

THE CONCEPT OF EVIL IN THE EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY
AND KANT'S DOCTRINE OF RADICAL EVIL

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ABSTRACT

THE CONCEPT OF EVIL IN THE EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY AND KANT'S DOCTRINE OF RADICAL EVIL

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The aim of my thesis is to shed light on the conception of evil in the early modern philosophy and specifically, as known as the last representative of the period, analyze Kant's account of radical evil within the boundaries of his moral philosophy. In order to actualize this aim, I started with naming the major philosopher of the early modern philosophy who contributed most to the discussions on the problem of evil. I reviewed the views of Descartes, Spinoza, Bayle, Leibniz, and Hume on the problem of evil and tried to analyze the major differences between their perspectives and approach. In the second and final chapter of my thesis, I started with Kant's grounds of moral philosophy since the concept of radical evil falls within this framework. After summarizing further integral concepts such as duty, moral law, maxim, categorical and hypothetical imperatives, I started

analyzing Kant's grounding of moral evil along with maxim making. I finally concluded my thesis with Kant's account of radical evil and discussed free agent's propensity to evil, and summarized if the radical evil is innate and universal according to Kant followed with his taxonomy of evil. I believe that the consideration of radical evil was important since, as Madore said, Kant's moral philosophy cannot be totally grasped unless his conception of "radical evil" is deeply understood and carefully examined.

Keywords: Early modern philosophy, Kant, moral theory, evil, radical evil

ÖZ

ERKEN MODERN FELSEFEDE KÖTÜLÜK KAVRAMI VE KANT'IN FELSEFESİNDE RADİKAL KÖTÜLÜK

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Bu tezin amacı, öncelikle erken modern felsefe döneminde kötülük kavramının nasıl anlaşıldığına ve dönemin son temsilcisi olarak kabul edilen Immanuel Kant'ın kendisine ait ahlak felsefesi çerçevesi içinde radikal kötülük anlayışına ışık tutmaktır. Bu amacı gerçekleştirmek üzere, kötülük sorunu üzerine en önemli katkıları yapmış olan dönemin filozofları araştırılmıştır. Bu bağlamda Descartes, Spinoza, Bayle, Leibniz ve Hume'un görüşlerine çalışmada yer verilmiş ve sözkonusu filozofların kötülük sorununa ilişkin farklılaşan görüşleri ve yaklaşımları analiz edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Tezin ikinci ve son bölümünde ise Kant'ın ahlak felsefesinin temelleri irdelenmiştir. Bu irdelenmenin temel nedeni ise, Kant'a göre kötülük sorununun bu alanı ilgilendiriyor olmasıdır. Ödev, ahlak yasası, maxim, kategorik

(koşulsuz) ve hipotetik (koşullu) buyruklar gibi temel kavramlar analiz edildikten sonra, Kant'ın ahlaki kötülük kuramının temelleri açıklanmaya çalışılmıştır. Tezin son bölümlerinde ise radikal kötülük kavramı açıklanmış ve özgür öznenin kötülük eğilimi üzerinde durulmuştur. Radikal kötülük evrensel ve içrek yapısı Kant'ın bakış açısından yansıtıldıktan sonra, nihayet Kant'a göre radikal kötülüğün türleri ile çalışma sonlandırılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın önemi radikal kötülük kavramının öneminden ileri gelmektedir. Madore'nin de ifade ettiği gibi radikal kötülük kavramını iyice anlamadan ve tartışmadan Kant'ın ahlak felsefesinin tam olarak anlaşılabilmesi mümkün görünmemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Erken modern felsefe, Kant, ahlak kuramı, kötülük, radikal kötülük

To my dearest family,

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZ	vi
DEDICATION.....	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xii
CHAPTER	
1. THE CONCEPT OF EVIL IN THE EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY.....	1
1.1. Origin and Nature of Evil.....	1
1.2. The Early Modern Philosophers on Evil	7
1.2.1. Descartes (1596-1650): Theodicy of Error.....	7
1.2.2. Spinoza (1632-1677): A Subjective Standpoint ...	11
1.2.3. Bayle (1647-1706): A Dualist View	16
1.2.4. Leibniz (1646-1716): Imperfect Creatures	20
1.2.5. Hume (1711-1776): A Skeptical View.....	27
2. KANT'S DOCTRINE OF RADICAL EVIL	32
2.1. A Short Overview of Kant's Moral Philosophy.....	32
2.2. Duty and Compliance with Moral Law	38
2.3. Categorical and Hypothetical Imperatives	42
2.4. Nature and Grounds of Evil in Kant's Moral Philosophy .	47
2.5. Maxim Making and Moral Evil.....	52
2.6. Radical Evil and Freedom.....	60
2.7. Propensity to Evil: Innateness and Universality	65
2.8. Kant's Taxonomy of Evil	71
3. CONCLUSION	74
REFERENCES	84

APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKCÖ ÖZET	95
B. TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU.....	110

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALT	Kant, Immanuel, <i>“On a Supposed Right to Lie from Altruistic Motives”</i>
CoG	Augustine, <i>City of God</i>
CoPrR	Kant, Immanuel, <i>Critique of Practical Reason</i>
D	Bayle, Pierre, <i>Dictionary</i>
DIA	Hume, David, <i>Dialogues</i>
DRE	Kant, Immanuel, <i>Dreams of a Spirit-Seer</i>
E	Spinoza, Baruch, <i>Ethics</i>
G	Kant, Immanuel, <i>Groundwork for Metaphysics of Morals</i>
LoE	Kant, Immanuel, <i>Lectures on Ethics</i>
OSC	Rousseau, J.J., <i>Of the Social Contract</i>
PoP	Descartes, Renee, <i>Principles of Philosophy</i>
R	Kant, Immanuel, <i>Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason</i>
ST	Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologica</i>
T	Leibniz, G.W., <i>Theodicy</i>
WE	Kant, Immanuel, <i>“What is Enlightenment?”</i>

CHAPTER 1

THE CONCEPT OF EVIL IN THE EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY

1.1. Origin and Nature of Evil

The concept of evil has always been integral to the philosophical discussions. Although the philosophical literature on evil has exponentially increased in the last several decades, origins and nature of evil have been inquired by philosophers since the ancient times. This first chapter of my thesis aims to shed light on the historical analysis of evil. However, since the discussions on evil have been dispersed throughout the entire history of philosophy, I shifted my focus on the discussions in early modern philosophy.

Problem of evil has been mainly studied in the domain of theodicy and thus it has always been a part of discussions regarding the qualities of God. Moreover, the idea of co-existence of God and evil leads to further problematic formulations in theology regarding the characteristics of God. Earliest known dilemma regarding the characteristics of God and existence of evil questions the attributes of God, in other words, it questions whether the God is omnipotent, omnibenevolent and omniscient. This early dilemma is known as “Epicurean Paradox”, “Epicurean Dilemma” or “the Riddle of Epicurus”. However, many scholars claim that the earliest written version of this paradox is found in Sextus Empiricus’ writings.

Omnipotence refers to an attribute that allows God to do anything that is logically possible to do. Being *omniscient* refers to a virtue of which God knows the truth of every true proposition and falsity of every false proposition. Finally, *omnibenevolence* is an attribute of God by which it desires and acts to minimize the pain, agony, and suffering in the world¹.

Epicurean dilemma briefly suggests that if God is omnipotent, omnibenevolent and omniscient, then evil would not exist. If evil exists, then at least one of these characteristics attributed to God must be false. Starting with the Epicurean Paradox, the problem of evil has always been a topic of discussion in philosophy. Majority of the solutions that were put forward to deal with the Epicurean Paradox attempted to preserve the existence of God while not denying the existence of evil². Throughout the history of philosophy, different philosophers tackled the problem of evil with various methods. In addition to the variety of methods, philosophers have dealt with the complex nature of evil from different standpoints. Because “the problem of evil” consists of a lot of problems that are interrelated, but still have different natures. Practical versus theoretical evil and moral versus natural evil are among the examples of how philosophers classify the problem of evil while such a classification serves as an evidence regarding the complexity of the problem. Furthermore, subclassification of these approaches does not help to draw clear boundaries to limit the discussions on the problem of evil. For

¹ Allan, L. (2015). *The Problem of Evil*. URL=<http://www.RationalRealm.com/philosophy/metaphysics/problem-of-evil.html>.

² Campbell, J.J. (2009). *On the Concept of Evil: An Analysis of Genocide and State Sovereignty*. Graduate Theses and Dissertations. <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/1887>

instance, practical problems of evil can be classified as personal and pastoral problems. Personal problems arise when someone suffers some terrible misfortune or when someone hears about a terrible event that occurred in the public sphere that in return stimulates his/her general human sympathies. A terrible earthquake that claims thousands of lives or the Holocaust can be studied in this domain. On the other hand, pastoral problems of evil arise when someone, due to his/her clerical position or in virtue of some other relation to a person, regards himself/herself responsible for the spiritual well-being of the people (s)he feels responsible for when that people encounter evil. This dual classification of practical problem of evil could be further divided³. Theoretical problems of evil are mainly studied in two categories as apologetic and doctrinal problems. Doctrinal problems are faced by theologians regarding the religious teachings of evil and permissible views on evil. Thus, theists deal with the problem of evil within the boundaries of a larger theology. On the other hand, the apologetic problem mainly deals with the problem of evil as described in the Epicurean Paradox. Because whoever feels himself/herself responsible for defending any theistic religion will have to confront this paradox⁴. Apologetic problems arise when there is an external attack on theism like the one given in Epicurean Paradox.

Although there are many other different classifications regarding the problem of evil, one widely known classification divides the problem of evil into two categories, namely as moral and natural evil. As mentioned above, early investigations of evil have remained mainly in the theological domain and thus, it was referred as moral or sometimes

³ van Inwagen, P. (2008). *The Problem of Evil*, pp.5-6, Oxford University Press, UK

⁴ *ibid*, p.6

as natural evil. Moral evil as an adjective refers to the way human as a moral agent acts while moral evil as a noun refers to the moral agents' acts in themselves. Investigations in moral evil involve both intentional and accidental varieties of moral evil. While intentional moral evil includes activities and expresses motion, accidental moral evil does not necessarily include activities hence it expresses a consequence. Such a classification of moral evil is closely related with how moral agent's freedom of will is understood⁵. Shattuck defines moral evil as actions that harm or exploit others despite accepted moral principles within a society. Judgment, punishment, mitigation, and aggravation are among the possible consequences of acts considered as moral evil and these actions are subject to repentance and remission⁶. According to the theodicy of moral evil, human beings are free individuals and whether the acts of human beings are morally good or evil depends on these free individuals. It is completely up to the individuals to pick morally good over evil or vice versa. If there is a capability of doing right, then obviously there is a capability of doing wrong. In other words, God cannot prevent individuals to act on a morally wrong or evil basis. Thus, God cannot be held responsible for the acts of free individuals⁷.

On the other hand, natural evil manifests itself in the form of elemental disasters and scourges. Such disasters and scourges can potentially

⁵ Runehov, D.T.A.L. (2009). *Why Moral Evil Will Not Go Away: Understanding Moral Evil in Neuroscience and Philosophy*. In SStH XII (Studies in Science and Theology). Eds. Antje Jackelén and Taede A. Smedes, pp.325-344.

⁶ Shattuck, R. (2001). *Narrating evil: Great faults and "splendidly wicked people"*. In J. L. Geddes. (Ed.) *Evil after Postmodernism: Histories, Narratives and Ethics*. (pp. 45-55). London, U.K., Routledge

⁷ Reichenbach, B.R. (1982). *Evil and a Good God*. Fordham University Press p.65

affect anyone in a given society and we have limited control over them⁸. In other words, natural evil refers to all events and occurrences that cause suffering in individuals' lives. Thus, diseases, earthquakes, tornados, floods are all manifestations of natural evil. It is widely argued that the most prominent manifestation of natural evil is death. Although moral and natural evil are considered as two separate subdivisions under the general problem of evil and natural evil is generally excluded from the domain of morality, Western thinkers of the 17th and 18th century have built solid linkages between moral and natural evil. Since they were mostly theological thinkers, they have considered natural evil as a punishment for the acts that are morally evil. Thus, for early modern philosophers, moral evil was closely related to natural evil. Since moral evil is considered to be synonymous with sin, early theology and doctrines consider natural evil as a consequence of sins. For instance, early Christian theology and doctrines (even valid today in many Christian sects/doctrines) consider human agents' will as one of the sources of sin and God's wrath is manifested through natural evil as a response to morally evil acts or in other words sins. Neiman claims that one of the two major events that have caused a paradigmatic shift in the history is the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 that claimed more than 15.000 lives in few minutes. This disaster has triggered an intellectual paradigm shift. Earthquake as a natural catastrophe ended up with a retraction of the scope of moral evil. Still, some clergymen have claimed that the Lisbon earthquake was a consequence of human sins. However, most thinkers of the time refused to take the earthquake as a punishment for the sins. Kant was one of the earliest philosophers who has broken

⁸ Ahoritor, G. (2016). Salvation and morality: The interconnections in African thought. *European Scientific Journal*, 12(26), p.225

the solid link between natural and moral evil. In 1756, Kant has written in *Königsberg Weekly* that earthquakes are not supernatural events. Since then moral evil has become solely related to human will and behavior⁹.

As mentioned above, theological thinking and problems related to theology were dominant within early modern philosophy. Because the major philosophers of the period were striving to achieve a complete explanation of reality and physio-mathematical modeling of the world-picture while avoiding irrational arguments that would ruin their picture. In addition to theological nature of the early modern philosophy, it is important to note that early modern philosophy and its approach to the problem of evil were echoing ancient philosophies. The rise of the early modern philosophy overlapped with the breakdown of ecclesiastical authority, the scientific revolutions, and the emergence of the autonomy of politics and ethics. Furthermore, early modern philosophy was articulated in the context of ancient Hellenistic philosophies of Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Skepticism. It could be argued that the effects of Hellenistic philosophy on the early modern philosophy were due to a chain reaction. Hellenistic philosophies affected the Church and Christian theology and consequently shaped the early modern philosophy. For example, some Stoic doctrines such as the identification of God with fire and the denial of the immortality of the soul were abominations to the early Father of the Church, explaining why no complete texts by early Stoic

⁹ Schott, R.M. (2003). Evil in modern thought: An alternative history of philosophy (review), *Hypatia*, 18(2), p.224

philosophers have survived. Nonetheless, early Christianity appropriated Stoic ethics without any acknowledgments¹⁰.

It is important to note that the most evident revival of Hellenistic philosophies revealed itself in the early modern discussions of evil. In one of the most solid examples of this revival, Hume noted in characterizing the problem as “Epicurus’s old questions”, the modern problem of evil is a Hellenistic one. Almost all discussions on evil in the early modern philosophy are the echoes of the debates between ancient Hellenistic philosophies¹¹.

In this chapter, leading discussions on the problem of evil in the early modern philosophy will be reviewed. Covering a period of approximately two centuries, the problem of evil has always been central to the early modern philosophy and paved the way for Kant’s approach to the problem of evil.

1.2. The Early Modern Philosophers on Evil

1.2.1. Descartes (1596-1650): Theodicy of Error

In the Fourth Meditation, Descartes, as an early modern philosopher, claimed that God – our creator – is non-deceiving and all-perfect. Such a result was entailed by the human error. This “problem of error” was actually a variation of the logical problem of evil and threatens to

¹⁰ Miller, J. and Inwood, B. (Eds.). (2003). *Hellenistic and Early Modern Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press, p.5

¹¹ Larrimore, M. (2004). Evil and wonder in early modern philosophy: A response to Susan Neiman. *Teaching New Histories of Philosophy*, p.55

produce an antinomy of Reason¹². After proving the existence of God as an omnipotent being: “*the possessor of all the perfections who is subject to no defects*” in the Third Meditation, Descartes confronts a variation of the problem of evil focusing on the evil of error in the Fourth Meditations. According to Descartes, God cannot be a deceiver because he possesses all the perfections and thus, since God cannot be a deceiver, he did not give him a faculty of judgment that would allow him to err when used correctly¹³. Descartes was aware of the problem that he found himself erring during his search for the truth, and this led him to doubt the existence of an omnipotent and omnipotent God as a creator. In other words, as an analogy, defects in the products of craftsmen would seem to be a result of limited power, knowledge, and benevolent intention. Descartes tackled this problem of error through his theodicy in the Fourth Meditation.

“*Being intrinsically good in that it comes from the deity*” was a thesis on which Descartes relied. Evil, error, and all imperfections are not distinct and positive beings, but instead, they result from an absence of *being* – much as one expounds darkness as the absence of light. Following the footsteps of the Aristotelian tradition, Descartes distinguishes two modes of imperfection: *imperfect instances* of a kind, and *imperfect kinds*. According to Newman, only the former need involve intolerable imperfection for which an omnipotent creator would have no morally sufficient reason. The imperfection of instances refers to the cases when a product malfunctions. In the latter, the product is imperfect in the sense that it lacks the perfection of a more

¹² Ragland, C. (2016). The Fourth Meditation Theodicy. In *The Will to Reason: Theodicy and Freedom in Descartes*. Oxford University Press.

¹³ Ragland, C. (2007). Descartes's theodicy. *Religious Studies*, 43(2), 125-144, p.126

deluxe model whether actual or merely possible¹⁴. Thus, the latter imperfection is a design limitation for all creatures. Whether these creatures are a product of an omniperfect deity is irrelevant. In *Principles of Philosophy (Principia Philosophiae)*, Descartes says:

*Our falling into error is a defect in how we act, how we use our freedom; it's not a defect in our nature. Whether we judge correctly or incorrectly, our nature remains the same. It's true that God could have given us intellects so sharp that we never believed anything false, but we have no right to demand this of him*¹⁵.

This conclusion suggests that the relationship between “can” and “ought” applies differently to God and to human beings. In *Principles*, Descartes clarifies this relationship by saying:

*When one of us men could but doesn't prevent some evil, we call him a 'cause' of the evil; but that way of talking about humans doesn't carry over to God; we mustn't regard him as a cause of our errors just because he could have but didn't bring it about that we never erred. Men were given power over one another to use in discouraging one another from evil; but God's power over all men is both absolute and totally free*¹⁶.

The same reasoning of Descartes was also applied to intellectual error. The ultimate power of God to grant human beings a full immunity from error, which was not actualized due to reasons are hidden from our sight, does not lead to the conclusion that God is responsible for our errors, nor it grants human beings to demand such a responsibility from him. In contrast, the power that God has given to human beings

¹⁴ Newman, L. (1999). The fourth meditation. *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research*, 559-591, p.564

¹⁵ Descartes, R. (1984). Principles of philosophy. In J.Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, & D.Murdoch (Eds. and Trans.), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* (Vol.2, pp.37-43). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press (Original work published 1641)

¹⁶ PoP, 1:38

to suspend judgment on matters that we do not clearly apprehend was given to us so that we might employ it to avoid error. Such an argument, along with our inner awareness of our absolute freedom, makes us fully responsible for our errors¹⁷.

Descartes responds to the problem of evil with the traditional model of creation according to which God creates different kinds of beings by granting them different degrees of reality or perfection. Thus, each kind created by God lacks God's infinite perfection in one way or another. In this traditional approach, such defects in kind are known as negations and are not evil. If the defects in each creature would be sufficient to call that creature as evil, then every single creature that lacks God's perfection would be evil. The absence is not evil since such a limitation or defect is a consequence of being a member of its kind. In short, these limitations or defects are the costs of creation and such natural defects are not evil. Human beings' lack of God's perfection and their defects as negations are epistemic imperfections and these imperfections are not inconsistent with neither God's perfection nor God's existence¹⁸. However, the problem with this approach is that although being prone to make mistakes is a defect in its kind, it still falls short to explain the fact that human being actually makes mistakes. Making actual mistakes is an imperfection which is not an imperfection in kind. A human being is responsible for the mistakes [errors] since they occur when we misuse our faculties given by God. In other words, human beings make actual mistakes and this imperfection is a consequence of the misuse of free will. These

¹⁷ Naaman-Zauderer, N. (2010). *Descartes' Deontological Turn: Reason, Will, and Virtue in the Later Writings*. Cambridge University Press, p.88

¹⁸ Robinson, T.S. (2012). Descartes's sceptical theism. *Religious Studies*, 49(4), pp.515-527 (517)

arguments of Descartes can be interpreted as a free will defense to the problem of error. From this standpoint, error or making actual mistakes are referred as a sort of moral evil.

1.2.2. Spinoza (1632-1677): A Subjective Standpoint

In early modern philosophy, another philosopher who wrote about the concept of evil is Baruch Spinoza. Spinoza was only 18 years old when Descartes died and they never met or exchanged ideas in person. However, from the moral philosophical standpoint, Spinoza is closely linked to Descartes's philosophy. Spinoza is widely considered as a philosopher in the Cartesian tradition. Spinoza's first published work was an elucidation of Descartes's Principles of Philosophy, and Descartes is the only philosopher referred to by Spinoza's Ethics. However, it should be noted that although Spinoza's metaphysics, epistemology, and physics are in many ways Cartesian, his ethical principles are closer to that of Hobbesian philosophy. Similar to Hobbes, Spinoza conceives of human beings as a mechanism in nature that are motivated with self-interest, self-preservation, and personal advantage. By mutual employment of reason, human beings can improve their way of life¹⁹.

Spinoza wrote on ethical topics in several of his works. The concept of evil was first covered in his early *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being*. Along with the concept of good and evil, Spinoza also covers topics of blessedness and freedom²⁰. Levine claims that evil is

¹⁹ Garrett, D. (1996). Spinoza's ethical theory in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, Cambridge University Press, p.267

²⁰ *Ibid*, p.269

among the primary concerns of pantheists and arguably, it is a principle concern of Spinoza and the central topic of his *Ethics*²¹. In the fourth part of the *Ethics*, he takes up topics like virtue, ethics, and politics. In this part of the *Ethics*, Spinoza reveals his theory of how to live well as well as his ideas of virtues and his understanding of the concepts of good and evil. For Spinoza, evil has a simpler context. Since, for Spinoza, there are no absolute universal moral values, many concepts such as good, evil, beauty, ugliness and etc. are defined based on what is useful to human beings. Thus, it could be concluded that nothing in nature is good or evil in itself. Spinoza claims that everything in nature is a mode of God and from God's standpoint, things are neither evil nor good; they are simply what they are. Only finite modes call things as good or evil based on how things appear to them²². In other words, for Spinoza, concepts of good and evil are simply labels that human beings use to label things. Spinoza refuses the objective reality of good or evil. However, he accepts the usefulness of retaining these words to identify what is beneficial or hindrance to our living. According to Spinoza, this can only occur in a well-ordered society. Then, it could be concluded that whatever prevents the harmonious operation of the society is also evil. On the other hand, evil is not intrinsically real in things²³. These arguments of Spinoza are reflected in *Ethics* (Part IV, Proposition VIII):

²¹ Levine, M.P. (1994). Pantheism, theism and the problem of evil. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*. 35(3). pp.129-151 (138)

²² Lord, B. (2010). *Edinburgh Philosophical Guides: Spinoza's Ethics*. Edinburgh University Press, p.105

²³ Marshall, E. (2018). Spinoza on evil. Unpublished Paper.

The knowledge of good and evil is nothing else but the emotions of pleasure or pain, insofar as we are conscious thereof²⁴.

Then he continues to prove his proposition:

We call a thing good or evil, when it is of service or the reverse in preserving our being, that is, when it increases or diminishes, helps or hinders our power of activity. Thus, insofar as we perceive that a thing affects us with pleasure or pain, we call it good or evil; wherefore the knowledge of good and evil is nothing else but the idea of the pleasure or pain, which necessarily follows from that pleasurable or painful emotion. But this idea is united to the emotion in the same way as mind is united to body; that is, there is no real distinction between this idea and the emotion or idea of the modification of the body, save in conception only. Therefore the knowledge of good and evil is nothing else but the emotion, insofar as we are conscious thereof²⁵.

For Spinoza, perfection and reality are the same concepts. He says:

Reality and perfection I use as synonymous terms²⁶.

In other words, Spinoza claims that whenever we call a *thing* as evil, we actually refer to the absence of universal attributes of that *thing* in our mind. That *thing* is obviously not inherently evil or that *thing* is not evil in essence. Same claims are also valid for the good. Armaner suggests that what eliminates A – in its existence between t and t' – does not belong to A. It rather belongs to $\sim A$ (negation of A). t' is not known. Since A exists, it wishes and pays effort to stay as A. Furthermore, it leans toward the things that support its efforts. For Spinoza, human beings do not lean toward things because they are

²⁴ Spinoza, B. (2005). *Ethics and On the Improvement of the Understanding*, Translated by Elwes, R.H.M., Barnes and Noble Inc., USA, p.182

²⁵ E, P.IV, Prop.VIII, Proof,

²⁶ E, P.II, Def.VI, p.30

inherently good or they do not avoid things because they are inherently evil. On the contrary, human beings label things as good to the extent they lean towards them and they label things as evil to the extent they avoid them. Good and evil are not predicates of particulars²⁷.

As mentioned earlier, Spinoza's Ethics does not only study good and evil at an individual or particular level. He also attempts to describe evil at the social level.

Whatsoever conduces to man's social life, or causes men to live together in harmony, is useful, whereas whatsoever brings discord into a State is bad²⁸.

Following the proposition, Spinoza provides his proof:

For whatsoever causes men to live together in harmony also causes them to live according to reason, and is therefore good, and (for the same reason) whatsoever brings about discord is evil²⁹.

As it can be clearly seen in the proposition and its proof, Spinoza claims that, at the social level, whatever causes human beings to live in harmony is good, while those bring discord are evil. Thus, state of harmony is closely linked with good and evil at both individual and social levels. Establishing and maintaining the harmony within the society is only possible through reason. Only through reason human beings establish harmony.

In so far as men are assailed by emotions that are passions, they can be different in nature, and at variance one with another. But

²⁷ Armaner, T. (2017). Kötülüğün Hiçliği: Spinoza. *Cogito*, 86, p.43

²⁸ E, P.IV, Prop.40

²⁹ E, P.IV, Prop.40, Proof

men are only said to be active, in so far as they act in obedience to reason; therefore, whatsoever follows from human nature in so far as it is defined by reason must be understood solely through human nature as its proximate cause. But, since every man by the laws of his nature desires that which he deems good, and endeavors to remove that which he deems bad; and further, since that which we, in accordance with reason, deem good or bad, necessarily is good or bad; it follows that men, in so far as they live in obedience to reason, necessarily do only such things as are necessarily good for human nature, and consequently for each individual man; in other words, such things as are in harmony with each man's nature. Therefore, men in so far as they live in obedience to reason, necessarily live always in harmony one with another³⁰.

It is obvious that the problem of evil in Spinoza's ethical philosophy does not present the type of challenge in terms of consistency and plausibility that the theistic problem of evil presents for theism. However, evil is a problem for Spinoza and thus it takes the entire *Ethics* to show that it can only be overcome through a special kind of knowledge and understanding of "God or Nature"³¹. Spinoza denies the idea that good and evil are absolute and objective values. From the perspective of "God or nature", nothing is inherently good or evil in essence. Furthermore, God or nature does not demand good or condemn evil, for God does not make moral judgments or demand moral values. Although Spinoza is a relativist about moral values, good and evil, it is important to note that he does not take the values as arbitrary and subjective inventions with no foundations. When moral values are based on habits and traditions, they are certainly fictional constructs. But when they are innate to a particular's essence, "good"

³⁰ E, P.IV, Prop.35, Proof

³¹ Levine, M.P. (1994), *ibid*, p.138

and “evil” are not fictional. For each individual, whatever promotes its being is truly good while whatever threatens its being is truly evil³².

1.2.3. Bayle (1647-1706): A Dualist View

Another philosopher who wrote about the concept of evil in the era of early modern philosophy is Pierre Bayle (1647-1706). Although his works are not as well-known as the other philosophers today, Bayle was an important name in his period. For example, Voltaire called him as “the immortal Bayle” and devoted entries in his *Philosophical Dictionary* to a discussion of Bayle himself. Voltaire was not alone with this view on Bayle. According to Gay, Bayle’s Dictionary was called the most-read book of the eighteenth century and the arsenal of the Enlightenment³³.

As a contemporary of Spinoza, Bayle’s theory of evil is also well-known and it actually occasioned Leibniz’s writing of the *Theodicy* (1710). Leibniz wrote his *Theodicy* as a response to Bayle. For Bayle, the most prominent divine attribute is goodness:

*It is manifest to anyone who reasons, that God is a most perfect being, and that of all perfections, none is more essential to him than goodness, holiness, and justice*³⁴.

³² Lord, B. (2010), *ibid*, p.107

³³ Neiman, S. (2015). *Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy*. Princeton University Press, p.116

³⁴ Larivière, A., and Lennon, T.M. (2001). Bayle on the moral problem of evil. In *The Problem of Evil in Early Modern Philosophy* (Ed. Kremer, E.J. and Latzer, M.J.), pp.101-118 (102), University of Toronto Press

Bayle denies the Cartesian position, but for reasons rather different than those of Leibniz:

If you deprive [God of this sort of perfection] to make him a law-giver who forbids men to sin, and then punishes them for it, you make him a Being in whom men cannot put their trust - a deceitful, malicious, unjust and cruel Being: he can longer be an object of worship ... when an object is dreaded only because it has the power and will of doing harm, and exercises that power cruelly and unmercifully, it must needs be hated and detested: this can be no religious worship³⁵.

Bayle's *Dictionary* is considered to be the most extensive source of his thoughts on the concept of evil and in *Dictionary*, Bayle approaches the problem of evil from several different perspectives and contexts. First, he thought about the traditional problem of evil and contemplated on how to combine three well-known propositions: (1) evil exists, (2) God is benevolent, and (3) God is omnipotent. The problem was dropping the benevolence would be leaving one with heresy, and dropping the omnipotence would be leading to another problem. Without the two premises, one could take one's sense from Manichaeism, but theology ruled out this option. Before going into further details about Manichaeistic arguments of Bayle, it is important to note that he was very successful in demonstrating how traditional efforts to solve the problem of evil abandon belief in God's qualities. His first analogy opens a window on the terror implicit in orthodox religion:

If you say that God has permitted sin in order to manifest his wisdom, which shines forth more in the midst of the disorders that man's wickedness produces everyday than it would in as taste of innocence, you will be answered that this is to compare God either to a father who allows his children to break their legs so he can

³⁵ *ibid*, p.102

*show everyone his great skill in mending their broken bones, or to a king who allows seditions and disorders to develop in his kingdom so that he can gain glory by overcoming them*³⁶.

However, according to many scholars, the most important of these contexts in Bayle's philosophy is his treatment of a number of heresies which might all be loosely styled "Manichaeism"³⁷. These heretical groups, especially Marcionites and Paulicians share with Manicheans a view that the world is best accounted for on the hypothesis of two opposing forces – good and evil. Bayle claims that such a dualism offers a useful response to the problem of evil³⁸. Bayle is also pessimistic about confronting the problem of evil by employing reason. In other words, rational explanation of the existence of evil contradicts with the lived experiences. Bayle found that both philosophical and theological discussions on evil had reached a dead-end. Consequently, after studying the problem of evil throughout the history of philosophy, Bayle declared his own position regarding the problem and his position was complete skepticism. Bayle notes:

*The way in which evil was introduced under the government of a supreme, infinitely good, infinitely holy, and infinitely powerful being is not only inexplicable but also incomprehensible. And all that can be opposed to the reasons why this being has allowed evil agrees more with the natural light and the ideas of order than do the reasons themselves*³⁹

³⁶ Neiman, S. (2015). *ibid*. p.120

³⁷ Manichaeism is a major religious movement that was founded by Iranian prophet Mani in the Sasanian Empire. Manichaeism taught an elaborate dualistic cosmology describing the struggle between a good, spiritual world of light, and an evil, material world of darkness.

³⁸ Larivière, A., and Lennon, T.M., *ibid*, p.103

³⁹ Bayle, P. (1991). *Historical and Critical Dictionary: Selections* (Translated and edited by Popkin, R., assisted by Brush, C.), p.168-169, Hackett Publishing, Indianapolis, USA

In order to respond to the problem of evil, as mentioned above, Bayle resurrected the ancient Manichaeism problem of evil in order to support his skeptical approach. Bayle never intended to defend monotheism over Manichaeism or vice versa. Bayle wanted to show that when tackling the problem of evil, reason was at odds with itself. For Bayle, *a priori* reason reveals the existence of a perfect and benevolent God. Since God is perfect and benevolent, there is no problem of evil. Because everything created by a perfect and benevolent God must be good both at particular and universal level. However, *a posteriori* reason conflicts with the *a priori* reason. Because if we consider our daily experiences, we find that there is evil in this world. Thus, the hypothesis of two Gods – one good and one evil – sounds more plausible and probable.

In order to reveal his arguments, Bayle wrote an imaginary dialogue between Melissus and Zoroaster. While Melissus was representing the monotheistic thought, Zoroaster was representing the dualistic view. Initially, Zoroaster agrees that Melissus is absolutely right about the idea that *a priori* reason reveals the existence of a single perfect unifying principle. Melissus argues that the physical evil is actually the response of God's justice to moral evil. Zoroaster replies that human being's inclination to evil is a defect in its nature that conflicts with a creator who is a perfect unifying principle. Melissus pays a final try to blame human beings for evil. But Zoroaster evades this argument by claiming that human freedom is not truly free since it exists completely by God's actions. Consequently, Zoroaster argues that *a priori* reason is inconsistent with the idea that a single unifying perfect principle fails to prevent moral evil, but then it punishes the

human beings with physical evil for the moral evil they commit – for which the single principle is still ultimately responsible⁴⁰.

In the *Dictionary*, considering the dialogue given above, Bayle shows that how dualist Manichaeans – represented with Zoroaster – would have a stronger argument than that of monotheistic Christians – represented with Melissus – in regards to the existence of evil. After all these arguments, what remains is the Bayle’s skeptical problem of evil that reveals the problem of evil is comprehensible but yet non-resolvable through human reason⁴¹.

1.2.4. Leibniz (1646-1716): Imperfect Creatures

Leibniz is another important philosopher who wrote on the problem of evil. As mentioned before, Leibniz knew about Bayle’s thought and works on the problem of evil. His *Theodicy* was a response to Bayle’s arguments. For Leibniz, the problem of evil was an integral question in his philosophical quest. Two works of Leibniz specifically deal with the problem of evil. Namely, the *Philosopher’s Confession* (1672) and the *Theodicy* (1710) are the two major works of Leibniz focusing on the problem of evil. The starting point for Leibniz is not that much different than those of other philosophers who questioned how evil is possible if God is omnibenevolent, omniscient, and omnipotent. Leibniz wrote⁴²:

⁴⁰ Irwin, K. (2017). Pierre Bayle. *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/bayle/>, Accessed on: 07.10.2017

⁴¹ Hickson, M.W. (2013). A brief history of problems of evil. *The Blackwell Companion to the Problem of Evil*, p.13, Wiley

⁴² Leibniz, G.W. (1966). *Theodicy*, Edited by Allen, D. And Merrill, B., p.176

God (so they say) could have given happiness to all, he could have given it promptly and easily, and without causing himself any inconvenience, for he can do all. But should he? Since he does not do so, it is a sign that he had to act altogether differently⁴³.

Howe suggests that the Theodicy is the most profound attempt in Christian literature to justify how God acts towards human beings⁴⁴. This attempt by Leibniz was also a response to the question why an omnipotent being permits evil to exist in this world. From a different standpoint apart from previous philosophical discussions, Leibniz notes that whenever evil is considered, God's goodness – not the God's power – is in question. In all his attempts for justifying the God's acts towards human beings, Leibniz notes that evil is not relevant to the God's divine goodness. In the Preliminary Dissertation part of the Theodicy, Leibniz reveals his thoughts:

[B]ut it must be borne in mind that when one has foreseen the evil and has not prevented it although it seems as if one could have done so with ease, and one has even done things that have facilitated it, it does not follow on that account necessarily that one is accessory thereto⁴⁵.

Following the above argument, Leibniz writes:

[B]ut in reference to God there is no need to suppose or to establish particular reasons such as may have induced him to permit the evil; general reasons suffice. One knows that he takes care of the whole universe, whereof all the parts are connected; and one must thence infer that he has had innumerable considerations whose result made him deem it inadvisable to prevent certain evils⁴⁶.

⁴³ T, 122.VII, Par.197, p.98

⁴⁴ Howe, L.T. (1971). Leibniz on evil. *Sophia*, 10(3), pp.8-17 (8)

⁴⁵ T, PD, 33, p.46

⁴⁶ T, PD, 34, p.46

Finally, in the 35th paragraph, Leibniz writes:

It should even be concluded that there must have been great or rather invincible reasons which prompted the divine Wisdom to the permission of the evil that surprises us, from the mere fact that this permission has occurred: for nothing can come from God that is not altogether consistent with goodness, justice, and holiness. Thus we can judge by the event (or a posteriori) that the permission was indispensable, although it be not possible for us to show this (a priori) by the detailed reasons that God can have had therefor; as it is not necessary either that we show this to justify him⁴⁷.

As seen from the arguments above, Leibniz claims that not everything that comes from God should be good, just, and holy. In Section XX, Leibniz is concerned with holding a position which avoids attributing the cause of evil to the will of God and rather locating its source, in reality, existing independently of God. Leibniz suggests that the source and the origin of evil are in the ideal nature of the creature insofar as the ideal nature exists in the divine understanding, since there is an original imperfection in the creature because the creature is essentially limited. Cause of the original imperfection is that God cannot create gods, and therefore any possible creature will inevitably lack the completeness of perfection which only God possesses. According to Leibniz, such an imperfection can be the source of evil and it can explain why evil occurs. Leibniz notes that since the creature lacks perfection, it cannot know all, and can deceive itself and commit other faults⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ T, PD, 35, p.46

⁴⁸ Latzer, M. (1994). Leibniz's conception of metaphysical evil. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 55(1), 1-15 (1)

In Section XXI, Leibniz presents a taxonomy for the types of evil – namely as metaphysical, physical, and moral. Leibniz writes:

Evil may be taken metaphysically, physically and morally. Metaphysical evil consists in mere imperfection, physical evil in suffering, and moral evil in sin⁴⁹.

In Section XX, Leibniz mentions about the original imperfection of the creatures and he suggests that the finitude of the creatures is the original imperfection before sin.

[b]ut we, who derive all being from God, where shall we find the source of evil? The answer is, that it must be sought in the ideal nature of the creature, in so far as this nature is contained in the eternal verities which are in the understanding of God, independently of his will. For we must consider that there is an original imperfection in the creature before sin, because the creature is limited in its essence; whence ensues that it cannot know all, and that it can deceive itself and commit other errors⁵⁰.

Referring to the Section XXI, it would not be wrong to assume that the original limitation of the creatures before sin is the metaphysical evil. Then, it follows that the metaphysical evil is the source of other types of evil – namely as physical and moral. It is important to note that Leibniz notes that original limitation before sin makes creatures liable to sin, rather than making them evil creatures⁵¹.

In response to the problem of evil, Leibniz offers his solutions. The most known and studied solution of Leibniz for the problem of evil is

⁴⁹ T, Par.I, 21, p.67

⁵⁰ T, Par.1, 20, p.67

⁵¹ Latzer, M. (1993). The nature of evil: Leibniz and his medieval background, *The Modern Schoolman*, 71(1), pp.59-69 (63).

known as the holiness problem. The main idea of the holiness problem is that God's character is stained by the existence of evil. Because everything in this world, including evil, is God's creation. Medieval philosopher's solution to this problem was different than that of Leibniz's. Medieval philosophers solved this problem through identifying evil as "nothing" or, in other words, they refused the idea that evil is "something". According to their view, evil is something with no positive reality. It is rather a privation or lack of being. Thus, they claimed that causing the human beings to exist causes evil as a by-product. Thus, for Medieval philosophers, God has a causal relationship with evil since evil is a by-product of the creation and simply a privation⁵². Leibniz's response to holiness problem is that existence is better than non-existence. For Leibniz, in so far as we are entitled to distinguish different moments in the divine will, we can say that God willed "antecedently" simply the good. But since the imperfection of the creature depends on the ideal essence of the creature rather than the divine choice, God could not choose to create without choosing the create imperfect beings. However, God chose to create the best possible world. God simply wills the good and it wills the best possible. In other words, God wills antecedently the good and consequently the best. However, He could not will the best without creating imperfect things. God cannot create other gods. He can only will to create simply imperfect beings. Thus, even in the best possible world, all creatures created by Him must be imperfect beings. For Leibniz, physical evil as a result of moral evil has useful functions. They act as a penalty for sin as means to perfecting the good. It would not be wrong to assume that for Leibniz, evil is required for

⁵² Murray, M. (2005). Leibniz on the Problem of Evil. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/leibniz-evil/>, Accessed on: 12.10.2017

completeness in the world. Evil in this world belongs to the whole system that makes the totality⁵³. In other words, Leibniz claims that the existence of evil contributes to the perfection of this world. Without the existence of evil, this world would not be best possible one. Leibniz says:

The best alternative is not always that which tends to avoid evil, since it can happen that evil may be accompanied by a greater good⁵⁴

and he also says:

Not only does (God) derive from (evils) greater goods, but He finds them connected with the greatest goods of all those that are possible; so that it would be a fault not to permit them⁵⁵.

In short, for Leibniz, the best possible world is not the perfect world which is free of all sorts of imperfections. It must always (in the past, today, and in the future) contain evil or, otherwise, without evil, this world which, taken as a whole, is the best possible, would not exist. Consequently, the answer to all concrete problems of evil, as Leibniz understands them is that actual evil is always necessary means to greater good and ultimately to the greatest good⁵⁶. Best possible world is only possible through the existence of evil.

⁵³ Copleston, F.C. (1963). *A History of Philosophy: Volume 4: Descartes to Leibniz*. Doubleday, p.327

⁵⁴ Ahern, M.B. (1971). *Studies In Ethics and the Philosophy of Religion, Volume I, The Problem of Evil*, Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited, p.60

⁵⁵ *ibid*, 60

⁵⁶ *ibid*, 61

At this point it is important to note that there have been important discussions on the Christian concept of the best possible world. Reichenbach claims that whenever Christian theists have considered “best” as applied to “possible world” insofar as it relates to beings, they have thought of a world populated only by the best kind of being. However, they missed the point that a best possible world would be the one full of richness and variety⁵⁷. For example, Augustine writes:

What, however, is true is that there is a hierarchy of created realities, from earthly to heavenly, from visible to invisible, some being better than others, and that the very reason of their inequality is to make possible an existence for them all⁵⁸.

In addition to the paragraph given above, Aquinas notes:

Hence we must say that the distinction and multitude of things is from the intention of the first cause, who is God. For He brought things into being in order that His goodness might be communicated to creatures and be represented by them. And because His goodness could not be adequately represented by one creature alone, He produced many and diverse creatures. For goodness, which in God is simple and uniform, in creatures is manifold and divided; and hence the whole universe together participates in the divine goodness more perfectly, and represents it better, than any given single creature⁵⁹.

And finally Leibniz writes:

Perfection is to be placed in form or variety; whence it follows that matter is not everywhere uniform, but is diversified by assuming different forms; otherwise, as much variety as possible would not

⁵⁷ Reichenbach, B.R. *ibid.*, pp.126-127

⁵⁸ CoG, Par.11, Chapter 22, pp.257-258

⁵⁹ ST, Question 47, Answer.1, p.327

*be realized...What we must say [is] that God makes the greatest number of things that he can*⁶⁰.

No matter how the issue is assessed, the problem is that there is no finite limit for the degree of richness, variety that possible worlds could ever manifest. However, although Reichenbach refers to Leibniz's sentence given above as an example of traditional Christian doctrine, I think, by accepting and even requiring the necessity of the co-existence of evil along with the goodness, Leibniz has a different standpoint than traditional Christian theists.

1.2.5. Hume (1711-1776): A Skeptical View

While moving toward Kantian view on the problem of evil, it is important to note that one last philosopher who wrote about the problem in the era of early modern philosophy is David Hume. One of the most important works of David Hume is *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. Dialogues can be approached in several different ways. One of these possible ways is to carry on a detailed discussion of philosophical arguments without focusing on which character in the dialogue said what and to whom. Majority of the interpreters of Hume's works adopt this approach. Another way is to take Hume's undermining of the apologetic value of the design argument as a major contribution to the philosophy of religion. And finally, some focus especially on the 10th and 11th parts of the *Dialogue* that explores the significance of evil in the world for belief in God⁶¹. Since this part of our study deals with the problem of evil, the third approach will be

⁶⁰ Reichenbach, B.R. *ibid.*, pp.127

⁶¹ Tilley, T.W. (1988). Hume on God and evil: Dialogues X and XI as dramatic conversation. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 56(4), pp.703-726 (703)

adopted for the reading of the *Dialogues*. As mentioned before 10th and 11th parts of *Dialogues* tackle the problem of evil. Hume's starting point is not different than that of well-known Epicurean paradox. In the given parts of his *Dialogues*, Hume provides the readers with his views on the traditional theological problem of evil. In the 10th and 11th parts, Hume writes a dialogue between Philo, Cleanthes, and Demea regarding the problem of evil. Cleanthes' initial position offers a traditional Christian perspective and refers the God as omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent. Furthermore, it is obvious that Cleanthes uses these term exactly as they are applied to men. In return, Philo argues that any occurrence of evil in this world is precluded if the God is to be omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent. That would also preclude the possibility of occurrences such as suffering, pain, disasters, superstition, and etc. Philo further argues that there is a strong incompatibility between the existence of God and the occurrences of evil such as sufferings and pain. Evil occurrences cannot be ignored or denied since these sufferings are directly experienced. Inevitably such an argument by Philo leads to the conclusion that the God does not exist – at least – as described in terms by Cleanthes.

The main problem here is about attributing worldly terms to God. In other words, God is considered as if He is a moral person. This could be named as the main source of the problem. Concerning the traditional theological problem of evil, F.H. Bradley comments as the trouble has come from the idea that the Absolute is a moral person and if started from this basis, then the relationship of evil to the Absolute presents at once an irreducible dilemma and the problem

becomes insoluble⁶². Regarding the attribution of worldly terms to the God, Cleanthes in the *Dialogues* says:

The terms admirable, excellent, superlatively great, wise, and holy, these sufficiently fill the imaginations of men, and anything beyond, besides that it leads into absurdities, has no influence on the affections or sentiments. Thus, in the present subject, if we abandon all human analogy, as seems your intention, Demea, I am afraid we abandon all religion and retain no conception of the great object of our adoration. If we preserve human analogy, we must forever find it impossible to reconcile any mixture of evil in the universe with infinite attributes; much less can we ever prove the latter from the former. But supposing the Author of nature to be finitely perfect, though far exceeding mankind, a satisfactory account may then be given of natural and moral evil, and every untoward phenomenon be explained and adjusted⁶³.

Although Hume adopts a skeptical approach toward the traditional theological arguments on the problem of evil, Pitson claims that Hume's actual aim is not to deny the God's being or even His existence. In consideration of the whole *Dialogues*, it could be argued that the especially important, difficult, and also obscure question at issue in natural religion concerns the nature of the deity. Such questioning takes a skeptical form in Hume's *Dialogues*. This standpoint is reflected in Part I when Philo does not directly challenge the religious hypothesis itself, but, rather, points that the speculation about the powers and work of the Deity may be taking us beyond the limits of our faculties⁶⁴. Hume, as a skeptic, diverts the question of being and existence of the Deity to the theist and shows that a theist cannot prove or establish God's omnipotence, omniscience, and

⁶² Pike, N. (1963). Hume on evil. *The Philosophical Review*, 72(2), pp.180-197 (181)

⁶³ DIA, Part.11, 203, p.78

⁶⁴ Pitson, T. (2008). The miseries of life: Hume and the problem of evil. *Hume Studies*, 34(1), pp. 89-114 (90)

omnibenevolence since there is strong evidence for evil that is observed by the creatures in this world. A theist, in this case, must show that all the evil that exists in this world is necessary and unavoidable. Otherwise (s)he cannot meet the challenge put forward by Hume. Of course, a theist cannot establish a support for this claim. Thus, the inference to God's infinite power and goodness cannot be justified and God's moral attributes, as Cleanthes introduced, cannot be established⁶⁵. In order to show that none of the evil exists in this world necessary and unavoidable according to human reason, Hume puts forward a fourfold catalogue of questions/topics. These are; (a) the fact that pain is used as a motivation for action, (b) that the world is conducted by general laws, (c) that nature is frugal in giving powers, and (d) that nature is "inaccurate," that is, more or less than the optimum level of a given phenomenon, such as rain, can and does occur. In the *Dialogues*, Philo presents these sources of evil during the discussion of the evil experienced in this world. His point must be carefully interpreted. Philo needs to show that at least of these sources of evil could be modified so that it might lead to less pain and suffering. For example, considering the third source, this world would be a slightly a better one if humans would be more resistant to dramatic heat changes. In this way, Philo bolsters the likelihood of gratuitous evil by arguing that things could easily have been better than they are⁶⁶.

⁶⁵ Russell, P. and Kraal, A. (2017). Hume on Religion. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/hume-religion/>, Accessed on: 15.10.2017

⁶⁶ Lorkowski, C.M. (2013). David Hume: Religion, *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/hume-rel/>, Accessed on: 15.10.2017

Since Hume is not offering a theodicy in Dialogues regarding the problem of evil, his writings on the problem are sometimes overlooked. Although Hume does not offer a theodicy, the questions he asked about the problem of evil in this world are important. Attribution of worldly terms to the Deity beyond the limits of our understanding is the main concern of Hume. And his arguments on this basis were widely used in the later periods.

As seen above, it could be argued that the discussions on the problem of evil was very rich and multi-dimensional in the early modern philosophy. It is also obvious that, for the philosophers of the period, discussions on the problem of evil were both philosophical and theological. For the vast majority of the period's philosophers, old Epicurean paradox seems like the starting point to tackle the problem of evil. From a philosophical standpoint, evil has always presented major challenges to the consistency and rationality of the world-picture⁶⁷. In order to deal with these major challenges, philosophers were strongly influenced by the theological discussions about free will, original sin, and God's attributes.

In the last phase of the era of early modern philosophy, Kant's views on the problem of evil in relation to human freedom will be discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.

⁶⁷ Kremer, E.J., and Latzer, M.J. (2001). Introduction. In *The Problem of Evil in Early Modern Philosophy* (Ed. Kremer, E.J. and Latzer, M.J.), p.3, University of Toronto Press

CHAPTER 2

KANT'S DOCTRINE OF RADICAL EVIL

2.1. A Short Overview of Kant's Moral Philosophy

Morality is among the major issues in Kant's overall philosophical approach. In his *Critique of Practical Reason (CoPrR)*, Kant reveals how important morality is in his philosophy:

Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence, the more frequently and persistently one's meditation deals with them: the starry sky above me and the moral law within me. Neither of them do I need to seek or merely suspect outside my purview, as veiled in obscurities or [as lying] in the extravagant: I see them before me and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence⁶⁸.

Kant's principle writings in practical philosophy did not begin to appear before his sixties. Before then, Kant's works were mainly focusing on metaphysics and natural sciences for almost thirty years. However, it does not necessarily mean that Kant only turned to practical philosophy in the late years of his career. The statement about the "moral law within" given above was included in the conclusion of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Such a statement proves that Kant had an enduring interest in the practical philosophy. When he published his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (Groundwork)*, one of his major work in moral philosophy, Kant was already lecturing regularly on ethics at the University of Königsberg for nearly thirty years. In this period, many works of Kant showed clear

⁶⁸ CoPrR, Conclusion, 162, p.203

hints and indications of his interest in moral philosophy⁶⁹. As Kant was reflecting on the fundamental principles of morality, there were three available choices for the ground of moral actions namely as religion, the state, and human psychology. It has long been viewed that God ordered morally right actions. However, this was an idea Kant never accepted and even strongly denied. For Kant, following the orders of the religion is the same thing as following the orders of the clergy. This way one's own moral reasoning is pushed into the background against an external authority. For Kant, the second option, or the state, was no different than the religion. He even considered the state as a much less plausible option for grounding moral actions. Finally, a more plausible and serious option was the human sentiments and psychology. In other words, locating the grounding of the moral actions in human psychology and interests⁷⁰. In contrast, Kant showed his interest in the social and political implications of autonomy in several different works. For example, in his short essay, "What is Enlightenment?", Kant says:

Sapere Aude! (Dare to know). Have the courage to use your own reason⁷¹.

By claiming so, Kant urges each individual to refuse to remain under the guidance of others. Kant further says:

⁶⁹ Kant, I. (2002). *Critique of Practical Reason*, Introduction by Engstrom, S. And translated by Pluhar, W.S., Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., Indianapolis, p.21

⁷⁰ Kitcher, P. (2001). Immanuel Kant. In *The Blackwell Guide to the Modern Philosophers: From Descartes to Nietzsche* (Edited by Emmanuel, S.M.), Blackwell Publishers, UK, p.241

⁷¹ WE, p.1

If I have a book that thinks for me, a pastor who acts as my conscience, a physician who prescribes my diet, and so on--then I have no need to exert myself⁷².

For Kant, every individual must think and decide for himself/herself. Similarly, later in *Perpetual Peace*, Kant expressed a hope that eventually all states will be organized as republics, in which every citizen can express his/her moral freedom⁷³. From this standpoint, Kant found positive inspiration in the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Kant accepted Rousseau's radical suggestion that the moral actions of citizens cannot be guided by the authority of clergy and statesmen. Rousseau suggested that each individual was capable of determining right actions for himself or herself⁷⁴. As mentioned above such thoughts of Rousseau obviously led Kant to redefine his understanding of reason and his entire conception of metaphysics. In a famous paragraph, Kant openly states his debt to Rousseau and clearly indicates how Rousseau made him rethink the ends of reason:

I am myself by inclination a seeker after truth. I feel a consuming thirst for knowledge and a restless desire to advance in it, as well as satisfaction in every step I take. There was a time when I thought that this alone could constitute the honor of mankind, and I despised the common man who knows nothing. Rousseau set me right. This pretended superiority vanished and I learned to respect humanity. I should consider myself far more useless than the common laborer if I did not believe that one consideration alone gives worth to all others, namely to establish the rights of man⁷⁵.

⁷² WE, p.1

⁷³ Schneewind, J.B. (1992). Autonomy, obligation, and virtue: An overview of Kant's moral philosophy. In *The Cambridge Companion to Kant* (Edited by Guyer, P.), Cambridge University Press, UK, p.310

⁷⁴ Kitcher, P., *ibid*, p.241

⁷⁵ Beiser, F.C. (1992). Kant's intellectual development: 1746-1781. In *The Cambridge Companion to Kant* (Edited by Guyer, P.), Cambridge University Press, UK, p.43

In his work, *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer (Dreams)*, Kant also make claims very identical to those of Rousseau. In the *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*, Kant analyses the moral feeling that leads us toward benevolent actions. According to Kant, there are two major forces that drive us. While one of these force's aim is "the satisfaction of self-interest, the other's aim lies outside of ourselves and is located in other beings (*Dreams* 2:334). Kant calls these two forces as egoism and altruism and he notes that these forces conflict with each other. Thus, we are either concerned with ourselves or with others. As a response to the battle, Kant says:

[a] secret power forces us to direct our will towards the well-being of others or regulate it [our will] with the will of another. Although this often happens contrary to our will and in strong opposition to our selfish inclination⁷⁶.

Here Kant claims that this moral feeling is about "sensed dependency of the private will on the general will" (*Dreams* 2:334). Kant's idea of "general will" reflects the strong influence of Rousseau⁷⁷. General will, for Rousseau, is a great contribution to the political philosophy with its implications on the development of a social contract. In his work "Of the Social Contract", Rousseau says:

The general will can only direct the forces of the State in keeping with the end for which it was instituted, which is the common good; for if the opposition of private interests has made the establishment of societies necessary, the harmony of these same interests has made it possible. That which is common to these different interests forms the social bond; and if there were not some point in which

⁷⁶ DRE, 2:334, p.63

⁷⁷ Walschots, M.H. (2015). *Moral Sense Theory and the Development of Kant's Ethics*. Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository, The University of Western Ontario, Canada

*all interests agree, no society could exist. Now it is only on this common interest that the society should be governed*⁷⁸.

The idea of the “general will” rests on a major distinction between two aspects of a person. For Rousseau, everyone may be thought of as both a man and a citizen. As a man, each of us is a unique entity and each of us has his/her own unique interest and a particular identity. But also we, as citizens, are members of the public. And as members of the public, we have common interests⁷⁹. Thus, everyone has a personal interest as a man and a common interest as a citizen. Moving from this distinction, paragraph given above clearly suggests that, for Rousseau, people may differ in their interests yet there is a common or public interest on which all humankind can agree in principle – even though not all wish to pursue that interest⁸⁰.

Rousseau and Kant are both voluntarists who make “will” ethically central in the shape of “general will”, “good will”, and “real will”. Although there is crucial amount of similarities in regard to the general will, there are some minor differences between Kant and Rousseau. For Rousseau, journey from egoism to altruism ends at the border of Sparta (with the Spartan mother on the opening page of Emile) whereas Kant’s journey continues until it “ought” to reach a universal Kingdom of Ends – or at least a universal republicanism and eternal peace. Thus, it could be argued that Kant more easily preserves freedom and autonomy than Rousseau who wants our real will to be

⁷⁸ OSC, 66 (3.11)

⁷⁹ Dagger, R. (1981). Understanding the general will. *Western Political Quarterly*, 34(3), 359-371 (360)

⁸⁰ Grofman, B. and Feld, S.L. (1988). Rousseau’s general will: A condorcetian perspective. *The American Political Science Review*, 82(2), pp.567-576 (568)

the recognition of the state as the embodiment of rational freedom realized⁸¹.

In addition to the Rousseau's impact on Kant's moral philosophy, Kant also shows the influence of the Roman philosopher Cicero. Kant knew Cicero's works. In his last two years at *Collegium Fridericianum*, he had already read the majority of *Epistulae ad Familiares*, which includes Cicero's various speeches, and *De Officiis*. Particularly, *De Officiis*, an important text in the moral philosophy of the period was very important to Kant when he was writing his famous *Groundwork* and also later works on ethics and politics. According to Klaus Reich, Kant's *Groundwork* closely follows Cicero – especially in its way to establish solid connections between the idea of a universal law of nature and the idea of respect for humanity⁸². It is also important to note that the terminology in the *Groundwork* is very identical with the terminology in Cicero's works. Many central concepts such as “will”, “dignity”, “duty”, “virtue”, “freedom”, and “autonomy” play similar foundational roles in both Kant's and Cicero's works. There are many other overlapping issues in their philosophies. They both thought that ethics is based on reason and opposed to impulse. They both denied hedonism. Cicero used such phrases as “conquered by pleasure” and “broken by desires” in regard to the actions lack morality and virtue, while Kant claimed that only the actions done for the sake of duty are moral, while any action motivated by desires or pleasure is non-moral. Both Kant's and Cicero's theories of morality are based on duties⁸³.

⁸¹ Riley, P. (2001). Rousseau's general will. In *The Cambridge Companion to Rousseau*, 124-153 (126)

⁸² Nussbaum, M.C. (2010). Kant and Cosmopolitanism. In *The Cosmopolitanism Reader* (Edited by Brown, G.W. and Held, D.), p.29

⁸³ Kuehn, M. (2001). *Kant: A Biography*. Cambridge University Press, p.279

However, there are few issues in which Kant rejected Cicero's views on morality. For example, Cicero's ethical thought that was founded on common life and expressed by concepts such as honor (*honestas*), faithfulness (*fides*), fellowship (*societas*), and seemliness (*decorum*) is too unphilosophical and shallow for Kant. Since Kantian moral philosophy claims that moral duties cannot be derived from honor or honorableness, Kant rejected Ciceronian ethics from this standpoint⁸⁴. Despite some differences between Kantian and Ciceronian ethics, it is important to note that Kantian ethics borrowed much from Ciceronian ethics.

2.2. Duty and Compliance with Moral Law

As mentioned above duty is one of the fundamental concepts in Kant's moral philosophy. In Kantian ethics, duty is an underlying concept in one's pursuit of virtue. About the foundational role of duty, Kant says:

By way of introduction it is to be noted that there is no question in moral philosophy which has received more defective treatment than that of the individual's duty towards himself. No one has framed a proper concept of self-regarding duty. It has been regarded as a detail and considered by way of another thought, as an appendix to moral philosophy, on the view that a human being should give thought to himself only after he has completely fulfilled his duty towards others. All moral philosophies err in this respect⁸⁵.

The *Metaphysics of Morals* contains Kant's most complete exposition of his system of duties. The duties that Kant identifies as duties to

⁸⁴ *ibid*, 282

⁸⁵ LoE, 117

oneself includes a wide range of commands and prohibitions. Among many other things, Kant's duties include duties to develop one's natural capabilities, to refrain from lying, to pursue self-knowledge, and to avoid the false humility⁸⁶. However, duties for Kant are not limited to the duties to oneself. A moral theory generally assumes that self-regarding duties are concerned with one's well-being and happiness. Kant totally rejects this perspective and he sees duties to oneself as concerning humanity in one's own person. Thus, according to Kant, duties require an agent to treat himself/herself with the respect (s)he deserves as a rational being with dignity, as an end in itself. Consequently, Kant points that a formula of humanity grounds duties to oneself⁸⁷.

According to the Kantian understanding of duty, an action can only have a moral value if and only if it is done from duty. Kant's notion of acting from duty is standardly understood as doing what is right just because it is right⁸⁸. In other words, for Kant, there is a strict distinction between actions done in accordance with duty and actions that are done for the sake of duty. For example, a grocer may be acting very carefully in not overcharging customers. Such a behavior obviously can be considered as in concordance with the duty but it does not necessarily follow that the behavior is done for the sake of duty. At this point, what differentiates between in accordance with duty and for the sake of duty is the main motive behind the action. If the grocer is not overcharging the customers just to avoid any possible legal sanctions, then the grocer's action is not for the sake of duty but

⁸⁶ Denis, L. (2012). *Moral Self-Regard: Duties to Oneself in Kant's Moral Philosophy*. Routledge, p.1

⁸⁷ *ibid*, p.1

⁸⁸ Stratton-Lake, P. (2004). *Kant, Duty and Moral Worth*. Routledge. p.11

they are in accordance with the duty. Thus, it could be said that the class of actions in accordance with the duty is much wider compared to the class of actions performed for the sake of duty. From the morality standpoint, for Kant, only the actions performed for the sake of duty are moral actions. Thus, in the given example if the grocer is not overcharging his customers just to avoid any legal sanctions then his action of not overcharging has absolutely no moral value.

In Kant's view, the less inclination we have when performing our duties, the greater the moral value of our action if we actually perform what it is our duty to do. In short, acting for the sake of duty must be distinguished from acting out of mere inclinations or desires. However, at this point, a question may arise and one must know better what it means to act for the sake of duty. As a response, Kant points that acting for the sake of duty refers to acting out of reverence for law, and that is the moral law. It is important to note that the essential characteristic or the form of the law is universality. This is a strict universality that does not admit any exceptions. Moral laws are as universal as the physical laws. Agents conform to the physical law unconsciously and necessarily since they are physical things. However, only rational beings are capable of acting in accordance with the idea of law. The moral value of the actions is derived not from the inclinations, or intended or actual results, but from the maxim of the agent⁸⁹. Another example for acting for the sake of duty is given in Kant's short essay "*On a Supposed Right to Lie from Altruistic Motives*". Kant wrote this essay as a response to the French philosopher Benjamin Constant when he published an article in the Journal

⁸⁹ Copleston, F. (1977). *A History of Philosophy: Vol. VI, Wolff to Kant*, Search Press, London, UK, p.318

France. The article was entitled "On Political Reactions". Constant blamed Kant through the passages below:

The moral principle, "It is a duty to tell the truth," would make any society impossible if it were taken singly and unconditionally. We have proof of this in the very direct consequences which a German philosopher has drawn from this principle. This philosopher goes so far as to assert that it would be a crime to lie to a murderer who has asked whether our friend who is pursued by him had taken refuge in our house⁹⁰.

The French philosopher on page 124 refutes this principle in the following manner:

It is a duty to tell the truth. The concept of duty is inseparable from the concept of right. A duty is that which in one being corresponds to the rights of another. Where there are no rights, there are no duties. To tell the truth is thus a duty: but it is a duty only in respect to one who has a right to the truth. But no one has a right to a truth which injures others⁹¹.

The main argument lies in the sentence: "To tell the truth is a duty, but it is a duty only toward one who has a right to the truth." As a response, Kant says:

Truthfulness in statements which cannot be avoided is the formal duty of an individual to everyone, however great may be the disadvantage accruing to himself or to another⁹².

Kant finally concludes his essay with this paragraph:

⁹⁰ ALT, p.1

⁹¹ ALT, p.1

⁹² ALT, p.3

All practical principles of right must contain rigorous truth, and the so-called "mediating principles" can contain only the more accurate definition of their application to actual cases (according to rules of policy), but they can never contain exceptions from the former. Such exceptions would nullify their universality, and that is precisely the reason that they are called principles⁹³.

It is clear from the essay that if telling the truth is a universal moral law, no agent ought to lie under any circumstance even if the lie is told for benevolent reasons. Acting in the opposite manner means the violation of the universal moral law and the act itself becomes immoral regardless of its consequences.

2.3. Categorical and Hypothetical Imperatives

Kant established a necessity to differentiate between moral judgments and hypothetical imperatives. That moral judgments cannot be hypothetical imperatives has come to be seen an unquestionable truth by many philosophers – even by those who do not consider themselves as Kant’s followers. When writing about imperatives, Kant thought about statements about what ought to be or what should be done, as of injunctions expressed in the imperative mood. In Kantian ethics, distinction between categorical and hypothetical imperatives plays a significant role. Such significance can be seen in the following passages from the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*:

All imperatives command either hypothetically or categorically. The former present the practical necessity of a possible action as a means to achieving something else which one desires (or which one may possibly desire). The categorical imperative would be one

⁹³ ALT, p.5

*which presented an action as of itself objectively necessary, without regard to any other end*⁹⁴.

Kant continues:

*If the action is good only as a means to something else, the imperative is hypothetical; but if it is thought of as good in itself, and hence as necessary in a will which of itself conforms to reason as the principle of this will, the imperative is categorical*⁹⁵.

As understood from the paragraphs above, Kant defines hypothetical imperatives in terms of an action is good to some purpose. Such purpose can be either actual or possible. Among imperatives related with actual purposes, Kant refers to the rules of prudence since he believes in the idea that all men necessarily desire their own happiness and pursue their own desires⁹⁶. On the other hand, Kant claims that the categorical imperatives are the fundamental principle of our moral duties. In other words, categorical imperatives refer to the unconditional moral law and it is absolute for all agents. In categorical imperatives, validity of the acts does not depend on any ulterior end. In Critique of Practical Reason, Kant says:

*If a rational being can think of its maxims as practical universal laws, he can do so only by considering them as principles which contain the determining grounds of the will because of this form and not because of their matter*⁹⁷.

⁹⁴ G, 414, p.31

⁹⁵ G, 414, p.31

⁹⁶ Foot, P. (1972). Morality as a system of hypothetical imperatives. *The Philosophical Review*, 81(3), 305-316 (306)

⁹⁷ CPrR, Theorem III, 27, p.40

Thus, moral requirements retain their reason-giving force under any conditions and, as mentioned above, they have universal validity. In other words, whatever else may be said of basic moral requirements, their content is universal. Only a universal law could be the content of a requirement that has the reason-giving force of morality. This leads Kant to a well-known formulation of the categorical imperative:

*I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law*⁹⁸.

This principle motivates a good will, and according to Kant it is the fundamental principle of all morality. This principle in effect summarizes a decision-making procedure for moral reasoning. First, an agent formulates a maxim that enshrines his/her reason for acting as (s)he proposes. Second, agent recasts that maxim as a universal law of nature governing all rational agents. Third, agent considers if his/her maxim is even conceivable in a world governed by this law of nature. If it is, then, fourth, agent asks himself/herself whether (s)he would, or could, rationally will to act on his/her maxim in such a world. If yes, then agent's action is morally permissible⁹⁹. At this point, Kant also defines two different types of duties and strictly distinguishes between them. These different types of duties are known as perfect duties and imperfect duties. According to Kant, perfect duties are obligatory and imperfect duties, which bind one only to adopt the maxim of developing talents and helping others but which leave one free to choose the method. However, codes of ethics typically

⁹⁸ G, 4:402, p.18

⁹⁹ Johnson, R. and Cureton, A. (2017). Kant's Moral Philosophy, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Edited by Zalta, E.N.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/kant-moral/>, Accessed on: 24.10.2017

include both types of duties¹⁰⁰. Such a distinction was made in the *Metaphysics of Morals* (G 421/39). Perfect duties were defined as the duties that must be done at every possible opportunity while the imperfect duties refer to the duties that must eventually be fulfilled. However, when and how these duties will be fulfilled are determined by the agent. Kant makes a further classification and divides perfect duties in two subcategories namely as perfect duties to oneself and perfect duty to others. Same classification is made for the imperfect duties: imperfect duties for oneself and imperfect duties for others. Kant gives the relevant examples for each category in the *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (421-424):

Perfect Duty for One Self (Negative): Suicide example was given for this type of duty. The maxim of the action is, "From self-love, I make as my principle to shorten my life when its continued duration threatens more evil than promises satisfaction." Universal law is, "Everyone will commit suicide in these unpleasant circumstances for the motive of self-love." The result is, "An agent cannot coherently will that everyone would follow such a law. Self-love also urges one to preserve and prolong one's life. Thus, ending the life can be contradictory. Action in question is not admitted.

Perfect Duty for Others (Negative): Borrowing money example was given for this type of duty. The maxim of the action is, "When I am in need of money, I will borrow money and promise to pay the money back, although I know that I can never do so." Universal law is, "Everyone will promise to pay a loan back when they know they will not be able

¹⁰⁰ L'etang, J. (1992). A Kantian approach to codes of ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 11(10), pp.737-744 (741).

to do so for the motive of convenience.” The result is, “An agent cannot coherently will that everyone would follow such a law. The motive of convenience urges the agent to lie about repaying the money and there is a strong possibility that lying will put the agent in a worse situation. There will be no loans available next time. Thus, action in question is not permissible.

Imperfect Duty for One Self (Positive): Developing talents was the example given for this type of duty. The maxim of the action is, “I will leave my talents undeveloped when I realize that I have certain abilities for the motive of remaining comfortable.” Universal law is, “Agents leave their talents undeveloped when they realize they have certain abilities for the motive of remaining comfortable. In other words, the maxim of neglecting one self’s natural gifts agrees with duty.” The result is, “As a rational being, an agent will necessarily develop faculties. Since an agent wants to get as much as possible out of life, motive pushes agents to develop their skills.” Thus, action in question is not permissible.

Imperfect Duty for Others (Positive). Drowning person can be given as an example for this type of duty. The maxim of the action is, “I recognize the problems of others while I enjoy no such problems, and I will neither take nothing from others nor contribute to another's well-being.” Universal law is, ““Everyone will allow others to drown when they are the only ones who could rescue them for the motive of remaining comfortable.” The result is, “An agent cannot coherently will that everyone would follow such a law. Our motive of remaining comfortable is in conflict with another motive: Agents wish to be

assisted when they are in need of help. These motives are in conflict. Thus, it is not permissible to allow others to go without assistance.”

Kant points that perfect duties override imperfect duties that in return require agents to adopt certain ends. For example, this tradition attributes to Kant the view that the perfect duty of keeping promises always overrides the imperfect duty of promoting other people’s welfare¹⁰¹. Therefore, if I promise to meet a friend at a certain time for dinner and on the way to dinner, if I see a drowning person who would die if I do not rescue, I must leave that person to die if saving him/her will restrain me from keeping my promise for dinner.

As mentioned above, given example is a clear manifestation of how perfect duties override imperfect duties. People can easily neglect or violate imperfect duties if and when it will help agent to fulfill perfect duties. According to Kant’s Groundwork, perfect duties do not allow or admit any exceptions or deviations for the sake of agents’ inclinations. It might be suggested that perfect duties override imperfect duties because the categorical imperative more clearly prohibits maxims of actions that violate perfect duties than it prohibits maxims of actions that violate imperfect duties¹⁰².

2.4. Nature and Grounds of Evil in Kant’s Moral Philosophy

After covering the general concepts of the moral philosophy of Kant, I would like to start discussing the concept of evil in Kant’s moral

¹⁰¹ Masek, L. (2005). How Kant’s View of Perfect and Imperfect Duties Resolves an Alleged Moral Dilemma for Judges. *Ratio Juris*, 18(4), 415-428 (417)

¹⁰² *ibid*, p.418

philosophy. In the *Groundwork*, Kant notes that our actions are morally good only so far as they conform to the moral law. In other words, morally good actions are completely free from all contingencies. However, those motivations that are derived from self-interest can be considered as potential barriers to acting in accordance with the moral law. Such an inclination led by desires may result in engaging in immoral activities. Kant claims that our disposition (*Gesinnung*) to diverge from the moral law is caused by an inherent propensity to evil. As a product of free will, moral evil means subordinating moral incentives to non-moral incentives when making our maxims.

As discussed in the first chapter, the concept of evil has often been a focal point for many philosophers and philosophical disciplines in the history of philosophy. Countless ferocious and terrifying events that happened throughout the history of humankind have led this issue to become a central topic of discussion. Calling these atrocities “wrong” or “bad” was not sufficient to describe their very nature and thus humanity needed the concept of evil to better characterize them¹⁰³. A sadistic torture or genocidal mass murder cannot simply be called wrong or even very, very wrong. We need a different conception to describe such evil acts. Thus, we need the concept of evil to make sense of the moral status of such actions¹⁰⁴.

Although evil is a central concept in philosophy, the nature of evil is understood differently by people from a non-philosophical background. Philosophers also have different points of view on the

¹⁰³ Calder, T. (2016). The Concept of Evil (Edited by E. Zalta, ed.). *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/concept-evil/>, Accessed on 25.10.2017

¹⁰⁴ Calder, T. (2015). Evil and its opposite. *Journal of Value Inquiry*, 49(1-2), pp.113-130.

concept of evil. Arendt, for instance, calls evil banal and she claims that it does not have to be demonic in nature¹⁰⁵. Neiman suggests that thoughtlessness has more destructive consequences than malice itself. Human beings are inclined to refuse to see the consequences of their actions. This refusal is a self-serving refusal and such a refusal is more threatening than a desire for destruction¹⁰⁶. Supporting the idea that there are different perspectives on evil, Koehn suggests that there are two major contrasting perspectives on the causes and nature of evil. For Koehn, the first one is moralism and the second one is wisdom. Koehn claims that philosophers like Kant and Aristotle are moralists and they basically claim that evil is a sort of corruption of choice or the will for practical reason. Moralists claim that although we know ourselves, our intentions are weak and vicious by nature. However, those who are involved with the tradition of wisdom have a different perspective on the nature and causes of evil. They suggest that evil is the frustrated quality of unsatisfied desire. For Koehn, thinkers of wisdom include Plato, Confucius, Spinoza, Buddha, and Goethe. They simply suggest that human beings do not possess self-knowledge and such lack of knowledge leads to a suffering that in turn triggers unsatisfying behavior¹⁰⁷. Evil in their view is rather suffering more of a cause of collective and individual ignorance of human nature and lack of self-knowledge¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁵ Arendt, H. (1963). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, Penguin, New York

¹⁰⁶ Neiman, S. (2015). *ibid*, p.303

¹⁰⁷ Koehn, D. (2005). *The Nature of Evil*. New York, NY: MacMillan Palgrave

¹⁰⁸ Darcia, N. (2015). Torture, evil and moral development. *Journal of Moral Education*, 44(1), pp.1-16.

As mentioned above, although there are several classifications of the concept of evil, philosophical discussions mainly focus on moral evil. It could be argued that moral evil can be considered within the scope of human behavior¹⁰⁹. In other words, moral evil is the evil brought about by the conduct of free agents. Evil acts can be considered as moral evil as long as they have a morally corrupted orientation or proceed from an evil disposition¹¹⁰. In other words, moral evil is closely related to moral wrongness or moral badness. Thus, it refers to a relatively high degree of moral wrongness or moral badness. We may easily think that evil is already a moral notion. Although many philosophers confirm this perspective, many others claim that other conceptions of evil are also possible¹¹¹. Another conception of evil, according to McCabe, is pictured neither as the expectations nor as the actions, but rather is pictured as a gap between them. From this definition of evil, it could be inferred that the concept of evil also refers to the imbalance or gap between “*is*” and “*ought*”. Such an argument depicts the moral condition of human beings. The relationship that was built between evil and other concepts such as moral expectations [ought] and actions [is] paves the way for the Kantian thought of morality¹¹². The distinction between expectations [ought] and action [is] leads to a moral gap. The problem of evil is absolutely central to Kantian moral philosophy. Madore suggests that Kant’s moral

¹⁰⁹ Schott, R. (2003). Evil in modern thought: An alternative history of philosophy. *Hyperia*, 18(2), pp.222-226.

¹¹⁰ Formosa, P. (2007). Kant on the radical evil of human nature. *The Philosophical Forum*, 38(3), pp.221-45.

¹¹¹ Hazlett, A. (2012). Non-moral evil. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 36, pp.3618-3634.

¹¹² McCabe, H. (2007). On evil and omnipotence. In *Faith Within Reason* (pp. 67-94). London: Continuum Publishing.

philosophy cannot be totally grasped unless his conception of evil is deeply understood and carefully examined¹¹³.

Kant published important essays and books in many major fields of philosophy. If we group his works, one major group would consist of his work on the issues closely related to philosophy of religion. Although he may not have intended to write about philosophy of religion, his writings on the immortality of the soul, morality and religious beliefs, the conception of God and – associated with morality – the problem of evil is among the topics that could be considered under the theme of philosophy of religion¹¹⁴.

Among these topics, the problem of evil is of special importance as it triggered a shockwave among the admirers of Kantian philosophy. It could be argued that the main reason for this shockwave were the ideas about evil put forward by Kant. Kant's views on evil were most prominent in his book titled *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*. The book is originally a compilation of four journal articles, which Kant brought together through the University of Jena to avoid censorship. It could be argued that the publication of the book created a long-lasting and intense impact on philosophy of religion while creating controversies, as mentioned above. The first part of the book is of particular importance for my thesis as that part deals with the problem of evil. The first part of the book was published in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* in 1792 as a separate article. Actually, it could be said that, apart from the book itself, this single article created most of the

¹¹³ Madore, J. (2014). Difficult freedom and radical evil in Kant. *Journal Of Moral Philosophy: An International Journal Of Moral, Political And Legal Philosophy*, 11(4), pp.547-550.

¹¹⁴ Pasternack, L. and Philip, R.. (2014). Kant's Philosophy of Religion. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

controversy. Admirers of Kantian philosophy, especially those embracing Kant's views on ethics, were completely surprised. Because in his work, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Kant was referring to evil from a Christian standpoint where he was actually confirming the Christian view on sin as well as its consequences. Summarizing the reaction against Kant's views on evil, Goethe says:

*Kant required a long lifetime to purify his philosophical mantle of many impurities and prejudices. And now he has wantonly tainted it with the shameful stain of radical evil, in order that Christians too might be attracted to kiss its hem*¹¹⁵.

Cherkasova also suggests that there is limited reason to believe that Kant's sharp turn in his ethical philosophy that surprised his admirers is due to some political pressures. He rather decided to confront the inherent evil in human nature or the soul.

2.5. Maxim Making and Moral Evil

In this first part of the *Religion*, Kant first focuses on the discussion of whether human nature is inherently good or evil and he says:

*[...] the ground of evil cannot lie in any object determining the power of choice through inclination, not in any natural impulses, but only in a rule that the power of choice itself produces for the exercise of its freedom, i.e., in a maxim*¹¹⁶.

¹¹⁵ Cherkasova, E. (2005). On the boundary of intelligibility: Kant's conception of radical evil and the limits of ethical discourse. *The Review of Metaphysics*, 58(3), pp.571-584.

¹¹⁶ R, 6:21, p.46

This question stems from the idea that human being is complicated. He concludes that human nature has a disposition towards both¹¹⁷. In other words, people have the propensity to commit good (moral) behavior while at the same time also having the propensity to commit evil (immoral) behavior. Based on these views of Kant, we can infer that Kant does not position human nature at extreme ends. He rather seems to claim that both qualities are simultaneously inherent (exist) in human nature. However, it is important to note that (when pointing at the simultaneous existence of good and evil) Kant does not imply that these qualities are interlaced with each other. Instead, he seems to hold the idea that each individual act of a human being is an individual act, and this act is free and it is an outcome of a law generated within the person. Kant calls this subjective principle of volition a “maxim”, which is the rule an individual employs when engaging in an act¹¹⁸. For Kant, a maxim is actually a special kind of principle, one that guides agents’ actions. In effect, a maxim can be considered as a “*practical principle*” and acting in accordance with a maxim is the same thing with willing the action as an instance of a concept. As mentioned earlier, the importance of maxim in Kant’s moral philosophy is perfectly evident through the role it plays in categorical imperatives. The idea of maxim is integral to Kant’s efforts to determine how reason can be practical, as well as to his attempt to delineate a theory of moral evil. Kant’s theory of maxim can be considered as a specific tool for showing how the will can be independent of natural determination¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁷ Cherkasova, E., *ibid*, p.572

¹¹⁸ Wood, A.W. (1998). The final form of Kant's practical philosophy. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 36(S1), pp.1-20.

¹¹⁹ Michalson, G.E. (1990). *Fallen Freedom: Kant on Radical Evil and Moral Regeneration*. Cambridge University Press, Chicago, p.32

Thus, we can argue that the maxim restrains an individual to behave solely based on his/her stimulus. We cannot be conceived as free when our actions are based on impulses and when/if we cannot suspend our desires. Kant basically means that the ends of moral actions must be grounded on rational principles rather than any other end that could be represented as a natural object of desire. On the other hand, this does not mean that desires must be overlooked. Furthermore, we cannot infer that people's acts are free from desires. Maxims would enable us to be free as they precede our desires¹²⁰. The preceding role of maxims could be interpreted as one's freedom to control one's desires. As long as the maxims are backed by duties, we can say that these maxims are good. Consequently, human nature is considered to be good as long as it conforms to duty – or good maxims – while human nature is considered to be evil when it conforms to pleasures and desires. We can also infer that the former is moral and the latter is immoral. Caswell points out that the failure to be moral would be normatively equal to the failure to be rational. Thus, it could be inferred that evil is a form of irrationality¹²¹. Kant strives to question “moral evil” when explaining the nature of evil¹²². Therefore, morality plays an integral role in Kant's conception of evil. There would be no moral accountability unless people have free will. Kant claims that an agent is kept morally responsible and thus praised or blamed for what

¹²⁰ Wood, A.W., *ibid*, p.5

¹²¹ Caswell, M. (2006). The value of humanity and Kant's conception of evil. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 44(4), pp.635-663.

¹²² McLaughlin, P. (2007). Kant on heredity and adaptation. In S. Müller-Wille & H. Rheinberger (eds.), *Heredity Produced: At the Crossroads of Biology, Politics, and Culture, 1500-1870* (p. 277). Cambridge: The MIT Press.

is morally good or evil. However, whatever morally attributed to the agent must necessarily be the product of a free will¹²³.

Ostella suggests that this is the case as each individual has a sense of what is good that ought to be practiced. Considering Kant's ethical formula that suggests “*ought implies can*”, we can infer that regardless of the evil nature of human conduct, obtaining moral good is still possible through the exercise of freedom¹²⁴. Kant also suggests that this moral conduct can only lie in a maxim¹²⁵. Thus, moral evil must reside not in the content of a maxim, but in the form. Kant describes the issue in terms of the concept of “subordination (unterordnung)” – that is, in terms of the question concerning which of the two types of incentives the moral agent makes the condition of other. In other words, Kant’s conception of subordination refers to the suppression of one incentive by the other. However, the suppressed incentive is not completely destroyed or eliminated. Kant's point could be further refined, whereas the distilled product of moral evil resides in the form of a maxim, moral evil itself is a property of the act of will that freely subordinates one incentive to another, the moral to the sensuous¹²⁶. In *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* Kant says:

[...] the ground of evil cannot lie in any object determining the power of choice through inclination, not in any natural impulses, but only in a rule that the power of choice itself produces for the exercise of its freedom, i.e., in a maxim ¹²⁷.

¹²³ Caswell, M., *ibid*, p.

¹²⁴ Ostella, R. (2008). A Critique of autonomous free will. *Journal of Biblical Apologetics California Biblical University and Seminary*, 11(1), pp.91-125

¹²⁵ Friedrich, C. (1949). *The Philosophy of Kant*. New York: The Modern Library

¹²⁶ Michalson, G.E. (1990). *ibid*, p.36

¹²⁷ R, 6:21, p.46

This paragraph could be interpreted as stating that when the interests and tendencies of individuals are brought under the rules that can be universalized, one could be considered as acting legally. However, when those interests and tendencies are brought under the rules that are determined based on some specific goals (passions and desires), we cannot refer to these activities as moral. Still, regardless of the nature of conduct, free commitment of “self” chooses between the possible courses of conducts based on a sort of hierarchy of maxims¹²⁸. Thus, we can argue that human being stands in between its passion and its reason. In other words, Kant’s conception of evil cannot be conceived without understanding the highly possible clash between the maxims and self-given practical laws. Kant defines human beings as “finite rational beings” and such a definition paves the way for the clash between the maxims and self-given practical laws¹²⁹. In the “*Critique of Practical Reason*”, Kant notes:

For, being a creature and thus always dependent with regard to what he requires for complete satisfaction with his condition, he can never be altogether free from desires and inclinations which, because they rest on physical causes, do not of themselves accord with the moral law, which has quite different sources; and consequently, with reference to those desires, it is always necessary for him to base the disposition of his maxims on moral necessitation, not on ready fidelity but on respect, which demands compliance with the law even though this is done reluctantly¹³⁰.

¹²⁸ Hoffman, P. (1982). *The Anatomy of Idealism: Passivity and Activity in Kant, Hegel and Marx*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

¹²⁹ Huang, H. (2010). Kant’s concept of radical evil. In S. Smith & S. Hill (eds.), *Against Doing Nothing: Evil and Its Manifestations* (pp. 21-29). Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press.

¹³⁰ CoPrR, Chapter III, 84, p.108

Supporting the idea given in the quotation above, Kant makes other points on the relationship between morality and evil. He claims that moral laws precede the concept of good and evil. Kant refers to moral laws as a foundation for the idea of good and evil. Grice points that Kant refers to moral good and evil when speaking of good and evil. As mentioned above, ground of judgment that a conduct is good or evil must include a judgment of obligation. In this case, opposite scenario would not be acceptable for Kant. In other words, judgment of obligation cannot be grounded in a proposition suggesting a conduct that is morally good. In order to understand the conception of evil in the moral philosophy of Kant, we should build an understanding about the relationship between maxims and morality. This relationship is also of great importance for Kant as the human nature and an ultimate grounding of the will are among the major questions in his philosophical quest. Within this framework, mostly ignored by many other studies about Kantian moral philosophy, the problem and the origin of evil emerge as a critical issue¹³¹. Cherkasova cites¹³² an excerpt from one of the works of Michalson regarding the concept of moral evil in Kant:

The deepest part of Kant's analysis is not a response to that question [of the origin of evil], but a link between moral evil and human freedom, and this link is utterly inexplicable, for the same reason that freedom itself is, for Kant, ultimately inexplicable. ... Thus, ...we are not finally led to comprehend Kant's view of evil. Instead, we are reminded of the contingent nature of the exercise of freedom, the unfathomable quality of the process of character-building, and, finally, the sheer inscrutability of moral evil itself. Kant is theorizing about human nature in a way that gradually

¹³¹ Grice, G. (1967). *The Grounds of Moral Judgment*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

¹³² Cherkasova, *ibid*, p.

*discloses the futility of domesticating this topic conceptually or rationally*¹³³.

Religion is surely not the first work of Kant whereby he referred to moral evil. Discussions of moral and natural evil were found in much earlier writings of Kant. Three decades before *Religion*, Kant had written about moral evil and his thoughts about the issue were repeated in 1797 in his work “*Metaphysical Principles of Virtue*”. As seen above, Kant’s conception of moral evil begins with his much earlier discussions of 1763 that point “the concept of real opposition has its useful application in practical wisdom”. He also pointed that internal causes can alter the spirit or the state of mind. These internal causes became a major issue for Kant’s philosophy, especially in 1793. For Kant, internal cause was a focal point for the discussions on moral character. Furthermore, Kant considers human conflict as a manifestation of this inner root of opposition to moral good. Thus, Kant argues that all human conflicts could be resolved through the establishment of a good moral character¹³⁴. However, according to Fackhenheim and Burbidge, we should not ignore the reality that Kant’s conception of evil has somewhat evolved since his earlier writings. Basically, as mentioned above, Kant was speaking of evil which was simply defined as “incomplete development of the capacity for good”. Such definition was referring to an imperfection which could be defeated by a person himself¹³⁵. Kant was claiming that human beings are already striving to defeat it.

¹³³ Michalson, G.E. (1987). The inscrutability of moral evil in Kant. *The Thomist*, 51(2), pp.246-269

¹³⁴ Munzel, G. (1999). *Kant's Conception of Moral Character: The "Critical" Link of Morality, Anthropology, and Reflective Judgment*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

¹³⁵ Fackenheim, E., and Burbidge, J. (1996). *The God Within: Kant, Schelling, and Historicity*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

When discussing maxim making, two concepts play an integral part in Kant's moral philosophy. These concepts are *Wille* and *Willkür*, and distinction between these two is also equally important. *Wille* and *Willkür* respectively characterize the legislative and executive functions of a unified faculty of volition. Both concepts were translated into English as "will" and, that, in return leads to few problems for translators. Thus, in order to point the distinction between *Wille* and *Willkür*, *Wille* could be translated as "will"; while *Willkür* could be translated as "choice". *Wille* constitutes a much-needed qualification of the Groundwork's account of will as practical reason. On the other hand, *Willkür* refers to the underlying disposition or character of a free agent, provides the basis for a further clarification of the conception of a good (and evil) will¹³⁶. When it comes to their roles, Allison's points on the differences and similarities are as follows: In the first formulation, *Wille* is the source of the laws that confront the human *Willkür* as imperatives. Both *Wille* and *Willkür* govern our selection of maxims and both are the products of practical reason. In the second formulation, Kant points that *Wille* leads to laws and *Willkür* leads to maxims. Thus, it is obvious that *Willkür* acts under the governance of *Wille*¹³⁷. In other words, it is *Wille* that provides the norm and *Willkür* acts – decides, chooses – in the guidance of this norm – *Wille*. Since *Wille* gives the laws, it provides a normative ground for the adoption of a maxim. In this sense, *Wille* is the equivalent to practical reason.

¹³⁶ Allison, H.E. (1990). Kant's Theory of Freedom. Cambridge University Press, p.130

¹³⁷ *ibid*, p.130

Willkür, on the other hand, is the faculty of volition whereby a free agent adopts a maxim following the pure rational incentive of *Wille*¹³⁸.

2.6. Radical Evil and Freedom

In *Religion*, Kant was not speaking only of the problem of evil in general, but also of “*radical evil*”. Kant’s conception of radical evil has been considered as problematic since it is not seen as consistent with the rest of Kant’s moral theory. McMullin also notes that most Kantian scholars agree that the Kantian conception of radical evil is basically against his moral theory insofar as he places morality in the noumenal realm whereas claims about human nature are placed in the phenomenal realm. Such a positioning of morality and human nature surely make it difficult to understand how human beings are by nature inclined toward evil for which they are responsible. Due to these arguments, Kant’s conception of radical evil is much less argued compared to other concepts in his moral philosophy¹³⁹. However, I do think that the concept of radical evil has a major role in Kant’s moral theory. Supporting this point of view, Loncar notes that Kant’s conception of radical evil in *Religion*: “has a peculiar status, sandwiched as it is between what can only be seen as expressions of a negative conception of evil: “Evil as some combination of sensuousness, folly, and the passivity of the will, not a capacity but rather a limitation of a capacity”. Thus, she suggests that radical evil

¹³⁸ Madore, J. (2011). *Difficult Freedom and Radical Evil in Kant: Deceiving Reason*. Continuum International Publishing, p.76

¹³⁹ McMullin, I. (2013). Kant on radical evil and the origin of moral responsibility. *Kantian Review*, 18(1), pp.49-72.

is not only a development of his earlier writings. But, it was rather developed for addressing a specific problem¹⁴⁰.

The main difference between evil and radical evil is that the radical evil refers to evil inherent in human nature itself. Kant was claiming that human beings possess an innate disposition to evil. In Kantian terminology, concept of radical evil refers to the notion that men are born with an evil maxim. In regards the concept of radical evil, in *Religion*, Kant says:

This evil is radical, because it corrupts the ground of all maxims; it is, moreover, as a natural propensity, inextirpable by human powers, since extirpation could occur only through good maxims, and cannot take place when the ultimate subjective ground of all maxims is postulated as corrupt; yet at the same time it must be possible to overcome it, since it is found in man, a being whose actions are free¹⁴¹.

Muchnik suggests that radical evil is actually a result of Kant's extending in *Religion* two basic assumptions of the *Groundwork*: First, Kant radicalizes his doctrine of transcendental freedom to include a choice of the principle of maxim selection. Freedom, in the *Groundwork*, was limited to the selection of maxims of actions whereas the limits here were extended to the selection of the principle of maxims. In other words, subject possesses the right to make a decision about how s(he) will use his/her freedom in general. This position leads to Kant's notion of "disposition" (*Gesinnung*) that refers to the agent's first subjective ground of the adoption of maxims. The second

¹⁴⁰ Loncar, S. (2013). Converting the Kantian self: Radical evil, agency, and conversion in Kant's 'Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason'. *Kant-Studien: Philosophische Zeitschrift der Kant-Gesellschaft*, 104(3), pp.346-366

¹⁴¹ R, 6:37, p.59

assumption by Muchnik suggests Kant's naturalization of the principles of his moral psychology. According to this assumption, the subjective use of freedom is attributed not only to individual but also to the human species in general. This claim could be interpreted as a generalization of the disposition to all men. It could be inferred that moral corruption is not an individual issue, it rather belongs to all human species. Thus, the whole human species has a disposition to evil by nature¹⁴².

The main question that emerges with this conception of radical evil is about morality and free will. Because if a maxim is innate, we should admit that our will is conditioned or determined external to us. This is one of the puzzles that Kant dealt with in his arguments of moral evil. Such an argument would lead to the view of "original sin" put forward by scholastic philosophers. Despite the efforts made by Kant to differentiate his position from that of scholastics, idea of innate evil is the main reason that created the shock among the admirers of Kant. Still, the concept of "radicalness" should be further investigated. Grimm notes that Kantian thought of morality claims that we must possess a capacity of free choice which is not determined or conditioned by the causal events in the world. Otherwise, moral law would not be possible. In other words, our will, as unconditioned and undetermined by this world, must be postulated outside time. Such an argument claims that our [will's] disposition to evil or good is innate in a different manner – a manner that is not conditioned or determined

¹⁴² Muchnik, P. (2009). *Kant's Theory of Evil: An Essay on the Dangers of Self-love and the Apriority of History*. Maryland: Lexington Books.

by this world¹⁴³. Supporting this point of view, in *Religion* (1793), Kant notes that:

Since the first ground of the adoption of maxims, which must itself again lie in the free power of choice, cannot be any fact possibly given in experience, the good or the evil in the human being is said to be innate...only in the sense that it is posited as the ground antecedent to every use of freedom given in experience (from the earliest use as far back as birth) and is thus represented as present in the human being at the moment of birth - not that the birth itself is its cause¹⁴⁴.

Considering the discussions given above, it is important to note that morality and freedom are interwoven concepts in Kant's moral philosophy. Both freedom and morality are also considered to be among the central topics in Kant's philosophy. Although many other philosophers investigated the strict relations between morality and freedom, one should pay special attention to Kant's approach to the relations between these two concepts. Kant's one of the best-known formulation of the relationship between freedom and morality reveals at the beginning of *Groundwork III*. After providing the definition of *Wille* as a "kind of causality belonging to living beings so far as they are rational," and freedom (negative) as "the property this causality has of being able to work independently of determination by alien causes", Kant offers his positive conception of freedom¹⁴⁵:

The concept of causality carries with it that of laws in accordance with which, because of something we call a cause, something else -namely, its effect - must be posited. Hence freedom of will,

¹⁴³ Grimm, S.R. (2002). Kant's argument for radical evil. *European Journal of Philosophy*, 10(2), pp.160-177.

¹⁴⁴ R, 6:22, p.47

¹⁴⁵ Allison, H. E. (1986). Morality and freedom: Kant's reciprocity thesis. *The Philosophical Review*, 95(3), pp.393-425 (395-396)

although it is not the property of conforming to laws of nature, is not for this reason lawless: it must rather be a causality conforming to immutable laws though of a special kind; for otherwise a free will would be self-contradictory. Natural necessity, as we have seen, is a heteronomy of efficient causes; for every effect is possible only in conformity with the law that something else determines the efficient cause to causal action. What else then can freedom of will be but autonomy—that is, the property which will has of being a law to itself? The proposition "Will is in all its actions a law to itself" expresses, however, only the principle of acting on no maxim other than one which can have for its object itself and at the same time a universal law. This is precisely the formula of the categorical imperative and the principle of morality. Thus a free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same¹⁴⁶.

In the *Groundwork*, Kant says that morality is not related to anything predetermined. Because freedom would not be possible when there is any sort of determination. According to Kant, morality is not possible if the agent is not free from all determinations. Morality absolutely requires the act of choosing and thus, it is only possible through free will. Therefore, freedom is the necessary presupposition of morality¹⁴⁷. With Rousseau, who was discussed earlier as a philosopher whose views influenced Kant, freedom does not mean being bound by no laws, but by laws that are in some sense of agent's own making. Thus, the idea of freedom as autonomy goes beyond the negative definition of freedom and it contains first and foremost the idea of laws made and laid down by oneself¹⁴⁸. According to Kant, morally wrong actions are possible only when they are within the agent's control in the sense that it was within his power to act otherwise. Thus, moral rightness or

¹⁴⁶ G, Ak 4:447, p.63

¹⁴⁷ Sokoloff, W.W. (2001). Kant and the paradox of respect. *American Journal of Political Science*, 768-779 (776)

¹⁴⁸ Johnson, R. and Cureton, A. (2017). Kant's Moral Philosophy, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Edited by Zalta, E.N.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/kant-moral/> , Accessed on: 26.10.2017

wrongness is only possible when the agent is free – who has control over his actions¹⁴⁹.

2.7. Propensity to Evil: Innateness and Universality

Finite beings such as ourselves possess both rational and sensuous natures. In *Religion*, Kant says:

*The human being must make or have made himself into whatever he is or should become in a moral sense, good or evil. These two characters must be an effect of his free power of choice, for otherwise they could not be imputed to him and, consequently, he could be neither morally good nor evil*¹⁵⁰.

Based on this paragraph, it is clear that the freedom of the will is presupposed and thus, locus of moral goodness and evil must lie within will. Kant argues that the agents have a freely chosen propensity to make evil maxims. Unfortunately, Kant initially gives two different definitions of a propensity which are neither equivalent nor compatible. Kant writes:

*By propensity (propensio) I understand the subjective ground of the possibility of an inclination[...] insofar as this possibility is contingent for humanity in general. It is distinguished from a predisposition in that a propensity can indeed be innate yet may be presented as not being such: it can rather be thought of (if it is good) as acquired, or (if evil) as brought by the human upon himself*¹⁵¹.

¹⁴⁹ Rohlf, M. (2016). Immanuel Kant, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Edited by Zalta, E.N.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2016/entries/kant/>, Accessed on 26.10.2017

¹⁵⁰ R, 6:44, p.65

¹⁵¹ R, 6:29, pp.52-53

However, in the same section, Kant writes a footnote about propensities and says:

*Propensity is actually only the predisposition to desire an enjoyment which, when the subject has experienced it, arouses inclination to it*¹⁵².

In the first definition, propensity refers to a different context and is different than the predisposition. However, in the second definition, Kant argues that the propensities and predispositions are the same in a sense. Such a confusion does not last long and it is resolved in the later parts of the work. Kant argues that propensities can either be moral (in accordance with the first definition), or physical (in accordance with the second definition). Propensities, in moral sense, pertains to us since the agents are free beings and propensities, in physical sense, pertains to us since we are natural beings. In the second sense, propensities are predispositions due to our unchosen nature. In contrast, moral propensity has its roots in our freedom. Thus, in the first sense, a propensity is not a predisposition since it is a maxim and not an unchosen part of our nature¹⁵³.

It is also important to make the distinction between propensities and dispositions. In fact, it seems that Kant uses the word disposition in the same meaning as moral propensity in *Religion*. Both terms refer to the supreme maxim that is the subjective ground of all other maxims. Kant probably used two different terms in order to differentiate between moral disposition and moral propensity. However, we might

¹⁵² R, 6:29, p.53

¹⁵³ Formosa, P. (2007). Kant on the radical evil of human nature. In *The Philosophical Forum* 38(3), Blackwell Publishing Inc., pp. 221-245 (224)

think that Kant's claim that they are equivalent is the result of the radical evil argument – our evil propensity corrupts us at the very root of our moral character¹⁵⁴.

Predisposition and propensity, taken together, both serve to form an individual's mindset or character (*gessinnung*), for the development of which every agent is responsible. Agents manifest their propensity to evil when they choose to act in accordance with the incentive of self-conceit which stands in opposition with the incentive of the moral law. However, Hanson argues that merely possessing the propensity to self-conceit alone does not make an agent evil. Because the agent not only possesses the incentive of self-conceit, but also the incentive of the moral law together within the hierarchy of maxims. In this case, an agent's moral character as a whole is determined by which maxim is going to be dominant for the selection of maxims¹⁵⁵. These incentives are certainly in competition with each other and there is no way that both will have equal weights. One of these incentives will prove to be more dominant against the other one. Grimm points that the source of our propensity to evil does not derive from our social relationships but it rather derives from our composite nature that involves both an animalistic inclinations and capacity to grasp the moral law through reason¹⁵⁶. Thus, it could be said that evil is innate to human beings. However, Kant rejects the Christian doctrine of original sin. From Kant's standpoint, the central problem of this doctrine is that it holds human beings morally responsible for a nature with which they were

¹⁵⁴ *ibid*, p.224

¹⁵⁵ Hanson, E.M. (2017). Immanuel Kant: Radical Evil. *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/rad-evil/>. Accessed on 25.10.2017

¹⁵⁶ Grimm, *ibid*, p.161

born – and did not freely choose. Furthermore, it renders that human beings deserve a punishment for a crime that they did not commit¹⁵⁷. In Religion, against the arguments of Augustine on original sin, Kant says:

*Whatever the nature, however, of the origin of moral evil in the human being, of all the ways of representing its spread and propagation through the members of our species and in all generations, the most inappropriate is surely to imagine it as having come to us by way of inheritance from our first parents; for then we could say of moral evil exactly what the poet says of the good: *genus et proavos, et quae non fecimus ipsi, vix ex nostra puto*^{158, 159}.*

Kant insists that there exists within each of us a pure demand to conform our wills to the moral law and to do our duty even in the face of our sensuous desires¹⁶⁰. In other words, evil in our nature is a propensity yet it is not a necessity. Kant points that it is justifiable to attribute the propensity to evil to all human beings and it is possible to claim that the propensity to evil is so deeply embedded in humanity and thus, it is innate. For Kant, as mentioned above, propensity to evil or good are two possible propensities in competition with each other. Since a mixture of propensities is not possible, either the good or the evil propensity will dominate over the other. Any agent who lacks either or both propensities cannot be considered as a moral agent and in that

¹⁵⁷ Miller, E.N. (2015). *Kant's Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. Bloomsbury, p.20

¹⁵⁸ Race and ancestors, and those things which we did not make ourselves, I scarcely consider as our own.

¹⁵⁹ R, 6:40, p.62

¹⁶⁰ Grimm, *ibid*, p.162

case, incentives to morality would not serve¹⁶¹. About the universality of propensity to evil in human nature, Kant says:

It will be noted that the propensity to evil is here established (as regards actions) in the human being, even the best; and so it also must be if it is to be proved that the propensity to evil among human beings is universal, or, which here amounts to the same thing, that it is woven into human nature¹⁶².

Although Kant notes that the propensity to evil is woven into human nature, it is important to note that it is rooted in the free will. Thus, the propensity of evil is innate and universal in free agents. In other words, it is subjectively necessary for all agents, yet it is an accidental property of the human being. Kant claims that since the propensity to evil is embedded in the free will, it is important to note that our free choices can overcome this propensity of evil¹⁶³. About this claim, Kant says:

Now if a propensity to this [inversion] does lie in human nature, then there is in the human being a natural propensity to evil; and this propensity itself is morally evil, since it must ultimately be sought in a free power of choice, and hence is imputable. This evil is radical, since it corrupts the ground of all maxims; as natural propensity, it is also not to be extirpated through human forces, for this could only happen through good maxims – something that cannot take place if the subjective supreme ground of all maxims is presupposed to be corrupted. Yet it must equally be possible to overcome evil, for it is found in the human being as acting freely¹⁶⁴.

¹⁶¹ Allison, H.E. (2002). On the very idea of a propensity to evil. *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 36(2), 337-348 (342)

¹⁶² R, 6:30, pp.53-54

¹⁶³ Morgan, S. (2005). The missing formal proof of humanity's radical evil in Kant's *Religion*. *The Philosophical Review*, 114(1), 63-114 (67)

¹⁶⁴ R, 6:37, p.59

About the universality of evil in human beings, Kant notes that;

[...] there is no cause for exempting anyone from' the propensity to evil¹⁶⁵

since,

Every man has his price, for which he sells himself¹⁶⁶.

To this saying of a British Parliament member, Kant adds:

If this is true (and everybody can decide for himself) ... then, what the Apostle says might indeed hold true of human beings universally, "There is no distinction here, they are all under sin – there is none righteous (in the spirit of the law), no, not one¹⁶⁷.

From these sayings of Kant, it could be understood that each agent has a universal propensity to evil. But, it does not necessarily follow that this propensity to evil will always be reflected in all the acts of free agents. Although the daily life practices prove that such a universality claim is potentially right, still from a different standpoint, it cannot be proved or in other words it is impossible to universalize evil since it requires an a priori argument rather than the empirical evidence Kant invokes. As mentioned, empirical evidence shows that the evil is widespread on this planet, but it cannot establish its strict universality. Although there are many arguments against Kant's universality claim, Kant's writings and his a priori apparatus of

¹⁶⁵ R, 6:25, p.49

¹⁶⁶ R, 6:39, p.61

¹⁶⁷ R, 6:39, p.61

morality propose a universality claim. On the other hand, from the empirical standpoint, it is also not possible to claim that the universality claim is not valid. Fremstadal claims that, although Kant claims the universality of evil, he also seems to be saying that everybody can decide for themselves whether evil is universal¹⁶⁸.

2.8. Kant's Taxonomy of Evil

There are three degrees of evil according to the Kantian conception of evil. The disposition to evil does not only reveal itself in the highest degree which could be referred as a wicked or perverse tendency to omit moral incentives in favor of immoral or non-moral ones. Kant calls the first level of evil as frailty. Frailty refers to the general weakness of the human heart in acting in accordance with the moral maxim (Religion, 6:29). For frailty, Kant provides an example of an Apostle and says:

[...]the frailty (fragilitas) of human nature is expressed even in the complaint of an Apostle: "What I would, that I do not!" i.e. I incorporate the good (the law) into the maxim of my power of choice; but this good, which is an irresistible incentive objectively or ideally (in thesi), is subjectively (in hypothesi) the weaker (in comparison with inclination) whenever the maxim is to be followed¹⁶⁹.

In addition to frailty, according to Kant, there are two more degrees of evil namely as *impurity* and *depravity*. As the second degree of evil, impurity refers to making right choices but failure to be consistent in

¹⁶⁸ Fremstadal, R. (2014). *Kierkegaard and Kant on Radical Evil and the Highest Good: Virtue, Happiness, and the Kingdom of God*. Springer, p.35

¹⁶⁹ R, 6:29, p.53

carrying out of these choices. It could be referred to as a kind of infirmity in moral conduct. In impurity, there is a propensity to do evil that may exist in the motivation for actions that accord with duty. In other words, subject might not engage in the rightful activity unless the activity holds some immoral or non-moral properties. In that case, whatever evil is not the activity itself but the volition behind it. Maxim is good in respect to its object and subject has no impotence to practice it¹⁷⁰. However, performing the maxim is not because the subject respects the moral law, but out of some personal interest that the subject thinks it is good for himself/herself¹⁷¹. According to Kant, highest degree of evil is called depravity or in other words corruption of the human heart. This degree of evil occurs when there is propensity to choose the maxims that subordinates the incentives of the moral law to others (non-moral ones). Kant claims that this degree of evil can also be called as perversity since it reverses the hierarchy of ethical order. It is not important if the action is legally good. As long as the moral law is subordinated by the other or non-moral incentives, one can speak of this degree of evil. In this case, mind is corrupted at its root (Religion, 6:30).

The main difference between the highest degree and the second degree of evil is that the highest degree of evil self-interests become the ground for the moral law. So, although the moral law ought to be the ground for the incentives, in the highest degree of evil, incentives are the ground for the moral law. In addition to these three degrees of evil Zupancic notes that there is a fourth degree of evil in Kant's moral philosophy. According to Kant, this fourth degree of evil is called

¹⁷⁰ Wood, A.W. (1999). *Kant's Ethical Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁷¹ Zupančič, A. (2000). *Ethics of the Real: Kant, Lacan*. London: Verso Publishing.

“diabolical evil”. However, diabolical evil is not the same thing as radical evil, whereas the former does not apply to human beings¹⁷².

¹⁷² *ibid*, p.

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSION

The problem of evil has always been among the central topics in the history of philosophy. In metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and philosophy of religion, this problem has been studied from various perspectives. It would not be wrong to claim that the major discussions on evil have started with the famous argumentation of Epicurus that questioned the attributes of God, such as omnipotence, omniscience, and omnibenevolence. Later on, in all the phases of the history of philosophy, problem of evil has always been a paramount issue. Especially, in the last 100 years, various atrocities and horrors such as the Holocaust, genocides, total wars, terrorist attacks, killings, and all other sorts of crimes against humanity brought the problem of evil to the attention of philosophical discussions again.

Although the problem of evil has always been under extensive discussions in all phases of the history of philosophy, I limited my thesis to a specific period since, otherwise, I would have been in danger of losing the focus. That is why I preferred to limit my research to the early modern philosopher's leading views on the problem in the first chapter of my thesis. The main reason for selecting early modern philosophy as the scope of my work was that the philosophers of this period made the greatest contributions to the problem of evil and they also influenced the works of later philosophical traditions. Although their views and central discussions were mainly borrowed from the earlier periods, I think early modern philosophers brought a relatively different perspective to the problem of evil which made important

impact on and provided strong debates for the next generations of philosophers.

After narrowing down the scope of this study to the early modern philosophy, I, then, started reading the major philosophers of the period and tried to figure out the main contributors to the problem of evil. I found that those contributors were Descartes, Spinoza, Bayle, Leibniz, Hume, and finally, at the top of them, Immanuel Kant. Thus, naturally the first chapter of my thesis will cover the contributions of the leading early modern philosophers' views on the problem of evil.

When building the thesis outline for the early modern philosophers, I have chosen specific labels for each philosopher. For Descartes, I picked "Theodicy of Error" in consideration with his philosophical position towards the problem of evil. When dealing with the problem of evil, Descartes relied on the thesis "Being intrinsically good in that it comes from the deity". Descartes mainly pointed that evil, error, and all imperfections are not distinct and positive beings, but instead, they result from an absence of being – much as one expounds darkness as the absence of light. Descartes explains the existence of evil with his imperfect kinds theory. Thus, product is imperfect in the sense that it lacks the perfection of a more deluxe model whether actual or merely possible. Thus, the imperfect kind is a design limitation for all creatures. His arguments on the problem of evil clearly suggest that Descartes has adopted a classical privation theory when dealing with the problem.

For Spinoza's handling of the problem of evil, I decided to name his approach as "Subjective Standpoint". Because it is clear that Spinoza's position in regard to the problem of evil is subjective and even in some

cases sounds like a nihilist point of view. First, Spinoza conceives human beings as mechanism in nature that are motivated with self-interest, self-preservation, and personal advantage. Compared to Descartes, Spinoza has a simpler perspective on evil. Since, for Spinoza, there are no absolute universal moral values, many concepts including evil are defined based on a pragmatic and subjective standpoint. Spinoza does not consider nature or God as evil or good. Things are simply what they are and things are good or evil only based on how they appear to finite beings and we, as finite beings, simply label things as good or evil depending on their appearance to us. Thus, nothing is inherently good or evil for Spinoza and concepts of good and evil have no objective value.

One of the least studied philosophers of the period is Bayle and I found that he had very important contributions to the problem of evil. I preferred to name Bayle's approach as "A Dualist View" since he has adopted a Manichaeian perspective on the problem of evil. In the dialogues within his Dictionary, Bayle revived the ancient Manichaeian problem of evil to support his skeptical approach. Bayle suggested that a priori knowledge claims that there is a perfect and benevolent God. However, according to Bayle a posteriori knowledge or, in other words, our experiences show that there is evil in this world, which conflicts with the existence of a benevolent God. Thus, for Bayle, Manichaeian approach that defends the idea that there are two Gods – one good and one evil – sounds more plausible and probable. In the dialogues between Melissus (monotheistic Christian) and Zoroaster (dualist Manichaeian), Zoroaster was the one with stronger arguments in regards to the existence of evil, yet Bayle suggests that the problem of evil can be conceivable but not resolvable through finite beings' reason.

After studying Bayle's approach, I have embarked on Leibniz's views on the problem labelling his position as "Imperfect Creatures". Leibniz's starting point for dealing with the problem of evil was not much different from that of the other philosophers who questioned how evil would be possible if God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent. Leibniz noted that not everything coming from God necessarily is good, just, and holy. However, it is clear that Leibniz avoided attributing evil to God's will. He rather located the source of evil, in reality, as something existing independently of God. According to Leibniz, the source of evil is in the ideal nature of the creature since there is an original imperfection in it. Because the creature is necessarily and essentially limited since God cannot create other Gods. Any possible creature inevitably lacks the perfection of God and thus, this imperfection is the source of evil.

The last philosopher I studied before Kant in this thesis is Hume. I have named Hume's approach to the problem of evil as "A Skeptical View". Hume's starting point for the problem of evil was also the Epicurean paradox. In the 10th and 11th parts of his Dialogues, Hume writes a dialogue between Philo, Cleanthes, and Demea regarding the problem of evil. Cleanthes' initial position offers a traditional Christian perspective regarding the qualities of God. Philo argues about the incompatibility between the existence of God and the occurrences of evil such as suffering and pain. Since these sufferings are directly experienced, Philo reaches a conclusion that God, as Cleanthes described, does not exist. Hume points out that the attribution of worldly terms to God as if He is a moral person is very problematic. Hume did not intend to deny God's existence. He was simply against the traditional theological arguments. Since worldly terms cannot be

attributed to God, as finite beings with limited rationality, we cannot justify God's infinite power and goodness. Consequently, Hume does not offer theodicy regarding the problem of evil. But, the questions he asked about God and the problem of evil are important.

In the second chapter of my thesis, which is the other major theme of my dissertation, I wrote first about the moral philosophy of Kant in general and then his views on the problem of evil within this framework. In order to understand the background of Kant's moral philosophy, I studied the major philosophers who made important contributions to the development of Kant's moral philosophy. When shedding light on the grounds of the moral philosophy of Kant, I described how Rousseau and Cicero influenced Kant. While Rousseau's theory of "general will" had important effect on Kant's philosophy, Cicero's concepts such as duty, will, dignity, freedom, and autonomy had similar impact on Kant's moral philosophy.

Before treating the problem of evil in Kant's moral philosophy, I studied the Kantian view of duties and, categorical and hypothetical imperatives. I showed that duties, for Kant, are not limited to well-being and happiness of oneself. It was also important to note that Kantian understanding of duty can only have a moral value if it is done only for the sake of duty. In other words, considering the inclination we have when performing our duties, the moral value of our actions will be greater, if we actually perform them only insofar as it is our duty to do so. In short, acting for the sake of duty must be distinguished from acting out of mere inclinations or desires. I have also shown the difference between Kant's account of categorical and hypothetical imperatives.

Finally, I studied the problem of evil and the concept of radical evil in Kant's moral philosophy. Kant claims that our disposition to diverge from the moral law is caused by an inherent propensity to evil. According to Kant, moral evil, as a product of free will, means subordinating moral incentives to non-moral incentives when making our maxims. I have mostly benefited from Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* when discussing Kant's account of evil.

I also discussed the relations between maxim making, *wille* (will), *willkür* (choice), and the problem of evil. It was obvious that Kant did not position human nature at extreme ends in terms of being good or evil. He rather seems to claim that both qualities are simultaneously inherent in human nature. Thus, the maxim employed by the individual when engaging in an act is the main factor that determines whether the act is moral or immoral. Agent freely makes his maxim that in return defines the morality of his actions. Actually, I discussed that, according to Kant, there would be no moral accountability unless people have free will. Whether the action is morally good or evil is the responsibility of the agent with free will. I also discussed the governing role of *Wille* over *Willkür*.

While approaching the final parts, I tried to shed light on the concept of radical evil and showed that the reason why Kant uses the concept of radical evil instead of simply evil is that because Kant wanted to refer to the evil inherent in the human nature. Kant notes that human beings possess an innate disposition to evil.

I also tried to tackle the discussion of innateness and universality. It was clear that the radical evil was both innate and universal since we

all have natural propensity to evil. Although from the logical and empirical perspective universality claim cannot be proved, our experiences on this world support Kant's claims about universality. It should also be noted that although Kant defended the innateness and universality of evil, there are still ongoing clashing discussions on this issue.

Finally, I wrote about the taxonomy of evil in Kant's moral philosophy and studied frailty, impurity, depravity, and diabolical evil and how they differ from each other.

An analysis of the problem of evil within the early modern philosophy and a detailed consideration of Kant's doctrine of radical evil helped me to better understand Kant's philosophical position compared to his contemporaries. If we consider Kant as the last philosopher of the early modern philosophical tradition, I would suggest that he played an integral role and relatively contributed most to the problem of evil in the era. Kant's approach to moral evil and his introduction of the doctrine of radical evil made the problem of evil more intelligible and switched the focus from theological grounds to human freedom.

Because, it is obvious that the problem of evil was mainly studied in the domain of theodicy and thus, it was referred as moral or sometimes as natural evil. Western thinkers of the 17th and 18th century have built solid linkages between moral and natural evil. Since they were mostly theological thinkers, they have considered natural evil as a punishment for the acts that are morally evil. Thus, for early modern philosophers, moral evil was closely related to natural evil. Since moral

evil is considered to be synonymous with sin, early theology and doctrines consider natural evil as a consequence of sins.

However, Kant was one of the earliest philosophers who has broken the solid link between natural and moral evil. In 1756, Kant has written in *Königsberg Weekly* that earthquakes are not supernatural events. Since then moral evil has become solely related to human will and behavior. Thus, Kant's handling of the problem of evil has a distinctive position in the era.

I found that, in Kant's account, the difference between the evil and radical evil is very important. Kant wrote about moral evil long before his famous *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. Especially, in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant argues that the moral evil refers to the actions determined by factors other than the moral law established by the free agent himself. However, the concept of radical evil perceived to be different from the mere concept of evil. I think one of the most important discussions in my thesis why radical evil is really that different from moral evil. It seems like the innateness and universality claims are the main differences between moral and radical evil. However, real curiosity emerges when one asks the questions why Kant needed the claims of innateness and universality and why mere moral evil was not sufficient for Kant to complete his moral philosophy. One possibility is that Kant wanted to introduce God's grace and divinity in his moral philosophy. As Kant says in *Religion*, an evil that is radical is inextirpable by human powers. In an implicit way, Kant introduces references to divine support, God's grace and even what he calls at one point 'supernatural cooperation'. Then, he engages in a task to integrate these powers with human autonomy, while

simultaneously solving the problem of radical evil. Kant considers divine support as an aid that enables us to perform the moral task to overcome radical evil. However, at this point a new question arises. How autonomy is possible when we expect divine aid from God? Kant seems like tackling this question by claiming that we must do our best to regenerate ourselves even though it is alone not enough. Thus, although we need divine support in the process, we still need to do our best to regenerate ourselves to cope with radical evil. I think such an effort will most likely to lead to moral progress. We may assume that God's grace or divine support had to be introduced since the alteration of maxim for the good could not be fixed solely by the agent himself/herself since the radical evil is innate.

Introduction of moral progress through divine support, explicit biblical references, and innate and universal character of radical evil obviously shocked the followers of the Kantian philosophy and led to harsh criticisms.

Although his contemporaries blamed Kant to adopt a Christian theological doctrine – namely as original sin, after studying the Religion and his other writings on moral evil, I do not think that Kant intended to support a Christian doctrine of original sin or any other theological doctrine over mere philosophical purposes. Thus, I think his account of radical evil has nothing to do with the concept of original sin. Radical evil seems rather like a conceptual support for the moral freedom. Because since moral freedom is about choosing between good and evil, Kant came up with the doctrine of radical evil to make his moral philosophy, in regard to freedom, more comprehensible. Because I think, through the doctrine of radical evil, Kant goes beyond

the mere definitions of moral freedom and reveals the origin and the nature of evil for free agents. By making this distinction, I claim that, without the doctrine of radical evil, Kant's moral freedom and moral evil would not be complete and sound.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. TURKISH SUMMARY

Felsefe tarihi içinde, kötülük kavramı pekçok filozofun ve farklı felsefi disiplinlerin odak noktalarından biri olmuştur. İnsanlık tarihi boyunca gerçekleşen sayısız felaketler ve korkunç olaylar kötülük probleminin gündemde kalmasına neden olmuştur.

Tüm bu felaketlerin ve korkunç olayların sadece “yanlış” ya da “olumsuz” olarak adlandırılması, bu olayların doğasının açıklanmasında yetersiz kalmıştır ve insanlık bu olayları açıklayabilecek bir kavrama gereksinim duymuştur. Sadistik bir işkence ya da bir soykırımı “yanlış” olarak nitelendirmek yeterli değildir. Bu türden kötü eylemleri nitelendirmek üzere farklı bir kavrama ihtiyaç duyulmuştur. Bu nedenle bu türden kötü eylemleri anlatabilmek üzere kötülük kavramına başvurulmuştur.

Kötülük ile ilgili tartışmaların pekçoğunun ünlü Epikürosçu argümandan türediği ifade edilebilir. Bu argüman, Tanrının nitelikleri (her şeye gücü yeten, mutlak iyi ve her şeyi bilen) ile kötülüğün varlığı arasındaki ikilemi esas almaktadır. Herşeye gücü yeten ifadesi (omnipotence) Tanrının mantıksal olarak mümkün olan herşeyi yapabilmesini ifade etmektedir. Herşeyi bilen (omniscient) ifadesi ise Tanrı'nın doğru olan her önermenin doğruluğunu ve yanlış olan her önermenin de yanlışlığını biliyor olmasıdır. Son olarak mutlak iyilik (omnibenevolence) ifadesi ise Tanrı'nın bu dünyadaki acıyı, ızdırabı ve cefayı asgari düzeyde tutma isteği ve eylemi olarak açıklanmaktadır. Epikürosçu paradoksa göre eğer Tanrı mutlak iyi, her şey bilen ve her

şeye gücü yeten ise bu dünyada kötülüğün var olmaması gerekir. Eğer kötülük varsa, bu durumda Tanrı'ya atfedilen özelliklerden en az bir tanesi yanlış olarak kabul edilmelidir.

Kötülük sorununa ilişkin çok sayıda sınıflandırma olmakla birlikte, en çok bilinen sınıflandırmalardan birine göre kötülük sorunu iki grupta incelenmektedir. Bu sınıflandırmaya göre kötülük ahlaki ve doğal kötülük (depremler, seller, doğal felaketler vs.) olarak iki gruba ayrılmaktadır. Şu bir gerçektir ki, kötülük konusunda yapılan ilk çalışmalar teoloji sınırları içinde kalmıştır. Aslen ahlaki kötülük ve doğal kötülük iki ayrı türden kötülük olarak sınıflandırılırken, onyedinci ve onsekizinci yüzyıl filozofları bu iki kötülük türü arasında bağlantı kurmuşlardır. Bu filozoflar daha çok teolojik çalışmalar yürüten filozoflar oldukları için, doğal kötülüğü, ahlaki kötülüğün cezası olarak düşünmüşlerdir. Çünkü bu filozoflara göre ahlaki kötülük günah anlamına gelmektedir ve yaşanan doğal kötülükler bu günahların bir sonucudur. Örneğin, erken dönem Hristiyan teolojisinde ve doktrinlerinde (bugün de bazı Hristiyan tarikatlarda gözlenebildiği üzere) bireylerin iradesi günahın nedenlerinden biridir ve Tanrı'nın gazabı aslında bu günahlara ya da ahlaki olarak kötü olan eylemlere verilen bir cevaptır.

Daha önce de ifade edildiği gibi, özellikle Epikürosçu paradoks ile birlikte, kötülük sorunu felsefe tarihinin tüm dönemlerinde gündemde olan bir sorun olmakla beraber, tez çalışması için tarihsel bir sınırlandırmaya gidilmiştir. Bu sınırlandırmanın nedeni, kötülük probleminin tartışılmasına ilişkin olarak odağın kaybedilmesi riskinin ortadan kaldırılmasıdır. Bu bağlamda, ilk bölümde tez çalışmasının tarihsel sınırları erken modern dönem felsefe ile çizilmiş ve dönemin

filozoflarından kötülük problemine katkı sağlayanlar dikkatle seçilmeye ve görüşlerine karşılaştırmalı olarak yer verilmeye çalışılmıştır.

Tez çalışmasında erken modern dönem filozoflarının seçilmiş olmasının temel nedeni, felsefe tarihi içinde sözkonusu filozofların kötülük problemine görece en büyük katkıyı yapmış oldukları düşüncesidir. Ayrıca sözkonusu filozofların çalışmaları kendilerinden sonra gelen filozofların çalışmalarını da etkilemiştir. Her ne kadar erken modern dönem filozoflarının düşüncelerinin şekillenmesinde, daha eski filozofların katkıları olmuş olsa da, kanaatimce erken modern dönem filozofları ayrıca ele alınmayı hakedecek ölçüde kötülük problemine katkı sağlamışlardır.

Bu bağlamda tezin birinci bölümünde sırasıyla Descartes, Spinoza, Bayle, Leibniz ve Hume'un kötülük problemine bakışları incelenmeye çalışılmıştır. Ayrıca dönemin her bir filozofu için yaklaşımlarını anlatmak üzere bir tema adı belirlenmiştir.

İlk incelenen filozof Descartes'tir. Descartes için "Hata Teodisesi" ismi seçilmiştir. Descartes genel olarak kötülüğün, hataların ve tüm eksikliklerin ayrı ve pozitif varlıklar olmadıklarını ileri sürmüştür ve bu kavramları, karanlığı aydınlıktan yoksun olmak şeklinde ifade etmek gibi, oluştan yoksun bulunmanın bir sonucu olarak tanımlamıştır.

Descartes, kötülüğün varlığını "kusurlu türler" teorisi ile açıklamıştır. Öyle ki, Tanrının yarattıkları kusurludur ve bu kusurları ile tam ve eksiksiz olandan ayrılmaktadırlar. Bu noktada yaratıcının her şeye

gücü yeten (omnipotent) olması konudan bağımsızdır. Yani yaratıcı her şeye gücü yeten dahi olsa, yarattığı varlıkların bir sınırı ve kusuru bulunmaktadır. Dolayısıyla kusurlu türe ait olmak, tüm yaratılanlar için bir tasarım sınırıdır. Descartes'e göre Tanrı'nın insanlara tüm hatalardan arınmış olmayı bahşetmeye gücü yeter. Fakat bu, bize verilmemiş olan nedenlerden dolayı mümkün görünmemektedir. Descartes'e göre buradan çıkartılması gereken sonuç hatalarımızdan Tanrı'nın sorumlu olduğu sonucu değildir. Tersine Tanrı'nın bahşettiği akıl ile anlayamadığımız noktalarda yargılarımızı askıya almalı ve böylece hata yapmaktan kaçınılıyoruz. Bu türden bir argüman, mutlak özgürlüğümüze ilişkin içsel farkındalığımız ile birlikte, hatalarımızdan dolayı tamamen bizlerin sorumlu olduğu anlamına gelmektedir.

Descartes'in kötülük sorunu ile ilgili olarak düşüncelerine bakıldığında, soruna ilişkin olarak klasik yoksunluk teorisini benimsemiş olduğu görülebilmektedir.

Çalışmada kötülüğe ilişkin görüşlerine yer verilen erken modern dönem filozoflarından ikincisi ise Spinoza'dır. Spinoza, Descartes öldüğünde henüz 18 yaşındadır ve kendisi ile tanışma ve görüşlerini paylaşma fırsatı olmamıştır. Yine de Descartes ile Spinoza arasında sıkı bağların olduğu göze çarpmaktadır. Özellikle metafizik, epistemoloji ve fizik tarafında Spinoza'nın Kartezyen geleneği takip ettiği görülmektedir. Fakat ahlak felsefesi ve etik ilkeler tarafından bakıldığında ise Spinoza, Hobbes ekolüne daha yakın görünmektedir. Spinoza'nın yaklaşımı için ise "Öznel Görüş" başlığı seçilmiştir. Çünkü, açıktır ki, Spinoza'nın kötülük problemine bakışı öznedir. Hatta bazı araştırmacılara göre Spinoza'nın bu konudaki görüşlerinin nihilist bir tutum sergilediği dahi söylenebilir. Öncelikle, Hobbes'ta

olduğu gibi Spinoza'da da, insanoğlu, doğada öz- ilgi, öz-koruma ve kişisel çıkar ile güdülenen bir mekanizmadır. İnsanlar karşılıklı olarak akıllarını kullanarak, yaşam kalitelerini arttırabilirler. Descartes'e kıyasla Spinoza'nın kötülük anlayışı çok daha basittir. Spinoza için evrensel ve mutlak ahlaki değerler olmadığından, kötülük de dahil olmak üzere pekçok kavram faydacı ve öznel temele göre tanımlanmıştır. Spinoza doğayı ya da Tanrı'yı iyi ya da kötü olarak ele almaz. Hiçbirşey özünde iyi ya da kötü değildir. Spinoza'ya göre doğadaki her şey Tanrı'nın bir suretidir ve Tanrı'nın açısından şeyler ne iyidir ne de kötüdürler; basitçe oldukları gibidirler. Bizler, sonlu varlıklar olarak, bizlere nasıl göründüklerine göre onları iyi ya da kötü etiketiyle etiketleriz. Bu nedenle Spinoza'ya göre hiçbirşey özünde iyi ya da kötü değildir ve iyi ve kötü kavramlarının nesnel bir değeri yoktur. Spinoza yine de yaşamımızı kolaylaştıran veya zorlaştıran unsurları tanımlayabilmek adına bu kelimelerin kullanımının yararlı olacağı görüşünü benimsemektedir. Spinoza'ya göre iyi işleyen bir toplumda bu gereklilik hissedilir. Çünkü toplumun uyumlu bir şekilde işlemesini engelleyen tüm unsurlar kötü olarak nitelendirilir. Diğer taraftan yine de kötü kavramı, şeylere içkin bir kavram olarak düşünülemez.

Erken modern dönemin belki de en az üstünde durulan filozoflarından biri de Bayle'dir. Hatta öyle ki, kötülük problemi ile ilgili yaklaşımları döneminde iyi bilinen Bayle, Leibniz'i etkilemiş ve düşünceleri Leibniz'in Theodicy (1710)'yi yazmasını tetikleyen faktörlerden biri olmuştur. Bayle'in görüşleri için "İkinci Görüş" tanımlaması kullanılmıştır. Bayle, *Dictionary*'de aslında kötülük problemine birkaç farklı açıdan yaklaşmıştır. Öncelikle, geleneksel kötülük sorununu ele almış ve üç tane çok bilinen önermeyi birbirine nasıl bağlayacağını

düşünmüştür. Bu önermeler: (1) Kötülük vardır, (2) Tanrı mutlak iyidir, ve (3) Tanrı'nın gücü herşeye yeter şeklinde sıralanabilir. Fakat Bayle'e göre mutlak iyiliği önerme setinden çıkardığımızda elimizde dinsizlik kalmaktadır. Mutlak güç çıkartıldığında ise yine teolojik problemler doğmaktadır. Bu iki önermeyi birlikte setten çıkardığımızda ise Maniheizm seçeneği doğmaktadır. Ancak teoloji bu seçeneği de reddetmektedir. Yine de yazmış olduğu *Dictionary*'de yer alan diyaloglarında Bayle, şüpheci yaklaşımını desteklemek üzere Maniheizm bakış açısına yönelmiştir. Çünkü Bayle, ancak böylesine bir ikinci yaklaşımın kötülük sorununa cevap verebileceğine inanıyordu. Bayle'e göre kötülük sorununun çözümünde aklın yardımının istenmesi de anlamsızdı. Çünkü Bayle bu sorunun akıl yardımıyla çözülemeyeceğine de inanıyordu. Çünkü diğer bir deyişle, kötülüğün varlığına ilişkin rasyonel açıklamalar ile günlük deneyimlerin çatışması kaçınılmazdı. Bayle'e göre sahip olduğumuz a priori bilgi mükemmel ve sonsuz iyi bir Tanrı'nın olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Fakat diğer taraftan sahip olduğumuz a posteriori bilgi ise ya da diğer bir deyişle deneyimlerimiz ise bu dünyada kötülüğün olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Deneyimle izlenebilen kötülüğün varlığı ise sonsuz iyi bir Tanrının varlığı ile çelişmektedir. Bu nedenle, Bayle'e göre biri iyi, diğeri kötü olan iki Tanrının aynı anda varolduğu iddiası daha tutarlı ve muhtemel görünmektedir. Melissus ile Zerdüşt arasında geçen diyalogta ise, kötülüğün varlığının sorgulanmasında Zerdüşt'ün daha güçlü argümanlara sahip olduğu görülmektedir. Bayle'e göre kötülük sorunu insanlar tarafından düşünülebilir fakat çözümlenemez bir sorundur. Bunun temel nedeni ise insanların sonlu ve sınırlı bir akla sahip olmalarıdır.

Çalışmada Bayle'in kötülük sorununa ilişkin yaklaşımının ardından Leibniz'in bakış açısı irdelenmiştir. Zira Leibniz'in yazmış olduğu *Theodicy* aslında Bayle'in argümanlarına bir cevap niteliği taşımaktadır. Leibniz'in yaklaşımı "Kusurlu Yaratıklar" olarak nitelendirilmiştir. Leibniz temel olarak iki eserinde kötülük sorununa değinmiştir. Bu eserlerden ilki, 1672 yılında yazmış olduğu *Philosopher's Confession*, diğeri ise 1710 yılında yazmış olduğu *Theodicy*'dir. Leibniz'in çıkış noktası da mükemmel bir varlık olarak Tanrının varlığı sözkonusuyken kötülüğün nasıl mevcut olduğu sorusudur. Leibniz'e göre Tanrı'dan gelen herşey adil, iyi ve kutsal olmak zorunda değildir. Ayrıca Leibniz'e göre kötülüğün varlığı tartışması açıldığında sorgulanan şey Tanrı'nın gücü değil, mutlak iyiliğidir. Bununla birlikte, mümkün olan her yerde Leibniz kötülüğün varlığını, Tanrı'nın iradesine yüklemekten özellikle kaçınmıştır. Aksine kötülüğün kaynağını Tanrı'dan bağımsız olan bir gerçekliğe atfetmiştir. Leibniz'e göre, kötülüğün kaynağı yaratılanların ideal doğasında bulunmaktadır. Çünkü sözkonusu bu doğada orijinal bir kusur mevcuttur. Tanrı, başka tanrılar yaratamayacağı için yaratılanlarda kusur olması kaçınılmaz bir gerekliliktir ve bu kusur kötülüğün kaynağıdır. Leibniz'e göre yaratılmış olan mükemmellikten uzak olduğu için her şeyi bilemeyecektir. Bu nedenle de aldanacak ve aldandıkça da yeni hatalar yapacaktır. Yaratılmış olana içkin olan kusurluluk durumu düşünüldüğünde, Leibniz'e göre yaratılanın sonluluğu içkin bir kusur durumudur. *Theodicy* içinde Leibniz üç tür kötülükten bahsetmektedir. Bu üç kötülük türü: metafizik, fiziksel ve ahlaki olarak nitelendirilmiştir. Leibniz, metafizik kötülük ile sadece kusurlu olmayı, fiziksel kötülük ile acı ve ızdırabı, nihayet ahlaki kötülük ile de günahı vurgulamaya çalışmıştır. Burada vurgulanması

gereken önemli nokta, metafizik kötülüğün diğer iki kötülük türünün kaynağı olmasıdır.

Kant'ın radikal kötülük anlayışına geçmeden önce çalışmanın ilk bölümünde son olarak Hume'un görüşleri incelenmiştir. Hume için "Şüpheli Görüş" başlığı belirlenmiştir. Hume'un çıkış noktası da Epikürosçu paradokstur. *Dialogues* içindeki 10. ve 11. bölümlerde, Hume, Philo, Cleanthes ve Demea arasında kötülük sorununa ilişkin bir diyalog yazmıştır. Cleanthes, Tanrı'nın taşıdığı niteliklerle ilgili olarak geleneksel Hristiyan görüşlerini yansıtmaktadır. Philo ise Tanrı'nın varlığı ile ızdırap ve acı gibi kötülüklerin arasındaki uyumsuzluğu tartışmıştır. Bu ızdırap ve acılar doğrudan doğruya tecrübe edildiklerinden dolayı görmezden gelinmeleri mümkün değildir. Bu nedenle Philo, Cleanthes'in ifade ettiği anlamda bir Tanrının olmadığı sonucuna varmıştır. Hume'a göre Tanrı'ya sanki ahlaki bir kişilikmiş gibi dünyevi sıfatlar yüklenmesi sorunlu bir durumdur. Hume aslen Tanrı'nın varlığını reddetmek niyetinde değildir. Yalnızca geleneksel teolojik argümanlara karşı çıkmaktadır. Hume, dünyevi sıfatlar Tanrı'ya yüklenemeyeceği için, sınırlı rasyonaliteye sahip sonlu varlıklar olarak bizler Tanrı'nın sonsuz gücünü ve iyiliğini kavrayamayız iddiasındadır. Sonuç olarak Hume kötülük sorununa ilişkin bir teodise önermemektedir. Fakat Tanrı ve kötülük sorunu ile ilgili olarak sormuş olduğu sorular önemlidir.

Tezin ikinci kısmında Kant'ın ahlak felsefesi ve bu çerçevede kötülük sorununa bakışı anlatılmıştır. Kant'ın ahlak felsefesinin temel arka planı anlaşılmasına çalışıldığında, bazı filozofların Kant'ın ahlak felsefesinin gelişiminde kilit rol oynadıkları söylenebilir. Bu bağlamda

özellikle Rousseau ve Cicero'nun Kant üzerindeki etkileri büyük olmuştur.

Kant, Rousseau'nun vatandaşların ahlaki eylemlerinin din adamları ve devlet adamları tarafından yönlendirilemeyeceğine ilişkin görüşlerine katılmaktadır. Ayrıca Rousseau'nun her bir bireyin kendi için doğru eylemleri belirleyebileceği iddiası da Kant tarafından benimsenmiştir. Kant açık bir şekilde Rousseau'ya borçlu olduğunu ve kendisini aklın amaçları konusunda yeniden düşünmeye sevkettiğini belirtmiştir. Özellikle genel irade konusunda Kant'ın Rousseau'dan önemli ölçüde etkilenmiş olduğu söylenebilir. Rousseau ve Kant iradeyi merkeze alan filozoflardır.

Rousseau'nun Kant üzerindeki etkilerinin yanında, Cicero'da Kant'ın ahlak felsefesi üzerinde önemli etkilere sahiptir. Kant, Cicero'nun çalışmalarını okumuştur. Hatta *Collegium Fridericianum*'daki son iki yılında *Epistulae ad Familiares*'in önemli bir kısmını okumayı tamamlamıştır. Özellikle *De Officiis* dönemin ahlak felsefesi içinde önemli bir yere sahiptir ve Kant *Ahlak Metafiziğinin Temellendirilmesi* eserini yazarken bu eserden yararlanmıştı. Cicero'nun üzerinde durmuş olduğu ödev, isteme, itibar, özgürlük ve otonomi gibi kavramlar, Kant felsefesinde kendisine önemli yer bulmuş kavramlar arasındadır.

Çalışmada ayrıca Kant'ın ödev, koşulsuz buyruk ve koşullu buyruk kavramları açıklanmıştır. Kant'a göre ödevler, bireyin kendi iyiliği ve mutluluğu ile ahlaki bir değere sahip olamaz. Diğer bir deyişle, ödevler bireyin kendisi için sahip olduğu ödevlerle sınırlı değildir. Bazı ahlak teorilerinde bireyin kendisine özgü ödevlerin bireyin iyiliği ve

mutluluğu ile sınırlı olduğu ileri sürülmektedir. Oysa Kant bu görüşe tamamen karşıdır. Kant'a göre ödevler bireyin kendi içinde fakat insanlığı esas alan ödevlerdir. Kant'a göre bir ödevin ancak ödev uğruna yapıldığında ahlaki bir değeri bulunmaktadır. Diğer bir deyişle, ödev yerine getirilirken sahip olunan eğilimler düşünüldüğünde, eylem yalnızca ödev uğruna yerine getirildiğinde yüksek bir ahlaki değere sahip olacaktır. Kısaca ödev uğruna eylemekle, salt eğilimler ve arzular uğruna eylemek arasında ahlaki değer açısından fark bulunmaktadır. Örneğin bir market sahibinin müşterilerinden fazla para almamak için çaba sarfetmesini düşünelim. Bu türden bir davranış ödevde uygun bir davranış olabilir fakat mutlak suretle ödev uğruna yapıldığının ifade edilebilmesi mümkün değildir. Bu noktada ödevde uygun olmakla ödev uğruna olmak arasındaki farkı belirleyen şey eylemin ardından yatan nedendir. Eğer market sahibi, yasal yaptırımlardan kaçınmak adına müşterilerden fazla para almıyorsa, eylemi ödev uğruna değil, ödevde uygundur. Ödevde uygun olan ile ödev uğruna olan eylemlerin ahlaki değerleri arasında da Kant'a göre fark bulunmaktadır. Zira, Kant'a göre yalnızca ödevde uğruna yapılan eylemlerin ahlaki değeri bulunmaktadır. Dolayısıyla yasal yaptırımdan kaçan bir market sahibinin bu nedenle müşterilerinden fazla para almamasının herhangi bir ahlaki değeri bulunmamaktadır.

Çalışmada ayrıca koşulsuz ve koşullu buyruk kavramları da açıklanmıştır. Çünkü Kant açısından iki kavram arasındaki farklılıklar önemlidir. Kant'a göre ahlaki yargılar koşullu olamazlar. Aslında bu yaklaşım genel olarak Kant'ın takipçisi olmayan pekçok filozof tarafından da kabul edilmiştir. Buyruklar konusunda yazarken Kant, genel olarak olması gereken üzerinde durmuştur. Koşullu buyruk

eylemin sonucunu dikkate alarak eylemeyi ifade ettiği için ahlaki açıdan bir değeri bulunmamaktadır. Diğer taraftan koşulsuz buyruk ise ahlaki ödevlerin temel prensibidir. Diğer bir deyişle, koşulsuz buyruk, koşuldan bağımsız ahlak yasasına işaret eder ve tüm özgür istence sahip özneler için mutlaktır. Koşulsuz buyrukta eylemin geçerliliği sonucundan bağımsızdır.

Çalışmada temel olarak Kant'ın kötülük sorununa bakışı ve esasen ahlak felsefesi içinde radikal kötülük kavramına yer verilmiştir. Kant'a göre ahlak yasasından sapma eğiliminde olmamızın temel nedeni öznenin doğasında olan kötülük eğilimidir. Kant'ın görüşlerine göre özgür istencin bir ürünü olan ahlaki kötülük, maksimler belirlenirken ahlaki olmayan nedenlerin, ahlaki nedenleri ikincilleştirmesidir.

Çalışma içerisinde aynı zamanda öznel ilkelerin (maksim) belirlenmesi, irade (wille) ve seçim (willkür) kavramları üzerinde de durulmuştur. Açık ki, Kant özneyi iyi ya da kötü skalasının uç noktalarına yerleştirmekten kaçınmıştır. Anlaşılmaktadır ki, her iki nitelik de insan doğasında birarada içkin olarak bulunmaktadır. Diğer bir deyişle, bireyler iyiye eğilimli oldukları kadar ahlaki olmayana yani kötüyü eyleme eğilimine de sahiptirler. Ancak burada vurgulanması gereken bir nokta bulunmaktadır. O da insan doğasında birlikte mevcut bulunan iyilik ve kötülük eğiliminin iç içe geçmemiş olmasıdır. Yani diğer bir deyişle, bireyin eylediği her eylem tekil bir eylemdir. Bu eylem özgür istencin ve birey tarafından üretilen yasanın bir sonucudur. Kant bu öznel ilkeye maksim adını vermiştir. Diğer bir deyişle maksim bireyin eylerken esas aldığı öznel ilkelerdir. Bu nedenle, bireyi eyleme taşıyan öznel ilke eylemin ahlaki olup olmadığını belirleyen temel faktördür. Özne, öznel ilkesini belirlemek konusunda özgürdür ve bu

seçim eylemlerinin ahlaki değerini belirler. Aslında, öznenin özgür istenci sözkonusu değilse ahlaki sorumluluğu da bulunmaz. Eylemin ahlaki olarak iyi ya da kötü olması özgür istence sahip öznenin sorumluluğundadır. Bu bağlamda iradenin (wille), seçim (willkür) üzerinde hükmeden bir rolü bulunmaktadır. Kant'a göre irade bizi yasalara götürürken, seçim bizi öznel ilkelere götürmektedir. Bu ifade de aslında iradenin seçin üzerindeki hükmedici gücünü göstermeye yetmektedir. Diğer bir deyişle irade bize normu sağlarken, seçim bu normun rehberliği altında tercihini yapar. Yasayı verenin irade olduğu düşünüldüğünde, öznel ilkenin seçiminde normatif bir temellendirme sunar. Bu bağlamdan bakıldığında irade, pratik aklın eşdeğeridir.

Çalışmanın son kısımlarına yaklaşırken, radikal kötülük kavramına değinilmiştir ve Kant'ın salt kötülük kavramını kullanmak yerine neden radikal kötülük kavramını kullandığı açıklanmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu tercihin arkasındaki temel neden, Kant'ın insan doğasında içkin olarak bulunan kötülüğe vurgu yapmak istemiş olmasıdır. Kant'a göre insan doğasında kötülüğe eğilim bulunmaktadır. Kant'ın terminolojisi ile ifade etmek gerekirse, radikal kötülük kavramı, insanların kötü öznel ilke sahibi olarak doğdukları anlamına gelmektedir. Radikal kötülük kavramı ile gündeme gelen temel sorulardan biri ahlak ve özgür istenç ile ilgilidir. Çünkü eğer bir öznel ilke içkin ise irademizin koşullu ve bizim dışımızda belirlenmiş olduğu sonucuna ulaşılır. Bu soru Kant'ın da üzerinde durduğu sorulardan biri olmuştur. Zira bu argümanın sonucu, skolastik filozoflar tarafından da ileri sürülmüş olan, geleneksel Hristiyan doktrini olan "İlk Günah" kavramına gitmektedir. Kant her ne kadar kendi pozisyonunun skolastiklerden çok daha farklı olduğunu anlatmaya çabalamış olsa da, içkin bir kötülüğün varlığına dair söylemleri, Kant'ın izleyicileri arasında bir

şok dalgasının oluşmasına neden olmuştur. Sözkonusu şok dalgasının ortaya çıkışındaki diğer önemli faktör ise Kant'ın radikal kötülük ile başa çıkmak üzere ilahi destekten ve Tanrı'nın inayetinden bahsediyor olmasıdır. Kant "Salt Aklın Sınırları İçinde Din" isimli kitabının ilk bölümünün sonlarında konu ile ilgili sıklıkla İncil'e referans vermiştir ve ahlaki ilerlemenin olabilmesi için doğaüstü güçlerin desteğine olan gereksinimden bahsetmiştir. Burada akla böylesine bir koşul içerisinde özgürlüğün nasıl mümkün olabileceği sorusu kaçınılmaz olarak gelmektedir. Kant'ın bu soruya vermiş olduğu yanıt ise sözkonusu ahlaki ilerlemede bireye de önemli bir rolün düştüğü yönünde olmuştur. Bu role göre birey de ahlaki ilerleme için gücü yettiği kadarıyla elinden geleni yapmakla yükümlüdür. Ayrıca birey bu desteği hak etmeli ve kabul etmelidir. Kant'a göre bu kolay bir iş olmamakla birlikte, özgürlük bireyin kendisini yeniden tanımlaması ve yaratması ile mümkündür. Ancak böylesine bir girişimle ve bu girişime destek olan ilahi güçle radikal kötülük sorunu çözülebilecek gibi görünmektedir.

Ayrıca çalışmada radikal kötülüğe ilişkin içkinlik ve evrensellik tartışmalarına da yer verilmiştir. Açıktır ki, özgür istence sahip tüm bireylerin doğasında kötülüğe eğilimi olduğu iddiası, Kant açısından radikal kötülüğün hem içkin hem de evrensel bir doğası olduğunu işaret etmektedir. Her ne kadar mantıksal ve ampirik açıdan bu iddiaların desteklenmesi mümkün olmasa da, deneyimlerimiz bize Kant'ın sözkonusu iddialarının yersiz olmadığını ifade etmektedir. Radikal kötülük kavramının içkinliği ve evrenselliği ile ilgili ifade edilmesi gereken nokta, yukarıda da ifade edildiği üzere radikal kötülük kavramı ile "İlk Günah" arasındaki farklılıklardır. Kant, radikal kötülük ile ilk günahı birbirinden kesinlikle ayırmaktadır ve

hatta ilk günah doktrinini reddetmektedir. Kant'a göre bu doktrin en problemlü yönü, insanları doğuştan sahip oldukları doğadan dolayı ahlaki olarak sorumlu tutuyor olmasıdır. Burada özgür istence sözkonusu değildir. Daha da ötesi, insanođlu işlememiş olduđu bir günahın bedelini ödemeye zorlanmaktadır.

Kant'a göre özgür istence sahip bireye içkin olan kötülük bir eğilimdir – bir zorunluluk değildir. İnsana içkin olan iyilik ve kötülük eğilimi ise birbiri ile rekabet halinde olan iki eğilimdir. Eğilimlerin birbiri ile karışması mümkün olmadığından, iyi ya da kötü eğilimden biri diğerine baskın gelecektir. İki eğilimden birinin ya da ikisinin birden bulunmadığı özne ahlaki bir özne olarak düşünülemez. Her ne kadar kötülük eğilimi insan doğasına içkin olarak düşünülse de, köklerini özgür istence aramak gerekmektedir. Bu nedenledir ki, özgür istence sahip tüm bireyler için kötülük eğilimi içkin ve evrenseldir. Kant'a göre kötülük eğilimi özgür istencin içine yerleşik olduğundan, özgür seçimlerimizle bu kötülük eğiliminin üstesinden gelmek mümkündür. Fakat yine de radikal kötülüğün içkinliği ve evrenselliği konusunda yoğun tartışmalar bugün de devam etmektedir.

Çalışmanın sonunda Kant'ın halka felsefesi içinde kötülüğün farklı düzeylerine yer verilmiştir. Bu düzeyler sırasıyla zaafiyet (frailty), katışıklık (impurity), sapkınlık (depravity) ve şeytani kötülük (diabolical) olarak sıralanmış ve açıklanmıştır. Zaafiyet ile kastedilen, insanın ahlaki maksimlere uygun olarak hareket etmesi konusunda göstermiş olduğu genel zayıflıktır. Katışıklıkta ise özgür istence sahip birey doğru seçimler yapmakta fakat bu seçimleri hayata geçirme konusunda tutarlı olamamaktadır. Katışıklıkta, bireyin eyleme geçmesi için nihayetinde bir koşul aranabilmektedir. Böylece eylemin

ahlaki deęeri ortadan kalkmaktadır. Bu yönüyle bakıldığında eylemin ahlaki deęeri için şart koşulan koşulsuz buyruk gereklilięi ihlal edilmektedir. Dięer bir deyişle eylemin kendisi deęil fakat ardındaki istem (volition) kötüdür. Kant'a göre insane atfedilebilecek olan en üst düzey kötülük ise sapkınlık olarak nitelendirilmektedir. Sapkınlık sözkonusu olduğunda koşullu buyruk, koşulsuz buyruğun daima önündedir. Ahlaki olmayan ise daima ahlaki olana hükmetmektedir. Burada artık öznenin kendi çıkarları ahlak yasası için temel teşkil etmektedir. Dördüncü ve son olarak ifade edilen şeytani kötülük ise radikal kötülükten farklı bir kavramdır ve insanlara atfedilemez.

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YAZARIN

Soyadı : Demirci
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Bölümü : Felsefe

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : THE CONCEPT OF EVIL IN THE EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY AND KANT'S DOCTRINE OF RADICAL EVIL

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans Doktora

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