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Kant Section 2-4

When Kant talks about good will he is really talking about the goodness of the person determined by their adherence to moral law. A person of good will is dedicated to making all their decisions in accordance with or the best application of moral authority. This type of person is the best version of a person, so we all try to orient ourselves into this type of character.

Kant believes the value of this type of person is limitless because we wouldn’t trade it for anything and there is no condition which would make it invaluable. I can’t imagine a situation where I would want to do something that could harm someone else just for some object. Kant says that goodness is good in itself, so there couldn’t be a situation where goodness would be worthless.

He continues by dividing out duty from being considered as goodwill because if you were to perform some action because of an external motivation it wouldn’t have the same weight. If I chose to help someone for no other reason than I saw someone suffering, then that would have a greater weight than if I were told to help that person. The act must come from a qualified source of motivation to be an act of good will, otherwise it’s just relegated to duty. Kant does say there is some lee way in conformance to social norms or laws but there is limit. He gives the example of Nazi Germany and the glaring morality issues with enforcing those type of laws should’ve caused people to value their goodness over their social norms.