

happiness which the *summum bonum* requires. The postulate of immortality is the condition of the realization of the chief good; because, according to Kant, there is an antagonism between the natural desires of man and the moral ideal. But as man cannot get rid of those desires without ceasing to be man, the moral ideal demands a *progressus ad infinitum*. From the impossibility of realizing the moral ideal, in a finite time, Kant reasons to an infinite time as the condition of its realization. This argument lacks logical cogency, and is based on a dualistic assumption unwarranted by the facts of experience.

The nature of a thing is not to be changed by the mere passage of time. There is no reason in the mere fact of a black object existing forever for its becoming white. If there be such an opposition between human reason and natural desire as Kant asserts, then no extension of time is likely to remove it; and if it required infinite time, then the consummation is obviously not realizable, since an infinite time is endless. On the other hand, if in a future life man is to be conceived as no longer the subject of desire, that is, if a miracle is to be performed for the benefit of each individual at death, then perfect virtue might be realized, but at the same time the reasons for postulating immortality would be removed. Immortality is postulated because reason demands the realization of perfect virtue, and such realization is impossible, because the work of progress in subjecting the desires to rational considerations is never completed. We can only infer that the postulate of immortality fails to solve the problem of the realization of the *summum bonum*. Unless men can be moral now, they cannot become moral simply because they are supposed to live forever: and if they can be moral now, then the argument for a progress to infinity (with regard to the individual, at least) falls to the ground. We do not, and need not, admit the unbridgeable psychological opposition between desire and rational determination on which Kant's argument for immortality turns; and with its denial the basis of this argument is undermined.