheit) or self-contentment (Selbstzufriedenheit).³ As far as I can tell, the only difference between these two terms is that Zufriedenheit does not refer back to a specific person; it simply

² In The Metaphysics of Morals, Kant derides “monkish ascetics” (6:485) who consciously seek to avoid the experience of happiness even if there is not a moral issue at stake. For Kant, happiness should only be subordinated if it interferes with morality: “Ethical gymnastics, therefore, consists only in combatting natural impulses sufficiently to be able to master them when a situation comes up in which they threaten morality” (6:485). If happiness is not pitted against duty, then the experience of happiness should be welcomed and enjoyed. For Kant, a constant and conscious shunning of happiness is simply not virtuous behavior. The root of Glückseligkeit (happiness) is Glück, which translates to both “luck” or “fortune.” Every human life in the first two worlds, even ones that are full of hardship, will have its share of luck and fortune, and there is no good reason to punish oneself by not being open and accepting of them if and when they become available.

³ I say “affirmative rational feeling” because one could also empirically suffer by placing duty over happiness. However, the simultaneous experiences of sensible pain and rational affirmation are not in conflict. Kant clearly understands that doing one’s duty may be accompanied by empirical distress.
denotes general contentment or satisfaction.\textsuperscript{4} Thus, \emph{Selbstzufriedenheit} differs from \emph{Zufriedenheit} only in so far as it is always self-referential: “Have we not, however, a word that does not denote enjoyment, as the word happiness does, but that nevertheless indicates a satisfaction with one’s existence, an analogue of happiness that must necessarily accompany consciousness of virtue? Yes! The word is \emph{contentment with oneself (Selbstzufriedenheit)}” (5:117). Since both words denote the same content, Kant tends to use the two words interchangeably, even though the more precise term that refers back to the specific person experiencing the contentment is \emph{Selbstzufriedenheit}.

Even though Kant says that self-contentment is an “analogue of happiness,” he forcefully distinguishes it from happiness:

\begin{quotation}
[\textit{W}]e can understand how consciousness of this ability of pure practical reason (virtue) can in fact produce consciousness of mastery over one’s inclinations, hence independence from them and so too from the discontent that always accompanies them, and thus can produce a negative satisfaction with one’s state, that is, \emph{contentment}, which in its source is contentment with one’s person. Freedom itself becomes in this way (namely indirectly) capable of an enjoyment, which cannot be called happiness because it does not depend upon the positive concurrence of a feeling… (5:119, emphasis is Kant’s).
\end{quotation}

Self-contentment is the experience of negative satisfaction when agents are conscious of their promotion of duty over the positive satisfaction of happiness. Thus, as a form of negative moral satisfaction, it \textit{comes at the expense} of happiness because it represents the “consciousness of mastery over one’s inclinations, hence independence from them.” To be clear, even the most morally successful sensible, rational agent can never be \textit{fully independent} from inclination; since contentment \textit{comes at the expense} of our inclinations, there remains a negative relationship between contentment and inclination. Beatitude, as a supersensible condition, is the only form of

\textsuperscript{4} Please consult the “Glossary” to Immanuel Kant, \textit{Practical Philosophy}, 650.
self-contentment that is fully independent of inclination. This form of well-being will be a central focus later in the dissertation. Nonetheless, self-contentment is not an experience of sensible satisfaction; rather, it is a cognitive recognition that elicits a moral satisfaction produced by doing one’s duty. When we place duty over happiness, we are privileging practical reason over mere sensible pleasure by freeing ourselves from being controlled by the brute causal machinations of nature, which is how things merely are and how they necessarily ought to be. Lastly, when Kant suggests that self-contentment is “an analogue of happiness,” he is merely claiming that self-contentment is a type of cognitive well-being that accompanies virtuous action. Consequently, happiness and self-contentment’s similarities lie simply in that they are two forms of well-being, but that is where the similarities end because happiness is empirically grounded in the sensibility of the natural world and contentment is intellectually grounded in the intelligibility of practical reason.

Kant goes on to say that self-contentment “is analogous to the self-sufficiency that can be ascribed only to the supreme being” (5:119). Thus, the Son of God, who had absolute mastery over the inclinations, could be characterized as perfectly self-content. Whenever we place duty over happiness, we are behaving analogously to the Son of God. The “determination of one’s will… be[ing] held free from their [the inclinations] influence” (5:119) is to behave in keeping with the archetype. For Kant, when one acts in this divinely-inspired, self-sufficient manner, one can rightly feel a moral “contentment with oneself.”

Does this form of moral contentment or negative satisfaction with oneself pose a larger moral problem? Kant is very clear that an action can only be deemed moral when it is undertaken solely for the sake of duty and not for dessert. However, if there is a corresponding form of
contentment that accompanies doing one’s duty, does this contentment threaten the very concept of duty? Might one act dutifully solely for the sake of experiencing moral satisfaction instead of for the sake of doing one’s duty? If so, does moral contentment threaten to become the ground of obligation? Kant believes that we should not worry too much about such questions:

[O]ne must first value the importance of what we call duty, the authority of the moral law, and the immediate worth that compliance with it gives a person in his own eyes, in order to feel that satisfaction in consciousness of one’s conformity with it and bitter remorse if one can reproach oneself with having transgressed it. Thus one cannot feel such satisfaction or mental unease prior to cognition of obligation and cannot make it the basis of the latter. (5:38)

Kant’s answer is the self-contentment that we rationally feel always presupposes the awareness of fulfilling our obligation to the moral law. That is, we could not experience any self-contentment unless we have first put moral duty over sensible happiness. This privileging of duty is what elicits self-contentment: if one places duty over happiness, then one is likely to experience moral satisfaction or self-contentment. If one does not place duty over happiness, then there is no moral satisfaction or self-contentment to be had. As Kant observes, a reason villains secretly wish that they were good people is because they cannot experience the contentment of following the moral law. There is a causality at work that delegitimizes the questions about self-contentment threatening to become the ground of obligation: for Kant, there can be no self-contentment (which is the cognitive effect issuing from the free assessment of one’s dispositions) unless one believes that duty has been put first (which serves as a cause of the

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5 Here we should, again, keep in mind that Kant believes that we cannot ever be entirely sure of our motives when placing morality over happiness. As I have said a few times already in the dissertation, there is a real sense in which that we have to put faith in ourselves that our motives are moral. And this faith in ourselves gives even more power to Kant’s famous statement that he had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith. Faith does not merely concern a rational belief in God, it also concerns a rational belief in ourselves.
What I find interesting is that there is a clear association between doing one’s duty and the corresponding negative satisfaction of moral self-contentment. However, this clear association does not exist between doing one’s duty and experiencing the corresponding positive satisfaction of happiness. Why is the former connection possible for finite, rational agents operating in a natural world, while the latter remains forever elusive for the very same agents in the very same setting? The central reason there is a connection between duty and self-contentment is that they are both grounded in our intelligible character. Doing one’s duty is inseparable from exercising one’s freedom over the inclinations: as beings with an intelligible character, we are morally capable of transcending the causality of nature through the causality of freedom. Self-contentment – when we judge ourselves to have respected the moral law and are pleased by the good report card that we can give ourselves – is the “enjoyment that cannot be called happiness because it does not depend upon the positive concurrence of a feeling.” Non-rational animals are incapable of experiencing such rational well-being because they only possess an empirical character determined solely by sensible objects and natural causality. Thus, non-rational animals may experience happiness but will never cognitively experience moral satisfaction as a form of rational self-contentment. As such, self-contentment depends entirely on us as rational beings that possess practical reason and are, thus, able to place moral considerations over their sensible counterparts, whereas happiness depends on us as sensible beings subject to the causal laws of nature itself. The former is fully within our control, while the latter is not.
In his essay, “Kant on Moral Satisfaction,” Michael Walschots says that the self-contentment elicited by acting dutifully “is rarely discussed in the literature.” Walschots’ assessment is correct. Furthermore, this absence within the secondary literature is odd because this type of contentment becomes more justified as one strives to get progressively closer to holiness by placing duty over happiness.

I will examine this issue through the lens of the faculty of desire: since desire presupposes duty and self-contentment presupposes desire, desire finds itself as an intermediary term in the chain of duty, desire and self-contentment. At root, we rationally desire representations of states of affairs or objects of how things ought to be that, if satisfied, occasion well-being; however, all states of affairs or objects of desire are not created equal for Kant. As has been established, our desire for sensible objects is rational (it is reasonable to want our sensible needs met), yet such desire is not ethical: the moral law commands us to be moral, even if it comes at the expense of happiness. Nevertheless, our desire for rational states of affairs or moral objects, especially the highest good as the final state of affairs and our greatest object of desire, is of a higher form because such desire is ethical and, thus, must take priority over satisfying our sensible desires. Hence, rational desires for how things ought to be are ethical and can readily be incorporated into our maxims. In this way, moral duty and rational desire – while never on an equal footing, insofar as the promotion of the highest good is a consequence of our duty to follow the moral law – are both determined by reason and fully compatible.

Kant understands that finite, rational beings possess three mental faculties: cognition (which falls under the purview of the first Critique), desire (which falls under the purview of the

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second *Critique*) and feeling (which falls under the purview of the third *Critique*). As Tim Jankowiak states, each mental faculty generates specific representations of objects:

- Cognition generates representations of objects (how things are). Desire generates representations aimed at making their objects actual (how things ought to be). And feeling generates pleasurable and dis-pleasurable representations (how things are for me).
- All three faculties are further subdivided into higher and lower forms, with the higher manifestations of the faculties spontaneously generating *a priori* representations, and the lower enabling passively received empirical representations.\(^7\)

The faculty of cognition determines knowledge of objects of possible experience. The faculty of desire represents both sensible objects of experience as well as intelligible objects of practical reason; thus, this faculty has both rational and empirical objectives of representing and securing *how things ought to be*, with the former taking priority when morally necessary. The faculty of feeling concerns the pleasure or pain agents experience either through a sensuous engagement with a sensible object or a moral engagement with an intelligible object.

The faculty of cognition has *the understanding as the determining faculty* with the imagination providing the schematism between sensibility and understanding. The faculty of desire has *reason as the determining faculty* with the understanding supplying a “typic:” the idea of a law of nature that plays a crucial role in the first formulation of the categorical imperative, which relates an idea of an unconditioned practical principle to specific moral action. The faculty of feeling has *no specific faculty playing a mediating role*; rather, the three faculties are either freed to enter into a harmonious accord in a reflective judgment of the beautiful, or reason pushes the imagination to distressing limits with a reflective judgment of the sublime. Yet both

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\(^7\) This quotation is taken from Tim Jankowiak’s review in the *Notre Dame Philosophical Review of Kant and the Faculty of Feeling*, edited by Kelly Sorensen and Diane Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). https://ndpr.nd.edu/reviews/kant-and-the-faculty-of-feeling/
ultimately culminate in the faculty of cognition determined by the understanding ceding prominence to the faculty of desire determined by reason. Gilles Deleuze offers a clear explanation of this transition:

If we consider the interests of reason which correspond to the two forms of reflective judgment, we rediscover the theme of ‘preparation,’ but in another sense. Aesthetics manifests a free accord of the faculties which is linked, in a certain way, to a special interest for the beautiful; now, this interest predestines us to be moral, thus preparing the advent of the moral law or the supremacy of the pure practical interest. Teleology, for its part, manifests a free accord of the faculties, this time in the speculative interest itself: ‘under’ the relationship of the faculties as it is determined by the legislative understanding, we discover a free mutual harmony of all the faculties, from whence knowledge draws a life of its own (we have seen that determining judgment, in knowledge itself, implied a living ground revealing itself only to ‘reflection’). We must therefore consider that reflective judgment in general makes possible the transition from the faculty of knowledge to the faculty of desire, from the speculative interest to the practical interest, and prepares the subordination of the former to the latter, just as finality makes possible the transition from nature to freedom or prepares the realization of freedom in nature.\(^8\)

Even though reflective judgment in both its aesthetic and teleological forms cannot constitute knowledge of objects, reflective judgment does point us to (or “prepare” us for) our ultimate moral purpose (the final end of the natural world) and our final end (the highest good). This transition from the speculative to the practical interest, or “from the faculty of knowledge to the faculty of desire,” concludes with practical reason’s primacy, due to the causality of freedom’s capacity to transcend the causality of nature. Not only does this transition from the speculative to the practical interest pave the way for human freedom to be the final end of nature, but it also posits our greatest object of our desire and our final end: the highest good that unifies our moral and non-moral ends.

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\(^8\) Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, 66-7. The emphases are Deleuze’s.
Of course, as has been said, it is perfectly reasonable to desire that both our sensible and moral needs are met. Even though the moral law infringes on our pursuit of happiness, the desire to satisfy our inclinations is clearly sanctioned by Kant, just as long as sensible desires are subordinated to duty when a situation demands it. This subordination is, of course, possible due to the spontaneity of reason that grounds the causality of freedom, which allows us to strive to realize our representations of how things ought to be and not just how things naturally are. Put simply, we rationally desire to be happy by satisfying our inclinations, and we also rationally desire how things ought to be ethically through respecting the mandates of the moral law and submitting our maxims to the categorical imperative. As Patrick Frierson has stated, for Kant, the latter is a higher form of desire: “insofar as a desire is the direct result of the senses or imagination, it is part of the 'lower' faculty of desire. Insofar as it proceeds from the understanding or reason, a desire falls under the 'higher' faculty.”9 Our desire to satisfy our inclinations – which are subjective (dependent on individual proclivities), empirically grounded (predicated on sense experience) and never categorical (always subject to partiality) – is a lower form of desire when compared to our rational desire to promote and achieve the highest good through respect for the moral law and elevating duty over happiness. Therefore, sensible desire, which is practical but not necessarily ethical, does not go away during our resolute striving to be increasingly holy. Nonetheless, if a will is morally progressing, rational desire, which is guided by practical reason’s interest in how things ought to be, becomes a progressively more dominant incentive for action.

Kant does not tend to represent the moral law as an overt object of desire. Nevertheless, as Kant states in Chapter III – “On the Incentives of Pure Practical Reason” – in the Analytic Section of the second Critique, there are still objective (the moral law) and subjective (rational incentives) grounds for maxim adoption and moral action (5:72). Hence, it is important to spell out the rather complex relations between moral duty, rational desire, the feeling of respect for the moral law and the feeling of moral self-contentment that we experience when we judge ourselves to have done our duty by respecting the moral law. Regarding the objective and unconditional aspect, the moral law imposes

*Duty!* Sublime and mighty name that embraces nothing charming or insinuating but requires submission, and yet does not seek to move the will by threatening anything that would arouse natural aversion or terror in the mind but only holds forth a law that of itself finds entry into the mind and yet gains reluctant reverence (though not always obedience), a law before which all inclinations are dumb, even though they secretly work against it; what origin is there worthy of you, and where is to be found the root of your noble descent which proudly rejects all kinship with the inclinations, descent from which is the indispensable condition of that worth which human beings alone can give themselves? (5:86)

The moral law, as a fact of reason, is the objective determining ground for every sensible, rational being. Of course, we are free to heed its unconditional demands or not; nevertheless, even if we violate the moral law and give way to inclination, our awareness of the moral law and our freedom to heed it remains “the indispensable condition of that worth which human beings alone can give themselves.” For Kant, if we are living up to our “noble descent,” our respect for the moral law and our freedom to heed it should take priority over our desire to be sensibly satisfied, even though our sensible desires remain and continue to call out to be fulfilled. The mandate that inclination (which seeks to satisfy our lower sensible desires) *always should give*
way to duty (which seeks to satisfy our higher desire to achieve our final object and end) is at the crux of Kantian ethics.

However, there remains a viable subjective ground, respect for the moral law, which constitutes a viable incentive and rational feeling:

The moral law, since it is the formal determining ground of action through pure practical reason and since it is also a material but only objective determining ground of the objects of action under the name of good and evil, is also a subjective determining ground— that is an incentive— to this action inasmuch as it has influence on the sensibility of the subject and affects a feeling conducive to the influence of the law upon the will. There is here no antecedent feeling in the subject that would be attuned to morality: that is impossible, since all feeling is subjective whereas the incentive of the moral disposition must be free from any sensible condition. Instead, sensible feeling, which underlies all our inclinations, is indeed the condition of that feeling we call respect, but the cause determining it lies in pure practical reason; and so this feeling, on account of its origin, cannot be called pathologically affected but must be called practically effected, and is effected as follows: the representation of the moral law deprives self-love of its influence and self-conceit of its illusion, and thereby the hindrance to pure practical reason is lessened and the representation of the superiority of its objective law to the impulses of sensibility is produced and hence, by removal of the counterweight, the relative weightiness of the law (with regard to a will affected by impulses) in the judgment of reason... The feeling (under the name of moral feeling) is therefore produced solely by reason. (5:75/6, emphases are Kant’s)

The moral law is “the objective determining ground of action”: if we are using reason properly, it is a “law before which all inclinations are dumb.” Further, Kant contends that our freedom to heed the moral law and subdue our sensible desires (“the impulses of sensibility” that are the inclinations) also affords an “incentive,” defined in the second Critique as a “subjective determining ground.” In the Groundwork, Kant provides a similar definition but adds that incentives are within the faculty of desire: “the subjective ground of desire is an incentive” (4:427, emphasis is Kant’s). In the Groundwork, Kant says that all incentives are material in nature and, thus, are representations of our sensible needs. As a result, at this time in Kant’s
moral theory, incentives could only inform hypothetical imperatives (or prudential imperatives, which fall under the purview of hypothetical imperatives.

However, in the second Critique, Kant broadens the concept of an incentive. Here, he posits a purely rational incentive – the representation of the moral law that allows agents to place autonomy over heteronomy – that elicits in finite, rational agents the moral and non-sensible feeling of respect. In this case, the incentive and the feeling are both subjective and conditional; nevertheless, they are also non-material and, so, purely rational. This purely rational representation that serves as a non-material, moral incentive (or desire) is involved in our ability to place autonomy (duty) over heteronomy (inclination) and, hence, act morally. Moreover, when we act morally, first through our freedom and then through our desire to heed the moral law, we live up to our representation how things ought to be, which is none other than doing our duty that informs a feeling of moral satisfaction or rational self-contentment.

Mark Packer sets the criteria for when an incentive or desire can be considered rational and so genuinely afford the experience of moral satisfaction and self-contentment:

We can now see why Kant so adamantly excludes inclination… from among the possible motives of the moral will. It is not the element of pleasure that he finds objectionable, as so many critics have claimed, but the fact that in the case of inclination the connection between pleasure and the faculty of desire stands in the wrong order. The experience of pleasure is perfectly fine morally for Kant, provided that it is the agent’s own faculties and powers that condition this feeling rather than things and events over which the agent has little or no control. The more power and efficacy agents have in regard to the conditions of their own feelings, the more autonomy and responsibility there is for their emotions and the actions that are produced by them…. It would therefore be a mistake to believe that Kant intends to replace all emotional factors in moral experience with rational ideas. As long as the relevant feeling, such as the contentment that follows the satisfaction of rational desire, is produced by rational antecedents instead of external and heteronomous conditions, it poses no threat to the
moral demands of reason.¹⁰

Packer's fundamental point is that if our rational desire is produced by the autonomy of the will and not the heteronomy of inclination, then this type of desire for how things ought to be is compatible with practical reason's unconditional demand to act from duty. Autonomy provides agents the possibility to place duty above happiness by privileging the moral law (freedom) over sensible objects (inclination), and such autonomous behavior reasonably produces the rational feeling of moral contentment. Thus, for Kant, autonomous moral action deserves to be met with moral satisfaction, and such self-contentment is not at odds, in the least, with the moral demands of reason.

Hence, there are lower and higher forms of desire. The lower form is a material incentive to meet our natural needs; the higher form is a rational incentive to meet our moral needs. The former is directed by the causality of nature; the latter is guided by the causality of freedom. The former informs hypothetical imperatives; the latter informs categorical imperatives. Importantly, however, both can be included in maxim formation. Henry Allison has sought to explain how this works through what he labels The Incorporation Thesis. Allison argues that sensible, rational agents have “the capacity to determine oneself to act on the basis of… (intersubjectively valid) rational norms and, in light of these norms, to take (or reject) inclinations or desires as sufficient reasons for action… This in turn supports the intuition (central to Kant’s moral theory) that we can adopt a given maxim for a number of reasons, not all of which are of equal moral significance.”¹¹ Autonomy allows agents the “capacity to determine oneself” through the


¹¹ Allison, Kant’s Theory of Freedom, 5 & 189.
adoption of maxims: subjective practical principles that agents freely adopt as self-imposed, rational norms designed to guide moral behavior. We adopt these subjective practical principles or maxims “for a number of reasons, not all of which are of equal moral significance.” For Kant, accepting or rejecting inclinations or desires is a sufficient (if not the principal) reason to incentivize action: “An incentive can determine the will to action only insofar as the individual has taken it up into his maxim (has made it into a general rule according to which he will conduct himself)” (6:24). Thus, desire can have a legitimate place in the maxims that we freely adopt and submit ourselves to if those desires freely promote objects (or states of affairs) of how things ought to be through freedom.

In order to make this process of incorporation clearer, let us look specifically at the maxim to resolutely pursue holiness of the will: the central maxim that delivers us from radical evil and sets us on the course to potentially be well-pleasing to God. We know that the moral law commands the pursuit of holiness; this pursuit is an unconditional moral duty and not an object of desire. Duty categorically commands that we pursue holiness because it is the ethical thing to do and not for any desert – full stop.

Nevertheless, if a desire can be rationally incorporated into our maxim to resolutely pursue holiness, then duty and desire are wholly compatible. For example, we rationally desire to promote the highest good as our greatest object of desire and our final end. This desire does not in any way contradict the moral law or controvert our duty to pursue holiness of will since the manner in which we promote our greatest object of desire and our final end is by first doing our duty. There is a clear priority at work in maxim adoption: the unconditional demand to do one’s duty is primary. Nevertheless, since “we can adopt a given maxim for a number of reasons, not
all of which are of equal moral significance,” duty – while remaining the foremost reason – need not be the only reason to adopt a maxim. If a desire does not oppose duty because it is grounded in practical reason’s quest for how things ought to be, then that desire, as a rational incentive, can be legitimately incorporated into a maxim. And in the case of the maxim to resolutely pursue holiness of will, rational desire does not oppose duty: if we first reject our inclinations when a situation demands by freely choosing to act dutifully through the unconditional compliance with the moral law, such dutiful action legitimates and sanctions our desire for the realization of the highest good. In this way, duty is the unconditioned condition to promote the highest good, while rational desire is a legitimate incentive to that same end.

Desire can now be designated as the intermediary term between duty and self-contentment. As we’ve already considered, Kant’s position is that the self-contentment we rationally feel always presupposes the awareness of fulfilling our obligation to the moral law. The same is true for duty and desire: as I’ve just argued, the possibility of realizing our greatest object of desire (the highest good) presupposes that we do our duty by following the unconditional mandates of the moral law. Any legitimate desire for the highest good requires duty as its necessary precondition. In this sense, the privileging of duty authorizes rational desire to be incorporated into our maxim: the result is that if one places duty above one’s happiness, then one can rightfully desire the highest good.

The order of significance has (1) moral duty paving the way for (2) rational desire that then affords (3) the experience of moral satisfaction or self-contentment. Our rational desire for

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12 Or, more properly, our belief of fulfilling our obligation because for Kant we can never be sure of such things.
representations of how things ought to be, which finds its most profound expression in our representation of the highest good, is itself predicated on moral duty, since the manner in which we promote the highest good is by *doing our duty*. As a result, our rational desire for representations of how things ought to be is grounded in our freedom to place duty over inclination; hence, moral duty *precedes* rational desire. Furthermore, the feelings of pleasure or pain that agents experience initially require an assessment of their success or failure to live up to how things ought to be. Thus, the experience of satisfaction, whether empirical or rational, requires the representations of empirical or rational desires of how things ought to be, with rational desire representing a higher form of desire. Therefore, rational desire both *precedes* and gives rise to moral satisfaction. The conclusion to be drawn is that when agents act dutifully and, thereby, satisfy their rational desire by fulfilling their representations of how things ought to be through freedom, they experience the moral satisfaction of self-contentment.

*This is the indefinitely extendable trajectory of a morally progressing agent.* This trajectory has agents *continuously choosing to decrease their immediate experience of happiness* when duty call. Of course, since we are not fully rational agents, we never experience complete self-contentment because there always exists a gap between disposition and deed. The Son of God, who was in possession of a holy will, is the only instance of a rational agent who could be said to experience complete self-contentment (or beatitude). Nonetheless, as we display greater (yet never perfect) mastery over our inclinations, we become progressively more self-sufficient and closer to holiness, and in so doing, we become more familiar with the moral self-contentment that comes with doing one’s duty at the expense of happiness.
It should be recognized that this moral trajectory leads us away from happiness and towards beatitude. Beatitude is defined “as complete independence from inclinations and needs” (5:118), and “as complete well-being independent of all the contingent causes in the world” (5:124). Thus, beatitude is an idea “like holiness” that is “never fully attained by a creature” (5:124). Just like holiness, which is defined as complete conformity with the moral law, beatitude is not possible for sensible, rational beings engaging in the process of becoming increasingly holy, due to the fact that this process must remain sensibly conditioned and, therefore, not “independent of all the contingent causes in the world.” Thus, beatitude is a form of well-being that can only be experienced outside of sensibility. Nevertheless, as we strive to place duty over happiness, which affords the experience of moral self-contentment with our ever-increasing mastery over our inclinations, we are not only getting increasingly closer to holiness through such rational self-sufficiency, we are also getting increasingly closer to beatitude.\(^\text{13}\) And even though our growing competence at not being heteronomously determined by objects outside of the will, which results in the greater self-sufficiency and relative independence from the inclinations, can never be complete within sensible coordinates, it is our rational contentment, and not our sensible satisfaction, that increases from exercising our freedom as rational beings. This trajectory towards holiness and beatitude (and not holiness and happiness) is the most perspicacious progression that our moral endeavors in W2 afford.\(^\text{14}\)

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\(^\text{13}\) Self-contentment can be considered an analogue to beatitude, as far as it is the partial moral satisfaction that we experience as sensible, rational creatures, and beatitude is the complete moral satisfaction that we will experience as fully rational beings in a transcendent highest good.

\(^\text{14}\) In “Making Sense of the Highest Good,” Jacqueline Mariña makes a similar point: “As we grow in virtue our desires change from those having to do only with the dear old self, to those which promote the welfare of all rational agents. This of course means that as far as we have grown in this life, our desires are transformed, our disposition moving ever closer to holiness. Our fulfillment is important throughout our lives, but as we grow in
However, on the standard account, what the highest good finally delivers is happiness commensurate with imputed holiness, but in order to get there, an agent has had to deny the commensurability of these two goods for an indefinite period of time. It seems quixotic that the progress made possible by the immortal soul postulate that allows us to get increasingly closer to _holiness and beatitude_ through our consistent subordination of happiness to duty culminates in that subordination (which we have been working so hard to master) vanishing and happiness finally receiving equal footing (once we are graciously imputed as holy). Earlier in the dissertation I affirmed Zupančič’s claim that our inclinations remain “available and accessible, _just no longer desirable_” as we strive to be well-pleasing to God by becoming ever more holy. Kant has advanced an account whereby our immediate desire to experience happiness is subordinated to duty in order for happiness eventually to receive a reciprocal footing through divine intervention. It is like saying if you necessarily deny something long enough, you will eventually receive all that you have necessarily denied. Thus, Kant’s account has the empirical experience of happiness becoming less-and-less desirable through our continuous struggle to pursue holiness, only to have that less desirable empirical experience be the most desirable form of well-being for a will finally imputed as holy?¹⁵

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¹⁵To use a Freudian term and corresponding analysis, it seems that Kant is _regressing_. Within psychoanalytic theory, regression is a defense mechanism that has an ego reverting back to an earlier and lower stage of development that presumably (but falsely) provides access to an object that provides satisfaction. This reverting back is due to a _fixation_ with an object that should have been superseded through a progression to a higher stage of development. It seems that Kant has a fixation with happiness. He sets up a process where happiness is to be
In *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798), Kant forthrightly argues for deferring happiness, so it will be evermore gratifying when one eventually chooses to experience it. However, before we get to Kant’s statements to that effect, it is important to first distinguish, in a quick yet responsible manner, the fundamental difference between anthropology and morality. In his *Introduction* to Robert Louden’s latest translation of the text, Manfred Kuehn explains the central philosophical difference:

‘[P]ragmatic’ imperatives are for Kant always ‘conditioned’ and ‘hypothetical,’ and only moral imperatives are categorical… Pragmatic imperatives concern rules of prudence. And rules of prudence concern mainly the use we can make of other people to achieve our own ends, or the means of obtaining our own happiness. They are thus in Kant’s mature philosophy essentially at cross-purposes with the fundamental duties of virtue. Given the sharp contrast between anything that is prudential and what is truly moral in Kant’s mature ethics, pragmatic considerations are not *per se* moral.16

Pragmatic imperatives, as hypothetical, are not good in themselves; they are conditioned by the consideration of happiness and are, thereby, always assertoric and never categorical. Pragmatic imperatives are practical, insofar as they proscribe and prescribe proper action in certain situations; nevertheless, they are not moral because they are ultimately carried out for the desire to experience happiness and not the unconditional moral demand to place duty over happiness. If there is not a moral consideration at hand, then the hypothetical nature of pragmatic imperatives does not threaten morality; however, if duty is pitted against happiness, then the

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moral law demands that happiness (and its pragmatic imperatives) be subordinated to duty and the categorical imperative.

Here are Kant’s statements, in the order of their appearance, on the pragmatic imperative to defer happiness. The first comes from Section 25 of Anthropology:

Young man! Deny yourself gratifications (of amusement, indulgence, love, and so forth) if not with the Stoic intention of wanting to do without them completely, then with the refined Epicurean intention of having in view an ever-increasing enjoyment. The stinginess with the assets of your enjoyment of life, actually makes you richer through the postponement of enjoyment, even if, at the end of life, you have had to give up most of the profit from it. Like everything ideal, the consciousness of having enjoyment in your control is more fruitful and comprehensive than anything that gratifies through sense, because by this means it is simultaneously consumed and thus deducted from the total quantity. (The emphasis is Kant’s)

In Section 63, Kant makes a very similar statement:

Young man! (I repeat) get fond of work, deny yourself enjoyments, not to renounce 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 which is independent of either chance or the laws of nature. (The emphasis is Kant’s)

As is clear, the intended audience for this prudential advice is a younger person, presumably the age of Kant’s students that attended his multiple anthropology courses. Here is what I take as the central message: Hey, youngster, there is no rush. There will be plenty of time for all this good stuff in your future, so do not go so fast. Intimately connected to this message is the belief that the anticipation that attends the deferral of immediate happiness will inevitably heighten the future empirical gratification when one’s sensible desires are eventually satisfied. As pieces of hypothetical and prudential advice, I find nothing inherently wrong with Kant’s directives: take your time; there is no reason to rush things; you will enjoy it more if you wait a little; all this is good prudential advice.
However, my account operates on a moral and not on a prudential level. Moreover, both statements end with the same message that works in support of my account: the self-contentment that attends the deferral of happiness – “the consciousness of having enjoyment in your control is more fruitful and comprehensive than anything that gratifies through sense,” and “even in this sacrifice, a capital of contentment which is independent of either chance or the laws of nature” – is, “like everything ideal,” a higher form of well-being. This sentiment that the rational satisfaction that we experience by deferring our happiness is a superior form of well-being supports of my argument on behalf of beatitude as the ideal (along with holiness) that the process is tending toward. The next chapter will further explore beatitude’s relationship to both holiness and reason; hence I will do a little deferring of my own and offer a more thorough answer to this question then.

To end this chapter, I will posit what I believe would inform Kant’s response to my question: If the moral progress made possible by the immortal soul postulate is predicated on happiness becoming less-and-less desirable, why would happiness be the most desirable form of well-being for a will finally imputed as holy? Kant’s answer would mirror one of his chief criticisms of the Stoics, who believe that “to be conscious of one’s virtue is happiness… the feeling of happiness was already contained in consciousness of one’s virtue” (5:111-2). Kant is of the opinion that the Stoic position that happiness is reducible to being content with virtuous action refuses a pervasive aspect of what it means to be a human being. For Kant, human beings both require and deserve more than feeling content with doing their duty; this type of well-being is simply not enough for human reason. Kant argues that the Stoics strained the moral capacity of the human being, under the name of the sage, far beyond all the limits of his nature and assumed something that contradicts all cognition of the
human being, but also and above all they would not let the second component of the highest good, namely happiness, hold as a special object of the human faculty of desire but made their sage, like a divinity in his consciousness of the excellence of his person, quite independent of nature (with respect to his own contentment), exposing him indeed to the ills of life but not subjecting him to them… and thus they really left out the second element of the highest good, namely one’s own happiness, placing it solely in acting and in contentment with one’s personal worth and so including it in consciousness of one’s moral cast of mind – though in this they could have been sufficiently refuted by the voice of their own nature. (5:127).

Kant thinks that by thoroughly rejecting happiness as a necessary positive satisfaction, the Stoics are not advancing an accurate portrayal of what humanity is and what reason commands. The Stoics, by repudiating humanity’s desire for the positive satisfaction of happiness, are essentially divorcing humanity, as sensible, rational beings, from the rational desire for nature and freedom to be reconciled and, thus, denying constitutive aspects of what it means to be a human being.17

Furthermore, another central aspect of Kant’s criticism of the Stoics is that they falsely believe that the entailment of virtue and happiness is possible in this world. As I have argued, this is not Kant’s position: either the synthetic relationship of holiness and happiness or the analytic relationship of holiness and beatitude will have to wait to a future world made possible through divine intervention. On my account, the former occurs in W3, and the latter occurs in W4.

Contrary to the Stoics, Kant neither dismisses nor removes the positive satisfaction of happiness from his account. Our desire for the highest good is none other than our representation of happiness to finally be on a reciprocal footing with duty. For Kant, we desire representations of how things ought to be, and this proportional and unified state of affairs between duty and

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17 Another objection Kant has to Stoicism is that it makes everything depend on us without any requirement of grace. As such, the Stoics elevate humanity to a divine level that Kant believes goes too far.
happiness is the most profound representation for Kant of how things ought to be. This representation, which is sustained by our rational desire for how things ought to be, in turn encourages our pleasurable feeling of hope that this proportional and unified state of affairs will finally obtain.\(^\text{18}\) Indeed, Kant works very hard to keep happiness as the condition that finally “completes” and/or “perfects” the highest good.

In the Canon of the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant states that “all hope concerns happiness” (A805/B833). He goes on to add: “However, it is not the hope for one's own happiness simpliciter that is at stake, but the hope for happiness that one deserves because of one's moral conduct” (A809/B837). So, the answer to the question – What may I hope? – is happiness proportionate to worthiness. In The Metaphysics of Morals, Kant says “[t]o have any end of action whatsoever is an act of freedom on the part of the acting subject” (6:385). If happiness is the non-moral end that completes the highest good (our final end), and “to have any end whatsoever” is an act of a free will, then we freely will happiness proportionate to worthiness as a final end and greatest hope.

\(^{18}\) In her chapter “Is Kantian Hope a Feeling” in Kant and the Faculty of Feeling, edited by Kelly Sorensen and Diane Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), Rachel Zuckert argues that hope is indeed a feeling and not a cognition, a desire or a belief. I agree with Zuckert; however, there are inter-relations between duty, desire, self-contentment, belief and hope. The moral law as a fact of reason unconditionally commands duty on all sensible, rational beings. This duty is paramount in maxim adoption and ethical action. However, we also rationally desire representations of how things ought to be, and when we utilize our freedom and live up to the moral law, we experience the moral satisfaction of self-contentment in doing so. The highest good is the representation par excellence of how things ought to be and, hence, is our greatest object of desire. Yet the state of affairs that defines the highest good requires our rational belief in God as the only being that could realize such a proportional and unified state of affairs. In this way, rational desire sustains belief in God. Duty, desire and belief, which are all determined by practical reason, give rise to the plausible and pleasurable feeling of hope that such a final state of affairs will come to pass if we follow the moral law, promote the highest good and have faith in God as a postulate of pure practical reason. As a feeling, hope is not fully determined by reason (the imagination plays a key role), but reason provides the content (or the parameters) for what we can legitimately hope.
Happiness becoming proportioned with morality means a great deal to Kant. Yet, as I have attempted to show, he radically attenuates happiness’s role up to being an agent being found well-pleasing. First, as sensible, rational agents consistently subordinate happiness to duty as they strive for an ever-closer approximation of holiness of the will, they also get more familiar with the experience of self-contentment that comes with doing one’s duty. As we display greater mastery over our inclinations and become progressively more self-sufficient and closer to holiness, we are engaging in a trajectory whereby we necessarily become less desirous of immediate happiness and, thereby, more familiar and at ease with the moral self-contentment that comes with heeding the unconditional mandate of the moral law. In this way, the path to holiness is paved with the consistent attenuation of happiness; thus, happiness is regulated to the back seat.

This again poses my major issue: The demand to put worthiness over happiness is nothing more than that of placing the causality of freedom over the causality of nature, so that human beings are not reduced to mere heteronomous animals determined solely by inclinations outside of their wills. Therefore, the moral progress made possible by the immortal soul postulate exhibits a trajectory that has agents consciously subordinating happiness to the moral law’s demand for dutiful action, which positions agents closer to holiness. Correspondingly, such rational mastery over their sensible desires (that are the inclinations) occasions more frequent experiences of moral self-contentment, which equally positions agents closer to beatitude. Thus, the trajectory of Kant’s moral progress inclines to the unity of holiness and beatitude.

Nevertheless, Kant’s most clearly articulated position, a stance that he never shies away from, is that a conscious struggle that depends on the consistent subordination of happiness to
duty (worthiness) ultimately resolves in a proportionality between the two (happiness). During this struggle in W2, that ratio between the two remains different; during the penultimate Kingdom of Ends in W3, the ratio, made possible through God’s ability to provide synthetic proportionality between the two, is the same. We all know Kant’s famous statement that he had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith. This dictum makes complete sense because at the most basic level knowledge and faith will always remain different in kind. Yet in the case of the highest good, Kant’s claim is that he has to deny happiness in order to make room for happiness.¹⁹

There is an explanation for how to potentially reconcile this dilemma. It is true that pure practical reason prompts us outside of sensibility by positing two fully intelligible final goods: holiness and beatitude. I will take up and defend this claim in greater detail in what follows. Nevertheless, as sensible, rational beings, we can never extirpate our desire for the well-earned experience of happiness. In fact, as Kant says in Religion, “to want to extirpate [the inclinations] would not only be futile but harmful and blameworthy as well” (6:58). Thus, no matter how much pure practical reason prompts us outside of sensibility, it is always incomplete until we are transitioned into a fully noumenal realm. As not fully rational beings that retain sensible desires, the need for empirical happiness will never be eradicated nor should it. My account satisfies both these needs with W3 and W4: to first experience happiness in proportion to morality and then to be transitioned outside of sensibility altogether in order to eternally partake in holiness and

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¹⁹ An interrelated claim is that Kant had to deny happiness to make room for beatitude. This claim corroborates my position about our final state in W4.
beatitude. It is these two worlds and their relationship to reason which will be taken up in a more thorough fashion in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE NEEDS OF REASON AND THE FINAL TRANSITION INTO TRANSCENDENCE

This chapter begins a sustained defense of an eternal highest good that has holiness analytically entailing beatitude as reason’s final end. Since I am advancing a supersensible final end, the resurrected body will finally have to be abandoned, and a transition from temporality to noumenal duration must occur. In a long footnote in *Religion*, Kant takes up the questions of the body and the sensible world after death. Here he argues that such a body and a sensible world are essentially needless and, thus, not amenable to reason:

With which the public record of his [Christ’s] life (which can therefore also serve universally as an example for imitation) ends. The more esoteric story of his *resurrection* and *ascension* (which, simply as ideas of reason, would signify the beginning of another life and the entrance into the seat of salvation, i.e., into the society of all the good), added as sequel and witnessed only by his intimates, cannot be used in the interest of religion within the boundaries of mere reason, whatever its historical standing. This is not just because it is a historical narrative (for so also is the story of what went before), but, because, taken literally, it implies the concept which is indeed very well suited to the human sense mode of representation but is very troublesome to reason’s faith concerning the future, namely the concept of the materiality of all the beings of this world – a materialism with respect to human personality, which would be possible only on the condition of one and the same body (psychological materialism), as well as a materialism with respect to existence in general in a world, which, on this principle, could not be but spatial (cosmological materialism). By contrast, the hypothesis of the spirituality of the rational beings of this world, according to which the body can remain dead on earth and yet the same person still be living, or the hypothesis that the human being can attain to the seat of the blessed in spirit (in his non-sensuous quality) without being transposed to some place in the infinite space surrounding earth (which we also call heaven) – this hypothesis is more congenial to reason, not merely because it is impossible to conceive a matter endowed with thought, but, most of all, because of the contingency to which our existence after death would be exposed if we made it rest merely on the coherence of a certain clump of matter under a certain form, whereas we can conceive the permanence of a simple substance as natural to it. – On the latter presupposition (of spirituality) reason can, however, neither find an interest in dragging along, through eternity, a body,
which, however, purified, must yet consist (if personality rests on its identity) of the same material which constitutes the body’s organic basis and which, in life, the body itself never quite grew fond of; nor can it render comprehensible what this calcareous earth, of which the body consists, should be doing in heaven. (6:129n)

Five years later in *The Conflict of the Faculties* (1798), Kant makes the very same point (with almost the exact language) with regard to the body after death:

For practical purposes we can be quite indifferent as to whether we shall live merely as souls after death or whether our personal identity in the next world requires the same matter that now forms our body, so that our soul is not a distinct substance and our body must be restored to life. For who is so fond of his body that he would want to drag it around with him for eternity, if he can get along without it? (7:40).

First, it is important to recognize that since the Son of God is the initial focus of the footnote in *Religion*, we are not dealing with a struggling will resolutely pursuing moral progress in order to receive a gracious imputation of holiness. We are dealing with a holy will returning “into the society of all the good.” After Christ’s body is resurrected and ascends into Heaven, there is no philosophical or theological reason to believe that he will retain his resurrected body. The ascension, from Kant’s perspective, has God returning to his eternal state outside time and space. Needless to say, in the Christian tradition whose rational core Kant is trying to articulate, this is the only instance of such a divine homecoming.

However, Kant quickly transitions from a focus on his perceived problems with Christ’s resurrection and ascension to a more general discussion about the need for a body and a sensible world after death. His central claim is that there is no need for these psychological and cosmological materialisms because reason “can neither find an interest in dragging along, through eternity, a body… however purified… nor can it render comprehensible what this calcareous earth, of which this body exists, should be doing in heaven.” The footnote in *Religion* and its repetition in *The Conflict of Faculties*, if read strongly, are both philosophical and
religious arguments against the body existing infinitely. If these quotations are read *weakly*, then Kant seems to be simply indifferent to the question. I prefer the strong reading because it seems to me that Kant is saying that reason cannot “render comprehensible” a sensible world replete with resurrected bodies *as our final end*. Philosophically, such representations of a body operating eternally are “very troublesome to reason’s faith concerning the future” because Kant finds “the contingency to which our existence after death would be exposed if we made it rest merely on the coherence of a certain clump of matter under a certain form” not congenial to reason. Kant simply finds it irrational to “drag along, through eternity, a body” because he sees no reason for “this calcareous earth, of which the body consists, [to be] in heaven.” These philosophical claims, of course, inform his religious claims that the “resurrection and ascension... cannot be used in the interest of religion within the boundaries of mere reason.” The fundamental reason is that the resurrection and ascension form “a historical narrative,” and rational theology is determined to transition from a merely historically situated ecclesiastical faith to a “universal religion of reason.” Since Kant considers the existence of an eternal body to be incoherent, it cannot be part of a “universal religion of reason.”

Here I want to reiterate my earlier claim, which I take to be grounded in sound Kantian principles, that a body operating within sensibility is an absolute precondition for the moral progress that the immortal soul postulate affords. Therefore, during the time an agent is resolutely striving to become holy, a body operating in a phenomenal world is an absolute condition for this moral progress to occur because moral progress necessitates placing duty over inclination. Such a necessity requires a body. As I stated earlier, I view Kant’s failure to recognize the need for such a body operating within sensibility as a flaw in his moral philosophy.
It would have been preferable for Kant to provide philosophical justifications for bodily resurrection (which I attempted earlier with the aid of Aquinas), while also recognizing that no material explanation is on offer, and, as such, a resurrected body operating in a sensible world must remain a philosophical mystery.

Equally important, if Kant (or anyone else) conceives of the highest good as consisting of (imputed) holiness and happiness existing proportionally in a synthetic a priori relationship (my W3), then a body operating within a sensible setting would be equally crucial. Kant defines happiness as “the sum of satisfaction of all inclinations” (4:399). Without question, a body and a sensible world would be necessary conditions for the experience of such sensible “satisfactions.” Thus, anyone who advances a synthetic a priori conception of the highest good must also accept the necessity of a temporally conditioned body operating within a phenomenal world because happiness requires both to be experienced.

The transition from temporally conditioned W3 into noumenally conditioned W4 requires the discarding of the body and the transition out of a world with any phenomenal aspects. As Kant makes clear in Religion, he is more than willing to discard “the psychological and cosmological materialisms” of body and world, and so am I. I am just trying to be as explicit as possible: such discarding must occur in the transition from W3 (in which such a body is a necessity) to W4 (in which such a body is an impossibility).

To close this issue, since I am advocating that holiness analytically entails beatitude and that holiness is achieved in a supersensible setting as our final end, I am calling for the body and the sensible world to be eventually jettisoned, too. What these two textual instances illustrate is that Kant is thoroughly open to abandoning the body “and yet the same person [can] still be
living.” He is equally open to forsaking “this calcareous earth, of which the body consists.” So even if I may have a disagreement with Kant (and various Kant commentators) about when it is appropriate to remove the body and the sensible world from the philosophical equation, my account accepts that Kant endorses a supersensible, and thus disembodied, final end.

In his essay “The End of All Things,” Kant revisits these very same concerns and provides a more robust account of why reason demands a supersensible end. He also introduces the concept of noumenal duration, which is a type of non-temporal existence in which natural causality and change cease to exist:

When we pursue the transition from time into eternity (whether or not this idea, considered theoretically as extending cognition, has objective reality), as reason does in a moral regard, then we come up against the end of all things as temporal beings and as objects of possible experience – which end, however, in the moral order of ends, is at the same time the beginning of a duration of just those same beings as supersensible, and consequently as not standing under the conditions of time (8:327).

Reason pursues the transition into eternity that initiates the noumenal duration of supersensible beings without which “creation itself appears purposeless” (8:331). Yet like every transcendental idea, we can have no knowledge of this type of supersensible duration even though it makes moral sense to posit it. Reason ultimately “pursue[s] the transition from time into eternity” as its final resolution. Our existence as supersensible beings ceasing to be “objects of possible experience” begins our noumenal duration, understood as a form of existence “not standing under the conditions of time” that constitutes our final non-temporal and fully intelligible condition.

Kant asks, “why do human beings expect an end… at all?” (8:330). Here’s his answer: “[T]he fact that reason says to them that the duration of the world has worth only insofar as the rational beings in it conform to the final end of their existence; if, however, this is not supposed to be achieved, then creation itself appears purposeless to them, like a play having no resolution
and affording no cognition of any rational aim” (8:331). If the empirical character continues infinitely, “creation itself appears purposeless” due to sempiternity’s inability to afford a final end. As I have argued, such an indefinite deferral is incommensurate with reason’s ultimate need for resolution. Thus, at a certain point, Kant posits a divine transformation outside of temporality and sensibility altogether as the necessary culmination of reason.

A simple, yet important, question arises with this transformational end: What kind of end is this? It is both a final as well as a supersensible end. However, does this type of end fit within Kant’s natural teleological framework? Even though Kant’s natural teleology concerns both purposiveness and ends, it is best not to conceive of the final end under examination as being subsumed under Kant’s natural teleological framework. Ultimately, Kant’s natural teleology deals with the purposiveness and ultimate end of nature. Kant concludes that the apex of nature as a purposive system is humanity itself. Specifically, as moral agents that are not reducible to nature’s causality, humanity represents the ultimate end of the sensible system of nature posited as a whole. Through reason’s spontaneity and humanity’s intelligible character, finite, rational agents possess the capacity to elevate the causality of freedom over the causality of nature when the moral law demands. As a result, human beings are the only agents operating in nature that are not strictly determined by natural causation. For Kant, nature is designed to allow humans to exercise their freedom within such a causally determined world. Moreover, the fact that the noumenal aspect of humanity is the pinnacle of natural purposiveness and the ultimate end of nature’s systematic processes posits a divine design for natural phenomena. Therefore, we posit God as the divine designer and moral author, while not going as far to say that such rational
positing rises to the level of proving God’s existence (we are still operating under faith and not knowledge), of a natural system ultimately designed for humans to exercise their freedom.

However, just because man is the ultimate end of nature, nature is not the ultimate end of man. Kant makes this distinction in the third *Critique* by distinguishing an *ultimate* from a *final end*. Allen Wood explains how humanity is the *ultimate end* of nature:

An *ultimate end* is a single end with reference to which it is possible to think of a teleological system as a unified whole; we are entitled to employ the idea of such an end regulatively as a principle of reflective judgment in giving systematic unity to the teleology we find in nature. Kant claims that because rational nature alone is capable of setting ends and organizing them into a system and human beings are the sole examples of rational nature with which we are acquainted in the natural world, the human being is the only being that could answer to the concept of an ultimate end of nature.¹

The central conclusion that Kant draws in the third *Critique* – that humanity is the ultimate end of nature due to its possession of practical reason and the possibility to freely act in spite of natural causality to set and secure ends – *should not be understood* as humanity achieving its final end. Kant is clear that humanity (as the ultimate end of nature) realizes its *final end* in the systematic unity of morality and well-being that constitutes the highest good. Here’s Wood again:

What is a final end? It is ‘an end that requires no other end as a condition of its possibility’… which must be thought of as pursued *only* for its own sake, and *cannot* be thought of as a means to any other end… A final end… is in its concept related to other ends only negatively, as presupposing no end beyond itself to which it might serve as a means… The connection between nature’s ultimate end and the final end is this: Because human beings are the only beings in nature that can set a final end, they may be considered as the ultimate end of nature insofar as they do set a final end. Nature has no ultimate end except *through* human beings; or, in what comes to the same thing, it has no ultimate send at all *until human beings give it one* by setting a final end… Kant’s name

¹ Allen Wood, *Kant’s Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 309. The emphasis is Wood’s.
for the final end, through which we complete a system of moral ends and simultaneously
the system of natural ends, is the ‘highest good.’ (The emphases are Wood’s)

The final end for human beings is a system that proportionally pairs the natural end of well-being
with the rational end of morality. Since this final end exists “in the idea of pure reason”
(A809/B837) and cannot occur naturally, such proportionality posits divine intervention;
moreover, since we can never speak with objective certainty about God, this final end remains a
hope sustained by our faith in God. As the ultimate end of nature, we are the only beings capable
of conceiving and working towards such a final end.

It is my central claims that the final end of the highest good occurs outside of sensibility
altogether and that it culminates in the attainment of holiness which analytically entails
beatitude. It is this conception of a state outside of sensibility altogether that is incommensurate
with Kant’s natural teleological framework, which conceives of the non-conflicting relationship
of the sensible and the intelligible due to moral agents’ capacity to subordinate the former to the
latter. Since humanity’s final end is supersensible, a natural teleological (or historical) account
cannot provide an adequate explanation because, simply put, natural teleology does not quit
sensibility. Only moral teleology does.

*Moral teleology*, as an example of transcendent (outside of sensibility) eschatology
(concerning final ends), does quit sensibility. Since we are concerned with an entirely intelligible
realm outside of all natural predicates, moral teleology is more appropriate when compared to
natural teleology. Furthermore, Kant’s final noumenal end is what gives humanity – as the
ultimate end of nature due to its rational capacity to posit transcending nature itself – *its final

2 Ibid., 310-1.
Such transcendence posits a morally teleological end because, as we have just seen, an infinite empirical character that never achieves finality makes “creation itself appear purposeless.” Therefore, noumenal duration and moral teleology are compatible concepts, while noumenal duration and natural teleology are not.\(^3\)

Kant surveys two theological positions on the transition to noumenal duration – the “unitists” and the “dualists” (8:328-9). The unitists award “eternal blessedness to all human beings,” while the dualists award “blessedness to some” (8:328-9). Kant sides with the dualists: “Thus from a practical point of view, the system to be assumed will have to be the dualistic one – especially because the unitistic system appears to lull us too much into an indifferent sense of security” (8:330). In Kant’s dualist conception, both the damned and the chosen transition into noumenal duration through divine judgment. At root, the former is found \textit{in demeritum}, while the latter is found \textit{in meritum}. The former has not radically converted by adopting a maxim towards resolutely pursuing holiness, while the latter have. The former cannot be “well-pleasing” to God, while the latter can. The former has no possibility of God’s grace, while the latter do. The former is judged evil, while the latter is imputed holy. The former will exist inalterably for eternity in privation, while the latter will exist inalterably for eternity in holiness and beatitude. With this dualist conception, there is room for the justice, which only pertains to meting out discipline for the damned, and benevolence, which only pertains to extending reward, for the chosen.

However, due to noumenal duration’s definition as a timeless eternity without alteration – “henceforth there shall be no \textit{alteration}” (8:333) – such justice and mercy are final. Kant’s idea

\(^3\) Moral teleology, at the very least, coincides nicely with Kant’s moral theology. In fact, it and may even be synonymous with it.
of noumenal duration as duration without alteration seamlessly corresponds with his foreclosing the idea of noumenal change. As I have argued, reason’s noumenal decisions to adopt a particular maxim or adopt a radical rebirth in disposition are not examples of temporal change; rather, they are freely chosen beginnings. God’s noumenal decision to judge the damned \textit{in demeritum} and the chosen \textit{in meritum} is the beginning of a noumenal existence for both parties that will be absolutely devoid of change. The noumenal (understood as outside the form of time) and change (understood as possible only under the condition of time) are strictly incompatible: the damned and the chosen are to remain in perdition and bliss, respectively. These punishments or rewards represent the end of all things.

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This dissertation ultimately concerns the final end of reason. On my account, once holiness is graciously imputed and that merciful crediting gets extended, the transition to transcendence will be imminent. Nevertheless, it will not be immediate: the experience of W3, replete with imputed holiness and proportional happiness, precedes it. This experience should not in any way be discounted. It is the culmination of a long and resolute moral struggle to be as dutiful as possible. Yet, once incorporated into W4, “the moral order of ends” ceases, and the noumenal duration for the supersensiblly meritorious and fully intelligible existence ensues.

Perhaps symbolism and analogy will help make my point more clearly: God’s gracious imputation will finally get a runner of a very long race over the final finish line. Thus, if such an imputation was never granted, the racer would never cross the eternal finish line, and, hence, the race would never end (a concept that is incompatible with reason). A will found well-pleasing will eventually get pulled over the finish line and eventually get \textit{delivered} into eternity.
Therefore, I am claiming that a transformation from a temporal form of existence characterized by an indefinitely long progress (quasi-sempiternity) to a thoroughly non-temporal existence characterized by time’s elimination (eternity) is contained within God’s gracious imputation of holiness to a well-pleasing will.

As I cited much earlier in the dissertation, Rachel Zuckert correctly characterizes “The End of All Things” as “an essay on the Christian conception of the last judgment.” As previously stated, what Kant is confronting in this essay is the termination of the first three conceivable worlds and the final incorporation into noumenal existence. Of course, when, why and how this last judgment will occur, as well as what the experience would entail, is beyond all cognition.4

Instead of the accounts that have dominated the secondary literature on where the highest good transpires and what kind of object it represents – it transpires in our phenomenal world and is an immanent object, or it transpires in a supersensible world and is a transcendent object – I have reformulated the distinctions. On my account, there are two instances of the highest good. The first instance occurs in an intermediary yet phenomenal world, and this penultimate highest good cannot be easily categorized as an immanent object due to the greater level of providential activity at work in W3 when compared to W1. The second instance occurs in a fully noumenal world, and, as such, this particular highest good can correctly be categorized as a transcendental

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4 It is also useful to note that a widespread account of last judgment within the whole of Christendom has the bodies of the saved getting resurrected on judgment day. While on the Kantian account that I am advancing, the bodies of the saved are cast-off on judgment day. Hence, both accounts have resurrected bodies. On my account, they are necessary within W2 to exhibit moral progress and in W3 to experience happiness; however, they are incompatible with realization of holiness and beatitude, which, I am arguing, is our final end from a Kantian perspective. A little later I will mount an argument that the manner in which Kant conceives of rationality, it is reason itself that prompts us to abandon our bodies. Of course, this is not a novel philosophical position: it goes back at least as far as Plato's *Phaedo.*
or eternal object. Hence, I have two sequential highest goods: a penultimate one in which imputed holiness (as the highest possible virtue for sensible, rational agents) affords proportional happiness (through God’s synthesizing power), and an eternal and final highest in which holiness is achieved and so yields beatitude in a fully supersensible setting.

Thus, when God graciously imputes holiness to agents who have resolutely pursued it, this gracious imputation begins a two-step transition into two different and sequential highest goods. First, once agents are imputed as holy, God provides the experience of the synthetic a priori relationship between imputed holiness and happiness. This experience will continue until the final judgment (or the end of all things) when those agents will be transformed into the noumenal duration of eternity and an eternal highest good expressing the analyticity of holiness and beatitude.

My ultimate goal is to reconstruct the Kantian ends of reason, yet I see no conflict between what I have labelled Worlds Three and Four. The former is a finite Kingdom of Ends, and the latter is an eternal Kingdom of Ends. As long as it is recognized that Kant posits humanity’s final end as transcendent, and thus, eternal, then W3, which affords happiness proportional to imputed holiness, is a conceivable world in which meritorious agents finally enjoy happiness proportional to worthiness prior to their transition into eternity. I will have more to say about my two conceptions of the highest good, as well as the final transition into transcendence. Specifically, at this point, I will examine in greater detail how my proposed W3 effectively addresses the problems that have plagued the synthesis of happiness to morality in the standard account of the highest good.

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Both happiness’s relation to morality and its positing as the final non-moral good are highly contested issues within the secondary literature. I have argued that W3 possesses the necessary conditions to allow for imputed holiness and happiness to be properly proportioned. I will also thoroughly examine Jaqueline Mariña’s position on a transcendent highest good as our final end. On this score, Mariña and I are in complete agreement; however, there are instances where I attempt to extend Mariña’s analysis with the expressed intent of advocating for the position even more forcefully.

Alison Hills summarizes just some of the criticisms about happiness, both as it relates to morality generally, and how it is posited as the non-moral, and thus conditional, aspect of our final end:

Commentators have found Kant’s view… that happiness is our necessary end very puzzling. Korsgaard describes it as ‘perplexing.’ Wood finds it unclear. Johnson argues that his [Kant’s] theory is internally inconsistent. Paton attributes to Kant ‘waverings and confusions.’

There are many more. Even though their criticisms of the highest good are more thoroughgoing – they contend that the moral law does not command us to promote the highest good – Lewis White Beck and Thomas Auxter also criticize Kant’s position on happiness as a necessary final good.

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5 Alison Hills, “Kant on Happiness and Reason,” History of Philosophy Quarterly 23, no. 3 (July 2006): 244.

6 For just one example, see R. Z. Friedman’s, “Virtue and Happiness: Kant and Three Critics,” Canadian Journal of Philosophy 11, no. 1 (March 1981): 95-110, where Friedman rehearses Roger Sullivan, Henry Veatch, and Phillippa Foot’s criticisms of Kant’s position on happiness and morality.

7 For examples, consult Beck, A Commentary on Kant’s Critique of Practical Reason, 244-5, and Thomas Auxter, “The Unimportance of Kant’s Highest Good,” 121–134.
Even during Kant’s era, criticisms were already appearing. Although Arthur Schopenhauer did not affirm happiness as a positive good within his own philosophy – “All satisfaction, or what is commonly called happiness, is really and essentially always negative only, and never positive”8 – when he assesses Kant on purely Kantian grounds, Schopenhauer contends that positing happiness as a necessary condition for our final end illicitly reintroduces heteronomy into Kant’s philosophy.

Hegel, for his part, states the following about Kant in *The Phenomenology of the Spirit:* “[Kant’s] moral world-view is… in fact nothing other than the elaboration of this fundamental contradiction in its various aspects. It is, to employ here a Kantian expression where it is most appropriate, a ‘whole nest’ of thoughtless contradictions.”9 One of Hegel’s central critiques of the highest good, which he refers to as a “postulate,”10 is that Kant subordinates and defers happiness “endlessly,” and when it is finally proportioned, it is accomplished outside of human autonomy and history, due to the proportionality (what Hegel refers to as “harmony”) getting brought about from the outside by God and not through the actions of humanity. Quentin Lauer, who cites a quotation from Hegel, frames it this way: “Thus the contradiction: harmony is postulated with a view to action, and at the same time with a view to action ‘this harmony is posited as not actual, as outside.’”11 Against Kant, Hegel argues that happiness, or the

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10 Against Kant, Hegel defines a postulate as anything that is merely thinkable. For Kant, that is an idea; conversely, a postulate is the positing of an actual object that cannot be known but still demands our fervent believe in its existence.
satisfaction of sensible drives, occurs when one acts morally: “According to Hegel, the happiness
that results from meeting the drives’ demands is thus normatively justified by being an aspect of
the realization of ethical duty.” This position is very different from Kant’s, who understands
that it is rational, ceteris paribus, to meet the demands of the inclinations but not ethical, which
requires the subordination of the inclinations to morality.

I will not fully rehearse all the problems and the arguments because I have already
addressed and assessed many of the inherent problems earlier in the dissertation. Put quickly, the
first issue is that happiness is relative and subjective; it is governed by our empirical character
and made possible through sensibility’s receptivity, and, thus, it is conditional and subject to the
causality of nature. Conversely, morality is universal and objective; it is governed by our
intelligible character and made possible through reason’s spontaneity, and, thus, it is
unconditional and subject to the causality of freedom. Such utter heterogeneity has been difficult
to reconcile, and Kant does not diminish such inherent differences:

[Morality being the efficient cause of happiness is] impossible because any practical
connection of causes and effects in the world, as a result of the determination of the will,
does not depend upon the moral dispositions of the will but upon knowledge of the laws
of nature and the physical ability to use them for one's purposes; consequently, no
necessary connection of happiness with virtue in the world, adequate to the highest good,
can be expected from the most meticulous observance of moral laws. (5:113-4)

Again, this citation from the second Critique is a very explicit rejoinder against secularist
commentators. Many commentators (like myself) agree that these two disparate goods can never
be unified solely by sensible, rational agents in the natural world. Secularists, however, are not

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12 Sebastian Stein, “Hegel and Aristotle on Ethical Life: Duty-Bound Happiness and Determined
willing to affirm any unification made possible through divine intervention and occurring in another world because they understand such solutions to be metaphysically extravagant.\(^\text{13}\)

Throughout the dissertation, I have argued against the secularist position that the standard account of the highest good can be realized in W1.

Instead, I have argued that our final end has holiness analytically entailing beatitude in a transcendent highest good made possible through God’s grace. Furthermore, I previously began to offer an account that further complicates happiness as our final non-moral good: this account suggests that our continuous striving toward becoming increasingly holy gets us gradually closer to beatitude and progressively further away from the desire for happiness. Thus, when agents are incorporated into their eternal final end, they finally achieve such a fully rational well-being.

The chief upshot of the eternal account of the highest good that has holiness analytically entailing beatitude in W4 is that two intelligible goods are unified. Kant clearly says in the second *Critique* that holiness, defined as “complete conformity with the moral law,” is impossible for sensible, rational agents at any moment of their existence in a sensible world (5:122). Thus, holiness and sensibility are incompatible.

Similarly, Kant defines beatitude:

- “as complete independence from inclinations and needs” (5:119)
- “as complete well-being independent of all the contingent causes in the world” (5:123n)
- “as attainable only in an eternity” (5:129)

\(^{13}\) Secularist commentators, essentially, want God and the immortal soul to remain transcendental ideas useful to reason’s theoretical interests; hence, Kant’s move to practical postulates goes too metaphysically far for them.
These statements indicate that beatitude and sensibility are incompatible, too. Moreover, Kant explicitly links beatitude with holiness in the second *Critique* when he says, the “complete well-being independent of all the contingent causes in the world,” which is an idea, just “like holiness,” is “never fully attained by a creature” in a sensible world (5:124). Holiness and beatitude, both of which are incompatible with sensibility, do not suffer from the heterogeneity that plagues holiness and happiness. However, I argued that the world in which God is called on to synthesize *imputed holiness* with happiness remains a logical, penultimate world, and it is within this intermediary world that I attempt to solve the (imputed) holiness and happiness problem.

One thing that becomes clearly apparent is that God is called on to play different roles in W3 and W4. In W3, God, as the only entity capable of synthesizing imputed holiness and happiness, is called upon to secure unity – “it must lead to the supposition of the existence of a cause [God] adequate to the effect [proportioning happiness to holiness in the highest good]” (5:124) – and this capacity informs our rational faith in God as well as our legitimate hope for the proportioning of happiness with worthiness. Just as on the theoretical plane of speculative judgment, the imagination is called on to synthesize intuitions and concepts, and on the practical plane of moral judgment, the understanding is called on to synthesize the supersensible moral law and the empirical laws of nature (as to make the unconditional moral law applicable within a sensible world), so on the rational, theological plane of determining what we can legitimately hope for, human reason calls on God to impute holiness to merely virtuous rational agents and, then, reward such agents with proportional happiness. From a cognitive standpoint, each faculty has a synthesizing role to play in unifying the sensible and the intelligible.
Further, while each of the synthesizing faculties is a *priori*, only God – as an actual postulated object of pure practical reason and sole being capable of synthesizing morality and happiness – falls outside of the cognitive faculties of human beings. While theoretical reason posits God as a transcendental idea, practical reason posits God as an actual object playing an essential role in unifying the ends of reason that necessitates our faith:

>[S]uch and intelligence [God], in which the morally most perfect will, combined with the highest blessedness, is the cause of all the happiness in the world, insofar as it stands in exact relation with morality (as the worthiness to be happy), the ideal of the highest good. Thus only in the ideal of the highest original good can pure reason find the ground for the practically necessary connection of both elements [imputed holiness and happiness] of the highest derived good. (A810-1/B838-9, emphases are Kant’s)

Pure practical reason calls on God as “the highest original good” to make possible “the highest derived good,” which is defined by God’s synthesis of morality and happiness. It is Kant’s move from a theoretical idea to a practical postulate that grounds the difference between God (as actual synthesizer) from the transcendental schemata of the imagination or the categories of the understanding, both of which remain on the cognitive side of the human being. Thus, while theoretical reason posits God as something we can legitimately think (yet never know), we place our faith in the existence of an ultimate synthesizer that is called on to do actual synthesizing outside of the human mind. Thus, it is not our sheer idea of God that can actually do the synthesizing; it is God as a genuine object that must do it. Kenneth Westphal correctly states, “practical postulates are factual propositions” even though they “cannot be proven theoretically.” In this way, the exteriority of a postulated God – God as not merely a logically

possible object of thought but as a necessary practical object that demands our faith – differs from the interiority of both the transcendental schemata of the imagination and the categories of the understanding.

Hence, it is possible for imputed holiness and happiness to be synthetically proportioned in W3 if the following three propositions are accepted. The first two should be uncontroversial; however, the third proposition is particular to this dissertation. The first proposition holds that reason demands a belief in God’s existence. The second propositions holds that it is conceivable that God possesses the metaphysical power to bring about a state of affairs (or a future world) capable of uniting imputed holiness and happiness. The latest citation from the first Critique clearly shows Kant affirms these two propositions. Lastly, this dissertation has argued for the standard highest good within a logically possible and practically necessary four-world system. W3, as a temporally conditioned and materially embodied world where agents who have been graciously imputed as holy can enjoy proportional happiness through God’s synthesizing power, possesses the conditions for the possibility of the synthetic proportionality of imputed holiness and happiness.

The eternal account of the highest good in W4, however, has God performing different tasks. Against the standard highest good’s proportionality of duty and happiness made possible through God’s synthesizing power, the eternal highest good that comes to pass at the end of all things has God removing agents from sensibility altogether and incorporating them into a supersensible realm of noumenal duration. Thus, W4 is an eternal Kingdom of Ends comprised of wholly rational beings that could only be understood by beings with discursive understandings as world governed by purely analytic relations and judgments.
I want to be clear that I am not the first commentator to suggest that the highest good as our final end is realized in a transcendent setting in which holiness entails beatitude in a non-synthetic relationship. Jaqueline Mariña clearly does that in her essay “Making Sense of Kant’s Highest Good.”

The culmination of virtue (holiness) joined to the consummation of happiness (bliss) is the highest good in its transcendent aspect… [A] critical elucidation of what is involved in the highest good as both an unconditioned condition and as consummate shows that this understanding of the highest good – what I will label its transcendent aspect – is not one which involves the synthesis of two heterogeneous concepts. However, while we agree that our final end culminates in a transcendent highest good that does not possess the requisite conditions for synthetic relations and judgments to exist, significant differences remain in our accounts.

Mariña begins by stating that the proportionality between virtue and happiness in the immanent world is impossible for all the reasons that I have already rehearsed:

Because the pursuit of virtue and the pursuit of happiness are two different actions, my maxim to act virtuously will not necessarily coincide with those maxims I may form in pursuing happiness. Thus, my endeavor to become virtuous will not guarantee my happiness. Moreover, precisely because the two elements of the highest good are different, while virtue is its supreme condition, my maxim to act virtuously may require that I give up my happiness… Our happiness has to do with our finite condition as beings of needs. As such, it concerns the lower faculty of desire, itself determined in the order of causes. It is thereby conditioned by the receptivity of the inner and outer senses, viz., our susceptibility to pleasure and pain. Happiness, for Kant, is always empirical happiness, i.e., satisfaction with our condition insofar as we are finite agents conditioned by sensibility with respect to what we desire. The nature of this receptivity, upon which the susceptibility to pleasure and pain is based, entails that the will allowing it to become its fundamental determining ground is heteronomous, i.e., allows itself to be determined by a

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16 Ibid., 333. The emphasis is Mariña’s. Mariña uses the Beck translation of the second _Critique_ where he translates the German _Seligkeit_ as “bliss” instead of “beatitude.”
causal principle (i.e., nature) lying outside the will itself. Virtue, on the other hand, concerns spontaneity, as opposed to the receptivity, of the will. Insofar as virtue and the inclinations stem from two distinct faculties of human nature (spontaneity and receptivity), the maxims made in the pursuance of each will not necessarily coincide.\(^\text{17}\)

She specifically argues against secularists like Reath and Yovel, who contend that it is possible to synthesize morality and happiness proportionally in the phenomenal world without any divine intervention. On this score, Mariña and I are in full agreement.

The differences begin to emerge when Mariña contends that the future world is transcendent. Following John Silber’s influential 1959 essay “Kant’s Conception of the Highest Good as Immanent and Transcendent,” Mariña is only willing to entertain two possible worlds: the current immanent world on earth and a future transcendent world outside of sensibility. Here, Silber and Mariña, with their two-world position, are essentially following (intentionally or not) what denominations of Protestant Christianity take to be the case: there is only our life on earth and our afterlife.

This is not the case, however, for Catholics, who have the concept of Purgatory — an existence in a world that mediates our life in this world and a further existence in Heaven. For Catholics, souls are released from Purgatory (the time spent in Purgatory is of a finite duration) after correcting their characters (aided by the actions, specifically the intercessory prayers, of those who are not yet deceased).\(^\text{18}\) If we bracket the practice of intercessory prayer, which is not

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\(^\text{17}\) Ibid., 334-5. The emphases are Mariña’s.

\(^\text{18}\) This system ties this world to existences in future worlds because it is a responsibility of the living to aid in freeing the souls in Purgatory to access Heaven. I will share a personal example. When my maternal grandmother was approximately 80 years old, she had recently lost two of her sisters and several other less immediate family members and friends. My grandmother was Polish Catholic: she prayed the Rosary every day in English, Polish and Latin, even though she never graduated high school (she left her junior year of high school to make box-springs in a bedding factory to help support the family). It was a brutal Chicago winter – snow, ice and dangerous cold. My grandmother (“Busia” in Polish) never learned to drive, and she preferred to offer prayers for her recently deceased family and friends at Saint John Cantius in Chicago, which was her local parish when she was young and where she
a practice in Kant’s philosophy, there still remains a distinct Purgatorial facet to W2: agents striving to be well-pleasing to God in W2 in the hope of accessing the highest good bear a striking resemblance to the souls (embodied on Dante’s account) that are undergoing their final purification with the hope of accessing Heaven. In each instance, there is a mediating existence in a world that differs from the prior existence, which is meant to prepare agents for the subsequent, and highly sought after, existence in a final world. As I have contended earlier, the immortal soul postulate poses a future life, which implies a future world that prepares agents for a subsequent life in the Kingdom of Ends, which implies yet another future world. Thus, Kant’s philosophy implies more than two types of lives and two types of worlds. And since my account has two Kingdom of Ends – the standard highest good in W3 and the eternal highest good in W4 – I posit three future worlds post W1.

However, because Mariña (following Silber) countenances only our life on earth and our future afterlife – with a corresponding immanent highest good in our current phenomenal world and a transcendent highest good in a future noumenal world – she draws the appropriate conclusions that happiness and virtue are forever incompatible in our phenomenal world, and, as intractably sensible, happiness has no place in a transcendent highest good, either. Hence, she claims that “there does not seem to be any place, either in this life or in the next, for the highest

received her education. At this point, where she currently lived, for her get to St John’s she needed to take three busses in the brutal cold, snow, and ice. Moreover, getting inside St. John’s itself required walking up many flights of outdoor stairs, which were not always free of snow or ice. One day when she was getting ready to leave, I said, “Busia, it is thirty degrees below zero with the wind chill, and there’s ice and snow everywhere; you could hurt yourself. Why do you continue to make these dangerous trips?” She looked at me intensely and said, “you don’t understand.” I replied, “what don’t I understand.” She paused and said, “I have a responsibility to the dead.” Then she walked out into the cold. Interestingly, my Busia’s response is not particularly different from Antigone’s rationale to give her brother, Polyneices, a proper burial against Creon’s edict in Sophocles’ Antigone. Catholics, just like Kant, have more than two worlds operating within their theology.

19 In fact, Kant would find such a theological practice heteronomous and, thus, non-moral.
good as a synthetic notion.” From here, she makes the reasonable move to replace happiness with beatitude, since beatitude, as supersensible, perfectly coincides with holiness: “The answer to this difficulty has to do with the fact that in the case of happiness – which for Kant principally has to do with inclinations and desires – is replaced by bliss.” With these two fully intelligible final goods in a transcendent highest good in a noumenal world, Mariña solves the happiness problem.

W3 attempts to solve the problem of the standard account of the highest good as a synthetic notion. God synthetically proportions imputed holiness and happiness in W3 in a world that possesses the necessary conditions – a temporally conditioned body operating in a sensible setting – for happiness to be experienced. Therefore, if one believes in God’s existence and metaphysical power to synthesize imputed holiness with happiness proportionally, which Kant clearly does, God could conceivably create and sustain the features in W3 that allow for the synthetic proportionality of happiness to worthiness. Since this penultimate world remains a logical and, more importantly, a moral possibility, Mariña’s statement that “there does not seem to be any place, either in this life or in the next, for the highest good as a synthetic notion” is misguided.

Moreover, the standard account of the highest good gets, by far, the most attention from Kant. In fact, it is hard to read Kant’s writings on this issue and not conclude that the proportionality of morality and happiness was Kant’s greatest hope. Why? Previously, I observed that “a plausible conclusion to draw is that... finite, rational creatures, whose reasons

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20 Ibid., 341.

21 Ibid., 347.
and wills are not absolute, desire happiness in proportion to virtue.” Since W3 is a phenomenal world, it remains temporally conditioned and, thereby, compatible with imputed holiness and happiness. Moreover, as I have been at great pains to show, W3 requires a body for happiness to be plausibly experienced in proportion to morality. Hence, the beings in W3 remain finite, rational, embodied beings, and such beings (especially Immanuel Kant!) rationally desire happiness to be synthetically proportioned with morality (by God!). Put simply, neither holiness analytically entailing beatitude nor the continuous effort to subordinate happiness to duty and, thereby, experience more consistent levels of self-contentment are enough for finite, rational, and embodied, beings: Kant is clearly of the belief that they rationally desire their happiness, too. And W3 satisfies that desire.

Nevertheless, Mariña and I are in full agreement that a supersensible highest good is the final end. However, nowhere in Mariña’s account does she say anything about transcending sensibility. Importantly, on my account, God’s gracious imputation of holiness not only contains within it access to the synthetic unity of morality and happiness, but it also equally contains the eventual transcending of sensibility and the entrance into a final noumenal world of ends in themselves. Thus, God’s grace is what allows initial access into W3 and eventual incorporation into W4. Mariña has published an essay on God’s grace – “Kant on Grace: A Reply to His Critics”22 – yet she never aligns transcendence with God’s grace. Thus, while Mariña recognizes the necessity to transition out of sensibility altogether, she never explains the transcendence of sensibility. I do, and I will try to justify my position a little more forcefully.

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On my account, as I have indicated above, God’s grace comprises three sequential and interrelating divine acts. The first is the *act of divine recognition of worthiness* (which is an act that can only be accomplished by God through intellectual intuition), which allows us to be discerned as well-pleasing. This act of divine recognition informs the next act, which is the *act of divine forgiveness*: since an agent has done everything in his or her power to try to achieve holiness, God forgives such agents for their initial adoption of the evil maxim and the remaining instances when they have not lived up to the moral law throughout their resolute struggle. Therefore, the act of divine forgiveness is predicated on the act of divine recognition. Lastly, once agents have been recognized for their moral worthiness and forgiven for their past transgressions, God, through an *act of divine benevolence*, rewards the agent by graciously crediting the gap between disposition and deed closed by imputing holiness to the agent. And since benevolence’s “object is happiness according to the proportion of worthiness in the subject,” the reward is entrance into the highest good of W3, where such proportionality is established, which is followed by the eventual incorporation into what could only be understood as W4’s fully analytic relations. These three sequential and interrelated divine acts constitute God’s gracious imputation of holiness and its consequences.

Benevolence does not depend on the merit of the agent. On the contrary, it is predicated on the fact that the agent has not fully merited something (in our case, happiness); however, one is, nevertheless, rewarded through an act of kindness or good will by the judge (in our case, by God). Kant says that “God punishes evil and rewards good,” and that “the rewards God bestows on us proceed not from his justice but from his benevolence.” Therefore, rewards proceed from benevolence, and God rewards the good; thus, benevolence is the rewarding of the good.
However, benevolence also entails the realization that one has not fully achieved something. The “as if” nature of this state of affairs poses the question: How can this lack or incompleteness with regard to achievement still be a good worthy of reward through benevolence? There is a tension here that needs to be resolved.

Kant defines divine benevolence as “an immediate well-pleasedness with the welfare of others” (28:1076). Thus, when we are found worthy and well-pleasing to God, benevolence is the order of the day. Kant further says that “benevolence… is the special idea whose object is happiness… Benevolence in and of itself is without limit, but it has to express itself in the apportionment of happiness according to the proportion of worthiness in the subject” (28:1074, emphases are Kant’s). Here Kant explicitly links benevolence to the highest good; benevolence is (or “it expresses itself” as) God proportioning well-being to worthiness, the state of affairs that defines the standard highest good (imputed holiness and happiness) and the eternal highest good (holiness and beatitude). We may hope that when God recognizes through intellectual intuition that we have taken our moral journey to holiness as far as we can, we are worthy of receiving God’s benevolent reward of imputed holiness that allows access into both instances of the highest good. Understood in this way, God’s gracious imputation of holiness (which is a divine reward) is a benevolent act that includes the transitions into W3 (our temporally conditioned, penultimate end) and, ultimately on Judgment Day, into W4 (our eternal and, thus, unconditioned final end). Unlike Mariña, my account of God’s grace explicitly involves a transition from X (where we resolutely struggle to become well-pleasing) to Y (access to the standard highest good) and Z (incorporation into the eternal highest good).
Next, Mariña states (multiple times) that the natural world has a *telos* that lies outside of it. Here are two of her statements on this score: “the world is ordered to an ethico-teleological goal that lies outside it, one in which the final perfection of virtue results in the replacement of the *need* for happiness with bliss.”\(^{23}\) The concept of “the highest good in the world has meaning only insofar as it refers to its ultimate *telos*, itself standing outside the world of sense; this implies that the highest good as transcendent is its principle and more important sense.”\(^{24}\) What Mariña seems to be getting at here is that on Kant’s account the natural world is teleologically structured such that humanity, which has the capacity to transcend natural causality through the spontaneity of reason, is nature’s ultimate end.

However, nature, in-and-of-itself cannot reveal humanity’s final end; only reason, which continuously seeks the unconditioned, can do that. As a result, Mariña goes on to correctly add:

Yet while physico-teleology may serve as a propaedeutic to theology, (i.e., towards a concept of God adequate to the demands of morality), it stops short of what is required… Nature can only reveal those sporadic purposes found within it, but it cannot reveal its own final purpose, i.e., the end towards which it is ultimately ordered, and which therefore stands outside of it. As Kant notes, ‘Only pure reason can provide a priori a final purpose (because all the purposes in the world are empirically conditioned and [hence] cannot contain what is good absolutely, but only what is good for this or that, i.e., for some contingent aim).’\(^{25}\)

Pure reason, which is transcendental, postulates the existence of God and the immortal soul, as well as the final end of the highest good. Here again, Mariña and I are in full agreement. Furthermore, we both find it “regrettable that Kant did not more carefully sort out”\(^{26}\) a more


\(^{24}\) Ibid., 331.

\(^{25}\) Ibid., 353.

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 341.
explicit exposition of the highest good as transcendent. Consequently, we are engaged in a “reconstruction” that seeks to take what’s both said and implied in Kant’s writings in order to give the most cogent account of the transcendent highest good as our final end. To this end, I have employed the concept of moral teleology (over-and-above natural teleology) in an attempt to augment Kantian moral theology and best explain how a transcendent (eternal) highest good is our final end. Here is another difference between my account and Mariña’s that is worth revisiting because I believe it to be a valuable addition to Kant’s rational theology, and it also helps clarify another aspect of reason that has received far too little attention in the secondary literature.

As I have formerly contended, Kant distinguishes an ultimate end from a final end: nature posits humanity as its ultimate end; however, humanity’s final end, which is the transcendent highest good, is entirely outside the purview of nature and is wholly within the purview of pure reason. Even though Kant’s teleology concerns both purposiveness and ends, it is best not to conceive of the final end of a transcendent highest good as being subsumed under Kant’s natural teleological framework. Ultimately, Kant’s natural teleology deals with the purposiveness and ultimate end of nature. Kant concludes that the apex of nature as a purposive system is humanity itself. Specifically, as moral agents that are not reducible to nature’s causality, humanity represents the ultimate end of the sensible system of nature posited as a whole. Through reason’s spontaneity and humanity’s intelligible character, finite, rational agents possess the capacity to elevate the causality of freedom over the causality of nature. As a result, humanity is the only

\[\text{27 The reason for this probably lies in Kant’s fervent hope for the unity of imputed holiness and happiness.}\]
agent operating in nature that is not strictly determined by natural causation. For Kant, nature’s design allows humans to exercise their freedom within a causally determined world. Moreover, the idea that the noumenal aspect of humanity is the pinnacle of natural purposiveness and the ultimate end of nature’s systematic processes suggests that there is a divine design for natural phenomena. Therefore, we posit God as the divine designer and moral author, while not going as far to say that such rational positing rises to the level of proving God’s existence (we are still operating with faith and not knowledge), of a natural system ultimately designed for humans to exercise their freedom.

However, just because we must reflectively judge that man is the ultimate end of nature, it does not follow that anything pertaining to man’s being in nature is the ultimate end of man. The central conclusion that Kant draws in the third *Critique* – that humanity is the ultimate end of nature due to its possession of practical reason and the capacity to freely act in spite of natural causality to set and secure ends – *should not be understood* as humanity achieving its final end. Kant is clear that humanity (as the ultimate end of nature) realizes its *final end* in the systematic unity of morality and well-being that constitutes the highest good. The final end for human beings is a system that proportionally pairs the natural end of well-being with the rational end of morality. Since this final end exists “in the idea of pure reason” (A809/B837) and cannot occur naturally, such proportionality presupposes divine intervention; moreover, since we can never speak with certainty about God, this final end remains a hope sustained by our faith in God. As the ultimate end of nature, we are the only beings capable of conceiving and working towards such a final end outside of nature itself.
It is my central claim that the final end of the eternal highest good occurs outside of sensibility altogether and culminates in holiness’s analytic entailment of beatitude. It is this concept of being *outside of sensibility altogether* that is incommensurate with Kant’s natural teleological framework, which conceives of the non-conflicting relationship of the sensible and the intelligible due to moral agents’ capacity to subordinate the former to the latter. Since humanity’s final end is supersensible, a natural teleological (or historical) account cannot provide an adequate explanation because, simply put, natural teleology does not quit sensibility. Nature does not transcend itself; rather, humanity, as its ultimate end, transcends nature through its possession of reason.

As I have said earlier, *moral teleology* does quit sensibility and transcend nature, and since I am advancing an entirely intelligible realm outside of all natural predicates as our final end, moral teleology precisely corresponds to noumenal duration because, ultimately, human reason transcends temporally conditioned nature. I want to further explore reason’s connection to a fully transcendent highest good as the final end by looking at four of Kant’s statements on reason: one is in the third *Critique* and three are in “The End of All Things.” In the third *Critique*, Kant says,

[T]he final end cannot be an end which nature would be sufficient to produce in accordance with its idea, because it is unconditioned. For there is nothing in nature (as a sensible being) the determining ground of which, itself found in nature, is not always in turn conditioned; and this holds not merely for nature outside of us (material nature), but also for nature inside of us (thinking nature) – as long as it is clearly understood that I am considering only that within me which is nature. A thing, however, which is to exist as a final end of an intelligent cause necessarily, on account of its objective constitution, must be such that in the order of ends it is dependent on no further condition other than merely the idea of it (5:435).
The final end of the highest good is unconditioned; it thus falls outside of the causality of nature, where every effect is conditioned by a cause in space and time. The highest good thus falls within the purview of reason, which is also not subject to space, time, or natural causality. Reason allows the highest good to be thought (on the theoretical side as an idea) and, as the following statements from “The End of All Things” will attest, to become a necessary object of belief and a plausible cause for hope (as a postulate of pure practical reason).

Here are three statements (some of which I have previously cited) in “The End of All Things” that connect our transition into the eternity of the transcendent highest good with the demands of pure practical reason:

- Now when we pursue the transition from time into eternity (whether or not this idea, considered theoretically as extending cognition, has objective reality), as reason does in a moral regard, then we come up against the end of all things as temporal beings and as objects of possible experience – which end, however, in the moral order of ends, is at the same time the beginning of a duration of just those same beings as supersensible, and consequently as not standing under conditions of time; thus that duration and its state will be capable of no determination of nature other than a moral one (8:327, emphases are Kant’s).

- But why do human beings expect an end of the world at all?... The ground… appears to lie in the fact that reason says to them that the duration of the world has worth only insofar as the rational beings in it conform to the final end of their existence; if, however, this is not supposed to be achieved, the creation itself appears to be purposeless to them, like a play having no resolution and affording no cognition of any rational aim (8:330-1, emphases are Kant’s).

- Here we have to do (or are playing) merely with ideas created by reason itself, whose objects (if they have any) lie wholly beyond our field of vision; although they are transcendent for speculative cognition, they are not to be taken as empty, but with a practical intent they are made available to us by law giving reason itself, yet not in order to brood over their objects as to what they are in themselves and in their nature, but rather how we have to think about them in behalf of moral principles directed toward the final end of all things (through which, though otherwise they would be entirely empty, acquire objective practical reality): hence we have a free field before us, this product of our own reason, the universal concept of an end of all things (8:332-3), emphasis is Kant’s).
In all three statements, Kant argues that “lawgiving reason itself,” in its practical and moral capacity, necessarily directs us to the final object and final end, which acquires “objective practical reality,” that is a fully transcendent, and thus eternal, highest good not “standing under conditions of time.” While reason in its theoretical interest prompts us to consider ideas “whose objects (if they have any) lie wholly beyond our field of vision;” reason in its practical interest demands that “we come up against the end of all things as temporal beings and as objects of possible experience – which end, however, in the moral order of ends, is at the same time the beginning of a duration of just those same beings as supersensible, and consequently as not standing under conditions of time.” In this way, practical reason directs finite, rational agents outside of nature and, thus, outside of time.

Kant’s foremost explanation for this final transition into supersensible eternity “lie[s] in the fact that reason says that the duration of the world has worth only insofar as the rational beings in it conform to the final end of their existence; if, however, this is not supposed to be achieved, the creation itself appears to be purposeless.” This explanation makes sense. But is there another motive for practical reason directing us outside of temporal conditions and into a transcendent highest good, and is that other motive grounded in the fact that reason itself stands outside of temporal conditions? There is. Reason is spontaneous. It can initiate a new causal chain without being affected by antecedent activity, and, as such, it is autonomous. Ultimately, reason is spontaneous and free because it stands outside of temporal conditions; this must be the case because if reason were conditioned by time, it would be strictly governed by natural causality and would lack spontaneity and freedom.
It is imperative to examine more fully the consequences of reason standing outside of the condition of time, insofar as that examination can illuminate the direction reason orients finite, rational beings. Reason is directed at “the absolute totality in the synthesis of conditions, and never ends except with the absolutely unconditioned, i.e., what is unconditioned in every relation” (A326/B382). In its theoretical interest, reason posits transcendental ideas: unconditioned totalities that cannot be known but can be legitimately thought. Transcendental ideas arise when theoretical reason posits putative objects as first conditions, which are themselves unconditioned yet logical preconditions for all subsequent fully conditioned causal activity. As such, transcendental ideas of theoretical reason are not objects of possible experience; rather, they are pure concepts that can guide thought but whose putative objects cannot be known. To hold that transcendental ideas represent knowable objects is to succumb to a transcendental illusion that Kant regards as inevitable. What transcendental ideas properly call on us to do is always seek further conditions, so as to more completely systematize our understanding of the casual activity that makes up the natural world (which is itself a dynamical whole that cannot be known as such). It is in this way that ideas of reason can aid in furthering knowledge.

Thus, reason, in its theoretical interest, posits the unconditioned as thinkable. Importantly for my concerns here, for something to be unconditioned, it has to be outside of time (because time is first condition of all change and causal activity). Thus, reason, itself not under the condition of time, posits unconditioned totalities – putative objects that can be thought and can

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28 In his “Preface” to his small but great book on Kant, Deleuze talks about “the first great Kantian reversal.” This reversal relates to time: Deleuze argues that prior to Kant, time was subordinated to movement and change. With Kant, however, movement is subordinated to time: “movement [and change] is related to time which conditions it” (vii). For Kant, there is no movement or change or causality without time.
guide further knowledge claims about the natural world – which as things in themselves are not under the condition of time. Hence, in its theoretical interest, we have the non-temporally conditioned faculty of reason directing us to think non-temporally conditioned ideas, or, put differently, reason, itself not under the temporal condition, inevitably directs our thoughts outside of time.

Furthermore, in its practical interest, reason posits the postulates of pure reason: these postulates are God and the immortal soul, both of which are unconditioned totalities that cannot be known yet can be legitimately thought. However, in its practical interest, reason demands that we view these totalities as subjectively necessary objects whose existence we fully believe in. The move from idea to postulate is the transition from the mere thinking of something to believing in the actuality of that something. Specifically, these unconditioned objects (even though they are not objects of possible experience) are worthy of our faith because they are necessary in achieving the ends of reason, which is the unconditioned transcendent highest good. Thus, practical reason, itself not under the condition of time, postulates the existence of certain subjectively necessary objects that wholly transcend the natural world and deserve our faith because they make our transcendence into the supersensible world a possible hope: “[The postulates of pure practical reason] postulate the possibility of an object itself (God and the immortality of the soul) from apodictic practical laws, but therefore only on behalf of a practical reason” (5:11n). Hence, in its practical interest, we have the non-temporally conditioned faculty of reason directing us to believe in non-temporally conditioned objects in order to realize our final end, or, put differently, reason directs our existence outside of time. Therefore, reason, in its practical interest, seeks the posited unconditioned.
It is also worthwhile to further rehearse our reflective and aesthetic judgments of the sublime because, here again, is another instance where reason demands us not to reduce ourselves to the temporal condition. Unlike determining judgments that subsume particular objects under universal concepts of the understanding and provide objective knowledge, reflective judgments start with particulars and attempt to find universal concepts under which the particulars can be subsumed. Reflective judgments do not constitute knowledge of objects of experience; rather, they rest on the subjectively necessary, but ultimately indeterminable, assumption that there is an intelligent author of the objects found within nature. This subjectively necessary assumption calls on sensible, rational beings to seek purposes within nature without the absolute assurance that those purposes exist; nevertheless, these purposes do prompt sensible, rational beings to draw necessary conclusions about how they are not reducible to the laws of nature.

Unlike an aesthetic judgment of the beautiful, in which the imagination and the understanding harmonize to an aesthetic judgment of the sublime has reason calling on the imagination to represent something beyond its capacity for aesthetic representation, thus causing the imagination to experience pain due to the dissonance between what reason demands of it and what the imagination can do. There are two forms of sublime judgments: mathematical and dynamical. Both types of sublime judgment have reason playing an essential role in order for sensible, rational beings to draw conclusions about their relationship with the natural world. In a mathematically sublime judgment, reason positions itself in relation to the faculty of knowledge when the imagination recognizes that a transcendental idea generated by reason is greater than the magnitude confronted within nature itself. In a dynamically sublime judgment, reason
positions itself in relation to the faculty of desire when we recognize that the freedom to heed the moral law is a more powerful imperative when compared to our desire for sensible incentives.

The mathematically sublime judgment concerns the confrontation with an object whose magnitude or sheer immensity surpasses the imagination’s ability to aesthetically represent it. The imagination cannot provide reason with a satisfactory image that could adequately represent the infinitely large. In this sense that imagination fails, as it “sinks back into itself” (5:252). Yet it is this very failure of the imagination to live up to reason’s demand and the pain that it elicits that promotes a higher form of pleasure because it occasions a recognition of reason’s capacity to comprehend the sheer immensity of the mathematically sublime natural object within a rational idea. Thus, the imagination concludes that reason’s ability to produce “a presentation of the infinite” (5:274) in a rational idea makes reason greater than nature itself. Hence, reason construes itself (as opposed to nature) as possessing absolute magnitude. Mathematically sublime judgments thus posit unconditioned reason as greater than conditioned nature.

With dynamically sublime judgments, the infinite magnitude of an object is not what is confronted; rather, it is the inability of the imagination to aesthetically represent the seemingly incalculable strength or sheer power of the natural world when it’s taken as a totality. Again, this failure prompts an initial pain that transitions into a pleasurable feeling when we accept our vocation as free agents who can intentionally place duty over the inclinations and freely resist sensible desires. In this way, and similarly to a mathematically sublime judgment, we can conclude that humanity exceeds nature.
In both sublime judgments, the discord between the imagination and reason prompts the experience of a higher pleasure because we come to conceive of ourselves as not merely sensibly conditioned beings. Deleuze makes the point nicely:

Such is the – discordant – accord of the imagination and reason: not only reason, but also the imagination, has a ‘supersensible destination.’ In this accord the soul is felt as the indeterminate supersensible unity of all the faculties; we are ourselves brought back into focus, as a ‘focal point’ in the suprasensible.29

Sensible, rational beings recognize their higher purpose that is predicated on their rational power over the empirical demands of the natural world. Hence, Kantian moral philosophy recognizes that the difference between the natural (or what is) and the rational (or what ought to be) and it always sides with the power of the rational ought over the natural is. These examples further strengthen my position that reason, which seeks and posits the unconditioned because it itself is unconditioned, inevitably directs finite, rational agents to transcend the mere conditions of sensibility. Put simply, a transcendent faculty begets a supersensible and eternal final end.

In order to better contextualize this claim about reason, I will return to beatitude and happiness. Beatitude is a supersensible form of well-being in an eternal highest good. Reason, which transcends sensibility, directs us toward the supersensible final goods of holiness and beatitude, both of which transcend sensibility. Reason, thereby, directs finite, rational beings toward the same transcendence that it enjoys. Of course, the same cannot be said for happiness, for it cannot, by definition, transcend sensibility. This argument – that reason, by virtue of what it is, directs finite, rational beings outside of the temporal condition30 – is absent in Mariña’s

29 Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, 51. The emphasis is Deleuze’s.

30 In this way, reason prompts us to abandon our bodies.
account. Nevertheless, it helps support our position for a supersensible highest good that has holiness entailing beatitude as the final end.

The last topic (which I have already touched upon) that provides contrast between Mariña and me is my explicit explanation of holiness’s analytic entailment of beatitude and the consequences that follow such an entailment. In her essay “Making Sense of Kant’s Highest Good,” Mariña explicitly (and frequently) states that the relationship between holiness and beatitude is not synthetic. However, at no time does she explicitly say that the relationship should be construed as analytic and explain how this is the case. Perhaps she takes it for granted that if it’s not synthetic, then it must be analytic. At any rate, here is what I take to be her most interesting claim about a transcendent highest good through which holiness entails beatitude:

We might ask further: what is the function of the moral law when the highest good in its transcendent aspect has been achieved. Obviously, here the moral law does not order needs and desires given to it from the outside, i.e., grounded in empirical causes lying outside the will and hence connected with the physical body. Whatever ends the holy will may have, they are necessarily in accordance with the moral law. A clue is provided in Kant’s description of the second formula of the categorical imperative as providing the material for the moral law, namely, the rational being is an end in itself and has absolute worth. If all rational wills were holy wills, each rational being would be directed to, and delight in, the sheer presence of every other rational being; barring all merely subjectively conditioned desires, there would be nothing to distract rational agents from a full appreciation of each other’s absolute worth. Hence, not only would such a world be one of perfect harmony, it would also be one of perfect love in the agapeic sense. Here only rational beings as ends in themselves provide the matter for willing.31

Mariña properly frames this issue with regard to the moral law: holiness, which is the morally unconditioned condition of a supersensible highest good, is the complete conformity to the moral law. When an agent partakes in such purity, then “such a world [would] be one of perfect harmony.” This perfect harmony is none other than the complete well-being of beatitude.

31 Ibid., 348. The emphases are Mariña’s.
analytically entailed to the perfected morality of holiness, so it is interesting that Mariña does not make this point explicit.

Instead, and equally interesting, she brings in the topic of love. In Religion, Kant says that “the highest goal of the moral perfection … is . . . the love of the law” (6:145). This quotation fits perfectly with Mariña’s assessment. If holiness is defined as complete conformity with the moral law, and holiness is only capable in a noumenal world, it makes sense that such a world would be “one of perfect harmony… and also be one of perfect love.” Within the first three worlds, which are not eternal, noumenal worlds, “respect” for the moral law is the appropriate characterization because “moral perfection” has not been (and cannot be) realized. However, with the transition into transcendence, we can properly speak of “moral perfection,” which is none other than the “the love of the law.” Thus, the moral imperfection operative in the first three worlds elicits respect for the moral law, while the moral perfection operative in W4 finally allows for love of the moral law. Mariña’s description of such a final state of affairs is nicely rendered, indeed.

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Since Mariña and I agree that our final end is a supersensible highest good that does not (in Mariña’s words that I cited earlier) “involve the synthesis of two heterogeneous concepts,” I will make explicit how analytic relations obtain between holiness and beatitude in such a world (which is something that Mariña chooses not to do). Moreover, such an account permits me to draw a very important conclusion about such a world; specifically, I will argue that intellectual intuition, which finally allows us to know of God’s existence, is contained within the complete well-being of beatitude, which contains the pleasure one gets from knowing God in our final end.
Very early in the first *Critique*, Kant distinguishes between two types of judgments: analytic and synthetic. An analytic judgment, or a “judgment of clarification,” occurs when the predicate of a judgment is conceptually contained within the subject: “the connection of the predicate is thought through identity” (A7/B11). The judgment is justified if the proposition passes the law of non-contradiction. All analytic judgments are *a priori* and, thus, independent of experience and hold necessarily in all logically possible worlds: one doesn’t need to have an experience to logically deduce that all squares are four-sided. Thus, analytic judgments can be known to be true without the need of a confirming intuition. Hence, there is no such thing as an analytic *a posteriori* judgment for Kant. *A posteriori* judgments, as a form of judgment of that involves experience, require the synthesis of empirical intuitions; however, analytic judgments, whose predicate is logically contained within the subject, do not have any empirical intuitions to synthesize. Also, because the predicate is logically contained within the subject, analytic judgments do not further knowledge, even though they do make something explicit that had merely been implicit before.

Conversely, synthetic judgments, or “judgments of amplification,” occur when the concept of the predicate is not contained in the subject, due to the concept of the predicate exceeding the concept of the subject: thus, synthetic judgments “add to the concept of the subject a predicate that was not thought in it at all and could not have been extracted from it through any analysis” (A7/B11). All contingent, empirical judgments of experience are synthetic, and, unlike analytic judgments, they provide additional knowledge of aspects of the world.

Kant advances two types of synthetic judgments: *a posteriori* and *a priori*. In synthetic *a posteriori* judgments (or empirical judgments determined through experience), “both concepts,
though the one is not contained in the other, nevertheless belong together, though only contingently, as parts of a whole, namely experience, which is itself a synthetic combination of intuitions” (A8). Kant uses the example of “a body has weight” to illustrate synthetic \textit{a posteriori} judgments. Weight is not analytically contained in the concept of body, yet

the concept nevertheless designates an object of experience through a part of it, to which I can therefore add still other parts of the same experience as belonging with the former. I can first cognize the concept of the body analytically through the marks of extension, of impenetrability, of shape, etc., which are all thought of in the concept. But now I amplify my cognition and, looking back to the experience from which I had extracted this concept of the body, I find that weight is also connected with the previous marks, and I therefore add this synthetically as predicate of that concept. It is thus experience on which the possibility of the synthesis of the predicate of weight with the concept of body is grounded, since both concepts, though the one is not contained in the other, nevertheless belong together, though only contingently, as parts of a whole, namely experience which is itself a synthetic combination of intuitions. (A8-9)

“Experience which is itself a synthetic combination of intuitions” allows the predicate of weight to be arrived at through its synthesis with one’s experience with bodies. In this way, “the field of experience” (B13), rather than logic, allows these two concepts to “contingently belong together as parts of a whole.”

Even though all contingent, empirical judgments of experience are synthetic, it does not necessarily follow that all synthetic judgments are contingent and empirical. In Kant’s second type of synthetic judgment – synthetic \textit{a priori} judgment – “this means of help [\textit{a posteriori}, contingent experience] is entirely lacking” (A9). Hence, synthetic \textit{a priori} judgments are not grounded in sensible experience and are arrived at necessarily because pure intuition establishes the necessity of a judgment. Kant believes that the success of his transcendental philosophy rests with proving the existence of synthetic \textit{a priori} judgments. Kant’s proposes that the transcendental forms of sensibility and the understanding allow for synthetic \textit{a priori} judgments.
that validate his transcendental idealism, which merges the salient parts of empiricism and rationalism, as well as wards off the dangers posed by Humean skepticism (Hume holds that synthetic *a priori* judgments are impossible and, thus, utterly dismisses metaphysics).

Furthermore, Kant believes that mathematical and pure natural scientific knowledge are all derived from synthetic *a priori* judgments.

Of course, the conclusion that Kant draws is synthetic *a priori* judgments provide knowledge of appearances and not things in themselves. And here is where intuitions enter the picture again. But not the empirical intuitions of sensible experience that inform synthetic *a posteriori* judgment, rather *a priori* intuitions of space and time that structure our appearances and our knowledge of the world. Either way, as Robert Hanna explains, intuitions are necessary for synthetic judgment and knowledge:

Kant directly connects the semantics of syntheticity with the semantics of intuitions, just as he directly connects the semantics of analyticity with the semantics of concepts (including both empirical concepts and the pure concepts of the understanding). Then positively put, a judgment is synthetic if and only if its meaning and its truth are strictly determined by its constituent intuitions, whether empirical intuitions or pure intuitions. This is not to say either that synthetic judgments do not contain any concepts (in fact they always *do* contain empirical or pure concepts), or even that the conceptual components of a synthetic judgment are irrelevant to its meaning or truth (in fact empirical or pure concepts always *are* semantically relevant), but only to say that in a synthetic judgment it is the intuitional components that *strictly determine* its meaning and truth, not its empirical-conceptual or pure-conceptual components. In short, a synthetic judgment is *an intuition-based proposition.*

Since “a judgment is synthetic if and only if its meaning and its truth are strictly determined by its constituent intuitions, whether empirical intuitions or pure intuitions,” this may explain why Mariña did not find it necessary to mount an explicit argument for the analytic entailment of

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holiness and beatitude. In a transcendent highest good, which is fully supersensible, intuitions – whether empirical or pure – are simply not on offer, and if there is no possibility for empirical or pure intuitions, then there is no possibility for synthesis. Here’s Hanna again:

Now since according to Kant our a priori formal representations of space and time are both necessary conditions of the possibility of human experience and also necessary conditions of the objective validity or empirical meaningfulness of judgments, which in turn confers truth-valuedness upon propositions, it then follows that a synthetic a priori judgment is a proposition that is true in all and only the humanly experienceable possible worlds and truth-valueless otherwise. By sharp contrast, analytic judgments, as logical truths in either a narrow (truth-functional or syllogistic) or broad (intensional logic) sense, are true in all logically possible worlds, including those logically possible worlds in which human experience is not possible, i.e., the worlds containing non-phenomenal or non-apparent entities, especially including things-in-themselves, i.e., the ‘noumenal worlds.’

Synthetic a priori judgments are not available “in all logically possible worlds,” especially “noumenal worlds” because such a world does not conform “to our a priori formal representations of space and time.” However, analytic a priori judgments are true “in all logically possible worlds” and, especially, for our purposes here, “worlds containing non-phenomenal or non-apparent entities, especially including things-in-themselves, i.e., the ‘noumenal worlds.’” As I have already argued, a world such as W4 “containing non-phenomenal or non-apparent entities, especially including things-in-themselves,” does not have the necessary conditions for synthetic propositions, judgments, and, thereby, the possibility of happiness. This noumenal world has holiness analytically entailing beatitude, and that is it. Furthermore, since holiness and beatitude are total conditions – “complete conformity” and “complete well-being” – that can only find their realization in the noumenal duration of eternity, W3, as a temporally

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33 Ibid. Interestingly, Hanna still essentially conforms to a two-world view: phenomenal, synthetic a priori worlds and noumenal analytic a priori worlds. Thus, Worlds Two and Three, which complicate these distinctions, seem not to be on his radar, either.
conditioned world, can only make good on imputed holiness (or “as if” holiness), which does not analytically entail beatitude.

In W4, our \textit{a priori} intuitions of time and space as transcendental conditions of experience, as well as any empirical intuitions, are not on offer. However, is there \textit{no} room for \textit{any} kind of intuition in the noumenal world of the transcendent highest good? There is. Kant recognizes the concept of intellectual intuition, and while he is militantly against extending such a power to sensible, rational beings with discursive understandings, \textit{it is} reasonable to extend such a form of cognition to noumenal beings in supersensible worlds.

First, I completely agree with Kant that intuitions and concepts are different \textit{in kind} (and not merely \textit{in degree}) for sensible, rational beings that require the subsumption of particular intuitions under general concepts made possible through the schematizing power of the imagination. Kant is absolutely right: intellectual intuition is not possible for sensible, rational beings with discursive understandings operating in phenomenal worlds. This impossibility is precisely why God must remain an object of faith and not of knowledge in the first three worlds.

Nonetheless, it \textit{is} possible to legitimately extend the cognitive power of intellectual intuition to non-discursive beings that have entered the eternal highest good through God’s grace. A being capable of an intellectual intuition does not have to separate the receptivity of sensibility, (which is organized spatiotemporally) from the spontaneity of the understanding (which is organized conceptually). Sebastian Gardner explains the collapsing of this distinction well:

\textit{We should consider what it would be for there to be no distinction as that which Kant makes between intuitions and concepts. According to Kant, we can form an idea of a subject whose mode of cognition is not divided in the way that ours is. This would be a subject for whom the act of thinking, and being presented with an object, were one and
the same event; the same representations in the subject would perform both functions, Such a subject would possess what Kant calls *intellectual intuition* (or, equivalently, an intuitive intellect or intuitive understanding), so called because in such a subject the same faculty that thinks objects would also intuit them.\(^3^4\)

If the transition to transcendence is a conversion to a purely rational condition, then the *a priori* intuitions – space and time – cease to be available because such a being has ceased to exist in that mode of being. We have transitioned from a world of appearances to a world of things in themselves. From this state of affairs, one would then deduce that “the act of thinking, and being presented with an object, were one and the same event” because in this situation, the only manner in which “objects” would be “experienced” is through such an “act of thinking.” An eternal highest good, as an intelligible state peopled with beings with non-discursive understandings and constituted by the analytic relationship of holiness and beatitude, provides the necessary conditions for the possibility of intellectual intuition.

Additionally, if beatitude is the “*complete well-being* independent of all the contingent causes in the world,” doesn’t it seem plausible that intellectual intuition would be the cognitive aspect that informs beatitude’s “*complete well-being*”?\(^3^5\) Presumably, complete well-being would not merely constitute the practical contentment with being holy; completeness would seem to require knowing that we’ve achieved holiness, too. That is, beatitude presupposes a type of knowledge that would take the form of an intellectual intuition.

Moreover, beatitude, as an absolute well-being that would be expressed both practically and theoretically, fits nicely within Kant’s architectonic of reason, which finds its final


\(^{35}\) This is another issue that Mariña does not take up but is relevant to her position that holiness and beatitude are the moral and non-moral goods of a transcendent highest good.
systematic expression in the eternal highest good in which reason’s two interests – the practical and the theoretical – are unified: “I require that the critique of pure practical reason, if it is to be carried through completely, be able at the same time to present the unity of practical with speculative reason in a common principle, since there can, in the end, be only one and the same reason, which must be distinguished merely in its application” (4:391). It is worthwhile to acknowledge that there is only one reason with two compatible interests, with the practical interest taking priority over the theoretical interest. The highest good unifies these two interests into one.

In this way, intellectual intuition satisfies “the unity of practical with speculative reason in a common principle, since there can, in the end, be only one and the same reason.” Therefore, beatitude’s “complete well-being,” which is grounded in holiness’s “complete conformity” to the moral law, would presumably contain the cognitive component of intellectual intuition that grounds the knowledge of God as the only form of cognition available to non-discursive beings. Thus, the transition from the phenomenal to the noumenal (that is contained within God’s gracious imputation of holiness) culminates in “the common principle” of “one and the same reason” that finds practical and speculative unity.

Another argument in favor of granting intellectual intuition to beings in a noumenal world pertains to those beings finally knowing that they have reached their final end. As I’ve already stated, since the first three worlds are peopled by sensible, rational beings with discursive understandings, the agents in the first three worlds operate on faith with regard to two very important issues: (1) if they are, in fact, acting morally, and (2) if God and the immortal soul exist and play the roles that pure practical reason posits. With W1, these are uncontroversial
claims. Things get a little more complicated with W2 and its resurrected bodies impervious to natural death. As we resolutely strive toward holiness in W2, we can never (as beings with discursive understandings) be certain if moral considerations are motivating our actions (hence, we require faith in ourselves), and we cannot claim knowledge of God’s existence. Hence, we retain our faith in God in W2.

W3 is similar to W2. In this second intermediary world, God is not only called on to sustain the resurrected body necessary for the experience of happiness but is equally called on to synthetically proportion imputed holiness with happiness. W3 retains the conditions for the possibility of synthetic a priori propositions and judgments. Thereby, sensible, rational agents that have been imputed as holy and earned proportional happiness within this world continue to retain discursive understandings and, hence, are confined to the knowledge of appearances of phenomena. As such, knowledge of putative objects that are not determined by space, time and natural causality – like God – remain objects of faith in W3.

If faith, as a form of taking to be true, is a consequence of not being entitled to claim knowledge of objects that are not subject to space, time and natural causality, then only the fully noumenal W4 (where space, time and natural causality cease to exist) possesses the conditions to render faith obsolete. Furthermore, as a world constituted of ends in themselves, I do not think it is too much to posit that such things in themselves would possess knowledge about their final form of existence. Here, I would like to revisit and requote Mariña:

If all rational wills were holy wills, each rational being would be directed to, and delight in, the sheer presence of every other rational being; barring all merely subjectively conditioned desires, there would be nothing to distract rational agents from a full appreciation of each other’s absolute worth.
Mariña’s “directed to, and delight in, the sheer presence of very other rational being [that elicits] a full appreciation of each other’s absolute worth” must surely have a cognitive component. “Full appreciation” proposes an intentional, intellectual understanding that must transcend any kind of physical sensation or “all merely subjectively conditioned desires,” which are simply not on offer in this world. I am contending that this type of “full appreciation” is a direct, intellectual comprehension of a harmonious whole that is indistinguishable from the direct, intellectual knowledge of noumena that defines intellectual intuition. The jettisoning of sensibility in W4 is, thereby, accompanied by replacing faith in God as perfectly holy being with the knowledge of our incorporation into God’s perfect holiness.

It is equally important to recognize that Kant distinguishes intellectual from divine intuition. Howard Caygill explains what differentiates these two forms of supersensible intuition: “Intellectual intuition consists in a direct, intellectual knowledge of things in themselves rather than appearances in space and time, while divine intuition is productive, producing the objects which it thinks rather than being passively affected by given objects in a manner of human intuition.”

36 *Intuitus originarius*, which is productive and only available to God, is the type of intuition capable of generating the object it intuits. The holy wills of the highest good would never be in possession of the kind of productive capacity that characterizes divine intuition, only the direct knowledge of the noumenal. In short, in an eternal highest good, the complete and harmonious holy wills would share in direct knowledge, yet they could never be “an intelligent world cause” that carries with it the productive power to instantiate things in themselves. This

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type of productive activity would solely reside in God, and with this distinction, there is an impenetrable division between the granter of grace and its grantees.
CONCLUSION

I would like to finish by highlighting four claims made in this dissertation that require further examination in the secondary literature. I am under no illusions that I have completely substantiated all the following claims. Nevertheless, I believe the subsequent claims to be sound and defensible through an interpretation of Kantian philosophy, and even though readers of Kant might disagree with any or all of my contentions, they are worthy enough to open up new and fruitful areas of dialogue within the secondary literature.

First, Kant is an implicit multiple world theorist. Kant’s postulates of an immortal soul and God illustrate that he acknowledges, at least, this world (W1), a following world that allows for continuous moral striving (W2), and a subsequent the Kingdom of Ends for agents found well-pleasing (W3). However, as I have tried to show with reason’s need for W4, there are four morally possible worlds that are implicitly posited in Kantian philosophy.

Thus far within the secondary literature, the standard account has almost exclusively been defined as construing the highest good as either an immanent or transcendent object. I have argued that these two distinctions are too reductive. I have contended that the standard account is simply flat-out incompatible with the highest good as a transcendent object (which would necessitate a noumenal world) because sensibility ceases to be on offer in a transcendent object and its corresponding noumenal world. As a result, happiness ceases to be either logically or really possible. Consequently, happiness, which is the aspect that “completes” or “perfects” the standard account of the highest good, necessitates a phenomenal world.
However, I have refrained from calling the highest good that transpires in W3 “immanent” because the amount of divine intervention operating in W3 is quantitatively greater than that of W1. So, while both W1 and W3 are phenomenal worlds populated by sensible, rational beings, W3 is sufficiently different, due to the type of body that finally receives the sensible in perfect proportion to the rational, for me to shy away from an immanent description. I have contended that the holiness and happiness problem that has beset the standard account of the highest good gets resolved in W3 with my introduction of this intermediary, phenomenal world and its highest good, whereby imputed holiness and happiness can be synthetically united.

However, as Mariña has correctly surmised, our final end is fully supersensible. Thus, W3 and its highest good, both of which she does not countenance, must remain a penultimate world and object. The graciously imputed agents will, at some point, make the divine transition outside of sensibility altogether when the end of all things is at hand. Holiness, which is possible in this supersensible world where the conditions for synthesis cease to exist, analytically entails beatitude in this fully noumenal and eternal world of things in themselves. However, while there is enough in Kant’s philosophy to surmise that this is our final end, both Mariña and I contend that Kant could have been more explicit on this score. There is a great deal of work that needs be done with regard to the multiple world account I have outlines. Nevertheless, my proposed four-world system – with its penultimate highest good, where imputed holiness and happiness as synthetically proportioned, and an eternal highest good, where holiness analytically entails beatitude – is not beset by the same problems that plague the immanent and transcendent conceptions in the secondary literature.
Second, I have argued that Kant’s philosophy implicitly requires bodies in both W2 and W3 for it to remain internally coherent. I am honestly surprised that this claim has not received more attention in the secondary literature. First, Kant defines duty as a sensible, rational agent freely placing duty over inclination when a situation demands. Inclinations, as causally conditioned empirical needs, are ineluctably satisfied sensibly. Thus, a body is instrumental in order to feel the pull of the inclinations yet still subordinate the natural desire for sensible fulfillment to the rational desire to heed the unconditional mandates of the moral law by placing worthiness to be happy over happiness itself. Therefore, whenever an agent is resolutely striving towards holiness and potentially becoming well-pleasing to God, a temporally conditioned body is a necessary object in order to place duty over inclination and exhibit moral progress. Hence, W2 requires temporally conditioned bodies.

W3 has imputed holy wills receiving proportionate happiness. I have called this the standard account of the highest good, and it receives, by far, the most attention in Kant’s writings. Without question, happiness, as our final non-moral good, meant a great deal to Kant: along with freedom of the will and the ideality of space and time, reason’s desire for happiness pervades Kant’s writing.¹ Equally importantly, however, is my position on the body in W3. Since happiness is the non-moral good in this world, a body operating in time is as much of a necessity in this world as it was in the previous one. Simply put, the tangible experience of happiness is not possible without a temporally conditioned body operating in a sensible setting. Hence, W3 requires a body, too.

¹ I repurposed this formulation, which was originally made by Henry Allision on the first page of his book Kant’s Theory of Freedom.
My third claim results from my first two. I have argued that God’s gracious imputation of holiness contains within it the transitions from W2 to both W3 and W4. There has been a great deal of secondary literature on what God’s grace is and is not. It is generally recognized that an essential aspect of God’s grace is the divine recognition through intellectual intuition that an agent has come as far as morally possible, and God, through the further acts of forgiveness and benevolence, credits the difference between disposition and deed “as if” it’s closed. I completely concur with this position on imputed holiness, with my caveat that imputed holiness, or “as if” holiness, does not rise to the distinction of complete holiness. Rather, it represents God’s recognition that a sensible, rational agent has reached the highest level of virtue possible. Such agents found to be well-pleasing enjoy the synthetic proportionality of imputed holiness and happiness in first in W3 and finally holiness analytically entailing beatitude in W4 at the end of all things.

A central aspect of my last claim is not novel. Well before me, Jaqueline Mariña asserted that our final end is a supersensible highest good with holiness as the moral good and beatitude as the non-moral good. Thus, on this score, I am riding on Mariña’s coattails. Yet, I have offered friendly amendments to her initial position that I believe strengthen it. First, I show how it is possible for imputed holiness and happiness to find proportional synthetic unification in W3. Next, I provide a more explicit explanation of the fully analytic relations between holiness and beatitude in a transcendent highest good. Finally, because fully analytic relations obtain in this final transcendent end, I argue that all the necessary conditions are met for the beings of the world to possess intellectual intuition. Such beings would remain different from God, since their holy wills would never be in possession of the kind of productive capacity (the ability to produce
what it cognizes) that characterizes *divine* intuition. Nevertheless, since the eternal highest good is a world of ends in themselves, it is conceivable that the non-discursive beings that populate this world would partake in the direct knowledge of their noumenal selves.

To close out this dissertation, I would like to elaborate on the importance of faith in Kant’s philosophy. Kant’s God possesses an absolutely spontaneous understanding and reason. Because God exists outside of space and time, sensibility has no role to play for God. For Kant, God is the ultimate end in itself. As I have contended, prior to W4, we cannot know but only think and place our faith in such a being. This is *one* motivation why Kant claims at the outset of the first *Critique* that he had “to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith.” For Kant, we have to pledge our fidelity to the unknowable. However, as I have said, it does not stop there. Because sensible, rational agents can only know themselves insofar as they appear in time, such agents need to possess just as much *faith in themselves* that their non-temporally conditioned radical rebirth, as well as their subsequent ethical actions are, in fact, moral. This is another striking example of pledging our faith to the unknown.

Kant would not want to be recognized for only showing what is *knowable*; rather, it was very important to him to show that which is *unknowable* remains wholly worthy of our *faith*. In the first three worlds, we are called to pledge our fidelity to the unknowable. This faith sustains the hope that when agents finally join the eternal highest good, which is a fully rational community of ends in themselves, such agents finally know they have reached their final end. Thus, reason ultimately provides the faith necessary to sustain our hope of entering into a fully rational, noumenal world where we finally *know* ourselves as intelligible beings and that God does exist.
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VITA

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