

Kant: does the misfit  
have good will? is



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Kant: GoodnessThe philosopher I used is Immanuel Kant. He was very practical in his thinking of goodness. A quote of his was "I ought, therefore I can". His view was good anything is under good will. He believed good will was the primary goodness, good in its purest form, and that it couldn't be corrupted. Good feelings and good intentions and actions can be interpreted in different ways; man can corrupt these things into evil..

. even though it still might be good in that man's eyes. What he's really trying to say is that good will is good in its objective form. Therefore, it defines goodness.

A few examples of forms of goodness that could be corrupt are intelligence, courage, and resolution. These things can be very good, but can be used for evil as well. The short story I would like to allude to in order to connect these themes and ideas is "A Good Man is Hard to Find". The title even has "good" in it..

. and according to Kant, goodness in its purest form is good will. The question now would be, does the Misfit have good will? Is what he is doing good, objectively, and purely? He is purging and purifying the world. He is Christlike in many senses. He is purifying the world by purging it of its evil.

.. relating to the Old Testament.

God decided that the human race was too evil to survive, so he flooded it. God killed, as well as the Misfit. This isn't the same as Christ, though; it just adds to the religious element. Christ's mission was to try and rid the world of

evil, and sacrificed for it. The Misfit sacrificed his freedom initially, was "reborn" again by escaping from jail, and become a Christ like figure again.

.. he's now reborn, and his mission has an even stronger exclamation point on it, just like Christ's after he was resurrected. The literal differences are obvious; Christ never held anyone at gunpoint, let alone kill old ladies (no matter HOW hateful).

But the allusions above illustrate that the Misfit was indeed a Christ-like figure with good intentions; good will. The Misfit was in a world of evil where he felt it was his mission, as well as his intention and his will, to be the savior of the good people. When it really comes to good will, I believe that the Misfit did have good will and that, in a world such as his, the South, he was not just playing God, but his will was forcing him to be God to judge the "infidels". I think the best poem I can relate to Kant's philosophy is "Richard Cory".

Richard Cory didn't have good will, that was his downfall. You can't tell a whole lot from his personal life from the poem, but you can always assume that he didn't have good will, at least in relation to Kant's philosophy. Assuming that, we look at his "good" actions, intentions, etc.

from the poem. He was a pillar of society, looked at as the model of goodness. This is exactly the people's mistake. I believe that the people killed Richard Cory by not looking inward for goodness; by saying: "Well, if Richard Cory does that, if I do that, I'll be good like him".

This put him on a pedestal, like the hunger artist. The people killed him by this method; he realized that the people did not have good will because they were looking at him for goodness, and therefore, he could never have good

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will. The people were looking for an identity, and it was too much for Richard Cory. An aspect of my life, or upcoming life, that I'd relate to Kant's philosophy is the fact that someday, I'd like to be a parent. We say it's for "selfish reasons", but I think most people who realize what they're doing when they want to become a parent, and not just a biological mother/father, also realize how much responsibility, caring, and planning parenting really takes.

God knows that the fact this isn't happening often enough is leading to problems like overpopulation and societal breakdown, but I would want to be a role model to my child(ren) and teach them everything I know so that eventually, they will be the best possible person I can raise them to be, and then be able to go out on their own and do the same. I think that this is good will, because, yes, reproduction is selfish in a way, but if you have the good will to be a good parent, by teaching your children, and trying to make them model their lives after yours, if you truly believe you can be a good mother/father, then you are acting on good will much more than selfishness.

Philosophy