a) Killing oneself is a crime (murder). It can also be regarded as a violation of one’s duty to other people (the duty of spouses to each other, of parents to their children, of a subject to his superior or to his fellow citizens, and finally even as a violation of duty to God, as his abandoning the post assigned him in the world without having been called away from it). But since what is in question here is only a violation of duty to oneself, the question is whether, if I set aside all those relations, a human being is still bound to preserve his life simply by virtue of his quality as a person and whether he must acknowledge in this a duty (and indeed a strict duty) to himself.

It seems absurd to say that a human being could wrong himself (volenti non fit iniuria). Hence the Stoic thought it a prerogative of his (the sage’s) personality to depart from life at his discretion (as from a smoke-filled room) with peace of soul, free from the pressure of present or anticipated ills, because he could be of no more use in life. – But there should have been in this very courage, this strength of soul not to fear death and to know of something that the human being can value even more highly than his life, a still stronger motive for him not to destroy himself, a being with such powerful authority over the strongest sensible incentives, and so not to deprive himself of life.

A human being cannot renounce his personality as long as he is a subject of duty, hence as long as he lives; and it is a contradiction that he should be authorized to withdraw from all obligation, that is, freely to act as if no authorization were needed for this action. To annihilate the subject of morality in one’s own person is to root out the existence of morality itself from the world, as far as one can, even though morality is an end in itself. Consequently, disposing of oneself as a mere means to some discretionary end is debasing humanity in one’s person (homo nomenon), to which the human being (homo phaenomenon) was nevertheless entrusted for preservation.

To deprive oneself of an integral part or organ (to maim oneself) – for example, to give away or sell a tooth to be transplanted into another’s mouth, or to have oneself castrated in order to get an easier livelihood as a singer, and so forth – are ways of partially murdering oneself. But to have a dead or diseased organ amputated when it endangers one’s life, or to have something cut off that is a part but not an organ of the body, for example, one’s hair, cannot be counted as a crime against one’s own

\* Obrigkeit
\* sich selbst beleidigen könne. In discussing perfect duties to oneself, as well as imperfect duties of respect to others, Kant often uses the terminology of The Doctrine of Right, as, e.g., in the preceding paragraph he called killing oneself a Verbrechen, which in The Doctrine of Right was a “crime” (crimen). Given the context in which these terms were introduced, however, it does not always seem advisable to translate them precisely as they were used in speaking of rights.

\* no one is wronged willingly
person – although cutting one’s hair in order to sell it is not altogether free from blame.

Casuistical questions

Is it murdering oneself to hurl oneself to certain death (like Curtius) in order to save one’s country? – or is deliberate martyrdom, sacrificing oneself for the good of all humanity, also to be considered an act of heroism?

Is it permitted to anticipate by killing oneself the unjust death sentence of one’s ruler – even if the ruler permits this (as did Nero with Seneca)? Can a great king who died recently be charged with a criminal intention for carrying a fast-acting poison with him, presumably so that if he were captured when he led his troops into battle he could not be forced to agree to conditions of ransom harmful to his state? – for one can ascribe this purpose to him without having to presume that mere pride lay behind it.

A man who had been bitten by a mad dog already felt hydrophobia coming on. He explained, in a letter he left, that, since as far as he knew the disease was incurable, he was taking his life lest he harm others as well in his madness (the onset of which he already felt). Did he do wrong?

Anyone who decides to be vaccinated against smallpox puts his life in danger, even though he does it in order to preserve his life; and, insofar as he himself brings on the disease that endangers his life, he is in a far more doubtful situation, as far as the law of duty is concerned, than is the sailor, who at least does not arouse the storm to which he entrusts himself. Is smallpox inoculation, then, permitted?

ARTICLE II.
ON DEFILING ONESELF BY LUST.

§ 7.

Just as love of life is destined by nature to preserve the person, so sexual love is destined by it to preserve the species; in other words, each of these is a natural end, by which is understood that connection of a cause with an effect in which, although no understanding is ascribed to the cause, it is still thought by analogy with an intelligent cause, and so as if it produced human beings on purpose. What is now in question is whether a person’s use of his sexual capacity is subject to a limiting law of duty with regard to the person himself or whether he is authorized to direct the use of his sexual attributes to mere animal pleasure, without having in view the preservation of the species, and would not thereby be acting contrary to a duty to himself. – In the doctrine of right it was shown that the human being cannot make use of another person to get this pleasure apart from a special limitation by a contract establishing the right, by which two per-

sons put each other under obligation. But the question here is whether the human being is subject to a duty to himself with regard to this enjoyment, violation of which is a defiling (not merely a debasing) of the humanity in his own person. The impetus to this pleasure is called carnal lust (or also simply lust). The vice engendered through it is called lewdness; the virtue with regard to this sensuous impulse is called chastity, which is to be represented here as a duty of the human being to himself. Lust is called unnatural if one is aroused to it not by a real object but by his imagining it, so that he himself creates one, contrapurposively; for in this way imagination brings forth a desire contrary to nature’s end, and indeed to an end even more important than that of love of life itself, since it aims at the preservation of the whole species and not only of the individual.

That such an unnatural use (and so misuse) of one’s sexual attribute is a violation of duty to oneself, and indeed one contrary to morality in its highest degree, occurs to everyone immediately, with the thought of it, and stirs up an aversion to this thought to such an extent that it is considered indecent even to call this vice by its proper name. This does not occur with regard to murdering oneself, which one does not hesitate in the least to lay before the world’s eyes in all its horror (in a species facti). In the case of unnatural vice it is as if the human being in general felt ashamed of being capable of treating his own person in such a way, which debases him beneath the beasts, so that when even the permitted bodily union of the sexes in marriage (a union which is in itself merely an animal union) is to be mentioned in polite society, this occasions and requires much delicacy to throw a veil over it.

But it is not so easy to produce a rational proof that unnatural, and even merely unpurposive, use of one’s sexual attribute is inadmissible as being a violation of duty to oneself (and indeed, as far as its unnatural use is concerned, a violation in the highest degree). – The ground of proof is, indeed, that by it the human being surrenders his personality (throwing it away), since he uses himself merely as a means to satisfy an animal impulse. But this does not explain the high degree of violation of the humanity in one’s own person by such a vice in its unnaturalness, which seems in terms of its form (the disposition it involves) to exceed even murdering oneself. It consists, then, in this: that someone who defiantly casts off life as a burden is at least not making a feeble surrender to animal impulse in throwing himself away; murdering oneself requires courage, and in this disposition there is still always room for respect for the humanity in one’s own person. But unnatural lust, which is complete abandon-

\(^4\) eine Schändung (nicht bloß Abwürdigung)
\(^5\) zweckwidrig
\(^6\) Species facti is the totality of those features of a deed that belong essentially to its imputability.
\(^7\) unzweckmäßigen
ment of oneself to animal inclination, makes the human being not only an object of enjoyment but, still further, a thing that is contrary to nature, that is, a loathsome object, and so deprives him of all respect for himself.

Casuistical questions

Nature’s end in the cohabitation of the sexes is procreation, that is, the preservation of the species. Hence one may not, at least, act contrary to that end. But is it permitted to engage in this practice (even within marriage) without taking this end into consideration? If, for example, the wife is pregnant or sterile (because of age or sickness), or if she feels no desire for intercourse, is it not contrary to nature’s end, and so also contrary to one’s duty to oneself, for one or the other of them, to make use of their sexual attributes — just as in unnatural lust? Or is there, in this case, a permissive law of morally practical reason, which in the collision of its determining grounds makes permitted something that is in itself not permitted (indulgently, as it were), in order to prevent a still greater violation? — At what point can the limitation of a wide obligation be ascribed to purism (a pedantry regarding the fulfillment of duty, as far as the wideness of the obligation is concerned), and the animal inclinations be allowed a latitude, at the risk of forsaking the law of reason?

Sexual inclination is also called “love” (in the narrowest sense of the word) and is, in fact, the strongest possible sensible pleasure in an object. — It is not merely sensitive pleasure, as in objects that are pleasing in mere reflection on them (receptivity to which is called taste). It is rather pleasure from the enjoyment of another person, which therefore belongs to the faculty of desire and, indeed, to its highest stage, passion. But it cannot be classed with either the love that is delightful or the love of benevolence (for both of these, instead, deter one from carnal enjoyment). It is a unique kind of pleasure (sui generis), and this ardor has nothing in common with moral love properly speaking, though it can enter into close union with it under the limiting conditions of practical reason.

ARTICLE III.

ON STUPEFYING ONESELF BY THE EXCESSIVE USE OF FOOD OR DRINK.

§ 8.

Here the reason for considering this kind of excess a vice is not the harm or bodily pain (diseases) that a human being brings on himself by it; for then the principle by which it is to be counteracted would be one of well-being and comfort (and so of happiness), and such a principle can establish only a rule of prudence, never a duty — at least not a direct duty.

Brutish excess in the use of food and drink is misuse of the means of nourishment that restricts or exhausts our capacity to use them intelligently. Drunkenness and gluttony are the vices that come under this heading. A human being who is drunk is like a mere animal, not to be treated as a human being. When stuffed with food he is in a condition in which he is incapacitated, for a time, for actions that would require him to use his powers with skill and deliberation. — It is obvious that putting oneself in such a state violates a duty to oneself. The first of these debasements, below even the nature of an animal, is usually brought about by fermented drinks, but it can also result from other narcotics, such as opium and other vegetable products. They are seductive because, under their influence, people dream for a while that they are happy and free from care, and even imagine that they are strong; but dejection and weakness follow and, worst of all, they create a need to use the narcotics again and even to increase the amount. Gluttony is even lower than that animal enjoyment of the senses, since it only lulls the senses into a passive condition and, unlike drunkenness, does not even arouse imagination to an active play of representations; so it approaches even more closely the enjoyment of cattle.

Casuistical questions

Can one at least justify, if not eulogize, a use of wine bordering on intoxication, since it enlivens the company’s conversation and in so doing makes them speak more freely? — Or can it even be granted the merit of promoting what Horace praises in Cato: virtus eius inculuit mero? — The use of opium and spirits for enjoyment is closer to being a base act than the use of wine, since they make the user silent, reticent and withdrawn by the dreamy euphoria they induce. They are therefore permitted only as medicines. — But who can determine the measure for someone who is quite ready to pass into a state in which he no longer has clear eyes for measuring? Mohammedanism, which forbids wine altogether, thus made a very bad choice in permitting opium to take its place.

Although a banquet is a formal invitation to excess in both food and drink, there is still something in it that aims at a moral end, beyond mere

6:426

6:428

4 Wohlbefinden

1 His virtue was enkindled by unmixed wine. Kant is quoting, from memory, Horace Odes 3.21.11.

7 In the second edition, the sentence “The use of opium ... only as medicines” follows the sentence “But who can determine ... for measuring?”
IMMANUEL KANT

physical well-being: it brings a number of people together for a long time to converse with one another. And yet the very number of guests (if, as Chesterfield says, it exceeds the number of the muses) allows for only a little conversation (with those sitting next to one); and so the arrangement is at variance with that end, while the banquet remains a temptation to something immoral, namely intemperance, which is a violation of one's duty to oneself—not to mention the physical harm of overindulgence, which could perhaps be cured by a doctor. How far does one's moral authorization to accept these invitations to intemperance extend?

Chapter II.
The human being's duty to himself merely as a moral being.

This duty is opposed to the vices of lying, avarice and false humility (servility).

I.
ON LYING.

§ 9.
The greatest violation of a human being's duty to himself regarded merely as a moral being (the humanity in his own person) is the contrary of truthfulness, lying (aliud lingua promptum, aliud pecore inclusum gerere). In the doctrine of right an intentional untruth is called a lie only if it violates another's right; but in ethics, where no authorization is derived from harmlessness, it is clear of itself that no intentional untruth in the expression of one's thoughts can refuse this harsh name. For, the dishonor (being an object of moral contempt) that accompanies a lie also accompanies a liar like his shadow. A lie can be an external lie (menadactum externum) or also an internal lie. — By an external lie a human being makes himself an object of contempt in the eyes of others; by an internal lie he does what is still worse: he makes himself contemptible in his own eyes and violates the dignity of humanity in his own person. And so, since the harm that can come to others from lying is not what distinguishes this vice (for if it were, the vice would consist only in violating one's duty to others), this harm is not taken into account here. Neither is the harm that a liar brings upon himself; for then a lie, as a mere error in prudence, would conflict with the pragmatic maxim, not the moral maxim, and it could not be considered a violation of duty at all. — By a lie a human being throws away and, as it were, annihilates his dignity as a human being. A human being who does not himself believe what he tells another (even if the other is a merely ideal person) has even less worth than if he were a mere thing; for a thing, because it is something real and given, has the property of being serviceable so that another can put it to some use. But communication of one's thoughts to someone through words that yet (intentionally) contain the contrary of what the speaker thinks on the subject is an end that is directly opposed to the natural purposiveness of the speaker's capacity to communicate his thoughts, and is thus a renunciation by the speaker of his personality, and such a speaker is a mere deceptive appearance of a human being, not a human being himself. — Truthfulness in one's declarations is also called honesty and, if the declarations are promises, sincerity; but, more generally, truthfulness is called rectitude.

Lying (in the ethical sense of the word), intentional untruth as such, need not be harmful to others in order to be repudiated; for it would then be a violation of the rights of others. It may be done merely out of frivolity or even good nature; the speaker may even intend to achieve a really good end by it. But his way of pursuing this end is, by its mere form, a crime of a human being against his own person and a worthlessness that must make him contemptible in his own eyes.

It is easy to show that the human being is actually guilty of many inner lies, but it seems more difficult to explain how they are possible; for a lie requires a second person whom one intends to deceive, whereas to deceive oneself on purpose seems to contain a contradiction.

The human being as a moral being (homo noumenon) cannot use himself as a natural being (homo phaenomenon) as a mere means (a speaking machine), as if his natural being were not bound to the inner end (of communicating thoughts), but is bound to the condition of using himself as a natural being in agreement with the declaration (declaratio) of his moral being and is under obligation to himself to truthfulness. — Someone tells an inner lie, for example, if he professes belief in a future judge of the world, although he really finds no such belief within himself but persuades himself that it could do no harm and might even be useful to profess in his thoughts to one who scrutinizes hearts a belief in such a judge, in order to win his favor in case he should exist. Someone also lies if, having no doubt about the existence of this future judge, he still flatters himself that he inwardly reveres his law, though the only incentive he feels is fear of punishment.

Insincerity is mere lack of conscientiousness, that is, of purity in one's professions before one's inner judge, who is thought of as another person

a Ehrlichkeit
b Redlichkeit
c Aufrichtigkeit
d Gutmütigkeit, perhaps "kindness"

6:429

6:430

Wohlleben

To have one thing shut up in the heart and another ready on the tongue. Sallust The War with Catiline 10.5.
when conscientiousness is taken quite strictly; then if someone, from self-love, takes a wish for the deed because he has a really good end in mind, his inner lie, although it is indeed contrary to his duty to himself, gets the name of a frailty, as when a lover’s wish to find only good qualities in his beloved blinds him to her obvious faults. — But such insincerity in his declarations, which a human being perpetrates upon himself, still deserves the strongest censure, since it is from such a rotten spot (falsity, which seems to be rooted in human nature itself) that the ill of untruthfulness spreads into his relations with other human beings as well, once the highest principle of truthfulness has been violated.

**Remark**

It is noteworthy that the Bible dates the first crime, through which evil entered the world, not from fratricide (Cain’s) but from the first lie (for even nature rises up against fratricide, and calls the author of all evil a liar from the beginning and the father of lies. However, reason can assign no further ground for the human propensity to hypocrisy⁴ (esprit fourbe), although this propensity must have been present before the lie; for, an act of freedom cannot (like a natural effect) be deduced and explained in accordance with the natural law of the connection of effects with their causes, all of which are appearances.

**Casuistical questions**

Can an untruth from mere politeness (e.g., the “your obedient servant” at the end of a letter) be considered a lie? No one is deceived by it. — An author asks one of his readers “How do you like my work?” One could merely seem to give an answer, by joking about the impropriety of such a question. But who has his wit always ready? The author will take the slightest hesitation in answering as an insult. May one, then, say what is expected of one?

If I say something untrue in more serious matters,* having to do with what is mine or yours, must I answer for all the consequences it might have? For example, a householder has ordered his servant to say “not at home” if a certain human being asks for him. The servant does this and, as a result, the master slips away and commits a serious crime, which would otherwise have been prevented by the guard sent to arrest him. Who (in accordance with ethical principles) is guilty in this case? Surely the servant, too, who violated a duty to himself by his lie, the results of which his own conscience imputes to him.

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§ 10.

By avarice in this context I do not mean greedy avarice⁴ (acquiring the means to good living in excess of one’s true needs), for this can also be viewed as a mere violation of one’s duty (of beneficence) to others; nor, again, do I mean miserly avarice,⁵ which is called stinginess or niggardliness when it is shameful but which can still be mere neglect of one’s duties of love to others. I mean, rather, restricting one’s own enjoyment of the means to good living so narrowly as to leave one’s own true needs unsatisfied. It is really this kind of avarice, which is contrary to duty to oneself, that I am referring to here.⁶

In the censure of this vice, one example can show clearly⁷ that it is incorrect to define any virtue or vice in terms of mere degree, and at the same time prove the uselessness of the Aristotelian principle that virtue consists in the middle way between two vices.

If I regard good management as the mean between prodigality and avarice and suppose this mean to be one of degree, then one vice would pass over into the (contrario) opposite vice only through the virtue; and so virtue would be simply a diminished, or rather a vanishing, vice. The result, in the present case, would be that the real duty of virtue would consist in making no use at all of the means to good living.

If a vice is to be distinguished from a virtue, the difference one must cognize and explain is not a difference in the degree of practicing moral maxims but rather in the objective principle of the maxims. — The maxim of greedy avarice (prodigality) is to get and maintain⁸ all the means to good living with the intention of enjoyment. — The maxim of miserly avarice, on the other hand, is to acquire as well as maintain all the means to good living, but with no intention of enjoyment (i.e., in such a way that one’s end is only possession, not enjoyment).

Hence the distinctive mark of the latter vice is the principle of possessing means for all sorts of ends, but with the reservation of being unwilling

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⁴ [Suche nicht gierig]{habeüchtigen Geiz}
⁵ [Sorge nicht sparsam]{kargen Geiz}
⁶ [Im Glauben]{in wirtschaftlichen Geschäften}
⁷ [Eine Erklärung]{The second edition omits “and maintain.”}
⁸ [Das Ziel]{Das Ziel}

"In place of the passage "nor, again, do I mean miserly avarice," the second edition has "I mean, rather, miserly avarice, which is called stinginess or niggardliness when it is shameful; and I am concerned with this kind of avarice, not as consisting in mere neglect of one's duties of love to others, but as a restricting of one's own use of the means for living well so narrowly as to leave one's true needs unsatisfied, and so as contrary to one's duty to oneself." In fact, only two kinds of avarice, prodigality and miserliness, are in question.
"Kann man ein Beispiel der Unrichtigkeit aller Erklärungen deutlich machen und zugleich die Unbrauchbarkeit... darten
"The second edition omits "and maintain."
to use them for oneself, and so depriving oneself of the comforts necessary to enjoy life; and this is directly contrary to duty to oneself with regard to the end.* Accordingly, prodigality and miserliness are not distinguished from each other by degree; they are rather distinguished specifically, by their opposed maxims.

Casuistical questions

Selfishness (solipsismus) is the basis both of the greed (instability in acquiring wealth) that aims at sumptuous living and of niggardliness (painful anxiety about waste); and it may seem that both of them — prodigality as well as miserliness — are to be repudiated merely because they end in poverty, though in the case of prodigality this result is unexpected and in the case of miserliness it is chosen* (one wills to live like a pauper). And so, since we are here speaking only of duty to oneself, it may be asked whether either prodigality or miserliness should be called a vice at all, or whether both are not mere imprudence and so quite beyond the bounds of one’s duty to oneself. But miserliness is not just mistaken thrift, but rather

* The proposition, one ought not to do too much or too little of anything, says in effect nothing, since it is a tautology. What does it mean “to do too much”? Answer: to do more than is good. What does it mean “to do too little”? Answer: to do less than is good. What does it mean to say “I ought (to do or to refrain from something)”? Answer: that it is not good (that it is contrary to duty) to do more or less than is good. If that is the wisdom in search of which we should go back to the ancients (Aristotle), as to those who were nearer the fountainhead — virtus consistit in medio, medium tenuere beat, est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines, quos citaque nequit consistere rectum — then we have made a bad choice in turning to its oracle. Between truthfulness and lying (which are contrarietate oppositorum) there is no mean; but there is indeed a mean between candor and reticence (which are contrarie oppositorum), since one who declares his thoughts can say only what is true without telling the whole truth. Now it is quite natural to ask the teacher of virtue to point out this mean to me. But this he cannot do; for both duties of virtue have a latitude in their application (latitudinem), and judgment can decide what is to be done only in accordance with rules of prudence (pragmatic rules), not in accordance with rules of morality (moral rules). In other words, what is to be done cannot be decided after the manner of narrow duty (officium strictum), but after the manner of wide duty (officium latum). Hence one who complies with the basic principles of virtue can, it is true, commit a fault (pecatum) in putting these principles into practice, by doing more or less than prudence prescribes. But insofar as he adheres strictly to these basic principles he cannot practice a vice (vitium), and Horace’s verse, insani sapiens nomen habeat aequus iniquit, ultra quam satis est virtutem in petit ilium, is utterly false, if taken literally. In fact, sapiens here means only a judicious man (prudent), who does not think fantastically of virtue in its perfection. This is an ideal which requires one to approximate to this end but not to attain it completely, since the latter requirement surpasses man’s powers and introduces a lack of sense (fantasy) into the principle of virtue. For really to be virtuous — that is, to be too attached to one’s duty — would be almost equivalent to making a circle too round or a straight line too straight. [For a translation of these Latin quotations see the page of this translation corresponding to 6.404 n.]

THE METAPHYSICS OF MORALS

slavish subjection of oneself to the goods that contribute to happiness, which is a violation of duty to oneself since one ought to be their master. It is opposed to liberality of mind (liberalitas moralis) generally (not to generosity, liberalitas sumptuosa, which is only an application of this to a special case), that is, opposed to the principle of independence from everything except the law, and is a way in which the subject defrauds himself. But what kind of a law is it that the internal lawgiver itself does not know how to apply? Ought I to economize on food or only in my expenditures on external things? In old age, or already in youth? Or is thrift as such a virtue?

III.

ON SERVILITY.

§ 11.

In the system of nature, a human being (homo phænomenon, animal rationale) is a being of slight importance and shares with the rest of the animals, as offspring of the earth, an ordinary value (pretium vulgare). Although a human being has, in his understanding, something more than they and can set himself ends, even this gives him only an extrinsic value for his usefulness (pretium usus); that is to say, it gives one man a higher value than another, that is, a price as of a commodity in exchange with these animals as things, though he still has a lower value than the universal medium of exchange, money, the value of which can therefore be called preeminent (pretium eminens).

But a human being regarded as a person, that is, as the subject of a morally practical reason, is exalted above any price; for as a person (homo noumenon) he is not to be valued merely as a means to the ends of others or even to his own ends, but as an end in itself, that is, he possesses a dignity (an absolute inner worth) by which he exacts respect for himself from all other rational beings in the world. He can measure himself with every other being of this kind and value himself on a footing of equality with them.

Humanity in his person is the object of the respect which he can demand from every other human being, but which he must also not forfeit. Hence he can and should value himself by a low as well as by a high standard, depending on whether he views himself as a sensible being (in terms of his animal nature) or as an intelligible being (in terms of his moral predisposition). Since he must regard himself not only as a person generally but also as a human being, that is, as a person who has duties his own reason lays upon him, his insignificance as a human animal may not infringe upon his consciousness of his dignity as a rational human being, and he should not disavow the moral self-esteem of such a being, that is,
he should pursue his end, which is in itself a duty, not abjectly, not in a servile spirit (animo servili) as if he were seeking a favor, not disavowing his dignity, but always with consciousness of his sublime moral predisposition (which is already contained in the concept of virtue). And this self-esteem is a duty of the human being to himself.

The consciousness and feeling of the insignificance of one’s moral worth in comparison with the law is humility (humilitas moralis). A conviction of the greatness of one’s moral worth, but only from failure to compare it with the law, can be called moral arrogance (arrogantia moralis). – Waiving any claim to moral worth in oneself, in the belief that one will thereby acquire a borrowed worth, is morally false servility (humilitas spuria).

Humility in comparing oneself with other human beings (and indeed with any finite being, even a seraph) is no duty; rather, trying to equal or surpass others in this respect, believing that in this way one will get an even greater inner worth, is ambition (ambitio), which is directly contrary to one’s duty to others. But belittling one’s own moral worth merely as a means to acquire the favor of another, whoever it may be (hypocrisy and flattery)* is false (lying) humility, which is contrary to one’s duty to oneself since it degrades one’s personality.

True humility follows unavoidably from our sincere and exact comparison of ourselves with the moral law (its holiness and strictness). But from our capacity for internal lawgiving and from the (natural) human being’s feeling himself compelled to revere the moral human being within his own person, at the same time there comes exaltation of the highest self-esteem, the feeling of his inner worth (valor), in terms of which he is above any price (prezium) and possesses an inalienable dignity (dignitas interna), which instills in him respect for himself (reverentia).

§ 12.

This duty with reference to the dignity of humanity within us, and so to ourselves, can be recognized, more or less, in the following examples.

Be no man’s lackey. – Do not let others tread with impunity on your rights. – Contract no debt for which you cannot give full security. – Do not accept favors you could do without, and do not be a parasite or a flatterer or (what really differs from these only in degree) a beggar. Be thrifty, then, so that you will not become destitute. – Complaining and whining, even crying out in bodily pain, is unworthy of you, especially if you are aware of

* “Heucheln,” properly “häuschen” [“to dissemble”], seems to be derived from “Heuch,” a moaning “breath” interrupting one’s speech (a sigh). “Schmeicheln” [“to flatter”] seems to stem from “Schmiegen” [“to bend”] which, as a habit, is called “Schmiegen” [“cringing”] and finally, in High German, “Schmeicheln.”

**Hauchelei und Schmeichelei**

**Fähigkeit**

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THE METAPHYSICS OF MORALS

having deserved it; thus a criminal’s death may be ennobled (its disgrace averted) by the resoluteness with which he dies. – Kneeling down or prostrating oneself on the ground, even to show your veneration for heavenly objects, is contrary to the dignity of humanity, as is invoking them in actual images;[4] for you then humble yourself, not before an ideal represented to you by your own reason, but before an idol of your own making.

Casuistical questions

Is not the human being’s feeling for his sublime vocation, that is, his elevation of spirit (elatio animi) or esteem for himself, so closely akin to self-conceit (arrogantia), the very opposite of true humility (humilitas moralis), that it would be advisable to cultivate humility even in comparing ourselves with other human beings, and not only with the law? Or would not this kind of self-abnegation instead strengthen others’[5] verdict on us to the point of despising our person, so that it would be contrary to our duty (of respect) to ourselves? Bowing and scraping before a human being seems in any case to be unworthy of a human being.

Preferential tributes of respect in words and manners even to those who have no civil authority – reverences, obeisances (compliments) and courtly phrases marking with the utmost precision every distinction in rank, something altogether different from courtesy (which is necessary even for those who respect each other equally) – the Du, Er, Ihr, and Sie, or Ew. Wohledeln, Hochedeln, Hochadelgeboren, Wohlgeboren (ohe, iam satis est!)[6] as forms of address, a pedantry in which the Germans seem to outdo any other people in the world (except possibly the Indian castes): does not all this prove that there is a widespread propensity to servility in human beings? (Hae nuga in seria ducunt.)[7] But one who makes himself a worm cannot complain afterwards if people step on him.

Chapter II.

SECTION I.

On the Human Being’s Duty to Himself as His Own
Innate Judge.

§ 13.

Every concept of duty involves objective constraint through a law (a moral imperative limiting our freedom) and belongs to practical under-

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1 in gegenwärtigen Bildern

2 Stay, that's enough! Horace Satires 1.5.12.

3 These trifles lead to serious things.