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though not a paradox, is pretty unwelcome. A deontic system from which we can derive that Smith has a legal obligation to murder Jones is not the sort of system we are likely to want to adopt.

Therefore, the most likely candidate for the scrap heap is (8)—a basic inference principle in standard deontic logic. If this is indeed the rotten apple, the entire barrel of standard deontic logic must be in a bad way. How to remove the rot while retaining a sound and viable deontic system of logic is a large task—one beyond the scope of this paper.

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THE ALLEGED MORAL REPUGNANCE OF ACTING FROM DUTY*

FRIENDS as well as foes of Kant have long been uneasy over his emphasis on duty, but lately the view that there is something morally repugnant about acting from duty seems to be gaining in popularity. More and more philosophers indicate their readiness to jettison duty and the moral 'ought' and to conceive of the perfectly moral person as someone who has all the right desires and acts accordingly *without* any notion that (s)he *ought* to act in this way. Elsewhere¹ I have argued that such a picture of the perfectly moral person is flawed. In this paper I examine the claim that acting from duty is morally repugnant. There is some truth to this charge, but, I argue, the repugnance attaches not to acting from duty as such, but only to certain ways of acting from duty. In isolating the objectionable elements of acting from duty, I hope not only to vindicate the skeletal concept but also to offer illumination on the question of just how we should understand morally good conduct.

My aim to vindicate acting from duty should not be construed as

*My paper was improved by incisive comments from Thomas Carson, Nancy Davis, Thomas Hill, Jr., Joan Leguard, Robert McKim, Peter Railton, Frederick Schmitt, Holly Smith, Susan Wolf, and the members of colloquia at Ohio State University (November, 1982) and the NEH Summer Institute on Kantian Ethics (July, 1983) to whom earlier versions of this paper were presented. I would also like to thank Peter Railton for sharing with me some years ago a rough draft of a long manuscript on moral alienation, a manuscript which deepened my appreciation of Williams's and Stocker's worries.

¹In my "On De-Kantianizing the Perfectly Moral Person," *Journal of Value Inquiry*, xvii, 4 (December, 1983): 281-293, and "Varieties of Ethics of Virtue," forthcoming in the *American Philosophical Quarterly*.

an aim to vindicate Kant. Indeed, part of the motivation for this paper is the belief that acting from duty can be understood in a number of different ways, some more and some less closely related to Kant's conception of morally good conduct.² Nor should my aim be thought to include defending the Kantian thesis that only acts done from duty have moral worth. The reason I wish to vindicate acting from duty is simply (or not so simply) that acting from duty seems to me to be crucial to morally good conduct.³

One last preliminary. My project is to examine the formal details of acting from duty in light of contemporary objections, in particular, those raised via examples offered by Michael Stocker⁴ and Bernard Williams,⁵ and to suggest forms of acting from duty that steer clear of the problems that those examples depict. A different but re-

²Since writing this paper I have become convinced, through reading Barbara Herman's excellent papers on Kant's ethics, that my account of acting from duty is even closer to Kant's view than I had thought. See Herman's "On the Value of Acting from the Motive of Duty," *Philosophical Review*, LXVI, 2 (July 1981): 233-250. Parenthetical page references to Herman are to this paper.

³Or, in other words, that one necessary condition for perfectly moral personhood is that one act from duty. When it is put this way, we see that it is in fact not simple at all. For what is meant by 'perfectly moral personhood'? What is at issue when it is asserted or denied that something is a necessary condition for perfectly moral personhood? Briefly, I take the point of asking what constitutes perfectly moral personhood to be that of trying to determine what types of people we should aspire and endeavor to be, and with what aims we should bring up and educate children. If this is the point, then to say that it is a necessary condition of perfectly moral personhood that one act from duty is to say only that we should aim in (self-)education to bring it about that the persons in question will act from duty—which, given the account of acting from duty that I present in this paper, is to say, very roughly, that they will be committed to doing whatever is right and to striving to determine what is right. This two-pronged commitment will govern their conduct. It is *not* to say that someone with a sense of duty but corrupt desires is (or is not) better than someone with "perfect" desires but no sense of duty. Nor is it claimed that, for any given person, that person is morally better if he is governed by a sense of duty than if he isn't. People who are exceptionally flawed, morally, and flawed in the relevant sorts of ways, may be morally better if they do not act from a sense of duty. [Suppose, for instance, that their sense of what is right is like that of Heinrich Himmler (as discussed in Jonathan Bennett's paper, cited in fn 7, below).] Finally, the order in which these things are taught may be important: a sense of duty may well be of great value *only* once the person has learned to distinguish morality from convention, honor, power, etc.

My position should not be taken to commit me to any stand as to whether ethical theories should be couched in aretaic rather than deontic terms. It is important to clarify that nothing hangs on my use of deontic terms. I use 'duty' and 'ought' repeatedly, partly in the hope of convincing readers that much of the opposition to acting from duty is nothing but dislike for the word 'duty'. See section II.

⁴"The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories," this JOURNAL, LXIII, 4 (Aug. 12, 1976): 453-466. Parenthetical page references to Stocker will be to this article.

⁵"Persons, Character and Morality," in Amelie O. Rorty, ed., *The Identities of Persons* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1976), pp. 214/5. Parenthetical page references to Williams will be to this book.

lated question concerns the content of the agent's conception of duty. This question will not be addressed, though it does bear on the issue, since certain normative conceptions of what one's duty is and certain metaethical conceptions of what morality is may make acting from duty, as explicated and defended below, morally undesirable. Hence, a caveat: My defense of acting from duty may not hold across all possible metaethical and normative views. If, for instance, one takes an especially stern view about what people's duties are, one may be inclined to say, "Well, it's better if people don't feel *too* compelled invariably to do what one morally ought to do." Or again, someone who takes morality to be strictly other-regarding is likely to say, "A commitment to act morally can go too far: after all, people need to think about themselves, too."⁶

I

The allegation that acting from duty is morally repugnant can be broken down into three charges: first, that to act from duty is to act just minimally morally; second, that acting from duty is alienating; and, third, that thinking in terms of what one ought to do or what morality directs one to do is at least as likely to yield the wrong answer as the right one. The third objection is quite different from the others, for it centers on the problem of the fallibility of conscience.⁷ I do not address that objection in this paper. Here I am concerned with something more elusive: an alleged flaw in the way that someone who acts from duty regards other people. The first objection is that someone who acts from duty does not really care about others, but fulfills his duties toward them just in order to meet a minimum requirement: to do the boy-scout-good-deed-of-the-day. The second objection is more complex and harder, at least initially, to make explicit; here the worry is that action done from duty expresses and perhaps nurtures the wrong sorts of attitude toward others. I begin with the first objection, which will turn out to be easy to get out of the way. The bulk of the paper focuses on the second charge.

II

Given the many pejorative associations that we have with the word 'duty', it is no surprise that many people think of a concern to do one's duty as a concern to do only what one *has* to do. We sometimes associate 'duty' with unconditional demands placed on us

⁶ This would, I think, be Susan Wolf's reaction. See her "Moral Saints," this JOURNAL, LXXIX, 8 (August 1982): 419-439.

⁷ For an intriguing discussion of this problem, illustrated by reference to Huck Finn, Heinrich Himmler, and Jonathan Edwards, see Jonathan Bennett, "The Conscience of Huckleberry Finn," *Philosophy*, LXIX, 110 (April 1974): 123-134.

from without, and especially by social institutions or norms that are themselves morally dubious.⁸ Someone who is deeply concerned to do his duty in *that* sense seems unreflective, cowardly, or both. Karenin's concern with duty (in *Anna Karenina*) hardly inspires us with respect, but that is, I think, because we are thinking of duty in this more colloquial sense, which contrasts sharply with the Kantian notion of duty as what one (truly!) morally ought to do.

Those who are motivated by duty in this pejorative sense of 'duty' may seem not to be morally motivated at all, but moved instead to do what they have to do in order to be off the hook, where the danger of the "hook" might be, say, social ostracism. But one may think of the hook and the motivation to avoid it as moral, where the agent is seen to act morally, but only minimally so. The thought is that someone who acts from duty is concerned only with what morality demands, not with what morality recommends. Thus, in defense of his claim that it is better to perform altruistic acts from "direct altruism" than from a sense of duty, Lawrence Blum argues that "most altruistic acts are not . . . duties."⁹ Giving someone directions, letting someone with few groceries ahead of you in the checkout line, and pressing the desired floor button for a blind person in an elevator are, he thinks, examples of altruistic acts that are not duties (*loc. cit.*).

Now, if one thinks of duty (or duties)¹⁰ as what morality *requires* and only that, then, arguably, the first two examples are *not* duties—though the third, I think, clearly is. And thus the charge of minimal morality would have some force, since one would have reason to worry that the person who acts from duty, in this sense, would not be concerned to give directions, etc., and might just not bother to do so.

To obviate the charge of minimal morality, we need only to ex-

⁸ Consider, for instance, the following inscription on a statue on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: "To the sons of the University, who entered the war of 1861-1865 in answer to the call of their country and whose lives taught the lesson of the great commander that duty [*sic*] is the sublimest word in the English language."

⁹ *Friendship, Altruism and Morality* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 92.

¹⁰ It is important to keep in mind that 'duties' is intended here and elsewhere in my paper strictly as the plural of 'duty', where 'duty' refers to whatever one morally ought to do. Contrast this Kantian usage with our colloquial use of 'duties': we tend to refer to all those many little tasks (often morally insignificant and occasionally immoral) which one's social or professional or familial role (etc.) demands. It must be admitted that at least some proponents of ethics of duty share responsibility with their opponents for blurring 'duty' as what one morally ought to do with the more common colloquial use. See for instance the passage from W. D. Ross's *The Right and the Good* which Blum cites on p. 96 of his book.

plain that the person who acts from duty, *in the sense in which acting from duty is being advocated*, is moved *both* by considerations that *x* is morally required and by considerations that *x* is morally recommended. Moreover, she is committed to being moved by both.

III

I turn now to the more complex charge that acting from duty is alienating; or, in long form, that it is alienating and, as such, morally repugnant, and that it is, therefore, morally preferable that one not act from duty. Vaguely—and it must remain so for now—the idea is that acting in a certain way, from a certain type of motivation betrays (and perhaps further entrenches) attitudes toward others and toward one's relations with others which are, morally and otherwise, regrettable.

The objection has been pressed forcefully and yet elusively by both Michael Stocker and Bernard Williams. They have made their points largely by way of examples—one example each—with less commentary than one would like. Susan Wolf¹¹ has made considerable headway in clarifying the objection, and I shall make use of her comments—although it would be unfair to assume that, thus clarified, the objection is precisely what either Stocker or Williams had in mind. My strategy will be to analyze their examples with the interlocking aims of determining exactly what it is that makes the contents disturbing and then of using these findings to decide whether acting from duty is as such alienating or whether it is only certain modes of acting from duty that are objectionable in this way. If, as I suspect, the latter is the case, our scrutiny of Williams's and Stocker's examples should enable us to separate the good in acting from duty from the ill, and to suggest the type—or rather, the way—of acting from duty which is worthy of defense. I will proceed by first asking what it is about the behavior Stocker describes that is morally repugnant and then querying what conclusions concerning acting from duty can be drawn from the fact that those aspects of his behavior are morally repugnant. Because of the nature of the examples, I will focus on Stocker's example for the next several pages and only later discuss Williams's.

IV

Stocker's example is that of a hospitalized person who receives a visit from his friend, Smith:

You are very bored and restless and at loose ends when Smith comes in once again. You are now convinced more than ever that he is a fine

¹¹ *The Failure of Autonomy*. Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1978, ch. 1. Unless otherwise noted, all references to Wolf hereafter will be to this work.

fellow and a real friend—taking so much time to cheer you up, traveling all the way across town, and so on. You are so effusive with your praise and thanks that he protests that he always tries to do what he thinks is his duty, what he thinks will be best. You at first think he is engaging in a polite form of self-deprecation, relieving the moral burden. But the more you two speak, the more clear it becomes that he was telling the literal truth: that it is not essentially because of you that he came to see you, not because you are friends, but because he thought it his duty, perhaps as a fellow Christian or Communist or whatever, or simply because he knows of no one more in need of cheering up and no one easier to cheer up (462).

Clearly there is something disturbing about Stocker's example. None of us would want to be treated by a friend the way Smith's friend is treated by Smith; moreover, we can see that there is something morally objectionable about Smith's conduct. But what?

There are a number of different ways in which (perhaps without knowing it) we may be filling in Stocker's sketch of Smith. We need to consider them separately in order to determine just what is disturbing about Smith's conduct and whether or not it impugns acting from duty.

The image that we have of Smith is something like this: he does not want to visit his friend, but believing it to be his duty to visit her, he forces himself to do so and, later, we fear, revels sanctimoniously in his goodness. The two features of this picture of Smith that contribute to the over-all repugnance of his conduct are his disinclination (or lack of inclination) to see his friend and his sanctimoniousness. I will shelve sanctimoniousness for now and concentrate on determining the relevance of disinclination to the moral repugnance of acting from duty. To do so it will be necessary to examine a number of different cases.

Consider first the case in which Smith is disinclined to visit the hospitalized friend—whom I'll call Thompson—and yet visits her because he believes it is his duty to visit fellow X's and she is, he believes, a fellow X. 'X' could be replaced by 'Christian', 'Communist', 'Republican', etc.¹² This case will be contrasted with those in which Smith thinks it his duty to visit her *as a friend*. Suppose that in Stocker's story Thompson thinks that Smith is coming to see her as a friend and then realizes, with a jolt, that it isn't friendship but a sense of (community and) special obligation to other Christians (or whatever) that brings him to her hospital room. She will feel al-

¹² The type and size of the group that gets covered by 'etc.' would make some difference to how one would feel about Smith's visiting him or her from a sense that he ought to pay a call on hospitalized fellow X's, but I ignore that here.

ienated if she thinks he isn't coming to see *her*, but rather to see the member of his church who is in the hospital. All the worse if he misleadingly acts as if he is coming as a friend when he isn't. Even if he doesn't mislead, and she is clear from the outset that he is visiting her as a fellow Christian, the situation may still be alienating if she does not strongly identify herself as a Christian (especially if he had no reason to suppose that she did).

All the above are details that we may, more or less clearly, have in our various pictures of Smith, and any of them accounts for at least some of what bothers us about Smith's conduct. But none of them has anything to do with acting from duty. To see this, just note that what goes wrong would equally go wrong if Smith visited her simply from an inclination to visit a fellow Christian.

Once these features are pushed to one side, there is, I think, nothing objectionable in Smith's visiting Thompson because he thought it his duty as a fellow X. Thompson thought he was visiting her as a friend, but in fact he came in quite a different capacity; he was wrong to pretend to come qua friend, if indeed he did pretend this, and it was thoughtless of him to visit her as a fellow X if he had reason to think that she did not have a sense of community with X's. But barring these problems, there would be nothing expressive of or conducive to alienation or otherwise objectionable about one fellow Christian or Communist visiting another because he thought it right to do so.

v

Stocker's example becomes more compelling if we think of Smith as visiting Thompson because he thinks it is his duty *as a friend* to do so. This situation is interestingly different, for friendship, unlike a sense of community with fellow Christians, does not sit easily with one's not wanting to visit one's friend but doing so out of duty. Stocker's belief appears to be that insofar as one is motivated on a particular occasion to do something for a friend out of duty, one is not acting as a true friend. The point has considerable force. The fact that the agent acted from duty tends to suggest (as in Stocker's example) that he is not much of a friend—or at least not much of a friend to the person in question.

We should note that much of the compellingness of Stocker's belief draws from the conception of the motive of duty as excluding inclination to do what one regards as one's duty—here visiting a hospitalized friend. As will be elaborated later, it is possible to do *x* from a sense of duty while wanting to do *x*; and acting from duty plus inclination meshes better with friendship than does acting from duty without inclination, or in the face of a strong opposing

inclination.¹³ But to that shortly. Let us first examine whether visiting a friend from duty (or for that matter helping or trying to comfort a friend from duty) without the inclination to do so is morally undesirable. To put it differently, let us see whether acts of friendship, if done from duty, lose their status as acts of friendship.

Depending on how one interprets Stocker's example (and how one pictures other instances of friendly acts done from duty), there are a number of reasons one might have for supposing that this is the case. One might think of Smith as visiting Thompson grudgingly or resentfully. Thus understood, his conduct is morally objectionable on two counts. First, his attitude may show through, making the visit rather unpleasant for Thompson. If this is the case, then the problem lies primarily not with Smith's motives, but with what he did. He acted contrary to duty. His duty was not to make an appearance in Thompson's room, but do her some good by visiting her—cheer her up, divert her, alleviate her boredom, let her see that at least one of her friends is thinking of her and is concerned about her. Of course if he fails to cheer her up because she is just too depressed, this would not impugn his conduct, but it is another matter if he conveys hostility toward her for having occasioned, as he sees it, the moral demand that he visit her, when he'd much prefer to be elsewhere. The important point here is that the flaw in his conduct lies not in his acting from duty, but in his acting from a misconception of what his duty is or perhaps failing to do what he sees to be his duty.

Visiting a friend grudgingly or resentfully is objectionable on a second count. Thompson may be unaware of Smith's resentment and may find his visit enjoyable, even gratifying. Yet there is something amiss in Smith's conduct if he harbors resentment toward Thompson, or even annoyance that takes no particular object. He ought not have such feelings, and although that isn't to say that he must be in control of whether or not he has those feelings and is at fault for having them, his conduct is morally deficient. Part of what one morally ought to do is cultivate certain attitudes and dispositions, e.g., sympathy rather than resentment or repulsion for the ailing; a cheerful readiness to help and to find ways in which one can help out.

If Smith's deficiency is that he lacks such attitudes and dispositions and feels resentful, then whether or not he successfully masks it, it does not indict acting from duty as such. It shows that there is

¹³ The last case is, tellingly, less at odds with friendship. See the examples in sec. VII below.

something wrong with acting from a false conception of one's duty, a conception that overlooks the importance of the attitudes and dispositions one has when one performs certain acts, especially those which are intended to express affection or concern. Thus although it does not indict acting from duty as such, it points to certain parameters within which satisfactory ways of acting from duty must be located. Similarly, it highlights the fact that any ethical theory that dismissed such feelings as irrelevant as long as "outwardly" the agent did her duty (narrowly construed) and did it from the sense that she ought to, would be unacceptable.¹⁴

So far, then, the problems we have uncovered in Smith's conduct do not signify any flaws in acting from duty as such. The same can be said of a number of other worrisome attitudes one might attribute to the man Stocker describes. One might, for instance, suspect that if Smith is disinclined to visit Thompson and goes solely from duty, he may persistently think of his visit under the description of *what morality requires or recommends* (or *what I ought to do*, or *what it is right to do*). Here one might be worried that Smith will be reveling throughout the visit in his own goodness. And this, one may suspect, will render him cold, cut off from others, alienated from people by his preoccupation with morality (cf. Wolf, 52).

One's response to this, at least initially (cf. sec. VI, below) is that if he revels throughout the visit in his own goodness then again his flaw is that he is not conducting himself as he ought, i.e., not really doing his duty. This is the problem; there is no reason to pin it on his acting from duty. And so once again, no conclusions concerning the merits or hazards of acting from duty can be drawn from the phenomenon. For there is no reason to suppose that if one acts from duty, one must be preoccupied with morality.

¹⁴ This raises the question of whether Kant's ethics is flawed in this respect. Certain passages seem to implicate him, e.g., his claim in the *Grundlegung* that respect for persons is only respect for the moral law, and the curious remark that "If . . . there is no way in which I can be of help to the sufferer and I can do nothing to alter his situation, I might as well turn coldly away and say with the Stoics: 'It is no concern of mine'" [*Lectures on Ethics*, Louis Infield, trans. (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 200]. It seems possible, however, that, in his annoyance with the romantic reverence for feelings, he overstated his point. Certain passages—and the general tone—of the *Tugendlehre* suggest that he did recognize the moral significance of feelings. See, for instance, Division 35, where he writes, "it is a duty to participate actively in the fate of others. Hence we have an indirect duty to cultivate the sympathetic natural (aesthetic) feelings in us and to use them as so many means to participating from moral principles and from the feelings appropriate to these principles." It must be admitted that, although suggestive, this passage does not *show* that Kant believes that sympathetic feelings are of value in themselves. As Stephen Darwall has pointed out in correspondence, Kant may mean only that they are of value as an added impetus to do our duty.

One might object to Smith's conduct on different grounds. One might imagine that, since Smith is visiting Thompson out of duty and against his predominant inclinations, this must be the way he always is with the people he thinks of and speaks of as his friends. The inference is not warranted, but that isn't my concern. The objection is nonetheless instructive. For though once again there appears to be no reason to think that someone who acts from duty always needs the motive of duty to impel him to seek out his friends—I will return to this shortly—it is worth noting that any ethical theory would be seriously flawed if it held that someone who is so dependent on the motive of duty can still qualify as perfectly moral. A person *S* is morally deficient if *S* is so motivationally depleted that, for actions to which most of us would be moved by sympathy, fellow-feeling, or affection for a particular person (the list is not exhaustive), the only sufficient motive *S* has is his belief that morality recommends (or requires) this act.¹⁵

To sum up the foregoing: we have considered a number of different explanations of what it is that we find morally repugnant about Smith's conduct in Stocker's example. In each case the explanation could be exploited to point the way to conceptions of acting from duty which, typically because of misconceptions of what one's duty is, are of dubious merit. The explanations did not, however, provide any reason for thinking that acting from duty is by its very nature alienating or otherwise morally repugnant.

VI

One might object that I have not yet done justice to Stocker's worries. What if the problems we have detected are more deep-seated than I have supposed? What if Smith's failure to fulfill—indeed to recognize—certain of his duties is rooted in an inability to be a true friend to anyone, to care about others? Perhaps, in other words, the whole problem is that Smith is alienated from others by virtue of his commitment to doing whatever he morally ought to do. If so, the objectionable features enumerated above are mere symptoms of the real difficulty which, Stocker thinks, is that, insofar as one acts from duty, one is unable "to realize the great goods of love, friendship, affection, fellow-feeling and community" (461), for these goods "essentially contain certain motives and essentially preclude others," among those precluded being the motive to do what one believes one morally ought to do (461/2).

If this is right, then the answer I have suggested will not suffice.

¹⁵ This is not intended as a definition. I have merely stated a sufficient condition (and there are many!) for being morally deficient.

It will not do to say that the problem lies not with acting from duty but with doing one's duty, if in fact there are certain duties that one cannot fulfill if one acts from duty.

As a preliminary to addressing this challenge, I will offer some positive suggestions as to how acting from duty can be understood. The suggestions will draw on a bit of conceptual machinery—three overlapping distinctions—concerning acting from duty.

The first distinction will be familiar. 'Duty' can be thought to refer only to moral requirements or to moral recommendations as well as to moral requirements.

The second distinction, which I borrow with some modification from Barbara Herman (372–376), is between primary and secondary motives. A primary motive supplies the agent with the motivation to do the act in question, whereas a secondary motive provides limiting conditions on what may be done from other motives. Although qua secondary motive it cannot by itself move one to act, a secondary motive is nonetheless a motive, for the agent would not proceed to perform the action without the "approval" of the secondary motive.¹⁶

Accordingly, the sense of duty can function in two very different ways if, for example, I help someone from duty. First, my sense of duty may prompt me to help the person, and it may motivate me without the aid of inclination and possibly in the face of conflicting inclinations. Here, my sense of duty operates as a primary motive. But imagine instead that I want to help someone—for example, a student who is having trouble with an assignment—and do so in the conviction that I should help him (or, that I do not act wrongly in helping him). In this case, my sense of duty is a secondary motive.¹⁷ It tells me that I may or that I should act as I wished. In different circumstances—suppose the assignment was such that students were not to get outside help of any sort—it would tell me that I should not do as I wished.¹⁸

¹⁶ It remains to be worked out just what the proper level of generality is for secondary motives. "Never pick one's nose in public" would not qualify, but just what would qualify is not entirely clear. This is roughly the same as the generality problem that vexes Kant scholars who seek to explain what counts as a maxim in Kant's ethics.

¹⁷ As I understand the distinction between primary and secondary motives (and here, I believe, I differ from Herman), a motive may initially operate as a secondary motive, but then, if it conflicts with and overpowers another motive, take on the function of a primary motive. Hence the distinction, as I see it, is not really between *types* of motives, but rather between functions that the motives assume.

¹⁸ It should be noted that, when it operates as a primary motive, the sense of duty can prompt one to perform required or recommended actions, but it cannot suffice to motivate a merely permissible action. To choose to perform a particular permissi-

Views on what it is to act from duty divide in yet a third way. Some may hold that to act from duty, the agent must think about x 's rightness just before acting (and an assortment of views is available as to how reflective one's thought about x should be); others hold that one need not do so at that particular time. The latter view is difficult to spell out with precision, but I want to say something about it, for it seems clearly to be the correct view.

On this view, at least in the form I wish to defend, what is expected of the agent is first and foremost that she be committed to doing what is right and understand this commitment to carry with it a commitment to thinking about what is right. But there are right times and there are wrong times for reflecting on the moral status of various forms of conduct, and the period immediately prior to action will frequently be one of the wrong times. To the extent that we know what it would be to evaluate the rightness or wrongness of every action just before doing it, it would be as inappropriate for a responsible moral agent to do so as it would be for a responsible driver to think about the correctness or incorrectness of applying the brakes or quickly turning the steering wheel before performing each such action.¹⁹ A responsible moral agent should think from time to time about the moral status not only of various actions, but also of acting from certain motives. She should also reflect on her character traits and be committed to changing her focus of attention in ways that will facilitate any changes that appear to be in order.

With these distinctions before us, I can clarify the form of acting

ble action, there must be something besides its permissibility that attracts one to it, for there are a great many permissible actions that one could perform in most given sets of circumstances, and thus mere permissibility would not pick out any one action from the range of possible actions. But when it operates as a secondary motive, the sense of duty can prompt one to perform any morally recommended, permissible, or required action. (Unfortunately, it can also prompt one to perform morally impermissible actions, but that misfortune is beyond the scope of this paper.)

¹⁹The analogy between morally responsible agents and responsible drivers was drawn by W. D. Falk in an unpublished paper, "Morality: Form and Content." It is important to note that although the analogy is useful in that it brings out the fact that one can have certain principles in one's mind—be they moral or principles of driving—and be influenced by them without consciously thinking of them, the analogy breaks down at another point: whereas there is such a thing as having the rules and techniques of driving "down pat," there is no comparable stage in morality. My point is not that few of us reach such a stage, but rather that moral principles must be regarded as always open to revision. It is possible that someone could accept moral principles that are absolutely correct, leaving no room for improvement, but it is impossible that anyone (with the possible exception of a deity) could *know* that they were correct.

from duty which can meet the challenge presented in the beginning of this section.

As explained earlier, I think that a concern to do what one morally ought to do should be understood as a concern to do the morally recommended as well as the morally required. Otherwise, a commitment to do one's duty is of limited importance in an agent morality and will not have the role of unifying and undergirding one's acts and one's conception of oneself which, for reasons yet to be adumbrated, I believe it should have.

It scarcely needs stating that acting from duty should *not* be thought to involve thinking just before every action about the moral status of the intended action. More important and more subtle is how this point interlocks with the distinction between primary and secondary motives of duty. On the conception that I am recommending, duty is seen as attaching primarily not to individual actions but to *conduct*, to how one lives, and only derivatively to isolated actions. The definitive feature of someone who acts from duty is her commitment to doing what she really ought to do—and to determining what she ought to do—and this is significant as a long-term, wide-ranging commitment, governing all one does.

Once we break from the idea that acting from duty primarily concerns isolated actions, there is no temptation to suppose that one must ask before each action whether one ought to do what one is proposing to do. But once we break from *that* idea (and no longer ask the typical "How often is one supposed to act from duty? Is acting from duty being advocated only for a certain range of actions? If so, which?"), we see the vital role of the sense of duty as a *secondary* motive. On my view, one should (ideally) always act from duty, but this is only to say that all of one's conduct should be governed by one's unconditional commitment to doing what one morally ought to do. To say that one should always act from duty is not to say that one should always act from duty as a primary motive. One's sense of duty will serve generally as a limiting condition and at the same time as an impetus to think about one's conduct, to appraise one's goals, to be conscious of oneself as a self-determining being, and sometimes to give one the strength one needs to do what one sees one really should do.

VII

We are now in a position to return to the questions posed. First, does a commitment to doing whatever one morally ought to do alienate one from others? Does it either make one unable to care for or about other people or make the concern or affection that one has

for others less deep or less genuine? Second, is it an expression or symptom of alienation?

It would seem that, in the form in which I have defended it, acting from duty would not involve any such difficulty, simply because it can operate together with sympathetic concern, deep attachment to the person, and so on. By 'together' I do not mean merely 'alongside'; the motives will typically be interwoven, and in more ways than one. To list just a few: first, one's awareness of how one ought to conduct oneself will not atypically be enriched by one's affective responses to fiction, the plight of others, etc. Second, since any materially adequate sense of duty will recognize that one has duties to be concerned about the welfare of others and that one has special duties as a friend, among one's duties will be those of cultivating certain attitudes and dispositions.²⁰ Third, and most important for present purposes, one's sense of duty will serve to strengthen other motives, as the following examples illustrate.

Suppose, following our well-worn motif, that, on a raw, chilly Sunday when I am inclined to stay home and read, I push myself to visit a friend who is in the hospital awaiting surgery the next day. I'd prefer to see her elsewhere (I dislike hospitals) and on a different day, but I really ought to visit her, since she would be especially anxious, as well as disappointed if I didn't (and helping out at times like this is part of friendship).²¹ Or, to borrow an example from Richard Norman²²:

Suppose that a friend of mine has come to grief, in a totally predictable way about which I had insistently warned him—yet another disastrous love-affair, perhaps—and now comes to me for sympathy; it has happened so often before, and was so obviously bound to turn out this way, that I have lost all patience with him and can feel no sympathy for him, but still I know that he needs my help and that I ought to do what I can for him (169).

²⁰ Just what these other motives are that will motivate the agent whose actions are governed by a sense of duty remains to be worked out. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss them, since my project is to argue that acting from duty is not in all shapes and forms morally repugnant, and to suggest a form of acting from duty which leaves room for the other motives that are important to morally good conduct.

²¹ Someone might protest that there would be something alienating about an agent who actually thought the parenthetical conclusion to him- or herself. "It's so distanced, so abstract; what purpose could it possibly serve? Why doesn't the agent leave things at 'she'd be very disappointed'?" My answer is that often it would not serve any purpose; hence the parentheses. But not infrequently it would; for the agent may recall a situation in which the fact that a friend would be very disappointed was not a sufficient reason for making plans accordingly, and may wonder why (or whether) this case is different. [Imagine, for instance, that a "suitor" pressed her to cancel her plans with a female friend so that he could go out with her (the

These examples (and many others like them) illustrate that the motive of duty can supplement the motives that opponents of acting from duty prefer to see operate as the sole motive.²³ If it operates in this way, there appears to be no ground for regarding it as symptomatic of alienation.

VIII

Thus understood, acting from duty would seem to be unobjectionable.²⁴ But it does not seem so to Susan Wolf and Bernard Williams. This is evident from their discussions of Williams's example. Indeed Wolf remarks that his example is particularly apt in that, unlike Stocker's, it reveals the flaws in acting from friendship or love that is governed or mediated by one's sense of duty—not just the flaws in acting from duty as a primary motive. The example, taken from Charles Fried's *An Anatomy of Values*,²⁵ describes a situation in which a man in a position to save one of two persons in equal

agent). The fact that he would be very disappointed if she didn't cancel the plans (more, we suppose, than she expected her female friend would be) was not, she thought, sufficient reason to change her plans; for although she'd be at least as happy to spend the evening with him as with the other friend, she believed that women should strive to avoid the traditional pattern of putting romantic interests above their friendships with women.] The thought serves the purpose, in such circumstances, of clarifying to the agent the relevant difference between the two situations.

²² "Critical Notice: Rodger Beehler, *Moral Life*," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, xi, 1 (March 1981): 157–183.

²³ In the examples, my affection and concern for my friend would not suffice to overcome my inclination to stay home—or, in Norman's example, to tell my friend to handle his problems himself. An opponent might argue that the examples serve to demonstrate only that morally deficient people need a sense of duty (a point which is consistent with and probably strategically useful for the thesis I am opposing, viz. that acting from duty is morally repugnant). This would be to suppose that the fact that I was strongly inclined to stay home or that I lost all patience with my friend shows me to be morally flawed. I think that that supposition should be rejected, but to defend my claim would take us too far afield, since it would require (among other things) an evaluation of the view of morality according to which an agent's goodness is a function solely of his unselfishness and indeed selflessness. Unless one accepts that view of morality, one will grant, I think, that a sense of duty is important to the conduct of morally perfect persons.

²⁴ Someone might find it unobjectionable, but maddeningly so, suspecting that I have changed the subject and concocted a straw-man argument. "Your opponents understand acting from duty differently," the objection continues, "but once you straighten out your terminological differences, will any disagreement remain?" The rest of this paper can be read as a reply to this objection. Section viii makes it plain that a substantive dispute would persist between Wolf/Williams and myself; section x argues that Stocker and I also disagree about more than terminology. I also question whether, even if the dispute were only terminological, I would be the one guilty of a straw man. *Who* has changed the subject (of acting from duty)? (See fn 2, above.) But that is material for a different paper.

²⁵ Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970.

peril chooses to save his wife. Fried explains that it is permissible for him to choose his wife rather than make the choice by a flip of a coin, because "the occurrence of the accident may itself stand as a sufficient randomizing event to meet the dictates of fairness" (27). Insisting that "surely this is a justification on behalf of the rescuer, that the person he chose to rescue was his wife," Williams objects to the "idea that moral principle can legitimate the man's preference." "This construction," he elaborates, "provides the agent with one thought too many: it might have been hoped by some (for instance, by his wife) that his motivating thought, fully spelled out, would be the thought that it was his wife, not that it was his wife and that in situations of this kind it is permissible to save one's wife."²⁶ Echoing Williams, Wolf adds, "Ideally, it seems, when one acts on behalf of a loved one, one acts plainly and simply *for his sake*. One's motivating thought, fully spelled out, is something like 'It's good for George'" (50).

The objection to the idea that the man should be thinking about fairness in such a situation can be dismissed, since we have seen that one's action can be governed by a belief that one is acting fairly without its being the case that one thinks about fairness at the time of action. But what about the claim that the agent should act "plainly and simply" for his wife's sake? Here the point seems to go beyond the suggestion that he shouldn't be thinking at that particular time about fairness; Williams objects, remember, "to the idea that moral principle can legitimate the man's preference."

Would it be preferable if the action of the man in Williams's example were motivated simply by love for his wife, i.e., if it were not governed by a belief that what he does is morally permissible? I think not, and the reason why can be gleaned if we revise the example slightly and imagine that his wife is badly shaken up, in terrible pain, but unlike the stranger, not in any life-threatening

²⁶ Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 214/5. See too Michael Slote, "Morality Not a System of Imperatives," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, xix, 4 (October 1982): 331-340. Slote argues that although obligations of general beneficence "require qualification to accommodate parental devotion . . . it would be absurd to expect a parent whose child was in danger to be guided by moral considerations in that very situation. In such circumstances, a parent will typically be beyond the reach of moral principles, and a parent who thought to himself 'I am permitted to save my child because family feelings overrides [*sic*] my other obligations' and who acted accordingly would seem to be an unnatural parent." One might think that Slote is saying only that the parent shouldn't be expected to *think this thought*, but in fact he regards the example as providing a reason for denying the thesis that moral claims (in particular, claims of moral obligation and permission) are all (disguised) prescriptions. (See especially p. 335.) Here and elsewhere in his paper Slote appears to assume that to be guided by a principle, one must be conscious of it at the time of the action.

danger. Assuming that there is hope of saving the stranger's life but very little time, it would be wrong of the husband to devote his attention to his wife before attending to the stranger. It is difficult to turn away from the anguished cries of someone whom one loves dearly in order to administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to a stranger; but far from supporting Wolf's and Williams's claims, this underscores the importance of acting from affections that are informed by a sense of what is right and, if necessary, adjusted accordingly. Or, if one's affections are recalcitrant, one will need to act from one's recognition of what one's affections would be if they were not so unyielding—i.e., from one's sense of what is right.²⁷

What about the argument that it might have been hoped by some (e.g., by his wife) that the thought that it was she would have been sufficient motivation for him? Several comments are in order here. First, the mere fact that she might have hoped this is in itself of no relevance. Many of us are insecure about the strength of our loved ones' affection for us; it might worry us that our spouse was not so overwhelmed by the sight of us in excruciating pain as to lack the presence of mind needed to see that the stranger was (or wasn't) in greater need. The spouse in the example as I revised it might be pained because she didn't receive any comfort or reassurance right away. She may realize that her husband was right to save (or try to save) the person whose life was imperiled before comforting her; but her pain may persist. If this is the situation, Williams's point is again of no relevance.

Someone might object, "But surely it is of relevance! After all, she feels alienated from her husband. She knows he did what was right, but it still hurts. And this goes to show the clash between morality and love." Now, if *this* is the force of the claim that acting from duty is alienating, then the difficulty lies not with acting from duty, but with doing what one morally ought to do, whether or not one does it *for the reason* that it is what one morally ought to do. The claim is thus not that acting from duty is morally repugnant, but rather that doing what one morally ought to do is morally repugnant—an interesting and curious claim, but not central to the focus of this paper.

To return to Williams's argument: it is true of both his example and my variation on it that there *might* be cause for worry. It's possible that the husband saw his wife's suffering just as *someone's*

²⁷ It should be evident from my appeal to "adjusted affections" that my view of morally good conduct derives from Hume as well as from Kant. See Hume, *Treatise*, III,3,i and the second *Enquiry*, pp. 228 and 239 of the Selby-Bigge and Nidditch edition.

suffering, or the prospect of her death just as the prospect of *someone's* tragic death. But we would need to know more about the husband to determine this, since an alternative interpretation is available.

Of course his wife would have reason to be dismayed if it had not pained him to hear her moans and to be unable to comfort her while tending to the more severe case. There would be cause for worry if his sympathetic responses were naturally directly proportional to the severity of the case: equal anguish in Williams's example for his spouse and the stranger; in my example, greater for the stranger than for his wife. But it is one thing to claim that there is something wrong if a person's spontaneous affective responses aren't such and such in circumstances *C*; it is another matter to say that there is something wrong, in circumstances *C*, with putting one's affective responses through a filter rather than acting on them with no thought of what it is right to do or what one ought to do.

Now it must be admitted that the conduct of the man in Williams's example is questionable. The man has curious moral intuitions if he thinks that, in the absence of "a sufficient randomizing event," he might be morally required to toss a coin to determine whom to aid. In the absence of reasons that weigh in favor of helping the stranger rather than his wife, the fact that she is this person whom he dearly loves is reason enough to choose her.²⁸ Of course, the fact that he has bizarre moral intuitions in no way implicates acting from duty, since there is no reason to think that people who act from duty necessarily or even generally have his intuitions.

Our scrutiny of Williams's and Stocker's examples discloses nothing that impugns acting from duty as such. It is true that there are instances in which someone may feel alienated or rejected if a friend puts some moral consideration above his needs or wishes, but to the extent that this is an instance where acting from duty is alienating, it hardly seems to support the claim that acting from duty is morally repugnant.

A more plausible objection concerns sanctimoniousness or, perhaps more accurately—since sanctimoniousness is sometimes thought to involve hypocrisy²⁹—moral narcissism. Earlier I re-

²⁸ But this is not to say that no other thoughts or beliefs should influence his action. The agent does well to be alert to the possibility that there are reasons that weigh in favor of helping the stranger.

²⁹ Or so say *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* and *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*.

marked that if someone who acts from duty is a moral narcissist, his flaw need not show that there is anything morally undesirable about acting from duty, since, in being a moral narcissist, the agent is actually failing to conduct himself as he morally ought to, i.e., failing to do his duty. I later acknowledged the objection that, if one who acts from duty is precluded from or even merely less able to fulfill certain duties, this fact does impugn acting from duty after all. Now, someone might argue that moral narcissism falls under this heading. The view seems initially plausible. It is true that someone who is committed to doing whatever she morally ought to do and to striving to determine just what she morally ought to do is, other things equal, more likely to be a moral narcissist than someone who pays no attention to the moral rectitude of his conduct. But though this is true, to conclude on that basis that acting from duty is morally undesirable would hardly be warranted. If, on the other hand, one could show that the individuals are very likely to be despicably obsessed with their own (individual) goodness and that proper moral education cannot ward off this malady, the case would be somewhat different. There appears, however, to be no reason to think this at all likely. It would seem perfectly feasible to bring children up to have, as adults, senses of duty without being excessively attentive to or smug about their moral characters.³⁰

Having addressed the objection that acting from duty is morally repugnant because it involves moral narcissism, we may—barring the development of further objections along these lines—conclude that Stocker was wrong to suggest that the motive of duty drives out such morally significant motives as concern for the weal and woe of others.

IX

Someone might protest, however, that my analysis of Stocker's and Williams's examples minimizes the difficulties and misconstrues the charge. I have, my opponent might acknowledge, refuted the charge that the motive of duty *drives out* these other valuable mo-

³⁰ In "Utilitarianism and Moral Self-Indulgence," Williams points out that "'he is concerned with being generous'" need not mean that the person has "substituted for a thought about what is needed, a thought which focuses disproportionately upon the expression of his own disposition [in Williams, *Moral Luck* (New York: Cambridge, 1980), p. 47]. The same point can be made if 'being generous' is replaced by 'doing what is right.' In each case one must be wary, however, of taking the point too far and supposing that the agent should be concerned merely with being generous—as if he were as responsible for others' conduct as he is for his own—and not with *his* being generous. (This is elaborated in my as yet unfinished "Remorse and Agent-regret.")

tives; but maybe that is not what Stocker (and Williams and Wolf) meant. The idea might be that, *by definition*, acts of friendship lose their status as acts of friendship if done from duty; that insofar as one does something for a friend from duty, one isn't acting as a friend—again, *by definition*.³¹ Thus understood, the point is not an empirical one, but strictly definitional, and thus immune to the criticisms I have put forth. For if, by definition, I do not act as a friend if I do a favor for a friend from a sense of duty, it is futile to protest that my sense of duty serves primarily to reinforce the feelings I at least generally have for my friend, and that it need not displace them. It is futile to make such points if the matter is closed by definitional fiat.

What, then, is to be said? The only reply open is that if, by definition, one cannot act from duty and act as a friend, so be it; but given the implicit definition of friendship, so what? If, according to the definition, I am not a true friend to *S* unless I put *S* first, before all else, we will simply have to come up with a new word for what most of us mean by 'friendship'. For most of us, friendship need not be exclusionary: I can be a friend to *S* and a friend to *T*. If friendship required that I put my friend first, where 'first' means 'before everything else', being friends with more than one person would be impossible. For most of us, friendship is nonetheless friendship if it is not wholly unconditional. Certain conditions are, to be sure, quite unreasonable; but to expect your friend to stick by you come what may, e.g., to lie for you on the witness stand or to assist you in a fraudulent business transaction, is hardly warranted. Yet it would be warranted if, by definition, one does not act as a friend if one's conduct vis-à-vis one's friend is governed by a sense of duty.

My criticism of the implicit definition of friendship can be made more crisply in the following manner. Susan Wolf remarks that the person who visits or otherwise aids another from duty sees that person "first as a possible object of moral concern and only second as a person whose comfort and happiness he naturally cares about increasing" (48). *Does* acting from duty mean that people are given a priority rating of 2: that morality counts for more than people? There is a sense in which the answer is "Yes, morality does come before people": what one morally ought to do imposes an ultimate constraint on one's conduct.³² Part of what it is to act from duty is to act with a counterfactual condition always at hand (though not

³¹ I am grateful to Holly Smith for pointing out this possible interpretation.

³² This is not to deny that there is also a (much more obvious) sense in which the answer is 'No'.

always in one's thoughts): one would not do this if it were morally counter-recommended.

If opponents insist that such a counterfactual condition gets in the way of friendship and love, then, I want to say, so much the worse for friendship and love—thus conceived. Unless one buys into an extremely romantic notion of love and a similar notion of unconditional friendship, the conflict is bogus.³³

X

A final objection needs to be considered. Someone might object, "I grant everything you've said, but find it trivial. The disagreement with Stocker *et al.* is strictly terminological. You have so watered down the notion of acting from duty that no one could possibly contest your claim that it is a necessary condition for perfectly moral personhood that one act from duty, though one could disagree with you over the merit of using the phrase 'acting from duty' the way you use it." Moreover, my critic might add, not only have I not shown that Stocker, Williams, and Wolf reject my thesis; there is positive evidence in Stocker's "Morally Good Intentions"³⁴ that he, at least, would accept it. For in that article Stocker emphasizes a *sine qua non* condition for morally good intentions which, in simplified form, is that S's intention is morally good only if it is true that if S believed that the direct object of the intention were not good, then for that reason, S would not have the intention or the intention would not be as strong as it is.

Stocker and I do agree in requiring a counterfactual condition, though since we require it for different purposes—he for morally good intentions, I for acting from duty, the "agreement" is hardly that.³⁵ Even if my critic transposed Stocker's necessary condition

³³ In attempting to think of examples that would show there is a conflict between friendship and morality, one must bear in mind that the conflict is to be between what one should do as a friend and what, morally, one really ought to do. Hence to say, as Wolf does in her criticism of acting from duty, that we "might hope that a friend would find our interests more important than the fulfillment of at least some rather trivial obligations" (53) is to forget that only genuine moral obligations are of relevance. *Prima facie* moral obligations must be weighed against each other, and only once it is decided what the person morally ought to do, all things considered, should we ask whether there is a conflict between the moral obligation and friendship.

³⁴ *The Monist*, LIV, 1 (January 1970): 124–141. The full analysis reads as follows: "A's intention to do *b* is at least in part morally good just in case (i) *A* has an intention *j* to do *b*, (ii) *A* believes that what is a direct object of *j* is good and that (a) (at least some of) this good is not intended simply as a means to something else, and (iii) were (ii) not true then for that reason *A* would not have *j* or *j* would not be so strong as it is" (141).

³⁵ Just how different these purposes are becomes evident when one notes (a) that Stocker thinks it may be possible that someone have a morally good character without ever having a morally good intention ("Morally Good Intentions," 129) and (b) that I think it is crucial to having a morally good character that one act from duty.

for morally good intentions into a necessary condition for perfectly moral personhood, the objection would find little support. For my requirement is much stiffer than Stocker's. I insist that the perfectly moral person must be committed to doing what is right (and to striving to determine what is right). The fact that had one believed it wrong to do *X*, one would not have done *X*—and would not have for the reason that one believed it wrong—does not suffice to show that one is acting from duty. Part of one's motivation must be a commitment to doing whatever is right. No such requirement is put forth in any of Stocker's papers, and there is every indication in "Schizophrenia. . ." that he would reject it.³⁶

A related difference between Stocker's analysis and mine is that I demand a cross-temporal condition, whereas he requires (for morally good intention) a single-case counterfactual. As I use 'acts from duty', it would not make sense to say of someone that he had acted from duty on only one occasion; for one acts from duty only insofar as all of one's conduct is informed and governed by a commitment to do whatever one ought to do. Stocker, in contrast, would have no difficulty saying of someone that he or she only once had a good intention.

It is now plain that my disagreement with Stocker, Williams, and Wolf is not merely terminological. They each believe that an overarching commitment to acting morally alienates us from others—and perhaps from ourselves.³⁷ My imaginary opponent's error can be traced to a simple conflation. The objection conflates (1) the condition which one must meet—one does not do what one sees to be wrong—and which forms the content of one's commit-

³⁶ Stocker: "Love, friendship, affection, fellow feeling, and community, like many other states and activities, essentially contain certain motives and essentially preclude certain others; among those precluded we find motives comprising the justifications, the goals, the goods of those ethical theories most prominent today" (461). "Duty seems relevant in our relations with our loved ones and friends, only when our love, friendship, and affection lapse. If a family is 'going well,' its members 'naturally' help each other; that is, their love, affection and deep friendship are sufficient for them to care for and help one another (to put it a bit coolly)" (465n).

It might be claimed that Stocker objects not to acting from duty, but to doing so if one's notions of what is good or right are those of current ethical theories. Given the quote just cited, and the words "among those [precluded]" in the previous quote, this interpretation seems too narrow. In addition, if the "narrow" interpretation were correct, one would expect Stocker to provide some clue as to what ethical theories *would* avoid schizophrenia, yet he provides none. Indeed, he points out that the same problem would arise if one tried to embody love into one's motives. Thus, the problem he addresses seems to reside not in embodying certain values in one's motives, but in embodying any values in one's motives.

³⁷ Stocker in particular stresses that acting from certain motives prevents us from caring for ourselves ("Schizophrenia," pp. 459/60).

ment, with (2) the conditions under which it is true that one acts from duty, i.e., is governed by this commitment. It wrongly reads the "weakness" of the condition in (1) into (2) and assumes that all I am advocating is that a perfectly moral person must meet the condition in (1). If this were so, my paper would be trivial indeed. But I have said more, viz., that one must be *committed* to meeting this condition.

Just how is this commitment to be understood? Since my aim here is not to provide a full account of acting from duty, but rather to challenge the suggestion that acting from duty is morally repugnant, this is not the place to discuss the commitment at length. I will, however, briefly indicate how the commitment to doing whatever is right is manifested and in what sense one who acts from duty acts from this commitment. We should first observe that a "perfect record" in doing one's duty is not only not sufficient to acting from duty, but also not necessary. A certain amount of backsliding is consistent with having this commitment; one can correctly be said to act from duty even if one occasionally fails to do what one sees one should do.³⁸ But the commitment will have other manifestations besides conformity to one's sense of duty, most notably, reflection on how one should live, readiness to revise one's moral beliefs and one's plans and aims in light of one's reflections, willingness to entertain evidence that tells against one's moral beliefs. In addition, one who acts from duty will reflect on her conduct and not be left cold by thoughts about how she acted—nor will she feel only the retrospective emotions (e.g., regret, unlike remorse) which enable one to evade moral responsibility for the conduct in question.³⁹ And, of course, the agent will sometimes evince *resolve* to act as she sees she ought to act.

The sense in which one acts from this commitment, even in instances in which one gives no thought to the ethical nature of one's conduct before proceeding with the intended action, is roughly as follows: a very rich explanation of any nontrivial choice or action, e.g., the sort of explanation that a novelist might give, would make reference to some of the manifestations listed above.

My response to this final objection has, I hope, helped to clarify my position in two (not unrelated) respects. First, when one bears in mind the centrality of the agent's commitment to my account of acting from duty, it becomes clear why I never speak of acting from

³⁸ I see no way to spell out just how much backsliding is too much.

³⁹ I discuss the importance of remorse in my "Remorse and Agent-regret."

a *desire* to do one's duty: acting from duty, as I understand it, is altogether different from acting from a desire (simpliciter) to do one's duty, since the desire does not require that one's conduct be governed by a sense of duty. A desire to do one's duty is in the end a desire; a commitment to doing whatever one morally ought to do is not. A desire to do one's duty does not have the legislative powers that a sense of duty has. Second, acting from duty, as I have defended it, must be thought of not in terms of isolated actions, but as conduct viewed over a stretch of time, and governed by a commitment which unifies and directs the self.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Rejection of Consequentialism. SAMUEL SCHEFFLER. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982. x, 133 p. \$12.95.

Recent criticisms of consequentialist ethical theories have clustered around two points. First, by basing the right on an impersonally reckoned good, consequentialism apparently abstracts from the personal importance of an agent's projects and commitments in a way that threatens to undermine personal integrity. Second, by aggregating personal goods into an impersonally reckoned over-all good, standard consequentialist theories appear to overlook the distinctness of persons and the concern for distributive justice to which it gives rise.

In *The Rejection of Consequentialism*, Samuel Scheffler provides a very useful, fair-minded, and subtly argued consideration of this case against consequentialist, more precisely, against act-consequentialist, theories. Although he finds objections based on personal integrity and the distinctness of persons initially plausible, especially against utilitarianism, he believes that they do not lead to any standard deontological theory of the right; indeed, he believes that the latter objection does not lead away from consequentialism at all.

It is possible to include distributive considerations within a conception of over-all good. A consequentialist may hold that whether one state of the world is better than another partly depends on how benefits and burdens are distributed to individuals in those states. Accordingly, Scheffler proposes a "distribution-sensitive" theory of