

Groundlaying
toward the
Metaphysics
of **Morals**

by
Immanuel Kant.

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Preface.

Ancient Greek philosophy was divided into three sciences: **physics**, **ethics**, and **logic**. This division is perfectly suitable to the nature of the thing, and there is nothing to improve about it, except perhaps only to add its principle, in order in such way partly to assure oneself of its completeness, partly to be able to determine correctly the necessary subdivisions.

All rational cognition is either *material* and considers some object; or *formal*, and occupies itself merely with the form of the understanding and of reason itself and the universal rules of thinking in general, without distinction of objects. Formal philosophy is called **logic**, the material, however,

which has to do with determinate objects and the laws to which they are subjected, is again twofold. For these laws are either laws of *nature*, or of *freedom*. The science of the first is called **physics**, that of the other is **ethics**; the former is also named doctrine of nature, the latter doctrine of morals.

Logic can have no empirical part, i.e. one such, where the universal and necessary laws of thinking rest on grounds which were taken from experience; for otherwise it would not be logic, i.e. a canon for the understanding, or the reason, which is valid for all thinking and must be demonstrated. On the other hand, natural as well as moral philosophy can each have their empirical part, because the former must determine its laws of nature as an object of experience, the latter however for the will of the human being so far as it is affected by nature, the first to be sure as laws according to which everything happens, the

second as such according to which everything ought to happen, but still also with consideration of the conditions under which it often does not happen.

One can name all philosophy, so far as it is founded on grounds of experience, *empirical*, that however, so far as it explains its teachings only from principles a priori, *pure* philosophy. The latter, if it is merely formal, is called *logic*; if, however, it is limited to determinate objects of the understanding, then it is called *metaphysics*.

In such way the idea of a twofold metaphysics arises, of a *metaphysics of nature* and of a *metaphysics of morals*. Physics will thus have its empirical, but also a rational part; ethics likewise; although here the empirical part especially could be called *practical anthropology*, the rational, however, properly *morals*.

All trades, crafts and arts have gained through the distribution of labor,

where, that is to say, no one makes everything, but each restricts oneself to certain labor which differs noticeably from others according to its mode of treatment, in order to be able to do it in the greatest perfection and with more ease. Where the labors are not in this way differentiated and divided, where each is a Jack-of-all-trades, there the trades still lie in the greatest barbarism. But although it would for itself be an object not unworthy of consideration, to ask: whether pure philosophy in all its parts would not require its special man, and would it not be better for the whole of the learned trade, if those, who are accustomed to sell the empirical mixed with the rational according to the taste of the public in all kinds of proportions unknown even to themselves, who name themselves independent thinkers, others however, who prepare the merely rational part, hair-splitters, would be warned, not to work at two tasks at the same time, which in the way to handle them, are entirely very different, for each of which perhaps a special talent is required,

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and of which union in one person produces only bunglers: nevertheless, I here ask only, whether the nature of science does not always require separating carefully the empirical from the rational part and sending before the proper (empirical) physics a metaphysics of nature, but before practical anthropology a metaphysics of morals, which must be carefully cleansed of everything empirical, in order to know how much pure reason in both cases can achieve and from which sources it itself draws its own instruction *a priori*, whether the latter task is conducted by all teachers of morals (whose name is legion) or only by some who feel a calling to it.

Since my purpose here is properly directed to moral philosophy, I limit the proposed question only to this: whether one is not of the opinion that it is of the utmost necessity to work up once a pure moral philosophy which is completely cleansed of everything that

might be only empirical and belong to anthropology; for that there must be such one is clear of itself from the common idea of duty and of moral laws. Everyone must admit that a law, if it is to hold morally, i.e. as a ground of an obligation, must carry about itself absolute necessity; that the command: thou shalt not lie, holds not at all merely for humans, other rational beings having themselves, however, to pay no heed to it, and similarly for all remaining proper moral laws; that therefore the ground of the obligation here must be looked for not in the nature of the human being, or the circumstances in the world, in which it is placed, but *a priori* only in concepts of pure reason, and that every other prescription which is grounded on principles of mere experience, and even a prescription universal in a certain respect, so far as it is based in the least part, perhaps only as regards a motive, on empirical grounds, can to be sure be called a practical rule, never however a moral law.

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Thus the moral laws together with their principles among all practical cognitions differ not only essentially from everything else in which there is anything empirical, but all moral philosophy rests completely on its pure part, and, applied to the human being, it borrows not the least from the knowledge of human beings (anthropology), but gives it, as a rational being, laws *a priori*, which of course still require a power of judgment sharpened through experience, in order partly to distinguish in which cases they have their application, partly to secure them entry into the will of the human being and vigor for their practice, since this, as itself affected with so many inclinations, is no doubt capable of the idea of a practical pure reason, but not so easily able of making it *in concreto* effective in its conduct of life.

A metaphysics of morals is therefore indispensably necessary, not merely from a motive of speculation, in order to investigate the source of the practical ground propositions lying *a priori* in our reason,

but because morals themselves remain subject to all kinds of corruption so long as that guide and highest standard of their correct valuation is lacking. For with that which is to be morally good it is not enough that it be in *conformity* with the moral law, but it must also be done *for the sake of it*; failing which, that conformity is only very contingent and precarious because the unmoral ground will now and then to be sure produce actions conforming to law, but again and again actions contrary to law. Now, however, the moral law is in its purity and genuineness (precisely which in practical matters counts the most) to be sought nowhere else than in a pure philosophy, and therefore this (metaphysics) must precede, and without it there can be no moral philosophy at all; that which mixes these pure principles with the empirical does not even deserve the name of a philosophy (for, by this, this distinguishes itself precisely from common rational cognition, that it presents in a separated science what the latter only confusedly comprehends),

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much less of a moral philosophy, because precisely through this confusion it even damages the purity of morals themselves and proceeds against its own end.

Let one nevertheless certainly not think that what is here demanded one already has in the propaedeutic of the famous *Wolff* before his moral philosophy, namely before what he called the *universal practical philosophy*, and thus here a completely new field is not at all to be broken into. Precisely because it was to be a universal practical philosophy, it has drawn into consideration not a will of any special kind, for instance one which, without any empirical motives, would be determined completely from principles *a priori*, and which one could call a pure will, but willing in general with all actions and conditions, which belong to it in this general sense, and by this it differs from a metaphysics of morals, just in this way as general logic differs from transcendental philosophy,

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of which the first explains the actions and rules of thinking *in general*, the latter however only the special actions and rules of **pure** thinking, i.e., of that, by which objects are cognized completely a priori. For the metaphysics of morals is to investigate the idea and the principles of a possible *pure* will and not the actions and conditions of human willing in general, which for the most part are drawn from psychology. That in the universal practical philosophy (although contrary to all authorization) moral laws and duty are also spoken of, constitutes no objection opposed to my assertion. For the authors of that science remain true to their idea of it also in this; they do not distinguish the motives which, as such, are represented completely a priori merely through reason and are properly moral from the empirical, which the understanding raises merely through comparison of experiences to universal concepts, but consider them without paying attention to the difference

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of their sources, only according to their greater or smaller amount (since they are all looked upon as of like kind) and in doing this make themselves their concept of *obligation*, which of course is anything but moral, but still so constituted, as can only be demanded in a philosophy that judges not at all over the *origin* of all possible practical concepts whether they occur also a priori or merely a posteriori.

In the intention at present to deliver someday a metaphysics of morals, I let this groundlaying take the lead. To be sure, there is properly no other foundation for it than the critique of a *pure practical reason*, just as for metaphysics there is no other than the already delivered critique of pure speculative reason. But, partly, the former is not of such extreme necessity as the latter because human reason in moral matters can easily be brought, even in the case of the commonest understanding, to great correctness and completeness, whereas it is in theoretical, but pure, use wholly and

entirely dialectical: partly, I require for the critique of a pure practical reason, that, if it is to be finished, its unity with the speculative must at the same time be able to be presented in a common principle, because there can, after all, in the end be only one and the same reason that must be differentiated merely in its application. I was, however, here not yet able to bring it to such a completeness without bringing in considerations of a quite different kind and confusing the reader. For that reason I have, instead of the designation of a *critique of pure practical reason*, helped myself to that of a *groundlaying toward the metaphysics of morals*.

Because, however, thirdly, a metaphysics of morals, in spite of the forbidding title, is nevertheless also capable of a great degree of popularity and suitability to the common understanding, I think it useful to separate this preparatory work of the foundation from it, in order that subtleties which are unavoidable in it

in the future need not attach to more comprehensible teachings.

The present groundlaying is, however, nothing more than the search for and establishment *of the highest principle of morality*, which constitutes by itself a business complete in its purpose and to be separate from all other moral investigation. No doubt my assertions over this important, and up to now by far still not adequately discussed, main question would receive through application of the same principle to the whole system much light and through the adequacy, which it shows everywhere, great confirmation: but I had to give up this advantage, which would be also at bottom more self-loving than generally useful, because the ease in the use of and the apparent adequacy of a principle furnishes no completely secure proof of the correctness of it, rather rouses a certain bias not to investigate and to weigh it for itself, without any regard for the consequences, in all strictness.

I have taken my method in this writing in such a way that, I believe, it is the most fitting, if one wants to take the path from the common cognition to the determination of its highest principle analytically and again back from the examination of this principle and its sources to common cognition, in which its use is found, synthetically. The division has therefore turned out in this way:

1. *First Section:* Transition from the common moral rational cognition to the philosophical.
2. *Second Section:* Transition from the popular moral philosophy to the metaphysics of morals.
3. *Third Section:* Last step from the metaphysics of morals to the critique of pure practical reason.

First Section.

Transition

from the common moral rational cognition
to the philosophical.

It is possible to think nothing anywhere in the world, indeed generally even out of it, which could without limitation be held to be good, except only a **good will**. Understanding, wit, power of judgment and whatever the *talents* of the mind may otherwise be called, or courage, resolution, perseverance in purpose, as qualities of *temperament*, are without doubt for many a purpose good and desirable; but they can also become extremely bad and harmful, if the will, which is to make use of these natural gifts and whose distinctive quality is therefore called *character*, is not good. With *gifts of fortune* it is just in this way qualified. Power, riches, honor, even health and the whole well-being and satisfaction with one's condition under

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the name of *happiness* produce courage and by this often also arrogance, where a good will is not present, which corrects their influence on the mind and with this also the whole principle of acting and makes them accord with universal ends; not to mention, that a rational impartial spectator even by the view of an uninterrupted prosperity of a being, adorned with no trait of a pure and good will, can never again have a satisfaction, and so the good will appears to constitute the unavoidable condition even of the worthiness to be happy.

Some qualities are even favorable to this good will itself and can much ease its work, have however for all that no inner unconditional worth, but always still presuppose a good will, which limits the high esteem that one after all justly carries for them and does not permit them to be held to be absolutely good. Moderation in emotional disturbances and passions, self-restraint and sober reflection are not only for many kinds of purpose good, but appear to constitute even a part of the *inner* worth of the person; but it lacks much that would be needed in order to declare them without limitation to be good (however unconditionally they were praised by the ancients). For without ground propositions of a good will they can become extremely bad, and the cold blood of a scoundrel makes him

not only far more dangerous, but also immediately in our eyes even more abominable than he would be held to be without this.

The good will is not through that which it effects or accomplishes, not through its suitability to the attainment of some proposed end, but only through the willing, i.e. in itself, good, and, considered for itself, without comparison of far higher value than anything which could ever be brought about through it in favor of any inclination, even if one wants, of the sum of all inclinations. Even if this will, through a special disfavor of fate, or through the scanty endowment of a stepmotherly nature, were wholly lacking the capacity to carry through its purpose; if, by its greatest effort nevertheless nothing were accomplished by it, and only the good will (of course not at all as a mere wish, but as the summoning of all means so far as they are in our power) were left over: then it would still shine for itself like a jewel, as something which has its full worth in itself. Usefulness or fruitlessness can neither add something to this worth, nor take anything away. It would, as it were, only be the setting in order to be better able to handle it in common commerce, or to call to itself the attention of those who are not yet adequate connoisseurs, not however in order

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to recommend it to connoisseurs and to determine its worth.

There is, nevertheless, in this idea of the absolute worth of the mere will, without taking into account some utility in its valuation, something so odd, that, despite all agreement even of common reason with it, nevertheless a suspicion must arise that perhaps mere high-flying fantasy secretly lies as the ground, and that nature, in its purpose in having reason attached to our will as its governess, may be falsely understood. Hence we will put this idea from this point of view to the test.

In the natural predispositions of an organized being, i.e., a being arranged purposively for life, we assume it as a ground proposition that no organ for any end will be found in it, except what is also the most appropriate for it and the most suitable to it. Now if in a being which has reason and a will, its *preservation*, its *well-being*, in a word its *happiness*, were the proper end of nature, then it would have hit very badly on its arrangement for this to select the reason of the creature as the executrix of its purpose. For all actions that it has to carry out for this purpose

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[Scholar Translation:Orr]

and the whole rule of its behavior would be prescribed to it much more exactly by instinct and that end would have been able to be attained by this much more safely than it can ever be by reason, and should this as well over and above have been given to the favored creature, then it would only have had to serve it in order to meditate on the happy predisposition of its nature, to admire it, to enjoy it and to be thankful for the beneficent cause of it; not however, in order to submit its faculty of desire to that weak and deceitful guidance and to meddle in the purpose of nature; in a word, it would have ensured that reason struck out not in *practical use* and had the audacity, with its feeble insights, to think out for itself the plan of happiness and the means to reach it; nature would have taken over not only the choice of ends, but also even of the means and with wise foresight entrusted both only to instinct.

In fact we also find that the more a cultivated reason occupies itself with the aim of the enjoyment of life and of happiness, the further does the human being deviate from true contentment, from which arises with many and to be sure those most tested in the use of it, if they are only candid enough to admit it,

a certain degree of *misology*, i.e., hatred of reason, because they, after rough calculation of all advantage which they draw, I do not want to say from the invention of all arts of common luxury, but even from the sciences (which in the end also appear to them to be a luxury of the understanding), nevertheless find that they themselves in fact have only brought more hardship down on their heads than have gained in happiness and on that point finally rather envy than despise the more common run of human being, which is nearer to the guidance of mere natural instinct, and which does not allow its reason much influence on its doing and letting. And so far one must admit that the judgment of those who greatly moderate and even decrease below zero the boastful eulogies of advantages which reason in view of happiness and contentment of life is to supply to us is in no way peevish or ungrateful for the kindness of world government, but that the idea of another and much worthier purpose of their existence lies secretly as ground for these judgments, for which and not for happiness reason is quite properly destined, and for which therefore, as highest condition, the private purpose of the human being must largely make way.

For since reason for that purpose is not able enough so as to guide reliably the will in view of its objects

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and of the satisfaction of all our needs (which it in part even multiplies), as to which end an implanted natural instinct would have much more certainly led, nevertheless however reason as a practical faculty, i.e. as one that is to have influence on the *will*, is still allotted to us; so its true function must be not at all to produce a will good *as a means* to some other purpose but a *will good in itself*, for which purpose reason was absolutely necessary, where otherwise nature has everywhere in the distribution of its predispositions purposefully gone to work. This will may thus, to be sure, not be the sole and the complete good, but it must yet be the highest good and for all the rest, even every longing for happiness, be the condition, in which case it is entirely consistent with the wisdom of nature, if one notices that the cultivation of reason, which is required for the first and unconditional purpose, limits the attainment of the second, which always is conditioned, namely of happiness, at least in this life in many a way, indeed can even decrease it below nothing, without nature proceeding unpurposively in this, because reason, which cognizes its highest practical function in the establishment of a good will, is capable by attainment of this purpose only of a satisfaction of its own kind, namely from the fulfillment of an end which in turn only reason

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determines, even if this should be connected with many impairments which happen to the ends of inclination.

In order, however, to explicate the concept of a will to be highly esteemed in itself and good without further purpose, just as it is already present in the naturally sound understanding and needs not so much to be taught as rather only to be cleared up, this concept, which in the valuation of the whole worth of our actions always stands at the top and constitutes the condition of everything left over: we want to take up before ourselves the concept of **duty**, which contains that of a good will, although under certain subjective limitations and hindrances which, however, far from that they should hide it and make it unrecognizable, rather bring it out by contrast and allow it to shine forth that much more brightly.

I here pass over all actions which are already recognized as contrary to duty, although they might be useful for this or that purpose; for with them the question is not at all even whether they might be done *from duty*, since they even conflict with this. I also set aside the actions which actually are in conformity with duty but to which human beings immediately have *no inclination*, which, however, they nevertheless practice because they are driven to it by another inclination. For

there it is easy to distinguish whether the action conforming to duty is done *from duty* or from self-seeking purpose. It is far more difficult to notice this difference where the action is in conformity with duty and the subject moreover has an *immediate* inclination to it. E.g., it is certainly in conformity with duty that the shopkeeper does not overcharge his inexperienced buyers, and, where there is much commerce, the shrewd merchant also does not do this, but holds a fixed common price for everyone, so that a child buys from him just as well as every other. One is thus *honestly* served; but that is not nearly enough in order on that account to believe the merchant has acted in this way from duty and ground propositions of honesty; his advantage required it; but that he moreover still should have an immediate inclination for the buyers in order, as it were, from love to give no one a preference in price over another, cannot here be assumed. Thus the action was done neither from duty, nor from immediate inclination, but merely done for a self-interested purpose.

On the other hand, to preserve one's life is a duty, and besides everyone also has an immediate inclination for it. But, on account of this, the often anxious care, which the greatest part of human beings takes of it, still has no inner worth, and its maxim no moral content. They preserve their lives to be sure *in conformity with duty*,

but not *from duty*. On the other hand, if adversities and hopeless sorrow have completely taken away the taste for life; if the unhappy one, strong of soul, more angered over his fate than despondent or dejected, wishes for death and yet preserves his life without loving it, not from inclination or fear, but from duty; then his maxim has a moral content.

To be beneficent, where one can, is a duty, and besides there are many so compassionately attuned souls that they, even without another motive of vanity or of self-interest, find an inner pleasure in spreading joy around themselves, and who can take delight in the satisfaction of others, so far as it is their work. But I maintain that in such a case, action of this kind, however in conformity with duty, however kind it is, nevertheless has no true moral worth, but is on a level with other inclinations, e.g. with the inclination for honor, which, if it luckily hits on what in fact is generally good and in conformity with duty, therefore honorable, deserves praise and encouragement, but not high esteem; for the maxim lacks moral content, namely to do such actions not from inclination, but *from duty*. Granted, then, that the mind of that friend of the human being were clouded over by its own sorrow, which extinguishes all

compassion for the fate of others, he still had power to benefit other sufferers, but foreign need did not move him because he is sufficiently occupied with his own, and now, since no inclination incites him further to it, he nevertheless tears himself from out of this deadly insensibility and does the action without any inclination, merely from duty, then it has for the first time its genuine moral worth. Further still: if nature had generally put little sympathy in the heart of this or that one, if he (after all an honest man) were of cold temperament and indifferent toward the sufferings of others, perhaps because he, himself equipped against his own with the special gift of patience and enduring strength, also presupposes, or even demands, the same with every other; if nature had not formed such a man (which truly would not be its worst product) properly into a friend of the human being, would he then not still in himself find a source to give himself a far higher worth than that of a good-natured temperament might be? Certainly! just there commences the worth of character that is moral and without any comparison the highest, namely that he is beneficent, not from inclination, but from duty.

To secure one's own happiness is a duty (at least indirect), for the lack of satisfaction

with one's condition in a crowd of many worries and in the midst of unsatisfied needs could easily become a great *temptation to transgression of duties*. But, even without looking here upon duty, all human beings have already of themselves the most powerful and most intimate inclination to happiness, because just in this idea all inclinations unite themselves into a sum. Only the prescription of happiness is for the most part so constituted that it greatly infringes some inclinations and yet the human being itself can make no determinate and secure concept of the sum of satisfaction of all under the name of happiness; hence it is not to be wondered how a single inclination, determinate in view of what it promises and of the time in which its satisfaction can be received, can outweigh a wavering idea, and the human being, e.g. a gouty one, can choose to enjoy what tastes good to him, and to suffer what he is able to, because he, according to his rough calculation, here at least has not destroyed for himself the enjoyment of the present moment through perhaps groundless expectations of a happiness that is to be put in health. But also in this case, when the general inclination to happiness does not determine his will, when health for him at least in this rough calculation was not so necessary a part, there in this way still remains here as in all other cases a law, namely to

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promote his happiness, not from inclination, but from duty, and there has his conduct first of all the proper moral worth.

In this way we are without doubt also to understand the scriptural passages in which it is commanded to love one's neighbor, even our enemy. For love as inclination cannot be commanded, but beneficence from duty itself, though no inclination at all drives to it, indeed even quite natural and invincible disinclination opposes, is *practical* and not *pathological* love, which lies in the will and not in the propensity of feeling, in ground propositions of action and not melting compassion; the former alone, however, can be commanded.

The second proposition is: an action from duty has its moral worth *not in the purpose* which is to be reached by it, but in the maxim according to which it is decided, depends thus not on the actuality of the object of the action, but merely on the *principle of willing*, according to which the action is done irrespective of any objects of the faculty of desire. That the purposes which we may have in actions, and their effects, as ends and incentives of the will, can give the actions no unconditional and moral worth, is clear from the foregoing. In what, therefore, can this worth lie, if it is not

to be in the will, in reference to the hoped-for effect of them? It can lie nowhere else *than in the principle of the will* irrespective of the ends which can be effected through such action; for the will is right in the middle between its principle *a priori*, which is formal, and between its incentive *a posteriori*, which is material, as if at a crossroads, and since it must still be determined by something, it must be determined by the formal principle of willing in general, if an action is done from duty, since every material principle has been withdrawn from it.

The third proposition, as a consequence from both previous, I would express in this way: *duty is the necessity of an action from respect for the law*. For an object as an effect of my intended action I can, to be sure, have an *inclination*, but *never respect*, just because it is merely an effect and not activity of a will. Just in this way I cannot have respect for inclination in general, whether it be mine or that of another, I can at most in the first case approve it, in the second sometimes even love, i.e. view it as favorable to my own advantage. Only that which merely as ground, never however as effect, is connected with my will, which does not serve my inclination but outweighs it, at least completely excludes this from rough calculation of them

during the choice, therefore the mere law for itself, can be an object of respect and along with this a command. Now an action from duty should wholly detach from the influence of inclination and with it each object of the will, thus nothing remains over for the will, which might be able to determine it, except objectively the *law* and subjectively *pure respect* for this practical law, therefore the maxim*) of obeying such a law, even with the thwarting of all my inclinations.

Thus the moral worth of the action lies not in the effect which is expected from it, nor, therefore, in some principle of the action, which needs to borrow its motive from this expected effect. For all these effects (pleasantness of one's condition, indeed even promotion of the happiness of strangers) were also able to be brought into existence through other causes, and therefore there was for this no need for the will of a rational being, in which however the highest and unconditional good alone can be found. Nothing other, therefore, than the *representation of the law* in itself, which

*) A *maxim* is the subjective principle of willing; the objective principle (i.e. that one which would serve all rational beings also subjectively as a practical principle, if reason had complete power over the faculty of desire) is the practical *law*.

of course only occurs in a rational being, so far as it, not however the hoped-for effect, is the ground of determination of the will, can constitute the so pre-eminent good which we call moral, which is already present in the person itself who acts accordingly, and does not first need to be waited for from the effect.*)

*) One could reproach me, as if I sought behind the word *respect* only refuge in an obscure feeling, instead of giving to the question clear information through a concept of reason. But although respect is a feeling, so is it still not one through influence *received*, but a *self-woven* feeling received through a rational concept and therefore specifically different from all feelings of the first kind, which let themselves be reduced to inclination or fear. What I immediately cognize for myself as law, I cognize with respect, which merely means the consciousness of the *subordination* of my will under a law, without mediation of other influences on my sense. The immediate determination of the will through the law and the consciousness of it is called *respect*, so that this is looked at as an *effect* of the law on the subject and not as a *cause* of it. Respect is properly the representation of a worth that infringes on my self-love. Thus it is something which is considered neither as an object of inclination, nor of fear, although it has something analogous with both at the same time. The *object* of respect is therefore only the *law* and to be sure that one which we impose on *ourselves* and yet as in itself necessary. As a law we are subject to it without consulting self-love; as imposed by us on ourselves, it is still a consequence of our will and has in the first respect analogy with fear, in the second with inclination.

What kind of law though can that really be, whose representation, even without taking notice of the expected effect from it, must determine the will, so that this absolutely and without limitation can be called good? Since I have robbed the will of any impulses which could spring up for it from the following of some law, in this way nothing remains over except the universal conformity to law of actions in general, which alone is to serve the will as a principle, i.e. I ought never act other than in this way, *that I can also will, my maxim should become a universal law*. Here is now the mere conformity to law in general (without laying as ground some law determined for certain actions) which serves the will as a principle and must also serve it in that way if duty is not to be everywhere an empty illusion and chimerical concept; common human reason also agrees with this completely in its practical judgment and has the aforesaid principle always before its eyes.

All respect for a person is actually only respect for the law (of integrity etc.), of which that one gives us the example. Because we view enlargement of our talents also as a duty, we conceive of a person of talents also as, so to speak, the *example of a law* (to become like it in this through practice), and that constitutes our respect. All so-called moral *interest* consists simply in the *respect* for the law.

The question is e.g. may I, when I am in distress, not make a promise with the intention not to keep it? I make here easily the distinction, which the meaning of the question can have, whether it is prudent, or whether it is in conformity with duty, to make a false promise. The first can without doubt often occur. To be sure, I well see that it is not enough to pull myself by means of this excuse out of a present embarrassment, but must be well weighed, whether for me out of this lie not afterwards much greater inconvenience can spring up than those are from which I now set myself free, and, since the consequences with all my supposed *slyness* are not so easy to predict, that a once lost trust could not for me become far more disadvantageous than all the trouble that I now intend to avoid, whether it is not *more prudently* handled, to proceed in this according to a universal maxim and to make it my habit to promise nothing except with the intention to keep it. But it is soon clear to me here that such a maxim still always only has anxious consequences as ground. Now, it is surely something completely different to be truthful from duty than from fear of disadvantageous consequences; since in the first case the concept of the action in itself already contains a law for me, in the second I first of all must look around elsewhere which effects for me might probably

be connected with it. For if I deviate from the principle of duty, then it is quite certainly bad; if I, however, desert my maxim of prudence, then that can yet sometimes be very advantageous for me, although it of course is safer to stay with it. In order however to instruct myself in view of the answer to this problem, whether a lying promise is in conformity with duty, in the very shortest and yet infallible way, I then ask myself: would I really be content that my maxim (to extricate myself from embarrassment by means of an untrue promise) should hold as a universal law (just as much for me as others), and would I really be able to say to myself: everyone may make an untrue promise when he finds himself in embarrassment from which he cannot extricate himself in another way? In this way I soon become aware that I, to be sure, can will the lie but not at all a universal law to lie; for according to such a one there would properly be no promising at all, because it would be futile to profess my will in view of my future actions to others, who would surely not believe this pretense, or, if they in an over-hasty way did believe it, would surely pay me back in like coin, and therefore my maxim, as soon as it were made into a universal law, would have to destroy itself.

What I therefore have to do, in order that my willing is morally good, for that I do not at all need far-reaching

sagacity. Inexperienced in view of the course of the world, incapable of being prepared myself for all its incidents that might happen, I ask myself only: can you also will that your maxim become a universal law? If not, then it is objectionable and that, to be sure, not because of an impending disadvantage to you or even others from it, but because it cannot fit as a principle in a possible universal lawgiving; for this, however, reason forcibly obtains from me immediate respect, of which I, to be sure, now do not yet *discern* upon what it is grounded (which the philosopher may investigate), at least, however, still this much understand: that it is an estimation of worth which far outweighs all worth of that which is praised by inclination, and that the necessity of my actions from *pure* respect for the practical law is that which constitutes duty, to which every other motive must yield because it is the condition of a will good *in itself*, whose worth exceeds everything.

In this way, then, we have reached in the moral cognition of common human reason up to its principle, which it certainly of course does not conceive in such way separated off in a universal form, but still always actually has before eyes and uses as the standard of its judgement. It would be easy to show here how

it, with this compass in hand, in all occurring cases knows very well how to distinguish what is good, what bad, conformable to duty, or contrary to duty, if one, without teaching it in the least something new, only makes it, as Socrates did, attentive to its own principle, and that it thus requires no science and philosophy in order to know what one has to do so as to be honest and good, yes, and what is more, so as to be wise and virtuous. It might also well in advance have already been supposed that the knowledge of what to do, and therefore also to know, incumbent on each human being would also be the concern of each, even of the most common human being. Here one surely cannot look without admiration at it, how the practical faculty of judgment has so very great an advantage over the theoretical in common human understanding. In the latter, when common reason dares to depart from the laws of experience and the perceptions of sense, it gets into nothing but incomprehensibilities and contradictions with itself, at least into a chaos of uncertainty, obscurity and instability. In the practical, however, the power of judgment then for just the first time begins to show itself really to advantage when common understanding excludes all sensuous incentives from practical laws. It becomes then even subtle, whether it be that it quibbles with its conscience or other claims in reference to what is to be called right,
or

also wants sincerely to determine the worth of actions for its own instruction, and what is the most, it can itself have in the latter case just as good hope to hit it right as a philosopher might ever promise, yes is almost still more secure in this than even the latter, because this one has still no other principle than that one, but can easily confuse his judgment through a crowd of foreign considerations not belonging to the matter, and can make it diverge from the straight direction. Would it, accordingly, not be more advisable in moral things to rest satisfied with common rational judgment and at most only to bring in philosophy in order to present the system of morals the more completely and comprehensibly, also to present its rules more conveniently for use (but still more for disputation), not however in order even for practical purpose to divert common human understanding from its happy simplicity and to bring it through philosophy to a new way of investigation and instruction?

There is a magnificent thing about innocence, only it is also in turn very bad that it does not let itself be preserved well and is easily led astray. For this reason even wisdom — which otherwise consists perhaps more in doing and letting than in knowing — still also requires science, not in order to learn from it, but

to gain admittance and permanence for its prescription. The human being feels in itself a powerful counterweight to all commands of duty, which reason represents to it as so worthy of high respect, in its needs and inclinations, the complete satisfaction of which it embraces under the name of happiness. Now reason commands its prescriptions unrelentingly, yet without in so doing promising something to the inclinations and therefore, as it were, with neglect and disregard of those so impulsive and yet so apparently reasonable claims (which will be neutralized by no command). Out of this arises, however, a *natural dialectic*, i.e., a propensity to reason speciously against those strict laws of duty and to cast into doubt their validity, at least their purity and strictness, and where possible to make them more suitable to our wishes and inclinations, i.e. to ruin them at bottom and to destroy their complete dignity, which then after all even common practical reason in the end cannot call good.

Thus in this way *common human reason* is driven, not through some need of speculation (which never befalls it, as long as it contents itself to be merely sound reason), but from practical grounds themselves, to go out of its circle and to take a step in the field of a *practical philosophy*, in order there on behalf of the source of its principle

and its correct determination in comparison with the maxims which base themselves on need and inclination, to get information and clear instruction so that it escapes from the embarrassment of double-sided claims and does not run a risk, through the ambiguity in which it easily falls, of being deprived of all genuine moral ground propositions. Thus arises just as much in practical common reason, when it cultivates itself, unnoticed a *dialectic*, which compels it to search for help in philosophy, as happens to it in theoretical use, and the first will accordingly find rest, to be sure, just as little as the other anywhere else than in a complete critique of our reason.

Second Section.

Transition

from popular moral philosophy

to the

metaphysics of morals.

If we have drawn our previous concept of duty from the common use of our practical reason, there is from that no way to conclude, as if we had treated it as a concept of experience. On the contrary, if we attend to the experience of the doing and letting of human beings, we encounter frequent and, as we ourselves admit, just complaints that, of the disposition to act from pure duty, one can adduce in this way not any sure examples at all, that, although many a thing, which *duty* commands, may happen *accordingly*, nevertheless it is always still doubtful whether it actually happens *from duty* and hence has a moral worth. Hence in every epoch there have been philosophers who have absolutely denied the actuality of this disposition in human actions and have attributed everything to a more or less refined self-love, without yet on this account bringing the correctness of the concept of morality into doubt, rather mentioned with intimate regret the frailty and impurity of human nature, which to be sure is noble enough

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[Scholar Translation:Orr]

to make itself an idea so worthy of respect into its prescription, but at the same time too weak so as to follow it, and uses reason, which was to serve it for lawgiving, only in order to provide for the interest of inclinations, whether it be singly or, at the most, in their greatest compatibility with one another.

In fact it is absolutely impossible to make out through experience with complete certainty a single case in which the maxim of an action otherwise in accordance with duty has rested solely on moral grounds and on the representation of one's duty. For it is indeed occasionally the case that we meet by the most acute self-examination nothing at all, except the moral ground of duty, which could have been mighty enough to move us to this or that good action and to such great sacrifice; from this, however, it cannot at all with certainty be concluded that actually the slightest secret impulse of self-love under the mere pretense of that idea was not the actual determining cause of the will, for on behalf of it we gladly flatter ourselves with a nobler motive falsely claimed for ourselves, in fact, however, even through the strictest examination, can never completely get behind the secret incentives, because, when the discussion is about moral worth, it does not depend on the actions which one sees, but on those inner principles of them, which one does not see.

One can also for those, who laugh at all morality as a mere phantom of a human imagination stepping over itself through self-conceit, not do a more wished-for service than to admit to them that the concepts of duty (just as one gladly convinces oneself also out of convenience that it is the case also with all other concepts) had to be drawn only from experience; for then one prepares for them a guaranteed triumph. I am willing to admit from love of human beings that still most of our actions are in conformity with duty; if one looks, however, at their intentions and endeavors more closely, then one everywhere comes across the dear self, which always stands out, on which, and not on the strict command of duty, which would again and again demand self-denial, their purpose is based. One needs also not even to be an enemy of virtue, but only a cold-blooded observer who does not immediately take the liveliest wish for the good to be its actuality, in order (especially with increasing years and a power of judgment through experience partly grown shrewd and partly sharpened for observation) in certain moments to become doubtful, whether also actually in the world any true virtue is found. And here now nothing can protect us from the whole descent from our ideas of duty and preserve grounded respect for its law in the soul, except the clear conviction that, even if there never have been actions,

which have arisen from such pure sources, nevertheless here also the discussion is not at all about whether this or that occurs, but reason for itself and independently of all appearances commands what ought to occur, and therefore actions, of which the world perhaps has given up to now still no example at all, on whose feasibility even someone who grounds everything on experience would very much like to doubt, nevertheless are by reason unyieldingly commanded, and that e.g. pure honesty in friendship can be no less required of every human being, although until now there might have been no honest friend at all, because this duty as duty in general lies before all experience in the idea of a reason determining the will through grounds *a priori*.

If one adds that, if one does not want to deny entirely to the concept of morality all truth and reference to some possible object, one cannot dispute that its law is of such widespread significance that it must hold not only for human beings, but for all *rational beings in general*, not merely under contingent conditions and with exceptions, but with *absolute necessity*; in this way it is clear that no experience can give occasion to infer to so much as even the possibility of such apodictic laws. For with what right can we bring that,

which perhaps is valid only under the contingent conditions of humanity, as a universal prescription for every rational nature into unlimited respect, and how should laws of the determination *of our* will be held for laws of the determination of the will of a rational being in general and only as such also for those of ours, if they were merely empirical and took their origin not completely a priori from pure, but practical reason?

One could also advise morality not more badly than if one wanted to borrow it from examples. For each example of it which is represented to me must itself previously be judged according to principles of morality, whether it is also worthy to serve as the original example, i.e. as the model, in no way, however, can it provide up to topmost the concept of it. Even the Holy One of the Gospel must first be compared with our ideal of moral perfection before one cognizes him as such; even he says of himself: why do you name me (whom you see) good, no one is good (the archetype of the good) but the one God (whom you do not see). From where however have we the concept of God as the highest good? Only from the *idea*, which reason sketches a priori of moral perfection and inseparably connects with the concept of a free will. Imitation has in the moral

no place at all, and examples serve only for encouragement, i.e. they put the practicability of what the law commands beyond doubt, they make what the practical rule more generally expresses intuitive, can never, however, justify setting aside their true original that lies in reason and guiding oneself according to examples.

If there is then no genuine highest ground proposition of morality which would not have to rest independently of all experience merely on pure reason, then I believe it is not necessary so much as even to ask whether it is good to present these concepts, just as they, together with the principles belonging to them, are established a priori, in general (in abstracto), provided that the cognition is to differ from the common and is to be called philosophical. But in our times this might well be necessary. For if one collected votes, whether pure rational cognition separated from everything empirical, therefore metaphysics of morals, or popular practical philosophy is preferred, then one soon guesses on which side the preponderance will fall.

This condescension to folk concepts is certainly very laudable, if the ascent to the principles of pure reason has first occurred and has been attained with complete satisfaction, and that would mean

grounding the doctrine of morals first on metaphysics, obtaining for it, however, when it is established, *access* afterwards through popularity. It is, however, extremely absurd to want already to accede to this in the first investigation on which all correctness of the ground propositions depends. Not only can this procedure never lay claim to the most rare merit of a true *philosophical popularity*, since it is no art at all to be commonly understandable if one by this relinquishes all fundamental insight; in this way it produces a loathsome mish-mash of patched-together observations and half-reasoned principles, which stale heads enjoy thoroughly, because it is after all something quite useful for the everyday tittle-tattle, where the insightful however feel confusion and, dissatisfied, yet without being able to help themselves, turn away their eyes, although philosophers, who quite well see through the deception, find little hearing when they for a short time call away from the supposed popularity in order to be allowed to be rightly popular only first of all after acquired determinate insight.

One needs only look at the attempts concerning morality in that taste thought proper; in this way, one will soon meet with the special determination of human nature (occasionally however also the idea of a rational nature in general), soon perfection, soon happiness,

here moral feeling, there fear of God, some of this, some also of that, in wonderful mixture, without that it occurs to one to ask whether even anywhere in the knowledge of human nature (which we can still only get from experience) the principles of morality are to be sought, and, if this is not so, if the latter are to be found completely a priori, free from everything empirical, simply in pure concepts of reason and nowhere else not even in the least part, to form the plan rather to separate off completely this examination as pure practical philosophy, or (if one may use such a decried name) as metaphysics*) of morals, to bring it by itself alone to its full completeness and to put off the public, which demands popularity, until the close of this undertaking.

Such a completely isolated metaphysics of morals that is mixed with no anthropology, with

*) One can, if one wants, (just as pure mathematics is distinguished from the applied, pure logic from the applied, hence) distinguish the pure philosophy of morals (metaphysics) from the applied (namely to human nature). Through this naming one is also at once reminded that the moral principles must be grounded not on the peculiarities of human nature, but must be existing for themselves a priori, out of such, however, as for each rational nature, therefore also for the human, practical rules must be able to be derived.

no theology, with no physics or hyperphysics, still less with hidden qualities (which one could call hypophysical) is, however, not only an indispensable substrate of all theoretical, securely determined cognition of duties, but at the same time a desideratum of the highest importance for the actual fulfillment of their prescriptions. For the representation, pure and mixed with no foreign addition of empirical incitements, of duty and in general of moral law has on the human heart through the way of reason alone (that by this first becomes aware that it by itself can also be practical) a so much more powerful influence than all other incentives*) which one might summon from the empirical field that it in the consciousness of its dignity despises the latter and little by little can become their master; in place of that, a mixed doctrine of morals, which is put together from incentives of feelings and inclinations and at the same time from rational concepts,

*) I have a letter from the deceased excellent *Sulzer*, in which he asks me: what might yet be the cause why the teachings of virtue, howsoever much they have that is convincing to reason, yet accomplish so little. My answer was delayed through the preparation for it so as to give it whole. But it is not other than that the teachers themselves have not brought their concepts into purity, and since they want to make it too good, by this, that they everywhere rummage out motives for moral goodness in order to make the medicine right strong, they ruin it. For the commonest

must make the mind waver between motives which can be brought under no principle, which only very contingently can lead to the good, more often however also to the bad.

From the foregoing it is evident: that all moral concepts have completely *a priori* in reason their seat and origin and this to be sure in the commonest human reason just as much as that in the highest degree speculative; that they can be abstracted from no empirical and hence merely contingent cognition; that in this purity of their origin precisely lies their dignity, so as to serve us as highest practical principles; that each time so much as one adds something empirical, so much also one subtracts from their genuine influence and the unlimited worth of actions; that it not only demands the greatest necessity in theoretical purpose, when it is merely a matter of speculation,

observation shows that, if one represents an action of integrity, how it, separated from all intention of some advantage in this or another world, even under the greatest temptations of need or of enticement, was done with steadfast soul, it leaves far behind itself and eclipses each similar action which even in the least was affected through a foreign incentive, raises the soul and arouses the wish also to be able to act in such a way. Even children of medium age feel this impression, and one should also never otherwise represent duties to them.

but also is of the greatest practical importance to obtain its concepts and laws from pure reason, to expound pure and unmixed, yes to determine the extent of this whole practical or pure rational cognition, i.e. the whole faculty of pure practical reason, but in this not, as indeed speculative philosophy allows, yes even sometimes finds necessary, to make the principles dependent on the special nature of human reason, but precisely because moral laws are to hold for each rational being in general, to derive them already from the universal concept of a rational being in general and in such a way to expound all morals, which for its *application* to human beings requires anthropology, first independently of this as pure philosophy, i.e. as metaphysics, completely (which can well be done in this kind of quite separated cognitions), well aware that, without being in possession of this, it is futile, I do not want to say, to determine for the speculative judgment exactly the moral element of duty in everything that is in conformity with duty, but is, even in mere common and practical use, especially of moral instruction, impossible to ground morals on their genuine principles and by this to effect pure moral dispositions and to engraft minds for the highest good of the world.

In order, however, to advance in this treatment not merely from common moral judgment (which here is very worthy of respect) to the philosophical, as has already happened, but from a popular philosophy, that reaches no farther than it can get through gropings by means of examples, up to metaphysics (which lets itself be further held back by nothing empirical and, since it must measure out the whole contents of rational cognition of this kind, goes in any case up to ideas, where even the examples desert us) by natural steps, we must follow and clearly present the practical faculty of reason from its universal rules of determination up to that place where the concept of duty springs up from it.

Each thing in nature works according to laws. Only a rational being has the capacity to act *according to the representation* of laws, i.e. according to principles, or a *will*. Since for the derivation of actions from laws *reason* is required, the will is in this way nothing other than practical reason. If reason unfailingly determines the will, then the actions of such a being, which are cognized as objectively necessary, are also subjectively necessary, i.e. the will is a capacity to choose *only that* which reason independently of inclination

cognizes as practically necessary, i.e. as good. If, however, reason by itself alone does not determine the will sufficiently, if this is in addition subject to subjective conditions (certain incentives) which do not always agree with the objective; in a word, if the will is not *in itself* completely in conformity with reason (as it actually is in the case of human beings); then the actions, which are cognized objectively as necessary, are subjectively contingent, and the determination of such a will according to objective laws is *necessitation*; i.e. the relation of objective laws to a not thoroughly good will is represented as the determination of the will of a rational being by grounds, to be sure, of reason to which, however, this will according to its nature is not necessarily obedient.

The representation of an objective principle, insofar as it is necessitating for a will, is called a command (of reason), and the formula of the command is called **imperative**.

All imperatives are expressed through an *ought* and indicate by this the relation of an objective law of reason to a will which according to its subjective constitution is not necessarily determined (a necessitation) by it. They say that to do or to omit something would be good, but

they say it to a will which does not always do something just because it is represented to it that it is good to do. Practical *good* is, however, what by means of the representations of reason, therefore not from subjective causes, but objective, i.e. from grounds that are valid for every rational being as such, determines the will. It is distinguished from the *agreeable* as that which only by means of feeling from mere subjective causes that only hold for the sense of this or that one, and not as a principle of reason that holds for everyone, has influence on the will*).

*) The dependence of the faculty of desire on sensations is called inclination, and this thus indicates every time a *need*. The dependence of a contingently determinable will, however, on principles of reason is called an *interest*. This occurs, therefore, only with a dependent will, which is not of itself every time in accordance with reason; in the case of the divine will, one can think of no interest. But even the human will can *take an interest* in something, without on that account *acting from interest*. The first means the *practical* interest in the action, the second the *pathological* interest in the object of the action. The first announces only dependence of the will on principles of reason in themselves, the second on its principles for the benefit of inclination, where, that is to say, reason only assigns the practical rule, how the need of inclination might be helped. In the first case the action interests me, in the second the object of the action (so far as it is agreeable to me). We have in the first section seen: that in the case of an action from duty interest must be seen not in the object, but merely in the action itself and its principle in reason (the law).

A perfectly good will would thus stand just as much under objective laws (of the good), but not be able to be represented by this as *necessitated* to actions conforming to law, because it of itself, according to its subjective constitution, can be determined only through the representation of the good. Therefore, for the *divine* and generally for a *holy* will, no imperatives hold; the *ought* is here out of place because the *willing* is already of itself necessarily unanimous with the law. Therefore, imperatives are only formulas to express the relation of objective laws of willing in general to the subjective imperfection of the will of this or that rational being, e.g. of the human will.

Now, all *imperatives* command either *hypothetically* or *categorically*. The former represent the practical necessity of a possible action as a means to attain something else that one wills (or yet is possible that one wills it). The categorical imperative would be one which represented an action as for itself, without reference to another end, as objectively necessary.

Because each practical law represents a possible action as good and on that account as necessary for a subject practically determinable through reason, in this way

all imperatives are formulas of the determination of action which is necessary according to the principle of a will good in some way. Now, if the action would be good merely as a means *to something else*, then the imperative is *hypothetical*; if it is represented as *in itself* good, therefore as necessary in a will in itself in conformity with reason, as its principle, then it is *categorical*.

The imperative thus says which action possible through me would be good, and represents the practical rule in relation to a will which for that reason does not immediately do an action because it is good, partly because the subject does not always know that it is good, partly because, even if it knew this, its maxims could still be opposed to the objective principles of a practical reason.

The hypothetical imperative thus says only that the action is good for some *possible* or *actual* purpose. In the first case, it is a **problematic**, in the second **assertoric**-practical principle. The categorical imperative, which declares the action for itself without reference to any purpose, i.e. even without any other end, as objectively necessary, holds as an **apodictic** (practical) principle.

One can conceive what is possible only through powers of some rational being also as a possible purpose for some will, and therefore the principles of action are, so far as this is represented as necessary in order to attain some possible purpose to be effected by it, in fact infinitely many. All sciences have some practical part which consists of problems that some end is possible for us, and of imperatives how it can be attained. These can therefore in general be called imperatives of **skill**. Whether the end is rational and good is here not at all the question, but only what one must do in order to attain it. The prescriptions for the doctor in order to make his man in a thorough-going way healthy, and for a poisoner in order certainly to kill him, are of equal worth, insofar as each one serves to effect perfectly its purpose. Because one in early youth does not know which ends may meet with us in life, parents accordingly seek above all to let their children learn right *many things* and provide for the *skill* in the use of means to all kinds of *arbitrary* ends, not one of which can they determine whether it perhaps actually in the future can become a purpose of their pupil, concerning which it nevertheless is still *possible* that it might once have it, and this care is so great that they on that point commonly neglect to form and to correct their judgment over the worth

of the things which they themselves would perhaps like to make into ends.

There is nevertheless *one* end which one can presuppose in the case of all rational beings (as far as imperatives apply to them, namely as dependent beings) as actual, and thus one purpose which they not at all merely *can* have, but of which one can surely presuppose that they such one and all do *have* according to a natural necessity, and that is the purpose toward *happiness*. The hypothetical imperative, which represents the practical necessity of action as a means to the promotion of happiness, is **assertoric**. One may propose it not merely as necessary to an uncertain, merely possible purpose, but to a purpose which one safely and *a priori* can presuppose in the case of every human being because it belongs to its essence. Now, one can name the skill in the choice of means to one's own greatest well-being *prudence**) in the narrowest sense. Therefore,

*) The word *prudence* is taken in a twofold sense, one time it can bear the name world *prudence*, in the second that of private *prudence*. The first is the skill of a human being to have influence on others, in order to use them for its purposes. The second is the insight to unite all these purposes for its own lasting advantage. The latter is properly the one to which even the worth of the first is traced back, and who is prudent in the first way, not however in the second, of him one could better say: he is clever and cunning, on the whole however still imprudent.

the imperative which refers to the choice of means to one's own happiness, i.e. the prescription of prudence, is still always *hypothetical*; the action is commanded not absolutely, but only as a means to another purpose.

Finally, there is an imperative, which, without laying for the ground some other purpose, attainable through a certain conduct, as a condition, commands this conduct immediately. This imperative is **categorical**. It concerns not the matter of the action and that which is to result from it, but the form and the principle from which it itself follows, and the essential-good of it consists in the disposition, may the result be what it will. This imperative may be called that *of morality*.

The willing according to these three kinds of principles is also clearly distinguished by the *dissimilarity* of necessitation of the will. In order now to make this also noticeable, I believe that one would most suitably so name them in their order if one said: they were either *rules* of skill, or *counsels* of prudence, or *commands (laws)* of morality. For only the *law* carries about itself the concept of an *unconditional* and to be sure objective and therefore universally valid *necessity*, and commands are laws,

which must be obeyed, i.e. obeyed even against inclination. The *counseling* contains to be sure necessity, which, however, can hold merely under a subjective contingent condition, whether this or that human being counts this or that in its happiness; on the other hand, the categorical imperative is limited by no condition and as absolutely, although practically, necessary can quite properly be called a command. One could name the first imperatives also *technical* (belonging to art), the second *pragmatic** (to well-being), the third *moral* (to free conduct in general, i.e. belonging to morals).

Now the question arises: how are all these imperatives possible? This question demands not to know how the performance of the action which the imperative commands, but merely how the necessitation of the will, which the imperative expresses in the problem, can be thought. How an imperative of skill is possible really requires no special discussion. Who wills the end, wills (so far as reason has

*) It appears to me, the proper meaning of the word *pragmatic* can in this way be determined most exactly. For *sanctions* are named pragmatic, which flow properly not from the right of states, as necessary laws, but from the *provision* for the general welfare. A *history* is composed pragmatically when it makes us *prudent*, i.e. teaches the world how it can take care of its advantage better than, or at least just as good as, the former ages.

decisive influence on his actions) also the indispensably necessary means to it that are in his power. This proposition is, as concerns the willing, analytic; for in the willing of an object as my effect is already thought my causality as acting cause, i.e. the use of means, and the imperative extracts the concept of actions necessary to this end already from the concept of a willing of this end (to determine the means themselves to a proposed purpose, to this belong to be sure synthetic propositions, which, however, do not concern the ground, the Actus of the will, but to make the object actual). That, in order to divide a line according to a sure principle into two equal parts, I must make from its endpoints two intersecting arcs, which mathematics teaches of course only through synthetic propositions; but that, if I know, through such action alone the intended effect can occur, I, if I fully will the effect, will also the action that is required for it, is an analytic proposition; for to represent something as an effect possible in a certain way through me and to represent myself, in view of it, acting in the same way, is one and the same.

The imperatives of prudence would, if only it were as easy to give a determinate concept of happiness, with those of skill wholly

and entirely agree and be just as well analytic. For it would just as well here as there be said: who wills the end, wills also (necessarily in conformity with reason) the sole means to it that are in his power. But it is a misfortune that the concept of happiness is such an indeterminate concept that, although each human being wishes to attain this, it can still never say determinately and consistently with itself, what it genuinely wishes and wills. The cause of this is: that all elements that belong to the concept of happiness are one and all empirical, i.e. must be borrowed from experience, that nevertheless for the idea of happiness an absolute whole, a maximum of well-being, in my present and every future condition is required. Now, it is impossible that the most insightful and at the same time most capable but still finite being makes for itself a determinate concept of what it here actually wills. If it wills riches, how much worry, envy and intrigue could it not in so doing bring down on its head. If it wills much cognition and insight, perhaps that could become only an eye all the more sharper in order only to show it the evil, that is for it now still hidden and yet cannot be avoided, all the more dreadfully, or to burden its eager desires, which already occupy it enough, with still more needs. If it wills a long life, who guarantees to it,

that it would not be a long misery? If it wills at least health, how often still has discomfort of the body kept from excess into which unlimited health would have let fall, and so on. In short, it is not capable of determining according to some ground proposition with complete certainty what will make it truly happy because for that omniscience would be required. One can thus not act according to determinate principles in order to be happy but only according to empirical counsels, e.g. of diet, of thrift, of courtesy, of reserve and so on, of which experience teaches, that they on the average most promote the well-being. From this it follows that the imperatives of prudence, to speak exactly, cannot command at all, i.e. present actions objectively as practical-*necessary*, that they are to be held as counsels (*consilia*) rather than as commands (*praecepta*) of reason, that the problem: to determine surely and universally which action will promote the happiness of a rational being is completely insoluble, and therefore no imperative in view of it is possible which in the strict sense would command doing what makes us happy, because happiness is not an ideal of reason, but of imagination, which merely rests on empirical grounds from which one futilely expects that they should determine an action by which the totality of an

in fact infinite series of consequences would be attained. This imperative of prudence would nevertheless be, if one assumes the means to happiness could be certainly assigned, an analytic-practical proposition; for it is distinguished from the imperative of skill only in this, that with the latter the end is merely possible, with the former, however, given; since both, however, merely command the means to that, of which one presumes that one willed it as an end: in this way the imperative, which commands the willing of the means for him who wills the end, is in both cases analytic. Thus there is, in view of the possibility of such an imperative, also no difficulty.

On the other hand, how the imperative of *morality* is possible is without doubt the only question in need of a solution, since it is not at all hypothetical and therefore the objective-represented necessity can be based on no presupposition, as with the hypothetical imperatives. Only it is always in this not to be let out of account, that it is *through no example*, therefore empirically, to be made out whether there is at all any imperative of such kind, but to be apprehensive that all that appear categorical might yet be in a hidden way hypothetical. E.g. when it is bid: you ought promise nothing fraudulently; and one assumes that the necessity of this omission is not at all merely giving counsel for

avoidance of some other evil, so that it nearly bids: you ought not promise falsely, so that you do not, if it comes to light, destroy your credit; but an action of this kind must for itself be considered as bad, the imperative of prohibition is thus categorical: in this way one can still in no example prove with certainty that the will is determined here without another incentive, merely through the law, although it appears so; for it is always possible that secretly fear of disgrace, perhaps also obscure apprehension of other dangers, might have influence on the will. Who can prove the nonexistence of a cause through experience, since this teaches nothing further than that we do not perceive the former? In such a case, however, the so-called moral imperative, which as such appears categorical and unconditional, would in fact only be a pragmatic prescription which makes us attentive to our advantage and merely teaches us to take care of this.

We will thus have to investigate the possibility of a *categorical* imperative completely *a priori*, since here the advantage does not come in useful for us that its actuality is given in experience and therefore that the possibility would be necessary not for the establishment, but merely for the explanation. So much is nevertheless provisionally to be seen: that the categorical imperative alone

reads as a practical **law**; the remaining can one and all undoubtedly be called *principles* of the will, but not laws: because what is necessary to do merely for the attainment of an arbitrary purpose can in itself be considered as contingent, and we can be released from the prescription any time if we give up the purpose; on the contrary, the unconditional command leaves to the will no discretion in view of the opposite, therefore alone carries with it that necessity which we demand of the law.

Secondly, with this categorical imperative or law of morality, the ground of the difficulty (to look into its possibility) is also very great. It is a synthetic-practical proposition*) *a priori*, and since to look into the possibility of propositions of this kind has so much difficulty in theoretical cognition, it can be readily gathered that in the practical it will not have less.

*) I connect with the will, without a presupposed condition from any inclination, the deed *a priori*, therefore necessarily (although only objectively, i.e. under the idea of a reason that had complete power over all subjective motives). This is therefore a practical proposition which analytically derives the willing of an action not from another, already presupposed (for we have no such perfect will), but connects with the concept of the will as of a rational being immediately, as something that is not contained in it.

With this problem we want first inquire whether not perhaps the mere concept of a categorical imperative also supplies its formula which contains the proposition which alone can be a categorical imperative; for how such an absolute command is possible, even when we also know how it reads, will still demand special and difficult effort, which we, however, postpone to the last section.

If I conceive a *hypothetical* imperative in general, then I do not know in advance what it will contain: until the condition is given to me. If I conceive, however, a *categorical* imperative, then I know at once what it contains. For since the imperative contains besides the law only the necessity of the maxim*) to be in conformity with this law, the law, however, contains no condition to which it was limited, in this way nothing but the universality of a law in general remains over to which the maxim of the action is to be in conformance,

*) A *maxim* is the subjective principle of acting and must be distinguished from the *objective principle*, namely the practical law. The former contains the practical rule which reason in conformity with the conditions of the subject (often its ignorance or also its inclinations) determines, and is thus the ground proposition according to which the subject *acts*; the law, however, is the objective principle valid for every rational being and the ground proposition according to which it *ought to act*, i.e. an imperative.

and which conformity alone the imperative properly represents as necessary.

The categorical imperative is thus only a single and indeed this: *act only according to that maxim, through which you at the same time can will, that it becomes a universal law.*

If now from this single imperative all imperatives of duty can be derived as from their principle, then we will, even though we leave it undecided whether in general what one calls duty is not an empty concept, still at least be able to announce what we think by this and what this concept wants to say.

Because the universality of the law, according to which effects occur, constitutes what properly is called *nature* in the most general sense (according to the form), i.e. the existence of things, as far as it is determined according to universal laws, in this way the universal imperative of duty could also read thus: *act in this way, as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a **universal law of nature.***

Now we want to enumerate some duties according to the usual division of them into duties to

ourselves and to other human beings, into perfect and imperfect duties.*)

1) One, who, through a series of misfortunes that has grown up to hopelessness, feels a boredom with life, is still so far in possession of his reason that he can ask himself whether it is also not at all contrary to the duty to himself to take his life. Now he tests: whether the maxim of his action can indeed become a universal law of nature. His maxim, however, is: from self-love I make it my principle, when life by its longer duration threatens more misfortune than it promises pleasantness, to shorten it. There is only still the question whether this principle of self-love can become a universal law of nature. Then one, however, soon sees that a nature, whose law it were, through the same feeling the function of which it is

*) One must here note well that I wholly reserve to myself the division of duties for a future *metaphysics of morals*, this here thus stands forth only as arbitrary (so as to order my examples). Moreover, I understand here under a perfect duty that one which permits no exception to the advantage of inclination, and there I have not merely outer, but also inner *perfect duties*, which runs counter to the word-use accepted in the schools; I, however, am here not minded to answer for, because it is all the same to my purpose whether one concedes it to me or not.

to urge on towards the promotion of life, to destroy life itself, would contradict itself and would thus not endure as nature, and therefore that maxim can impossibly occur as a universal law of nature and consequently wholly conflicts with the highest principle of all duty.

2) Another sees himself forced by need to borrow money. He well knows that he will not be able to repay, sees also, however, that nothing will be lent to him if he does not firmly promise to repay it at a determinate time. He desires to make such a promise; still, however, he has enough conscience to ask himself: is it not impermissible and contrary to duty to help myself out of need in such a way? Assuming he still resolves to do it, then his maxim of the action would read in this way: when I believe myself to be in need of money, then I will borrow money and promise to repay it, although I know it will never happen. Now, this principle of self-love or of one's own advantage is perhaps quite consistent with my whole future well-being, but now the question is: whether it is right. I thus change the unreasonable expectation of self-love into a universal law and arrange the question in this way: how would it then stand, if my maxim became a universal law. Then I now see at once that it can never hold as a universal law of nature and accord with itself, but

must necessarily contradict itself. For the universality of a law, that each, accordingly as he believes to be in need, can promise what occurs to him with the intention not to keep it, would make the promise and the end, which one may have with it, itself impossible, since no one would believe that something is promised to him, but would laugh at every such utterance as idle pretense.

3) A third finds in himself a talent which by means of some cultivation could make him into a human being useful for all kinds of purpose. He sees himself, however, in comfortable circumstances and prefers rather to indulge in pleasure than to trouble himself with enlargement and improvement of his fortunate natural predispositions. Still, however, he asks: whether, besides the agreement which his maxim of neglecting his natural gifts in itself has with his propensity to amusement, it also agrees with that which one calls duty. Then he henceforth sees that undoubtedly a nature according to such a universal law can indeed always endure, although the human being (in this way like the South Sea inhabitants) lets his talent rust and were resolved to devote his life merely to idleness, amusement, procreation, in a word to enjoyment; but he can **impossibly will**, that this become a universal law of nature or as one such be laid in us by natural instinct.

For as a rational being he necessarily wills that all capacities in him be developed, because they are after all serviceable to him and given to him for all kinds of possible purposes.

Yet a *fourth*, for whom it goes well while he sees that others have to fight with great hardships (whom he could also well help), thinks: what does it concern me? may yet each one be so happy, as heaven wills it, or he can make himself, I will take nothing from him, indeed not even envy; only to his well-being or his assistance in need I have no desire to contribute anything! Now, of course, if such a way of thinking became a universal law of nature, the human race could quite well subsist and without doubt even better than when everyone babbles about compassion and benevolence, also exerts oneself occasionally to practice them, on the other hand, however, also, where he only can, cheats, sells the right of human beings, or otherwise violates it. But, although it is possible that according to that maxim a universal law of nature could indeed subsist; in this way, it is nevertheless impossible to *will* that such a principle hold everywhere as a law of nature. For a will, which resolved this, would conflict with itself, since many cases can yet occur where he needs the love and compassion of others, and where he, through such a law of nature sprung from his own will,

would rob himself of all hope of the assistance for which he longs.

These, then, are some of the many actual duties, or at least held by us as such, whose separation from the one principle cited above clearly strikes the eyes. One must *be able to will* that a maxim of our action become a universal law: this is the canon of moral judgment of it in general. Some actions are so constituted that their maxim without contradiction cannot even be *thought* as a universal law of nature; far from it, that one can still *will* it *should* become one such. With others undoubtedly that inner impossibility is not to be found, but it is still impossible to *will* that their maxim be raised to the universality of a law of nature, because such a will would contradict itself. One easily sees: that the first conflicts with the strict or narrower (unremitting) duty, the second only with the wider (meritorious) duty, and so all duties, as concerns the kind of obligation (not the object of their action), have through these examples in their dependence on the one principle been set forth completely.

If we now pay attention to ourselves during each transgression of a duty, then we find that we

actually do not will that our maxim should become a universal law, for that is for us impossible, but the opposite of it should instead generally remain a law; only we ourselves take the liberty to make for ourselves or (even only for this time) to the advantage of our inclination an *exception* to it. Consequently, if we weighed everything from one and the same point of view, namely of reason, then we would find a contradiction in our own will, namely, that a certain principle be objectively necessary as a universal law and yet subjectively not hold universally, but should permit exceptions. Since we, however, one time consider our action from the point of view of a will wholly in conformity with reason, then, however, also just the same action from the point of view of a will affected by inclination, in this way no contradiction is actually here, to be sure, however, an opposition of inclination against the prescription of reason (*antagonismus*), by which the universality of the principle (*universalitas*) is changed into a mere generality (*generalitas*), and by this means the practical principle of reason is to meet with the maxim halfway. Now, although this cannot be justified in our own impartially employed judgment, in this way it yet shows that we actually acknowledge the validity of the categorical imperative and permit ourselves (with all respect for it) only a few,

as it seems to us, inconsiderable and wrung-from-us exceptions.

We have this much thus at least shown, that, if duty is a concept which is to contain meaning and actual lawgiving for our actions, this can be expressed only in categorical imperatives, in no way, however, in hypothetical; we have also, which is already much, clearly and determinately for every use exhibited the content of the categorical imperative, which would have to contain the principle of all duty (if there were such a thing at all). Still, however, we are not so far, *a priori* to prove, that the same imperative actually occurs, that there is a practical law which absolutely and without any incentives commands for itself, and that the following of this law is duty.

With the aim of arriving at this, it is of the utmost importance to let this serve oneself as a warning, that one, of course, not let it come into one's mind to want to derive the reality of this principle from the *special quality of human nature*. For duty is to be practical-unconditional necessity of action; it must thus hold for all rational beings (to which only an imperative can apply at all) and *only for this reason* also be for all human wills a law. What, on the other hand, is derived from the

special natural predisposition of humanity, what from certain feelings and propensity, indeed even where possible from a special tendency, which were peculiar to human reason and had not to hold necessarily for the will of every rational being, that can, to be sure, yield a maxim for us, but not a law, a subjective principle, according to which we may act, have propensity and inclination, but not an objective principle, according to which we were *directed* to act, even if all our propensity, inclination and natural tendency were to the contrary, what is more, that it all the more proves the sublimity and inner dignity of the command in a duty, the fewer the subjective causes for it, the more they are against it, without yet for that reason weakening even in the least the necessitation through the law and taking anything away from its validity.

Here we now see philosophy put in fact on a precarious standpoint which is to be firm, even though it is neither in heaven nor on the earth suspended from something or supported by it. Here it should prove its purity as self-holder of its laws, not as herald of those which an implanted sense or who knows what tutelary nature whispers to it, which all together, they may always be better than nothing at all, yet can never yield ground propositions which reason dictates and which must throughout have completely *a priori* their source and with this at the same time their commanding authority:

to expect nothing from the inclination of the human being, but everything from the supreme power of the law and the respect owed to it, or otherwise to condemn the human being to self-contempt and inner abhorrence.

Thus everything which is empirical, is, as an addition to the principle of morality, not only wholly unsuitable to it, but even highly disadvantageous to the purity of morals, in which the proper worth, raised above all price, of an absolutely good will consists just in this, that the principle of the action be free from all influences of contingent grounds, which only experience can provide. Against this carelessness or even base way of thinking, in search of the principle among empirical motives and laws, one can issue neither too much nor too frequently warnings, since the human reason in its weariness gladly rests on this pillow and in the dream of sweet illusions (which permit it after all to embrace a cloud instead of Juno) substitutes for morality a bastard patched up from limbs of quite different ancestry, which looks like everything which one wants to see in it, only not like virtue for one who has beheld it once in its true form.*)

*) To behold virtue in its proper form is nothing other than to exhibit morality stripped of all admixture of the sensuous

Thus the question is this: is it a necessary law *for all rational beings* to judge their actions always according to such maxims of which they themselves can will that they should serve as universal laws? If there is one such, then it must (completely a priori) be connected already with the concept of the will of a rational being in general. In order, however, to discover this connection, one must, however much one resists, take a step out, namely into metaphysics, although in a region of it which is different from that of speculative philosophy, namely into the metaphysics of morals. In a practical philosophy, where it is not our concern to assume grounds of that which *happens*, but laws of that which *ought to happen*, although it never happens, i.e. objective-practical laws: there we have no need to undertake investigation of the grounds why something pleases or displeases, how the enjoyment of mere sensation is different from taste, and whether the latter is different from a universal satisfaction of reason; upon what feeling of pleasure and displeasure rests, and how from here eager desires and inclinations, from these, however, through cooperation of reason, maxims

and all spurious adornment of reward or of self-love. How much it then eclipses everything else which appears enticing to the inclinations can each easily become aware of by means of the least effort of one's reason which is not wholly ruined for all abstraction.

arise; for all that belongs to an empirical doctrine of the soul, which would constitute the second part of the doctrine of nature, if one considers it as *philosophy of nature*, as far as it is grounded on *empirical laws*. Here, however, the discussion is of objective-practical laws, therefore of the relation of a will to itself, so far as it determines itself merely through reason, where then everything, which has reference to the empirical, of itself falls away; because, if *reason by itself alone* determines conduct (the possibility of which we just now want to investigate), it must do this necessarily *a priori*.

The will is thought as a capacity to determine itself to action *according to the representation of certain laws*. And such a capacity can only be found in rational beings. Now, that which serves the will as the objective ground of its self-determination is the *end*, and this, if it is given through mere reason, must hold equally for all rational beings. What, on the other hand, contains merely the ground of the possibility of an action whose effect is an end is called the *means*. The subjective ground of desire is the *incentive*, the objective ground of willing the *motive*; thus the difference between subjective ends, which rest on incentives, and objective, which depend on motives, which

hold for each rational being. Practical principles are *formal*, if they abstract from all subjective ends; they are, however, *material*, if they lay down these, therefore certain incentives, as the ground. The ends that a rational being arbitrarily proposes as *effects* of its action (material ends) are one and all only relative; for only merely their relation to a particularly constituted faculty of desire of the subject gives them the worth, which can therefore provide no valid and necessary universal principles, i.e. practical laws, for all rational beings or for every willing. Hence all these relative ends are only the ground of hypothetical imperatives.

Granted, however, there were something, *whose existence in itself* has an absolute worth, which as an *end in itself* could be a ground of determinate laws, then in it and only in it alone would the ground of a possible categorical imperative, i.e. a practical law, lie.

Now I say: the human being and in general every rational being *exists* as an end in itself, *not merely as a means* to the arbitrary use for this or that will, but must in all its actions, directed not only to itself but also to other rational beings,

always be considered *at the same time as an end*. All objects of inclinations have only a conditional worth; for if the inclinations and the needs based on them were not, then their object would be without worth. The inclinations themselves, however, as sources of need, are so far from having an absolute worth so as to be wished for themselves that, on the contrary, to be completely free of them must be the universal wish of each rational being. Thus the worth of all objects *to be obtained* by our action is always conditional. The beings whose existence rests indeed not on our will, but on nature, have nevertheless, if they are beings without reason, only a relative worth as means and are therefore called *things*, on the other hand, rational beings are named *persons* because their nature already marks them out as ends in themselves, i.e. as something that may not be used merely as means, therefore so far limits all choice (and is an object of respect). These are thus not merely subjective ends whose existence as effect of our action has a worth *for us*; but *objective ends*, i.e. things whose existence in itself is an end and, to be sure, one such in place of which no other end can be put for which they should stand to serve *merely* as means, because without this nothing at all of *absolute worth* would be found anywhere; if, however, all

worth were conditional, therefore contingent, then for reason no highest practical principle could be found anywhere.

If, then, there is thus to be a highest practical principle and in view of the human will a categorical imperative, then it must be one such that, from the representation of that which necessarily for everyone is an end because it is an *end in itself*, constitutes an *objective* principle of the will, therefore can serve as the universal practical law. The ground of this principle is: *rational nature exists as an end in itself*. In this way the human being necessarily conceives its own existence; so far is it thus a *subjective* principle of human actions. In this way, however, also every other rational being conceives its existence owing to just the same rational ground which also holds for me *); hence it is at the same time an *objective* principle from which as a highest practical ground all laws of the will must be able to be derived. The practical imperative will thus be the following: *Act in this way, that you use humanity in your own person, as well as in the person of every other, always at the same time as an end, never*

*) This proposition I set forth here as a postulate. In the last section one will find the grounds for this.

merely as a means. We want to see whether this can be achieved.

So as to stay with the previous examples, in this way will

Firstly, in accordance with the concept of necessary duty toward oneself, that one, who has suicide in mind, ask himself whether his action can subsist together with the idea of humanity *as an end in itself*. If he, in order to escape from a troublesome situation, destroys himself, then he makes use of a person merely as *a means* for the preservation of a tolerable situation till the end of life. The human being, however, is not a thing, therefore not something that can be used *merely as means*, but must in all its actions always be considered as an end in itself. Thus I can dispose of nothing concerning the human being in my own person, to maim him, to corrupt, or to kill. (The more precise determination of this ground proposition for the avoidance of all misunderstanding, e.g. of the amputation of limbs in order to preserve myself, of the danger to which I expose my life in order to preserve my life, etc., I must here pass by; it belongs to morals proper.)

Secondly, what concerns the necessary or obliged duty to others, so will he, who has it in mind to make a lying promise to others, at once see that he wills to make use of another human being

merely as a means, without that the latter at the same time contains the end in itself. For he, whom I will to use through such a promise for my purposes, can impossibly agree in my way of proceeding against him and thus himself contain the end of this action. This conflict with the principle of other human beings more clearly catches the eye when one draws near examples of attacks on freedom and property of others. For then it is clear that the transgressor of the rights of human beings is disposed to make use of the person of others merely as a means, without taking into consideration that they as rational beings ought always at the same time to be valued as ends, i.e. only as such, who must be able to contain the end of just the same action also in themselves*).

Thirdly, in view of the contingent (meritorious) duty to oneself, it's not enough that the

*) Let one not think that here the trivial: what you do not want done to you etc. can serve as a rule of conduct or principle. For it is, although with various limitations, only derived from that one; it can be no universal law, for it does not contain the ground of duties to oneself, not of duties of love to others (for many would gladly agree to it that others ought not benefit him if only he might be excused from showing them kindness), finally not of duties owed to one another; for the criminal would from this ground argue against his punishing judges, and so on.

action not conflict with humanity in our person as an end in itself, it must also *harmonize with it*. Now, in humanity there are predispositions to greater perfection, which belong to the end of nature in view of humanity in our subject; to neglect these would be at most possibly compatible with the *preservation* of humanity as an end in itself, but not with the *furtherance* of this end.

Fourthly, in reference to the meritorious duty to others, the natural end that all human beings have is their own happiness. Now, humanity would no doubt be able to subsist, if no one contributes anything to the happiness of others, in doing so, however, intentionally withdraws nothing from it; but this is still only a negative and not positive agreement with *humanity as end in itself*, if everyone did not also strive to further the ends of others, so far as he can. For the subject, which is an end in itself, ends of it must, if that representation is to have *full* effect in me, also, so far as possible, be *my* ends.

This principle of humanity and of each rational nature in general, *as an end in itself*, (which is the highest limiting condition of the

freedom of the actions of each human being) is not borrowed from experience, firstly, on account of its universality, since it applies to all rational beings in general, about which to determine something no experience suffices; secondly, because in it humanity is represented not as an end of human beings (subjectively), i.e. as an object which one of oneself actually makes an end, but as an objective end which, whatever ends we may have, as law is to constitute the highest limiting condition of all subjective ends, and therefore must arise from pure reason. That is to say, the ground of all practical lawgiving lies *objectively in the rule* and in the form of universality which makes it capable of being (according to the first principle) a law (possibly law of nature), *subjectively*, however, in the *end*; the subject of all ends, however, is each rational being as an end in itself (according to the second principle): from this follows now the third practical principle of the will, as highest condition of the harmony of it with universal practical reason, the idea *of the will of each rational being as a will giving universal law*.

All maxims are rejected according to this principle, which are not consistent with the will's own universal lawgiving. The will is thus not only subject to the law,

but so subject, that it also must be seen *as self-lawgiving* and for just that reason subject first of all to the law (of which it can consider itself as author).

The imperatives according to the previous way of representation, namely, of a conformity to law of actions, generally similar to a *natural order*, or of the universal *prerogative of the end* of rational beings in themselves, excluded undoubtedly from their commanding authority all admixture of any interest as incentive just by this: that they were represented as categorical; they were, however, only *assumed* as categorical, because one had to assume such-like, if one wanted to explain the concept of duty. That there are, however, practical propositions that command categorically could for itself not be proved, just as little as it also not yet anywhere here in this section can be done; but one thing could still have been done, namely: that the renunciation of all interest in willing from duty, as the specific distinguishing mark of the categorical from hypothetical imperative, would be jointly indicated in the imperative itself through some determination which it contains, and this is done in the present third formula of the principle, namely, in the idea of the will of each rational being as a *will giving universal law*.

For if we think one such, then, although a will *which stands under laws* may still be bound by means of an interest to this law, nevertheless a will, which is itself at highest lawgiving, can depend impossibly so far on any interest; for such a dependent will would itself require still another law, which limited the interest of its self-love to the condition of a validity for universal law.

Thus the *principle* of each human will, as *a will giving universal law through all its maxims**), if it otherwise had with it only its correctness, would be quite *well suited* for the categorical imperative by this, that it, just for the sake of the idea of universal lawgiving, *is grounded on no interest* and thus among all possible imperatives can alone be *unconditional*; or still better, in that we convert the proposition, if there is a categorical imperative (i.e. a law for every will of a rational being), then it can only command to do everything from the maxim of its will as one such that at the same time could have itself as giving law universally

*) I can here be excused from citing examples for the illustration of this principle, for those, that at first illustrated the categorical imperative and its formula, can here all serve to just the same end.

as an object; for then only is the practical principle and the imperative, which it obeys, unconditional, because it can have no interest at all as ground.

It is now no wonder, when we look back on all previous efforts that have ever been undertaken in order to discover the principle of morality, why they in every case had to fail. One saw the human being through its duty bound to laws, but it occurred to no one that it is subject *only to its own* and nevertheless *universal lawgiving*, and that it is only bound to act in conformity with its own will, though, according to the natural end, universally lawgiving. For if one conceived of it only as subject to a law (whichever it is): then this had to carry with itself some interest as attraction or constraint, because it arose not as law from *its* will, but the latter was necessitated in conformity to law by *something else* to act in a certain way. Through this wholly necessary consequence, however, all labor to find a highest ground of duty was irretrievably lost. For one never got duty, but necessity of action from a certain interest. This might now be one's own or another's interest. But then the imperative had each time to turn out conditioned

and was not able at all to be fit as the moral command. Thus I want to name this ground proposition the principle of the *autonomy* of the will, in opposition to every other that I on this account class with **heteronomy**.

The concept of any rational being which must consider itself through all maxims of its will as giving universal law, in order from this point of view to judge itself and its actions, leads to a very fruitful concept hanging on it, namely, that of *an empire of ends*.

I understand, however, under an *empire* the systematic union of different rational beings through common laws. Now, because laws determine ends as regards their universal validity, in this way will, if one abstracts from the personal difference of rational beings, also from all content of their private ends, be able to be thought a whole of all ends (not only of rational beings as ends in themselves, but also of individual ends which each one may set itself) in systematic bond, i.e. an empire of ends, which in accordance with the above principles is possible.

For rational beings all stand under the *law* that each of them is to treat itself and all others

never merely as a means, but always at the same time as an end in itself. Through this, however, arises a systematic union of rational beings through common objective laws, i.e. an empire, which, because these laws have just the reference of these beings to each other as ends and means as the purpose, can be called an empire of ends (admittedly only an ideal).

A rational being, however, belongs as a *member* to the empire of ends, if it is, to be sure, universally lawgiving in it but also is itself subject to these laws. It belongs to it *as head*, if it as lawgiving is subject to no will of another.

The rational being must consider itself always as lawgiving in an empire of ends possible through freedom of the will, whether it now be as a member, or as head. It can keep the seat of the latter, however, not merely through the maxims of its will, but only then, when it is a completely independent being without need and limitation of its capacity adequate to the will.

Morality thus consists in the reference of all action to the lawgiving by which alone an empire of ends is possible. This lawgiving must, however,

be found in each rational being itself and be able to arise from its will, whose principle therefore is: to do no action according to another maxim, except such that it also can be consistent with it, that it is a universal law, and thus only such *that the will through its maxim can consider itself at the same time as universally lawgiving*. If now the maxims are with this objective principle of rational beings, as universally lawgiving, not through their nature already necessarily in agreement, then the necessity of action according to that principle is called practical necessitation, i.e. *duty*. Duty belongs not to the head in the empire of ends, does, however, to each member and undoubtedly to all in equal measure.

The practical necessity to act according to this principle, i.e. the duty, rests not at all on feelings, impulses and inclinations, but merely on the relation of rational beings to one another, in which the will of a rational being must be considered always at the same time as *lawgiving*, because it otherwise could not think them as an *end in themselves*. Reason thus refers each maxim of the will as universally lawgiving to each other will and also to each action toward oneself and this, to be sure, not for the sake of any other practical motive or future advantage, but from the idea of the

dignity of a rational being who obeys no law other than that which it at the same time itself gives.

In the empire of ends everything has either a **price**, or a **dignity**. What has a price, in its place can also something else as *equivalent* be placed; what, on the other hand, is raised above all price, and therefore allows no equivalent, that has a dignity.

What refers to general human inclinations and needs has a *market price*; that which, even without presupposing a need, conforms to a certain taste, i.e. to a delight in the mere purposeless play of our powers of mind, a *fancy price*; that, however, which constitutes the condition under which alone something can be an end in itself has not merely a relative worth, i.e. a price, but an inner worth, i.e. *dignity*.

Now, morality is the condition under which alone a rational being can be an end in itself, because only through it is it possible to be a lawgiving member in the empire of ends. Thus morality and humanity, as far as it is capable of it, is that which alone has dignity. Skill and diligence in work have a market price; wit,

lively imagination and humor, a fancy price; on the other hand, fidelity in promising, benevolence from ground propositions (not from instinct) have an inner worth. Nature as well as art contain nothing which they, in deficiency of them, could put in their place; for their worth consists not in the effects that arise from them, in the advantage and profit which they provide, but in the dispositions, i.e. the maxims of the will, that are ready to reveal themselves in this way in actions, even though success did not favor them. These actions also need no recommendation from any subjective disposition or taste, to look at them with immediate favor and delight, no immediate propensity or feeling for the same: they present the will, which practices them, as an object of an immediate respect, for which nothing but reason is required in order *to impose* them on the will, not to *coax* from it, which latter were in the case of duties anyhow a contradiction. This estimation thus shows the worth of such a way of thinking as dignity and puts it above all price infinitely far off, with which it can not at all be brought into account and comparison, without as it were assaulting its holiness.

And what is it now, then, which justifies the morally good disposition or virtue to make such high claims?

It is nothing less than the *share* that it affords the rational being *in universal lawgiving* and makes it by this fit to be a member in a possible empire of ends to which it through its own nature was already determined as an end in itself and just for that reason as lawgiving in the empire of ends, in view of all natural laws as free, only obeying those alone that it itself gives and according to which its maxims can belong to a universal lawgiving (to which it at the same time subjects itself). For nothing has a worth other than that which the law determines for it. The lawgiving itself, however, which determines all worth, must just for that reason have a dignity, i.e. unconditional, incomparable worth, for which the word *respect* alone furnishes the proper expression of the estimation which a rational being has to assign with regard to it. *Autonomy* is thus the ground of the dignity of the human and every rational nature.

The three ways cited above to represent the principle of morality, however, are at bottom only so many formulas of just the same law, of which the one of itself unites in itself the other two. Meanwhile, a difference is yet in them that, to be sure, is subjective rather than objective-practical, namely, so as to bring an idea of reason nearer to intuition (according to a certain analogy)

and by this to feeling. All maxims have namely

1) a *form*, which consists in universality, and here the formula of the moral imperative is expressed thus: that the maxims must in this way be selected, as if they were to hold as universal laws of nature;

2) a *matter*, namely an end, and here the formula says: that the rational being, as an end according to its nature, therefore as an end in itself, must serve for every maxim as the limiting condition of all merely relative and optional ends;

3) a *complete determination* of all maxims through that formula, namely: that all maxims from individual lawgiving ought to harmonize to a possible empire of ends, as to an empire of nature*). The progression occurs here as through the categories of the *unity* of the form of the will (of its universality), of the *plurality* of the matter (of the objects, i.e. of the ends) and of the *allness* or totality of the system of them. One does better, however, if one in moral *judgment* always

*) Teleology considers nature as an empire of ends, morals a possible empire of ends as an empire of nature. There the empire of ends is a theoretical idea in explanation of that which exists. Here it is a practical idea, in order to bring into existence that which does not exist, but through our doing and letting can become actual, and, to be sure, in conformity with just this idea.

proceeds according to the strict method and lays the universal formula of the categorical imperative as the ground: *act according to the maxim which at the same time can make itself into a universal law*. If one wants, however, to provide at the same time *entry* for the moral law: then it is very useful to lead one and just the same action through the named three concepts and in so doing, so far as it is possible, to bring it nearer to intuition.

We can now here end from where we in the beginning started, namely, from the concept of an unconditionally good will. The *will* is *absolutely good*, which cannot be bad, therefore whose maxim, if it is made into a universal law, can never conflict with itself. This principle is thus also its highest law: act always according to that maxim whose universality as law you at the same time can will; this is the sole condition under which a will can never be in conflict with itself, and such an imperative is categorical. Because the validity of the will as a universal law for possible actions has analogy with the universal connection of the existence of things according to universal laws, which is the formal aspect of nature in general, so can the categorical imperative also in this way be expressed: *Act according to maxims which can at the same time have themselves as universal laws of nature as the object*.

Thus in this way the formula of an absolutely good will is constituted.

Rational nature excludes itself from the rest by this, that it sets itself an end. This would be the matter of any good will. Since, however, in the idea of a will absolutely good without limiting condition (of the attainment of this or of that end) complete abstraction must be made from every end to be *effected* (as it would only make each will relatively good), in this way will the end here have to be thought not as one to be effected, *but self-standing* end, therefore only negatively, i.e. the never acted against, which therefore must never be valued merely as a means, but always at the same time as an end in each willing. This can now be nothing other than the subject of all possible ends itself, because this at the same time is the subject of a possible absolutely good will; for this can without contradiction be subordinated to no other object. The principle: act in reference to any rational being (to yourself and others) in this way, that it holds in your maxim at the same time as an end in itself, is accordingly at bottom one and the same with the ground proposition: act according to a maxim, which contains its own universal validity for each rational being at the same time in itself. For that I ought to limit my maxim in the use

of the means to each end to the condition of its universal validity as a law for each subject, says just so much, as the subject of ends, i.e. the rational being itself, must never merely as a means, but as highest limiting condition in the use of all means, i.e. always at the same time as an end, be laid as the ground of all maxims of actions.

Now follows from this incontestably: that each rational being as an end in itself must be able to look at itself, with reference to all laws to which it may ever be subjected, at the same time as universal lawgiving, because just this fitness of its maxims to the universal lawgiving marks it out as an end in itself, also that this its dignity (prerogative) before all mere natural beings brings with it, to have to take its maxims always from the point of view of itself, at the same time, however, also of every other rational being as lawgiving (who for this reason are also called persons). Now, in such way a world of rational beings (*mundus intelligibilis*) as an empire of ends is possible and undoubtedly through the individual lawgiving of all persons as members. Accordingly, any rational being must in this way act, as if it were through its maxims always a lawgiving member in the universal empire of ends. The formal principle of these maxims is:

act in this way, as if your maxim at the same time were to serve as the universal law (of all rational beings). An empire of ends is thus only possible according to the analogy with an empire of nature, the former, however, only according to maxims, i.e. rules imposed on oneself, the latter only according to laws of externally necessitated efficient causes. Despite this, one still gives also to the whole of nature, although it is looked at as a machine, nevertheless, so far as it has reference to rational beings as its ends, from this ground the name of an empire of nature. Such an empire of ends would now through maxims, whose rule the categorical imperative prescribes to all rational beings, really come to pass, *if they would be universally followed*. But, although the rational being cannot count on it, that, even if it itself strictly followed this maxim, for that reason every other would be faithful precisely to it, also that the empire of nature and its purposive order harmonize with it, as a fitting member, toward an empire of ends possible through it itself, i.e. will favor its expectation of happiness; so remains still that law: act according to maxims of a member giving universal law to a merely possible empire of ends, in its full force because it is categorically commanding. And in this lies precisely the paradox: that merely the dignity of humanity, as

of rational nature, without any other end or advantage to be attained by this, therefore the respect for a mere idea should nevertheless serve as the unrelenting prescription of the will, and that just in this independence of the maxim from all such incentives its sublimity consists and the worthiness of any rational subject to be a lawgiving member in the empire of ends; for otherwise it would have to be represented only as subject to the natural law of its need. Even if the natural empire as well as the empire of ends were thought as united under one head, and by this the latter remain no longer merely an idea, but receive true reality, in this way would by this undoubtedly that one gain the increase of a powerful incentive, never, however, augmentation of its inner worth; for, despite this, even this sole unlimited lawgiver would have still always to be so represented, how it judged the worth of rational beings only according to their disinterested conduct, prescribed to themselves merely from that idea itself. The essence of things does not alter through their outer relations, and what, without thinking of the latter, alone constitutes the absolute worth of the human being, accordingly must it also, by whomsoever it is, even by the highest being, be judged. *Morality* is thus the relation of actions to the autonomy of the will, that is, to the possible universal

lawgiving through its maxims. The action that can subsist with the autonomy of the will is *permissible*; that not harmonious with it, is *impermissible*. The will whose maxims necessarily harmonize with the laws of autonomy is a *holy*, absolutely good will. The dependence of a not absolutely good will on the principle of autonomy (moral necessitation) is *obligation*. This can thus not be pulled on a holy being. The objective necessity of an action from obligation is called *duty*.

One can from the recent foregoing now easily explain it, how it comes to pass: that, although we conceive under the concept of duty a subjection under the law, we imagine by this nevertheless at the same time a certain sublimity and *dignity* in that person who fulfills all its duties. For, to be sure, no sublimity is in it so far as it is *subject* to the moral law, but rather so far as it is in view of just it at the same time *lawgiving* and only for that reason subordinate to it. We have also shown above how neither fear, nor inclination, but merely respect for the law is that incentive which can give to the action a moral worth. Our own will, so far as it would act only under the condition of a universal lawgiving possible through its maxims,

this will possible to us in the idea, is the proper object of respect, and the dignity of humanity consists just in this capability, universal lawgiving, although with the condition to be itself subject at the same time precisely to this lawgiving.

The autonomy of the will
as
highest principle of morality.

Autonomy of the will is the characteristic of the will by which it is to itself (independently of any characteristic of the objects of willing) a law. The principle of autonomy is thus: not otherwise to choose than in this way, that the maxims of one's choice are comprehended jointly in the same willing at the same time as universal law. That this practical rule is an imperative, i.e. the will of each rational being is necessarily bound to it as a condition, cannot be proven through mere analysis of the concepts present in it, because it is a synthetic proposition; one would have to go out beyond the cognition of objects and to a critique of the subject, i.e. of pure practical reason, for this synthetic proposition, which commands apodictically, must be able to be cognized completely a priori, this business, however, does not belong in the present

section. But that the aforesaid principle of autonomy is the exclusive principle of morals lets itself through mere analysis of concepts of morality very well be proved. For by this is found that its principle must be a categorical imperative, this, however, commands nothing more or less than just this autonomy.

The heteronomy of the will
as the source of all spurious principles
of morality.

If the will *anywhere else* than in the suitability of its maxims to its own universal lawgiving, hence, if it, in that it goes out beyond itself, seeks the law that is to determine it in the character of any of its objects, then *heteronomy* results each time. The will gives then not itself, but the object through its relation to the will gives it the law. This relation, whether it rests now on inclination or on representations of reason, lets only hypothetical imperatives become possible: I ought do something just *because I will something else*. On the other hand, the moral, hence categorical imperative, says: I ought act thus or so, even if I willed nothing else. E.g. the former says: I ought not lie, if I will to remain with honor; the latter,

however: I ought not lie, even if it brings upon me not the least shame. The latter must therefore abstract from any object so far that this has no *influence* at all on the will, so that practical reason (will) not merely administers foreign interest, but merely proves its own commanding authority as highest lawgiving. In this way I ought e.g. seek to promote others' happiness, not as if its existence were anything of consequence to me (whether it be through immediate inclination, or some satisfaction indirectly through reason), but merely because the maxim which excludes it cannot be comprehended in one and the same willing, as universal law.

Division
of all possible principles of morality
from the
assumed ground concept
of heteronomy.

Human reason has here, as everywhere in its pure use, so long as it lacks a critique, previously tried all possible incorrect ways before it succeeds in hitting upon the only true one.

All principles, which one might take from this point of view, are either *empirical* or

rational. The **first**, from the principle of *happiness*, are built on physical or moral feeling, the **second**, from the principle of *perfection*, either on the rational concept of it as a possible effect, or on the concept of a self-standing perfection (the will of God), as determining cause of our will.

Empirical principles are not at all fit to be the ground of moral laws. For the universality with which they are to hold for all rational beings without difference, the unconditional practical necessity that is imposed on them by this, falls away, if the ground of them is taken from the *special constitution of human nature* or the contingent circumstances in which it is placed. Yet the principle of *individual happiness* is most of all objectionable, not merely because it is false, and experience contradicts the pretense, as if well-being always adjusts itself according to good conduct, also not merely because it contributes nothing at all to the grounding of morality, since it is wholly something else to make a happy than a good human being, and make this prudent and sharp-sighted for its advantage than make it virtuous: but because it puts incentives underneath morality that rather undermine it and destroy its whole sublimity, since they put the motives

to virtue with those to vice in one class and only teach better calculation, the specific difference of both, however, wholly and entirely obliterate; on the other hand, moral feeling, this supposed special sense*), (however shallow the appeal to it is, since those, who cannot *think* even in that which merely depends on universal laws, believe to help themselves out through *feeling*, however little feelings, that are in terms of rank by nature infinitely different from each other, furnish a uniform standard of good and bad, also one can through one's feeling for others not at all validly judge) nevertheless remains closer to morality and its dignity in that it shows to virtue the honor of ascribing the satisfaction and the high esteem for her *immediately* to her, and does not say to her as it were in her face, that it is not her beauty, but only advantage, that attaches us to her.

Among the *rational* or reason-grounds of morality is yet the ontological concept of

*) I class the principle of moral feeling with that of happiness because any empirical interest, through the agreeableness that something only affords, it may well happen immediately and without view to advantages or in regard to them, promises a contribution to well-being. Likewise one must class the principle of compassion for others' happiness, with *Hutcheson*, with the same moral sense assumed by him.

perfection (however empty, however indeterminate, therefore useless it is, in order to discover in the immense field of possible reality the greatest sum appropriate for us, however much it, in order specifically to distinguish the reality, of which here the discussion is, from every other, has an unavoidable propensity to turn in the circle, and cannot avoid secretly to presume the morality which it is to explain) nevertheless better than the theological concept, to derive it from a divine, all-perfect will, not merely because we do not, after all, intuit its perfection, but can only derive it from our concepts, among which that of morality is the foremost, but because, if we do not do this (as it then, if it happened, would be a coarse circle in the explanation), the concept still remaining to us of its will from the qualities of eager desire for glory and dominion, combined with the fearful representations of power and of vengefulness, would have to make the foundation for a system of morals which would be directly set against morality.

If I, however, had to choose between the concept of the moral sense and that of perfection in general (both of which at least do not infringe on morality, although they are not at all suitable for the purpose of supporting it as foundations): then I would decide for the latter,

because it, since it at least pulls the decision of the question away from sensibility and to the court of pure reason, although it also here decides nothing, nevertheless preserves unfalsified the indeterminate idea (of a will good in itself) for closer determination.

For the rest, I believe to be able to be excused from a lengthy refutation of all these doctrines. It is so easy, it is even by those, whose office demands it, to declare themselves nevertheless for one of these theories (because listeners do not really want to put up with postponement of judgment), even presumably so well seen, that by this only superfluous labor would take place. What, however, interests us here more is to know: that these principles set up everywhere nothing but heteronomy of the will as the first ground of morality and for that very reason must necessarily fail to do their end.

Everywhere, where an object of the will must be laid as ground in order to prescribe to this the rule that determines it, there the rule is nothing but heteronomy; the imperative is conditional, namely: *if* or *because* one wills this object, one ought act thus or so; hence it can never morally, i.e. categorically, command. Whether now the object by means of inclination, as with the principle of one's own happiness,

or by means of reason directed to objects of our possible willing in general, in the principle of perfection, determines the will, in this way the will never determines itself *immediately* through the representation of the action, but only through the incentive which the anticipated effect of the action has on the will; *I ought do something, for this reason, because I will something else*, and here must still another law in my subject be laid as ground, according to which I necessarily will this other, which law in turn requires an imperative that limits this maxim. For, because the impulse, which the representation of an object possible through our powers is to exercise according to the natural constitution of the subject on its will, belongs to the nature of the subject, whether it is of sensibility (of inclination and of taste) or of understanding and of reason, which according to the special arrangement of their nature exercise themselves with delight on an object, in this way nature strictly speaking gives the law, which, as one such must not only be cognized and proved through experience, therefore is in itself contingent and for apodictic practical rule, of such kind the moral must be, becomes by this unfit, but it is *always only heteronomy* of the will, the will gives not to itself, but a foreign impulse gives the law to it by means of a

nature of the subject attuned to the receptivity of it.

The absolutely good will, whose principle must be a categorical imperative, will therefore, undetermined in view of all objects, contain merely the *form of willing* in general and undoubtedly as autonomy, i.e. the suitability of the maxim of any good will to make itself into universal law, is itself the sole law that the will of any rational being imposes on itself, without putting any incentive and interest of it underneath as ground.

How such a synthetic practical proposition a priori is possible and why it is necessary, is a problem whose solution lies no longer within the boundaries of the metaphysics of morals, also we have its truth here not maintained, much less presumed to have a proof of it in our power. We showed only through development of the once generally in vogue going concept of morality: that an autonomy of the will attaches to it in an unavoidable way, or rather lies as ground. Who, therefore, holds morality to be something, and not to be a chimerical idea without truth, must at the same time admit its above-cited principle. This

section was, therefore, just in this way, like the first, merely analytic. That now morality is no phantom, which then follows if the categorical imperative and with it the autonomy of the will is true and as a principle *a priori* absolutely necessary, requires a *possible synthetic use of pure practical reason*, which we, however, may not venture upon without sending on before a *critique* of this rational faculty itself, of which we in the last section have to present the leading features sufficient for our purpose.

Third Section.

Transition

from the

**metaphysics of morals to the critique
of pure practical reason.**

The concept of freedom

is the

key to the explanation of the autonomy
of the will.

The *will* is a kind of causality of living beings, so far as they are rational, and *freedom* would be that quality of this causality, since it can be effective independently of foreign causes *determining* it; just as *natural necessity* the quality of the causality of all reasonless beings to be determined to activity through the influence of foreign causes.

The above-cited explanation of freedom is *negative* and, therefore, in order to look into its essence, unfruitful; but there flows out of it a *positive* concept of it, which is so much more comprehensive and more fruitful. Since the concept of a causality carries with it that of *laws*, according to which through something which we name cause, something

else, namely the effect, must be posited: in this way is freedom, although it is not a quality of the will according to natural laws, for that reason still not entirely lawless, but must rather be a causality according to immutable laws, but of special kind; for otherwise a free will would be an impossibility. Natural necessity was a heteronomy of efficient causes; for each effect was possible only according to the law that something else determined the efficient cause to causality; what really, then, can the freedom of the will be other than autonomy, i.e. the quality of the will to be itself a law? The proposition, however: the will is in all actions itself a law, signifies only the principle to act according to no other maxim except which can have itself also as a universal law as object. This is, however, just the formula of the categorical imperative and the principle of morality: thus is a free will and a will under moral laws one and the same.

If, therefore, freedom of the will is presupposed, then morality follows together with its principle from that through mere analysis of its concept. Nevertheless, the latter is still always a synthetic proposition: an absolutely good will is that one whose maxim can always contain itself, considered as universal law, in itself,

for through analysis of the concept of an absolutely good will can that quality of the maxim not be found. Such synthetic propositions, however, are only possible by this, that both cognitions are joined to each other through the connection with a third in which they are reciprocally to be found. The *positive* concept of freedom provides this third, which cannot be, as with the physical causes, the nature of the world of sense (in which concept the concepts of something as cause in relation to *something else* as effect come together). What this third is, to which freedom directs us, and of which we have a *priori* an idea, lets itself here right now not yet be shown, and to make comprehensible the deduction of the concept of freedom from pure practical reason, with it also the possibility of a categorical imperative, but requires still some preparation.

Freedom
must as quality of the will
of all rational beings
be presupposed.

It is not enough that we ascribe to our will, it be from what ground, freedom, if we do not have sufficient ground to attribute the very same also to all rational beings.

For since morality serves as law for us merely as for *rational beings*, in this way must it hold also for all rational beings, and since it must be derived only from the quality of freedom, in this way must also freedom as a quality of the will of all rational beings be proved, and it is not enough to demonstrate it from certain supposed experiences of human nature (although this also is absolutely impossible and it can be demonstrated only *a priori*), but one must prove it as belonging to the activity of rational beings in general endowed with a will. I say now: Any being, that can act not otherwise than *under the idea of freedom*, is just for that reason, in practical regard, actually free, i.e. all laws that are inseparably joined with freedom hold for it, just in this way, as if its will also in itself, and validly in theoretical philosophy, would be declared as free*). Now I maintain: that we, to each

*) This way, to assume, as sufficient to our purpose, freedom only as laid down by rational beings in their actions merely *in the idea* as ground, I suggest for this reason so that I may not make myself bound to prove freedom also in its theoretical respect. For, even if this latter is left undecided, then still the same laws hold for a being that can act not otherwise than under the idea of its own freedom that would bind a being that really were free. We can thus liberate ourselves here from the load that weighs down the theory.

rational being that has a will, must necessarily lend also the idea of freedom under which it alone acts. For in such a being we conceive a reason that is practical, i.e. has causality in view of its objects. Now, one cannot possibly conceive a reason that, with its own consciousness in view of its judgments, would receive direction from elsewhere, for then the subject would not to its reason, but to an impulse, ascribe the determination of the power of judgment. It must look at itself as authoress of its principles independently of foreign influences, consequently, it must be looked at by itself as practical reason, or as a will of a rational being, as free; i.e. its will can only under the idea of freedom be a will of its own and must therefore in practical respect be attributed to all rational beings.

**Of the interest,
which to the ideas of morality
attaches.**

We have at last traced the determinate concept of morality back to the idea of freedom; this, however, we were not able even to prove as something actual in ourselves and in human nature; we saw only that we must presuppose it if we

ourselves want to conceive a being as rational and endowed with consciousness of its causality in view of actions, i.e. with a will, and in this way we find that we must from just the same ground attribute to each being endowed with reason and will this quality of determining itself to action under the idea of its freedom.

There flowed, however, from the presupposition of these ideas also the consciousness of a law to act: that the subjective ground propositions of actions, i.e. maxims, must always be taken so that they also hold objectively, i.e. universally as ground propositions, and therefore can serve for our own universal lawgiving. Why, however, should I then subject myself to this principle and, to be sure, as a rational being in general, therefore also by this all other beings endowed with reason? I will admit that no interest *impels* me to this, for that would give no categorical imperative; but I must still necessarily *take* an interest in this and look into how it comes about; for this ought is properly a willing that holds under the condition for each rational being, if reason with it were practical without hindrances; for beings, who, as we, are still affected through sensibility as incentives of different kind, with whom what reason for itself alone would do does not always happen,

that necessity of action is called only an ought, and the subjective necessity is distinguished from the objective.

It appears, therefore, as if in the idea of freedom we strictly speaking only presupposed the moral law, namely the principle of the autonomy of the will itself, and could not prove for itself its reality and objective necessity, and there we would have gained to be sure still always something quite considerable by this, that we at least had determined the genuine principle more accurately than indeed otherwise would occur, but in view of its validity and of the practical necessity to subject ourselves to it, we would have come farther for nothing; for we could give no satisfactory answer to him who asked us, why then the universal validity of our maxim, as a law, must be the limiting condition of our actions, and on what we ground the worth which we attribute to this way of acting which is to be so great that there can be no higher interest anywhere, and how it comes to pass that the human being believes to feel by this alone its personal worth against which that of an agreeable or disagreeable condition is to hold for nothing.

Of course we very well find that we can take an interest in a personal characteristic that

carries with itself no interest at all of the condition, if only the former makes us capable of partaking of the latter, in case reason should effect its distribution, i.e. that the mere worthiness to be happy, even without the motive of partaking of this happiness, can interest for itself: but this judgment is in fact only the effect of the already presupposed importance of moral laws (when we separate ourselves through the idea of freedom from all empirical interest); but we can not yet discern in this way that we ought to separate ourselves from this, i.e. consider ourselves as free in acting, and in this way nevertheless take ourselves to be subject to certain laws, in order to find a worth merely in our person, which can compensate us for all loss of that which provides a worth to our condition, and how this is possible, therefore *from where the moral law binds*.

There appears here, one must freely admit it, a kind of circle, from which, as it seems, there is no coming out. We assume ourselves in the order of efficient causes as free in order to think ourselves in the order of ends under moral laws, and we think ourselves afterwards as subject to these laws because we have attributed to ourselves the freedom of the will; for freedom and individual lawgiving of the will are both

autonomy, therefore reciprocal concepts, of which, however, just for that reason, one cannot be used in order to explain the other and to specify the ground of it, but at most only in order for logical purpose to bring different appearing representations of precisely the same object to a single concept (like different fractions of equal value to the littlest expression).

One recourse, however, remains over to us still, namely to search: whether we, when we think ourselves through freedom as a priori efficient causes, do not take up a different standpoint than when we represent ourselves according to our actions as effects that we see before our eyes.

It is a remark which to post quite certainly no subtle reflection is required, but of which one can assume that indeed the commonest understanding, although according to its way through an obscure distinction of power of judgment that it names feeling, may make it: that all representations that come to us without our choice (like those of sense) give the objects to us to cognize exactly so as they affect us, while what they may be in themselves remains unknown to us, and therefore that, as concerns representations of this kind, we can by this, even with the most strenuous

attentiveness and distinctness that the understanding may ever add, still merely arrive at the cognition of *appearances*, never of *things in themselves*. As soon as this distinction (possibly merely through the noticed difference between the representations that are given to us from somewhere else, and with which we are passive, from those that we bring forth only from ourselves and with which we prove our activity) is once made, then it follows of itself that one must admit and assume behind the appearances yet still something else which is not appearance, namely the things in themselves, although we resign of ourselves, that, since they can never become known to us, but always only as they affect us, we cannot step nearer to them and can never know what they are in themselves. This must provide a, although crude, distinction of a *world of sense* from the *world of understanding*, of which the first according to difference of sensibility in various observers of the world also can be very different, meanwhile the second, which underlies it as ground, always remains the same. Even itself and, to be sure, according to the knowledge that the human being has through inner sensation of itself, it may not presume to cognize how it is in itself. For since it after all does not as it were procure itself and gets its concept not a priori but empirically, in this way it is natural that it can also draw in information of itself through the inner sense and

consequently only through the appearance of its nature and the way in which its consciousness is affected, meanwhile it nevertheless in a necessary way must assume beyond this characteristic, put together from nothing but appearances, of its own subject still something else underlying as ground, namely its I, such as it may in itself be constituted, and must thus class itself in view of the mere perception and receptivity of sensations with the *world of sense*, in view of that, however, which in it may be pure activity (of that which arrives in consciousness not at all by affecting the senses, but immediately), class itself with the *intellectual world* which it, however, knows no further.

The reflective human being must draw a conclusion of this kind from all things that may appear to it; presumably it is also to be found in the most common understanding, which, as is known, is very inclined to expect behind the objects of the senses still always something invisible, something active for itself, but again by this ruins it, that it soon makes this invisible itself again sensible, i.e. wants to make into an object of intuition, and thus becomes by this not by a degree wiser.

Now the human being actually finds in itself a capacity by which it distinguishes itself from all other things, even from

itself, so far as it is affected by objects, and that is *reason*. This, as pure self-activity, is even in this raised still above the *understanding*: that, although this is also self-activity and does not, like sense, contain merely representations that only arise when one is affected by things (therefore passive), it can nevertheless produce from its activity no other concepts than those that in this way serve merely in order to *bring sensuous representations under rules* and to unite them by this in a consciousness, without which use of sensibility it would think nothing at all, while on the other hand, reason under the name of ideas shows such a pure spontaneity that it goes out by this far beyond anything that sensibility can only deliver to it, and proves in this its most eminent occupation, to distinguish the world of sense and the world of understanding from each other, by this, however, to prescribe to the understanding itself its boundaries.

For this reason a rational being must look at itself *as an intelligence* (thus not on behalf of its lower powers), not as belonging to the world of sense, but to the world of understanding; therefore, it has two standpoints from which it can consider itself and can cognize laws of the use of its powers, consequently of all its actions, *once*, so far as it belongs to the world of sense,

under natural laws (heteronomy), *secondly*, as belonging to the intelligible world, under laws that are independent of nature, not empirical, but are grounded merely in reason.

As a rational being, therefore as belonging to the intelligible world, the human being can think the causality of its own will never otherwise than under the idea of freedom; for independence from the determinate causes of the world of sense (of such kind reason must always attribute to itself) is freedom. Now, with the idea of freedom the concept of *autonomy* is inseparably connected, with this, however, the universal principle of morality, which underlies in the idea all actions of *rational* beings as ground just in this way as natural law all appearances.

Now is the suspicion that we above made astir removed, as if a hidden circle were contained in our inference from freedom to autonomy and from this to the moral law, namely, that perhaps we laid the idea of freedom as ground only for the sake of the moral law in order to infer this afterwards from freedom in turn, therefore of that could provide no ground at all, but it only as begging of a principle that friendly souls will probably gladly allow to us, which we, however, could

never set up as a provable proposition. For now we see that when we think ourselves as free, in this way we transfer ourselves as members into the world of understanding and cognize the autonomy of the will together with its consequence, morality; if we, however, think ourselves as obligated, in this way we consider ourselves as belonging to the world of sense and yet at the same time to the world of understanding.

How is a categorical imperative possible?

The rational being classes itself as intelligence with the world of understanding, and only as an efficient cause belonging to this does it name its causality a *will*. From the other side, it is conscious of itself, however, also as a piece of the world of sense, in which its actions as mere appearances of that causality are found, but of which possibility from this, which we do not know, cannot be looked into, but in which place those actions as determined through other appearances, namely eager desires and inclinations, must be looked into as belonging to the world of sense. As a mere member of the world of understanding, all my actions would thus be in perfect conformity with the principle of the autonomy of the pure will; as a mere piece of the world of sense, they would have to be taken as wholly in conformity with the natural law of eager desires and inclinations, therefore with the heteronomy of

nature. (The first would rest on the highest principle of morality, the second of happiness.) But because *the world of understanding contains the ground of the world of sense, therefore also of its laws*, thus is in view of my will (which wholly belongs to the world of understanding) immediately lawgiving, and thus must also be thought as such, in this way I will cognize myself as subject as an intelligence, although on the other side as a being belonging to the world of sense, nevertheless to the law of the first, i.e. of reason, which contains in the idea of freedom the law of it, and thus to the autonomy of the will, consequently must look at the laws of the world of understanding as imperatives for me and the actions in conformity with this principle as duties.

And in this way categorical imperatives are possible, by this, that the idea of freedom makes me into a member of an intelligible world, whereby, if I were only such, all my actions *would* always be in conformity with the autonomy of the will, but since I intuit myself at the same time as a member of the world of sense, *ought* to be in conformity with, which *categorical* ought represents a synthetic proposition a priori, by this, that to my will affected by sensuous eager desires still is added the idea of just the same will, but belonging to the world of understanding, pure, and for itself practical,

which contains the highest condition of the first according to reason; approximately in the way that concepts of the understanding, that for themselves signify nothing but lawful form in general, are added to the intuitions of the world of sense and by this make possible synthetic propositions *a priori*, on which all cognition of a nature rests.

The practical use of common human reason confirms the correctness of this deduction. There is no one, even the most wicked miscreant, if he is only otherwise accustomed to use reason, who, when one puts before him examples of honesty in purposes, of steadfastness in observance of good maxims, of compassion and of general benevolence (and connected moreover with great sacrifices of advantages and convenience), does not wish, that he also might be so disposed. He can, however, only because of his inclinations and impulses, not well bring it about in himself; by which he nevertheless at the same time wishes to be free from such inclinations burdensome to himself. He shows by this, therefore, that he, with a will that is free from impulses of sensibility, transfers himself in thought into an altogether different order of things than that of his eager desires in the field of sensibility, because he can expect from that wish no satisfaction of eager desires, therefore no satisfactory condition for any of his actual or otherwise

imaginable inclinations (for by this even the idea which coaxes the wish from him would lose its preeminence), but only a greater inner worth of his person. This better person he believes, however, to be when he transfers himself to the standpoint of a member of the world of understanding, to which the idea of freedom, i.e. independence from *determining* causes of the world of sense, involuntarily necessitates him, and in which he is himself conscious of a good will that for his bad will as a member of the world of sense according to his own admission constitutes the law, of whose authority he knows during the time that he transgresses it. The moral ought is thus one's own necessary willing as a member of an intelligible world and is thought only by it as ought so far as it considers itself at the same time as a member of the world of sense.

Of
the extreme boundary
of all practical philosophy.

All human beings think themselves as regards the will as free. From this come all judgments about actions as such that *ought* have been *done*, although they *were not done*. Nevertheless, this freedom is not a concept of experience and it also cannot be, because it always remains, although experience shows the opposite

of those demands that are represented as necessary under presupposition of it. On the other side, it is just in this way necessary that everything that happens according to natural laws is unfailingly determined, and this natural necessity is also not a concept of experience, just because it carries with itself the concept of necessity, therefore of a cognition *a priori*. But this concept of a nature is confirmed through experience and must itself unavoidably be presupposed, if experience, i.e. cohering cognition of objects of the senses according to universal laws, is to be possible. Therefore, freedom is only an *idea* of reason, whose objective reality is in itself doubtful, nature, however, a *concept of the understanding*, which proves and necessarily must prove its reality in examples of experience.

Although now out of this a dialectic of reason arises, since in view of the will the freedom attributed to it appears to stand in contradiction with the necessity of nature, and, with this parting of the ways, reason finds in *speculative purpose* the way of natural necessity much more worn and more useful than that of freedom: in this way the footpath of freedom is in *practical purpose* still the only one on which it is possible to make use of one's reason in our doing and letting; hence it is for the most subtle

philosophy just as impossible as for the most common human reason to argue away freedom. This must thus indeed presuppose: that no true contradiction will be found between freedom and natural necessity of the very same human actions, for it can just as little give up the concept of nature as that of freedom.

Meanwhile, this apparent contradiction must at least be destroyed in a convincing fashion, even though one could never comprehend how freedom is possible. For, if even the thought of freedom contradicts itself, or of nature, which is just as necessary, then it, as opposed to natural necessity, would have to be given up completely.

It is, however, impossible to evade this contradiction, if the subject, which imagines itself free, were to think itself *in the same sense*, or *in just the same relation*, when it names itself free as when it assumes itself in respect of the same action subject to the natural law. Hence, it is an inescapable problem of speculative philosophy: at least to show that its illusion with regard to the contradiction rests in this, that we think the human being in a different sense and relation when we name it free than when we consider it as a piece of nature subject to this

its laws, and that both *can* not only quite well subsist together, but also must be thought *as necessarily united* in the same subject, because otherwise a ground could not be assigned why we should trouble reason with an idea, that, although it allows itself to be united *without contradiction* with a different one, sufficiently established, nevertheless involves us in a business in which reason in its theoretical use is put in a very tight spot. This duty, however, is incumbent only on speculative philosophy, so that it provides a clear path for practical philosophy. Thus it is not put at the discretion of the philosopher whether he wants to remove the apparent conflict or leave it untouched; for in the latter case the theory about this is *bonum vacans*, into the possession of which the fatalist can put itself with ground and can expel all morals from its alleged property possessed without title.

Yet one can here not yet say that the boundary of practical philosophy begins. For that settlement of the controversy belongs not at all to it, but it demands only from speculative reason that this bring to an end the discord in which it in theoretical questions entangles itself, so that practical reason has rest and security against external attacks that for it could make contentious the ground on which it wants to establish itself.

The rightful claim, however, even of common human reason to freedom of the will grounds itself on the consciousness and the granted presupposition of the independence of reason from merely subjective-determinate causes which collectively constitute that which only belongs to sensation, therefore under the general naming of sensibility. The human being, who considers itself in such a way as an intelligence, puts itself by this in a different order of things and in a relation to determining grounds of a quite different kind when it thinks itself as an intelligence endowed with a will, consequently with causality, than when it perceives itself as a phenomenon in the world of sense (which it actually also is) and subjects its causality, as regards external determination, to natural laws. Now, it soon becomes aware that both at the same time can take place, indeed even must. For that a *thing in the appearance* (that belonging to the world of sense) is subject to certain laws, of which just the same *as thing* or being *in itself* is independent, contains not the least contradiction; that it, however, must represent and think itself in this twofold way, rests, as concerns the first, on the consciousness of itself as an object affected through senses, as regards the second, on the consciousness of itself as an intelligence, i.e. as independent in the use of reason of sensuous impressions (therefore as belonging to the world of understanding).

Hence it happens that the human being presumes a will that lets nothing come to its account which merely belongs to its eager desires and inclinations, and on the contrary thinks actions through itself as possible, indeed even as necessary, that can be done only with disregard of all eager desires and sensuous incitements. Their causality lies in it as intelligence and in the laws of effects and actions according to principles of an intelligible world of which it indeed knows nothing further than that in this only reason and, to be sure, pure reason independent of sensibility gives the law, also since it is in that very place only as an intelligence its proper self (as a human being, on the other hand, only an appearance of itself), those laws apply to it immediately and categorically, so that, to what inclinations and impulses (therefore the whole nature of the world of sense) incite, cannot infringe the laws of its willing as an intelligence, so entirely, that it for the first does not answer and does not ascribe to its proper self, i.e. to its will, certainly, however, does ascribe the indulgence that it likes to bear for them, if it allowed them to the detriment of rational laws of the will influence on its maxims.

By this, that practical reason *thinks* itself into a world of understanding, it oversteps not at all its boundaries, but certainly would if it wanted to *look* or *feel* itself *into* it. The former is only a negative

thought in view of the world of sense which gives reason no laws in determination of the will, and only in this single point positive, that that freedom, as negative determination, at the same time is connected with a (positive) capacity and even with a causality of reason, which we name a will, to act in this way, that the principle of actions is in accordance with the essential character of a rational cause, i.e. the condition of the universal validity of the maxim as a law. Were it, however, still to fetch an *object of the will*, i.e. a motive, from the world of understanding, then it would overstep its boundaries and presume to know something of which it knows nothing. The concept of a world of understanding is thus only a *standpoint*, that reason sees itself necessitated to take outside the appearances, *in order to think itself as practical*, which, if the influences of sensibility were determining for the human being, would not be possible, which, however, is still necessary insofar as the consciousness of itself as an intelligence, therefore as a rational cause active through reason, i.e. free acting, is not to be denied it. This thought brings about, of course, the idea of a different order and lawgiving than that of the nature mechanism, which concerns the world of sense, and makes the concept of an intelligible world (i.e. the totality of rational beings, as things in themselves)

necessary, but without the least presumption to think here further than merely according to its *formal* condition, i.e. in conformity to the universality of the maxim of the will as law, therefore to autonomy of the latter, which alone can subsist with its freedom; while, on the other hand, all laws that are determined on an object give heteronomy, which can only be found in natural laws and also can only concern the world of sense.

But then reason would overstep all its boundary, if it itself attempted to *explain how* pure reason can be practical, which would be fully one and the same with the problem of explaining *how freedom is possible*.

For we can explain nothing except what we can trace back to laws whose object can be given in some possible experience. Freedom, however, is a mere idea whose objective reality can in no way be set forth according to natural laws, therefore also not in any possible experience, which thus can never be comprehended or even only seen into because underneath it itself an example may never be put according to any analogy. It holds only as a necessary presupposition of reason in a being that believes itself to be conscious of a will, i.e. of a capacity still different from the mere faculty of desire, (namely to determine itself to action as an intelligence, therefore according to laws of reason independently of

natural instincts). Where, however, determination according to natural laws ceases, there ceases also all *explanation*, and there remains nothing left but *defense*, i.e. repulsion of the objections of those who pretend to have seen deeper into the essence of things and on that account boldly pronounce freedom to be impossible. One can only show them that the contradiction supposedly discovered by them in it lies nowhere else than in this, that, since they, in order to make the natural law hold in view of human actions, had to consider the human being necessarily as an appearance and now, since one demands of them that they should think it as an intelligence also as a thing in itself, they still consider it always in this, too, as an appearance, where, in that case admittedly, the separation of its causality (i.e. of its will) from all natural laws of the world of sense in one and the same subject would stand in contradiction, which, however, falls away, if they wanted to reflect and, as is reasonable, confess that behind the appearances still the things in themselves (although hidden) must lie as ground, of which laws of working one cannot demand that they should be of the same sort with those under which their appearances stand.

The subjective impossibility of *explaining* freedom of the will is one and the same with the impossibility of discovering and making comprehensible an

*interest**), which the human being can take in moral laws; and nevertheless it actually takes an interest in them, of which the foundation in us we name moral feeling, which has falsely been given out by some as the standard gauge of our moral judgment, since it rather must be looked at as the *subjective* effect that the law exercises on the will to which reason alone delivers the objective grounds.

In order to will that for which reason alone prescribes the ought to the sensuously-affected rational being, to that belongs of course a faculty of reason *to instill a feeling of pleasure* or of satisfaction in the fulfillment of duty, therefore a causality

*) Interest is that by which reason becomes practical, i.e. a cause determining the will. Hence one says only of a rational being that it takes an interest in something, unreasoning creatures feel only sensuous impulses. Reason takes an immediate interest only then in the action when the universal validity of the maxim of it is a sufficient ground of determination of the will. Such an interest is alone pure. If it, however, can determine the will only by means of another object of desire, or under the presupposition of a special feeling of the subject, then reason takes only a mediate interest in the action, and since reason can discover for itself alone without experience neither objects of the will, nor a special feeling underlying it as ground, in this way the latter interest would only be empirical and not a pure rational interest. The logical interest of reason (to advance its insights) is never immediate, but presupposes purposes of its use.

of it to determine sensibility in accordance with its principles. It is, however, completely impossible to look into, i.e. to make a *priori* comprehensible, how a mere thought, which itself contains nothing sensuous in itself, produces a sensation of pleasure or displeasure; for that is a special kind of causality of which, as of all causality, we can determine nothing at all a *priori* but about which we must consult experience alone. Since this, however, can provide no relation of cause to effect, except between two objects of experience, but here pure reason through mere ideas (which furnish no object at all for experience) is to be the cause of an effect that admittedly lies in experience, so the explanation, how and why the *universality of the maxim as law*, therefore morality, interests us, is for us human beings completely impossible. This much only is certain: that it does not have validity for us *because it interests us* (for that is heteronomy and dependence of practical reason on sensibility, namely on a feeling lying as the ground, by which it never could be morally lawgiving), but that it interests us because it holds for us as human beings, since it has arisen from our will as intelligence, therefore from our proper self; *what, however, belongs to mere appearance is subordinated by reason necessarily to the constitution of the thing in itself.*

The question thus: how a categorical imperative is possible, can be answered, to be sure, so far as one can declare the sole presupposition under which it alone is possible, namely the idea of freedom, also so far as one can look into the necessity of this presupposition, which is sufficient for the *practical use* of reason, i.e. for the conviction of the *validity of this imperative*, therefore also of the moral law, but how this presupposition itself is possible can never be looked into by any human reason. Under the presupposition of freedom of the will of an intelligence, however, its *autonomy*, as the formal condition under which it alone can be determined, is a necessary consequence. To presuppose this freedom of the will is also not only (without falling into contradiction with the principle of natural necessity in the connection of appearances of the world of sense) very well *possible* (as speculative philosophy can show), but also it is practically, i.e. in the idea, to put underneath all its voluntary actions as a condition, *necessary* without further condition for a rational being that is conscious of its causality through reason, therefore of a will (which is distinct from eager desires). But now *how* pure reason without other incentives that might be taken from somewhere else can be practical for itself, i.e. how the mere *principle of universal*

validity of all its maxims as laws (which admittedly would be the form of a pure practical reason) without any matter (object) of the will, in which one in advance may take some interest, for itself can furnish an incentive and produce an interest which would be called purely *moral*, or in other words: *how pure reason can be practical*, all human reason is completely incapable of explaining that, and all effort and labor to seek an explanation of this is lost.

It is just the same as if I sought to fathom how freedom itself as causality of a will is possible. For there I leave the philosophical ground of explanation and have no other. To be sure, I could now swarm about in the intelligible world that still remains over to me, in the world of intelligences; but although I have an *idea* of it, which has its good ground, so I have still not the least *knowledge* of it and can also never arrive at this through all effort of my natural rational faculty. It signifies only a something that there remains over when I have excluded from the grounds of determination of my will everything that belongs to the world of sense merely in order to limit the principle of motives from the field of sensibility, by this, that I bound it and show that it contains in itself not everything in everything, but that beyond it is still more; this more, however,

I know not further. Of the pure reason which thinks this ideal, nothing remains over to me after separation of all matter, i.e. cognition of objects, but the form, namely the practical law of the universal validity of maxims, and, in accordance with this, to think reason in reference to a pure world of understanding as a possible efficient cause, i.e. as determining the will; the incentive must here be completely missing; this idea of an intelligible world itself would then have to be the incentive or that one in which reason originally would take an interest; which, however, to make comprehensible is precisely the problem that we are not able to solve.

Here, then, is the highest boundary of all moral inquiry; which, however, to determine is also already of great importance for this reason, so that reason hunts not on the one side around in the world of sense in a way damaging to morals for the highest motive and for a comprehensible, but empirical interest, on the other side, however, so that it also not powerlessly swings its wings in the space, empty for it, of transcendent concepts under the name of the intelligible world, without moving from the spot, and loses itself among phantoms. Furthermore, the idea of a pure world of understanding as a whole of all intelligences, to which we ourselves as rational beings (although on the other side at the same time members of the world of sense) belong, remains always a useful and permitted idea for the purpose of a

rational faith, although all knowledge has at its border an end, in order to effect a lively interest in the moral law in us through the magnificent ideal of a universal empire of *ends in themselves* (of rational beings), to which we only then can belong as members when we carefully conduct ourselves according to maxims of freedom, as if they were laws of nature.

Concluding Remark.

The speculative use of reason *in view of nature* leads to absolute necessity of some highest cause *of the world*; the practical use of reason *with regard to freedom* also leads to absolute necessity, but only *of laws of actions* of a rational being as such. Now it is an essential *principle* of all use of our reason to drive its cognition up to the consciousness of its *necessity* (for without this it would not be cognition of reason). It is, however, also an equally essential *limitation* of the very same reason that it can see into neither the *necessity* of what exists, or what happens, nor of what ought to happen, unless a *condition*, under which it exists, or happens, or ought to happen, is laid as ground. In this way, however, through the constant inquiry for the

condition, the satisfaction of reason is only further and further postponed. Hence it seeks restlessly the unconditioned-necessary and sees itself necessitated to assume it without any means of making it comprehensible to itself; lucky enough, if it can discover only the concept which is compatible with this presupposition. It is thus no shortcoming of our deduction of the highest principle of morality, but a reproach that one would have to make of human reason in general, that it cannot make comprehensible an unconditional practical law (of such kind the categorical imperative must be) as regards its absolute necessity; for that it wants to do this not through a condition, namely by means of some interest laid as ground, can it not be blamed, because it would then not be a moral law, i.e. highest law of freedom. And in this way we comprehend, to be sure, not the practical unconditional necessity of the moral imperative, we comprehend, though, at least its *incomprehensibility*, which is all that can fairly be demanded of a philosophy that strives up to the boundary of human reason in principles.

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Preface

1. [iii.2](#) Ancient Greek philosophy was divided into three
2. [iii.12](#) All rational cognition is either *material* and
3. [iv.9](#) Logic can have no empirical part, i.e.
4. [v.4](#) One can name all philosophy, so far
5. [v.12](#) In such way the idea of a
6. [v.20](#) All trades, crafts and arts have gained
7. [vii.18](#) Since my purpose here is properly directed
8. [ix.1](#) Thus the moral laws together with their
9. [ix.20](#) A metaphysics of morals is therefore indispensably
10. [xi.5](#) Let one nevertheless certainly not think that
11. [xiii.11](#) In the intention at present to deliver
12. [xiv.17](#) Because, however, thirdly, a metaphysics of morals,
13. [xv.3](#) The present groundlaying is, however, nothing more
14. [xvi.1](#) I have taken my method in this

First Section (Paragraphs)

1. (15) [1.5](#) It is possible to think nothing anywhere
2. (16) [2.12](#) Some qualities are even favorable to this
3. (17) [3.4](#) The good will is not through that
4. (18) [4.3](#) There is, nevertheless, in this idea of
5. (19) [4.14](#) In the natural predispositions of an organized
6. (20) [5.21](#) In fact we also find that the
7. (21) [6.25](#) For since reason for that purpose is
8. (22) [8.4](#) In order, however, to explicate the concept
9. (23) [8.17](#) I here pass over all actions which
10. (24) [9.21](#) On the other hand, to preserve one's
11. (25) [10.9](#) To be beneficent, where one can, is
12. (26) [11.25](#) To secure one's own happiness is a
13. (27) [13.4](#) In this way we are without doubt
14. (28) [13.14](#) The second proposition is: an action from

15. (29) [14.13](#) The third proposition, as a consequence from
16. (30) [15.11](#) Thus the moral worth of the action
17. (31) [17.1](#) What kind of law though can that
18. (32) [18.1](#) The question is e.g. may I, when
19. (33) [19.26](#) What I therefore have to do, in
20. (34) [20.21](#) In this way, then, we have reached
21. (35) [22.21](#) There is a magnificent thing about innocence,
22. (36) [23.20](#) Thus in this way *common human reason*

Second Section (Paragraphs)

1. (37) [25.6](#) If we have drawn our previous concept of
2. (38) [26.7](#) In fact it is absolutely impossible to make
3. (39) [27.1](#) One can also for those, who laugh at
4. (40) [28.16](#) If one adds that, if one does not
5. (41) [29.10](#) One could also advise morality not more badly
6. (42) [30.8](#) If there is then no genuine highest ground
7. (43) [30.22](#) This condescension to folk concepts is certainly very
8. (44) [31.22](#) One needs only look at the attempts concerning
9. (45) [32.18](#) Such a completely isolated metaphysics of morals that
10. (46) [34.5](#) From the foregoing it is evident: that all
11. (47) [36.1](#) In order, however, to advance in this treatment
12. (48) [36.16](#) Each thing in nature works according to laws.
13. (49) [37.16](#) The representation of an objective principle, insofar as
14. (50) [37.20](#) All imperatives are expressed through an *ought* and
15. (51) [39.1](#) A perfectly good will would thus stand just
16. (52) [39.15](#) Now, all *imperatives* command either *hypothetically* or *categorically*.
17. (53) [39.23](#) Because each practical law represents a possible action
18. (54) [40.9](#) The imperative thus says which action possible through
19. (55) [40.17](#) The hypothetical imperative thus says only that the
20. (56) [41.1](#) One can conceive what is possible only through
21. (57) [42.3](#) There is nevertheless *one* end which one can
22. (58) [43.6](#) Finally, there is an imperative, which, without laying
23. (59) [43.16](#) The willing according to these three kinds of
24. (60) [44.13](#) Now the question arises: how are all these

25.	(61)	45.24	The imperatives of prudence would, if only it
26.	(62)	48.14	On the other hand, how the imperative of
27.	(63)	49.20	We will thus have to investigate the possibility
28.	(64)	50.11	Secondly, with this categorical imperative or law of
29.	(65)	51.1	With this problem we want first inquire whether
30.	(66)	51.9	If I conceive a <i>hypothetical</i> imperative in general,
31.	(67)	52.3	The categorical imperative is thus only a single
32.	(68)	52.7	If now from this single imperative all imperatives
33.	(69)	52.14	Because the universality of the law, according to
34.	(70)	52.23	Now we want to enumerate some duties according
35.	(71)	53.3	1) One, who, through a series of misfortunes
36.	(72)	54.6	2) Another sees himself forced by need to
37.	(73)	55.9	3) A third finds in himself a talent
38.	(74)	56.4	Yet a <i>fourth</i> , for whom it goes well
39.	(75)	57.3	These, then, are some of the many actual
40.	(76)	57.24	If we now pay attention to ourselves during
41.	(77)	59.3	We have this much thus at least shown,
42.	(78)	59.17	With the aim of arriving at this, it
43.	(79)	60.17	Here we now see philosophy put in fact
44.	(80)	61.6	Thus everything which is empirical, is, as an
45.	(81)	62.1	Thus the question is this: is it a
46.	(82)	63.13	The will is thought as a capacity to
47.	(83)	64.15	Granted, however, there were something, <i>whose existence in</i>
48.	(84)	64.21	Now I say: the human being and in
49.	(85)	66.4	If, then, there is thus to be a
50.	(86)	67.3	So as to stay with the previous examples,
51.	(87)	67.4	<i>Firstly</i> , in accordance with the concept of necessary
52.	(88)	67.23	<i>Secondly</i> , what concerns the necessary or obliged duty
53.	(89)	68.16	<i>Thirdly</i> , in view of the contingent (meritorious) duty
54.	(90)	69.10	<i>Fourthly</i> , in reference to the meritorious duty to
55.	(91)	69.23	This principle of humanity and of each rational
56.	(92)	70.23	All maxims are rejected according to this principle,
57.	(93)	71.5	The imperatives according to the previous way of

58.	(94)	<u>72.1</u>	For if we think one such, then, although
59.	(95)	<u>72.10</u>	Thus the <i>principle</i> of each human will, as
60.	(96)	<u>73.5</u>	It is now no wonder, when we look
61.	(97)	<u>74.5</u>	The concept of any rational being which must
62.	(98)	<u>74.11</u>	I understand, however, under an <i>empire</i> the systematic
63.	(99)	<u>74.23</u>	For rational beings all stand under the <i>law</i>
64.	(100)	<u>75.9</u>	A rational being, however, belongs as a <i>member</i>
65.	(101)	<u>75.14</u>	The rational being must consider itself always as
66.	(102)	<u>75.22</u>	Morality thus consists in the reference of all
67.	(103)	<u>76.15</u>	The practical necessity to act according to this
68.	(104)	<u>77.3</u>	In the empire of ends everything has either
69.	(105)	<u>77.9</u>	What refers to general human inclinations and needs
70.	(106)	<u>77.18</u>	Now, morality is the condition under which alone
71.	(107)	<u>78.25</u>	And what is it now, then, which justifies
72.	(108)	<u>79.20</u>	The three ways cited above to represent the
73.	(109)	<u>80.3</u>	1) a <i>form</i> , which consists in universality, and
74.	(110)	<u>80.7</u>	2) a <i>matter</i> , namely an end, and here
75.	(111)	<u>80.12</u>	3) a <i>complete determination</i> of all maxims through
76.	(112)	<u>81.9</u>	We can now here end from where we
77.	(113)	<u>82.3</u>	Rational nature excludes itself from the rest by
78.	(114)	<u>83.9</u>	Now follows from this incontestably: that each rational
79.	(115)	<u>86.12</u>	One can from the recent foregoing now easily
80.	(116)	<u>87.10</u>	Autonomy of the will is the characteristic of
81.	(117)	<u>88.11</u>	If the will <i>anywhere else</i> than in the
82.	(118)	<u>89.19</u>	Human reason has here, as everywhere in its
83.	(119)	<u>89.24</u>	All principles, which one might take from this
84.	(120)	<u>90.8</u>	<i>Empirical principles</i> are not at all fit to
85.	(121)	<u>91.19</u>	Among the <i>rational</i> or reason-grounds of morality is
86.	(122)	<u>92.22</u>	If I, however, had to choose between the
87.	(123)	<u>93.7</u>	For the rest, I believe to be able
88.	(124)	<u>93.18</u>	Everywhere, where an object of the will must
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90.	(126)	<u>95.13</u>	<i>How such a synthetic practical proposition a priori</i>

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1. (127) [97.10](#) The *will* is a kind of causality
2. (128) [97.18](#) The above-cited explanation of freedom is *negative*
3. (129) [98.21](#) If, therefore, freedom of the will is
4. (130) [99.23](#) It is not enough that we ascribe
5. (131) [101.21](#) We have at last traced the determinate
6. (132) [102.8](#) There flowed, however, from the presupposition of
7. (133) [103.4](#) It appears, therefore, as if in the
8. (134) [103.24](#) Of course we very well find that
9. (135) [104.19](#) There appears here, one must freely admit
10. (136) [105.9](#) One recourse, however, remains over to us
11. (137) [105.15](#) It is a remark which to post
12. (138) [107.14](#) The reflective human being must draw a
13. (139) [107.24](#) Now the human being actually finds in
14. (140) [108.20](#) For this reason a rational being must
15. (141) [109.5](#) As a rational being, therefore as belonging
16. (142) [109.16](#) Now is the suspicion that we above
17. (143) [110.10](#) The rational being classes itself as intelligence
18. (144) [111.16](#) And in this way categorical imperatives are
19. (145) [112.8](#) The practical use of common human reason
20. (146) [113.20](#) All human beings think themselves as regards
21. (147) [114.17](#) Although now out of this a dialectic
22. (148) [115.8](#) Meanwhile, this apparent contradiction must at least
23. (149) [115.15](#) It is, however, impossible to evade this
24. (150) [116.19](#) Yet one can here not yet say
25. (151) [117.1](#) The rightful claim, however, even of common
26. (152) [118.1](#) Hence it happens that the human being
27. (153) [118.24](#) By this, that practical reason *thinks* itself
28. (154) [120.9](#) But then reason would overstep all its
29. (155) [120.14](#) For we can explain nothing except what
30. (156) [121.25](#) The subjective impossibility of *explaining* freedom of
31. (157) [122.10](#) In order to will that for which
32. (158) [124.1](#) The question thus: how a categorical imperative

33. (159) 125.11 It is just the same as if
34. (160) 126.13 Here, then, is the highest boundary of
35. (161) 127.10 The speculative use of reason *in view*

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1. [15.23](#) *) A *maxim* is the subjective principle of
2. [16.8](#) *) One could reproach me, as if I

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3. [32.20](#) *) One can, if one wants, (just as
4. [33.19](#) *) I have a letter from the deceased
5. [38.12](#) *) The dependence of the faculty of desire
6. [42.19](#) *) The word prudence is taken in a
7. [44.21](#) *) It appears to me, the proper meaning
8. [50.19](#) *) I connect with the will, without a
9. [51.19](#) *) A *maxim* is the subjective principle of
10. [53.18](#) *) One must here note well that I
11. [61.25](#) *) To behold virtue in its proper form
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13. [68.18](#) *) Let one not think that here the
14. [72.23](#) *) I can here be excused from citing
15. [80.22](#) *) Teleology considers nature as an empire of
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Preface

1. [iii.18](#) Material philosophy is twofold.
2. [iv.9](#) Logic can have no empirical part.
3. [iv.17](#) Natural and moral philosophy can have an empirical part.
4. [v.15](#) Physics has its empirical and rational parts.
5. [vii.21](#) It is of the most extreme necessity to work out a pure moral philosophy.
6. [viii.13](#) The ground of obligation must be sought in concepts of pure reason.
7. [viii.17](#) Every prescription that rests on empirical grounds can never be called a moral law.
8. [ix.5](#) All moral philosophy rests completely on its pure part.
9. [ix.9](#) Moral philosophy gives a priori laws to the human being.
10. [ix.10](#) Power of judgement sharpened by experience is still required.
11. [ix.20](#) A metaphysics of moral is indispensably necessary.
12. [x.2](#) Morals remain subject to all kinds of corruption.
13. [x.5](#) What is to be morally good must also be done for the sake of the law.
14. [x.9](#) Conformity alone is very contingent and precarious.
15. [x.16](#) Pure philosophy (metaphysics) must come first.
16. [x.17](#) Without metaphysics there can be no moral philosophy at all.

First Section (Assertions)

1. [1.7](#) Nothing but a good will can be considered good without qualifications.
2. [3.4](#) The good will is good through willing alone.
3. [7.7](#) The true function of reason must be to produce a will good in itself.
4. [7.12](#) The good will must be the highest good.
5. [7.14](#) The good will must be the condition of everything else.
6. [8.11](#) The concept of duty contains the concept of a good will.
7. [11.25](#) To secure one's own happiness is a duty.

8. 12.5 All human beings have the most powerful and intimate inclination for happiness.
9. 12.10 The human being can make no determinate and secure concept of happiness.
10. 13.13 Practical love alone can be commanded.
11. 13.14 An action from duty has its moral worth only in its maxim.
12. 13.21 Intentions and effects can give no unconditional and moral worth.
13. 14.2 The moral worth of an action can only lie in the principle of the will.
14. 14.14 Duty is the necessity of an action out of respect for the law.
15. 15.1 Only the mere law in itself can be an object of respect and thus a command.
16. 15.6 Only the law can objectively determine the will.
17. 15.6 Pure respect for the practical law subjectively determines the will.
18. 15.11 The moral worth of action does not lie in the effects.
19. 15.21 Only the representation of the law in itself constitutes the moral good.
20. 17.12 The mere conformity to law in general must serve the will as a principle.
21. 20.18 Duty is the condition of a will good in itself.
22. 21.7 Common human reason, in order to know what to do, does not require philosophy.
23. 23.24 Out of practical grounds, common human reason is driven to philosophy.

Second Section (Assertions)

1. 26.7 It is impossible to make out by experience with certainty whether an action is done from duty.
2. 26.24 When the issue is moral worth, what matters are inner principles of actions, which are not seen.
3. 28.13 Duty lies before all experience in the idea of a reason determining the will through a priori grounds.
4. 28.21 The law must hold for all rational beings in general.
5. 28.23 The law must hold with absolute necessity.
6. 30.1 Examples serve only as encouragement and can never justify.

7. [32.18](#) A completely isolated metaphysics of morals is an indispensable substrate of all securely established theoretical knowledge of duties.
8. [32.18](#) A completely isolated metaphysics of morals is a desideratum of the greatest importance for the actual fulfillment of its prescriptions.
9. [33.7](#) The pure representation of duty has a powerful influence on the human heart through reason alone.
10. [33.11](#) Reason can get control over incentives.
11. [34.5](#) All moral concepts have their seat and origin completely a priori in reason.
12. [34.9](#) No moral concepts can be abstracted from empirical cognitions.
13. [34.11](#) The dignity of all moral concepts lies in the purity of their origin.
14. [34.13](#) So far as one adds the empirical, one also detracts from the genuine influence of moral principles and from the unlimited worth of actions.
15. [35.1](#) It is of the greatest practical importance to derive moral laws from the universal concept of a rational being in general.
16. [35.14](#) For its application to human beings, morality requires anthropology.
17. [35.14](#) Without presenting morals as metaphysics, it is impossible to ground morals on its genuine principles and in so doing to bring about pure moral dispositions.
18. [36.16](#) Each thing in nature works according to laws.
19. [36.17](#) Only a rational being has the capacity to act according to the representation of laws, i.e., according to principles, or has a will.
20. [36.20](#) The will is nothing other than practical reason.
21. [37.6](#) Necessitation is the determination of a will that is not in itself fully in accord with reason.
22. [37.16](#) The representation of an objective principle, insofar as it is necessitating for a will, is called a command (of reason), and the formula of the command is called an imperative.
23. [37.20](#) All imperatives are expressed through an ought.
24. [39.6](#) No imperatives hold for the divine will and in general for a holy will.
25. [39.15](#) All imperatives command either hypothetically or categorically.

26. [40.17](#) The hypothetical imperative only says that an action would be good for some possible or actual purpose.
27. [42.3](#) The pursuit of happiness is one end which one can presuppose as actual for all rational beings.
28. [43.1](#) The imperative which refers to the choice of means to your own happiness is hypothetical.
29. [43.6](#) That imperative is categorical which, without laying down as a condition for the imperative's basis some other purpose that is to be achieved by that conduct, commands the conduct immediately.
30. [44.20](#) Whoever wills the end, wills also the indispensable means, that are in his power.
31. [46.6](#) The concept of happiness is an indeterminate concept.
32. [47.8](#) One cannot act according to determinate principles in order to be happy.
33. [48.14](#) The imperative of morality is not at all hypothetical.
34. [49.26](#) Only the categorical imperative reads as a practical law.
35. [50.14](#) The categorical imperative is a synthetic practical proposition a priori.
36. [52.3](#) There is only one categorical imperative.
37. [57.9](#) Some actions are constituted in such a way that their maxim cannot without contradiction even be thought as a universal law of nature.
38. [58.25](#) We really do acknowledge the validity of the categorical imperative.
39. [59.4](#) Duty, if it is to be genuine, can only be expressed in categorical imperatives, never in hypothetical imperatives.
40. [59.23](#) Duty must hold for all rational beings.
41. [61.6](#) Everything empirical is highly damaging to the purity of morals themselves.
42. [61.10](#) The purity of morals consists just in this, that the principle of action is free from all influences of contingent grounds that only experience can provide.
43. [62.1](#) If there is a necessary law for all rational beings, then it must (completely a priori) already be connected with the concept of the will of a rational being in general.
44. [63.13](#) The will is thought as a capacity to determine itself to act according to the representation of certain laws.

45. [65.15](#) Rational beings are called persons because their nature already marks them out as ends in themselves.
46. [66.12](#) The human being necessarily conceives of its own existence as an end in itself.
47. [70.11](#) The principle of humanity must arise from pure reason.
48. [73.11](#) The human being is subject only to its own, but universal, lawgiving.
49. [77.3](#) In the empire of ends everything has either a price or a dignity.
50. [77.21](#) Morality and humanity, so far as it is capable of it, alone have dignity.
51. [79.12](#) Lawgiving itself must have a dignity.
52. [79.17](#) Autonomy is the ground of the dignity of human nature and of all rational nature.
53. [79.20](#) The three ways above of representing the principle of morality are at bottom only so many formulas of the very same law.
54. [80.2](#) All maxims have a form, a matter, and a complete determination of all maxims.
55. [81.11](#) That will is absolutely good which cannot be bad and therefore whose maxim, if the maxim is made into a universal law, can never conflict with itself.
56. [82.3](#) Rational nature distinguishes itself from the others by setting an end for itself.
57. [82.10](#) The end here must be thought not as one to be produced but rather as a self-sufficient end.
58. [83.23](#) Any rational being must so act as if it were through its maxims always a lawgiving member in the universal empire of ends.
59. [84.11](#) An empire of ends would actually come into existence through maxims whose rule the categorical imperative prescribes to all rational beings, if the maxims were universally followed.
60. [87.10](#) Autonomy of the will is the characteristic of the will by which the will is a law to itself.
61. [88.11](#) If the will seeks the law that is to determine it in the character of any of its objects, then heteronomy always results.
62. [90.8](#) Empirical principles are not at all fit to be the ground of moral laws.
63. [90.16](#) The principle of personal happiness is the most objectionable.

64. 91.4 Moral feeling, this supposed special sense, remains closer to morality.
65. 92.22 If I had to choose between the concept of moral sense and that of perfection in general, then I would decide for the latter.
66. 95.3 The absolutely good will contains merely the form of willing in general as autonomy.
67. 95.23 Whoever holds morality to be something must admit the principle of autonomy.

Third Section (Assertions)

1. 97.10 The will is a kind of causality of living beings.
2. 98.18 A free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same.
3. 100.13 Any being that can act not otherwise than under the idea of freedom is, just for that reason, in practical regard, actually free.
4. 102.4 We must attribute to each being endowed with reason and will this quality of determining itself to action under the idea of its freedom.
5. 104.26 Freedom and individual lawgiving of the will are both autonomy.
6. 106.16 This must provide a distinction between a world of sense and a world of understanding.
7. 106.22 By the knowledge the human being has of itself through inner sensation, it cannot presume to know what it is in itself.
8. 108.23 A rational being has two standpoints from which it can consider itself.
9. 109.11 With the idea of freedom the concept of autonomy is inseparably connected, but this is inseparably connected with the universal principle of morality.
10. 111.3 The world of understanding contains the ground of the world of sense, and therefore also of its laws.
11. 111.13 One must look at the laws of the world of understanding as imperatives for oneself.
12. 111.16 Categorical imperatives are possible because the idea of freedom makes me into a member of an intelligible world and I intuit myself at the same time as a member of the world of sense.
13. 112.8 The practical use of common human reason confirms the correctness of this deduction.
14. 113.20 All human beings think themselves as regards the will as free.

15. [114.12](#) Freedom is only an idea of reason, whose objective reality is in itself doubtful.
16. [115.3](#) No true contradiction will be found between freedom and natural necessity of the very same human actions.
17. [116.10](#) This duty, however, is incumbent only on speculative philosophy so that speculative philosophy might prepare a clear path for practical philosophy.
18. [117.17](#) That a thing as an appearance is subject to certain laws while the very same as a thing or being in itself is independent of those laws contains not the least contradiction.
19. [119.14](#) The concept of a world of understanding is only a standpoint.
20. [120.9](#) Reason would overstep its entire boundary if it attempted to explain how pure reason can be practical.
21. [120.23](#) The idea of freedom holds only as a necessary presupposition of reason.
22. [121.2](#) Where the determination of natural laws stops, all explanation stops, too.
23. [121.25](#) The subjective impossibility of explaining the freedom of the will is one and the same with the impossibility of discovering and making understandable an interest which the human being might take in moral laws.
24. [122.7](#) Moral feeling must be seen as the subjective effect that the law exercises on the will.
25. [123.14](#) The explanation of how and why the universality of a maxim as law, and therefore morality, interests us, is completely impossible for us human beings.
26. [123.22](#) It interests us because it is valid for us as human beings.
27. [124.1](#) The question of how a categorical imperative is possible can be answered so far as you can provide the sole presupposition under which the imperative is possible.
28. [124.11](#) Under the presupposition of the freedom of the will of an intelligence, the will's autonomy is a necessary consequence.
29. [124.14](#) To presuppose this freedom of the will is not only possible but also practically necessary.
30. [125.7](#) All human reason is completely incapable of explaining how pure reason can be practical.
31. [126.23](#) The idea of a pure world of understanding remains always a useful and permitted idea for the purpose of a rational faith.
32. [128.2](#) Reason restlessly seeks the unconditioned-necessary.

1. [ix.15](#) The German 'diese' ('this') in the 1786 edition is emended to 'dieser' so that 'this' refers to the masculine 'Willen des Menschen' ('will of the human being') rather than to the feminine 'Ausübung' ('practice').
2. [3.17](#) In the emended edition, the word 'als' ('as') is inserted, yielding '(of course not at all as a mere wish ...)' This insertion makes the phrase parallel the subsequent 'als die Aufbietung' ('as the summoning').
3. [14.18](#) The German pronoun 'sie' in the 1786 edition is changed to 'es' so that the referent is the object (the neuter 'Objekt') rather than the effect (the feminine 'Wirkung').
4. [20.5](#) The German 'wo nicht' ('if not') in the 1786 edition becomes 'Wo nicht' ('If not') so that a capital letter begins the sentence, just as the capital 'K' in 'Kannst' begins the German question.
5. [41.23](#) The German word 'nicht' ('not') on line 23 in the 1786 edition is removed, yielding 'whether it perhaps actually' rather than 'whether it not perhaps actually'.
6. [44.3](#) The German 'gefälliger' ('pleasing') in the 1786 edition is emended to 'zufälliger' ('contingent') since what specific items people count as belonging to their happiness is contingent (which is one of Kant's main complaints about the principle of happiness).
7. [52.1](#) The definite article 'den' ('the') in the 1786 edition is emended to 'der', yielding 'which conformity alone the imperative properly represents as necessary' rather than 'which conformity alone properly represents the imperative as necessary'.
8. [65.23](#) In the German in the 1786 edition, the 'en' ending on the indefinite article 'einen' ('a' or 'one') is removed to match the referent 'Zweck' ('end').
9. [65.24](#) The 'en' ending on 'solchen' ('such') in the 1786 edition is replaced with the strong masculine 'er' ending because the referent is the masculine 'Zweck' ('end').
10. [79.10](#) In the parenthetical expression, the German pronoun 'er' is emended to 'es' to reflect the neuter referent 'Wesen' ('being').
11. [80.7](#) 'Maxime' ('maxim') is emended to 'Materie' ('matter') to achieve consistency with the immediately following third part of all maxims (specifically at 80.18).
12. [84.13](#) The German 'aller' ('of all') in the 1786 edition is emended to 'allen' ('to all'), yielding 'whose rule the categorical imperative prescribes to all rational beings' rather than 'whose rule the categorical imperative of all rational beings prescribes'.
13. [89.13](#) The 'en' ending on 'allgemeinen' ('universal') is emended to an 'es' ending since 'Gesetz' ('law') is neuter and in the nominative singular.
14. [91.17](#) In the German, an 's', unprinted in the text and resulting in 'ondern' in the 1786 edition rather than 'sondern' ('but'), is added.
15. [91.26](#) The German text in the 1786 edition has 'mau' but evidently should be 'man' ('one').
16. [93.1](#) To give the verb 'aufbehält' ('preserves') a subject, 'er' ('it', referring to the masculine 'Begriff' ('concept')) is added immediately after 'weil' ('because').

17. 100.9 In the parenthetical expression, 'sie' ('it', referring to freedom) is inserted, giving 'and it can be demonstrated' rather than 'and can be demonstrated'.
18. 100.12 The German 'gehörig' ('belonging') is added to the 1786 edition, yielding 'one must prove it as belonging to the activity of rational beings' rather than 'one must prove it as to the activity of rational beings'.
19. 112.11 The first 'nicht' ('not') in the 1786 edition is removed, eliminating a double negative ('who not does not') that expresses the opposite of what Kant intends.
20. 115.13 The indicative 'mußte' ('must') in the 1786 edition is replaced with the subjunctive II form 'müßte' ('would have to'). This brings sentence in line with the subjunctive construction of the previous sentence and conforms with the use of 'wenn' ('if').
21. 117.13 The indefinite article 'ein' ('a') is inserted before 'Phänomen' ('phenomenon').
22. 127.4 The 'en' ending on 'welchen' ('which') in the 1786 edition is emended to 'welchem' to reflect the neuter 'Reich' ('empire') in the dative case required by the preposition 'zu' ('to') and the verb 'gehören' ('belong').
23. 128.1 In the German in the 1786 edition, the spelling of 'Bedigung', split between pages 127 and 128, is corrected to 'Bedingung' ('condition').



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**absolute**

Kant uses 'absolute' or 'absolutely' to let us know that something is not dependent or based on some empirical, contingent condition. He frequently uses it to describe a good will, necessity, and law. So an absolutely good will is a will that is always guided by the moral law and never swayed by desires and other empirical incentives. And a moral command such as the categorical imperative expresses absolute necessity because it must be followed no matter what desires you might have. This independence from any empirical condition implies that you will not be able to excuse yourself from, or make for yourself an exception to, the moral law. viii

a posteriori

This Latin phrase is typically used in connection with concepts and incentives. It indicates availability only by means of empirical investigation and is to be understood in opposition to 'a priori'. An example of an a posteriori concept is the concept of gravity. We have the concept of gravity only through experience (e.g., of dropped objects falling to the ground rather than floating) and, in its more precise form, through the empirical investigations of experimenters like Galileo Galilei and Isaac Newton. In philosophy in general, it is knowledge justified by appeal to the senses that is typically alleged to be a posteriori. xiii

a priori

This Latin phrase is frequently used in connection with concepts, principles, laws, and propositions. It signals availability without the aid of empirical investigation and so is to be understood in opposition to 'a posteriori'. Characterizing a principle as a priori, for instance, can signal that the principle can be known without the aid of empirical investigation. Kant thinks that all genuinely moral principles are a priori (and also that they are synthetic). In philosophy in general, it is knowledge that is sometimes alleged to be a priori, particularly knowledge of logical truths but also of some moral and metaphysical truths. In these contexts, we are said to know these truths a priori; that is, we can gain access to the truths without having to resort to empirical investigation. v

analytic

1. Kant's method of investigation is in part analytic, another part being synthetic. In this methodological context, 'analytic' refers to transitioning to higher principles (having a more general or wider scope of application) from lower principles (having a more specific or narrower scope of application) by examination of the lower principles. Other ways to think of it are to see it as a transition from conclusion to premises or assumptions, or as a process of reverse-engineering a finished product into the components from which it is assembled. Kant says (at pp. 95-6) that the first two Sections of the work exhibit this analytic approach. xvi

2. Kant also speaks of analytic propositions (see p. 45). Such a proposition linguistically joins together concepts that are conceptually inseparable in the sense that if you think one concept and fully probe the concept you will come across the other concept, thus merely making explicit what is already implicit in the probed concept. The usual metaphor is that one (i.e., the probed) concept contains the other concept, this containment being what makes the concepts inseparable in the specified sense. As an example, Kant says (pp. 44-5) that the proposition 'whoever wills the end also wills the indispensable means to that end' is an analytic proposition; for if we sufficiently probe the concept of willing an end we will find in it the concept of willing the indispensable means to that end. 45

apodictic

This unusual word indicates the absolute necessity of something such as a law or principle. For example (p. 40), the categorical imperative is an apodictic practical principle; hypothetical imperatives, on the other hand, are never apodictic because the necessity they express is always conditional (on, for instance, desires and wants) rather than absolute. 28

appearance

An appearance is an object of experience and is located in space and time. This word ('Erscheinung' in German) occurs most frequently in the Third Section (an earlier and less specific use appears on p. 28) in the context of the world of sense: appearances are what we encounter in the world of sense, in the world that is full of sensible objects such as trees and bumblebees. A closely related term is 'phenomenon' ('phenomena' being the plural, analogous to 'appearances'). An appearance (phenomenon) is to be contrasted with a thing in itself (noumenon). The appearance is supposed to be the appearing, to us in the world of sense, of the thing in itself which is not in the world of sense and which we cannot know; the unknowable thing in itself is in some way "behind" the appearance. 106

assertoric

Kant categorizes hypothetical imperatives in several ways. One of these ways is to say that the hypothetical imperative is an assertoric practical principle, by which he means that the imperative, taken as a principle, asserts that an action is appropriate for some actual or real (as opposed to some merely possible) purpose. Kant's example (p. 42) is that everyone has as an actual purpose the pursuit of happiness; the hypothetical imperative prescribing the pursuit is thus assertoric. On p. 40, Kant contrasts assertoric principles with problematic principles. 40

autonomy

Kant uses this word to refer to the capacity of the will to govern itself by formulating and following laws and principles that are based in reason. This capacity is a distinguishing feature of rational beings endowed with a will. Such beings can (but, if they are imperfect beings such as humans, do not always) make principled decisions that are the result of thinking things through using their reason; frequently, however, such beings make decisions (and then act) based chiefly on emotions, feelings, desires, wants, likes and dislikes, biases, and prejudices. Kant also speaks (p. 74) of the principle of autonomy, and in this usage he means a principle that prescribes that we should exercise this capacity of the will to act on rational principles or maxims formulable as universal laws. 74

categorical

Most generally, this signals an independence from desires, wants, and needs. So, for example, the categorical imperative is an imperative that holds independently of what you might happen to want or desire. The categorical is aligned with what is universal and absolute rather than with what is personal/individual and relative. This alignment with the universal and absolute is perhaps the chief reason why moral imperatives, which are always categorical, are not hypothetical imperatives. 39

categories

Although this word has the same root as 'categorical' in 'categorical imperative', their meanings are not closely related. The categories are pure concepts of the understanding. They are basic, very general concepts that are built-in to the structure of our minds and that play an essential role in constructing our experience of the empirical world, the world of sense. According to Kant, there are twelve of these categories; examples of these fundamental concepts include: unity, plurality, causality, and possibility. Kant discusses the categories at length in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). In the *Groundlaying*, they are mostly in the background. In fact, Kant only explicitly refers to them once, on p. 80; other references are indirect such as those on p. 108 where they are the concepts that "bring sensuous representations under rules" or on p. 112 where they are the concepts that are "added" to intuitions. 80

cognition

A cognition is a kind of representation (in Kant's sense) of an object or relation between objects. A moral cognition, for instance, might be a true judgment about what our duty is in a particular situation. The German word is 'Erkenntniß' and is sometimes translated as 'knowledge' in the sense of knowing that something is the case or of holding a true proposition about something. iii

concept

A concept is a kind of representation (in Kant's sense) of a property or characteristic of something of a particular kind. For example, the concept of a rational being specifies the property or attribute of having the power or faculty of reason. Some concepts can be complex and specify more than one property; for example, the concept of a moral principle specifies, among others which Kant does not emphasize so much, the three properties of being universal, being necessary, and being absolute. viii

critique

Kant speaks several times in the *Groundlaying* of a critique of reason and of practical reason. These critiques are part of his so-called critical philosophy, which is the philosophy he started putting together in the 1770s and which represents his more mature views. Kant thinks these critiques of reason are necessary in order to prevent reason from exceeding its limits, which it does when it tries to claim knowledge of things that are beyond our possible experience. Examples of such claims to knowledge, from traditional metaphysics (which Kant rejects) include claims about God's abilities, claims about the immortality of the soul, and claims about how freedom is possible. (Note that although in the *Groundlaying* Kant says a bunch about this last, freedom, he does not say how it is possible but only that it must be presupposed.) xiii

dignity

Like so many of the terms he uses, it's hard to pin down what Kant means by 'dignity', but it seems to be closely associated with autonomy. On p. 77, he seems to say that dignity is a kind of inner worth that human beings have insofar as they can be lawgivers. He later (p. 79) also seems to add that this inner worth is unconditional and incomparable. And on p. 87 Kant suggests that dignity is, or arises from, the capability of rational beings to be universal lawgivers. 23

duty

In the *Groundlaying*, a duty is a moral obligation. For Kant, this means that duties have several features. They are based on the moral law and so are unconditioned and specify absolutely necessary actions. We feel this necessity that they have, this obligatoriness, when we respect the moral law. These features help explain Kant's account of duty in The Third Proposition (p. 14). Kant also holds that there are different kinds (pp. 52-3) of duties and that the concept of duty contains (p. 8) the concept of a good will. viii

ethics

Ethics is one of the main branches of philosophy. As such, it is the science of morals, the methodological study of the system of duties that govern human conduct. As a branch of philosophy, ethics should be thought of as philosophical ethics or as moral or practical philosophy. Kant says (p. v) that ethics has two parts, one empirical and one rational: practical anthropology (which is the empirical part) and the metaphysics of morals (which is the purely rational part). The term should not be thought of as synonymous with 'morals' or 'morality' because ethics takes morals or morality as its object of study as, for instance, biology takes the living organism as its object of study. iii

empirical

1. As an adjective, it usually characterizes motives, laws, or principles as in some way relying on sense experience. So, for instance, an empirical law (such as the law of gravity) is a law that is established through observation and experiment. For Kant, no genuine moral laws or principles are empirical at their foundations (but applying the laws or principles may require empirical inputs). This is so because all moral laws are synthetic a priori statements while all empirical laws are synthetic a posteriori statements. iv

2. As a noun (as in 'the empirical'), it refers to content obtained or generated by using the senses. So, for instance, the propositional content in the general claim that humans desire companionship is based on our repeated observations of the social behavior of others (and ourselves). The opposite of the empirical is the transcendent, what is beyond experience (and the analogous adjective is 'transcendental'). vi

end in itself

By an end in itself ('Zweck an sich selbst' in German), Kant means a rational being with a will. Human beings with wills and persons count as ends in themselves. These kinds of beings are able to set goals for themselves and to have purposes which they try to fulfill by following principles of action. This conception of rational beings underlies the Humanity formulation of the categorical imperative. 64

experience

In a non-technical sense, experience is the empirical knowledge we have from our interactions with the world of sense. More technically, an experience is a judgment or statement our faculty of understanding forms from combining sensory inputs (intuitions) with the twelve categories of the understanding (such as the category of causality). Kant holds that no moral concepts, such as duty, are concepts of experience (p. 25). iv

ground

Kant uses this word very frequently in various contexts: "ground of obligation" at viii.13; "ground of the difficulty" at 50.12; "ground of desire" at 63.22; "ground of determinate laws" at 64.17; "ground of this principle" at 66.11; "ground of the dignity" at 79.18; "ground of the world of sense" at 111.4; "its good ground" at 125.17; and others. It can, in general, perhaps best be understood as an amalgam of the following: (rational) basis, foundation, cause, source, origin, reason, warrant, justification, account. iv

groundlaying

A metaphysics of morals requires a rational basis, and in this work Kant is trying to figure out such a rational basis: the content of the sequential transitions passed through in the process of this figuring out constitutes the groundlaying. Others have translated the German word, 'Grundlegung', as 'groundwork', 'fundamental principles', 'foundations', and 'grounding'. xiii

heteronomy

In contrast to autonomy, heteronomy is a capacity of the will to relinquish control to empirical influences such as desires and wants. A will in this state would be a heteronomous will and is not free. Kant also speaks of principles of heteronomy, meaning by this principles, such as the principle of happiness, that prescribe that the will should let itself be governed by desires and wants rather than by reason. According to Kant, such heteronomous principles can never be genuine moral principles. 74

highest good

Kant says (p. 7) that a will that is good in itself is the highest good. Such a will is good not because of what it accomplishes but only because of the way in which it wills (i.e, willing in accordance with a universalizable maxim). The highest good should not be confused with the complete good, which (as we learn (5:110) in the *Critique of Practical Reason*) is a good will which is also happy because it has all the virtues that entitle it to that happiness. Note that Kant also remarks (p. 29) that we identify God as the highest good. 7

hypothetical

This is an adjective characterizing some imperatives as based on wants, desires, and needs rather than on reason. So a hypothetical imperative prescribes that you should do some action provided that you desire some result that would probably be brought about (at least in part) by performing the action. An example of a hypothetical imperative would be: I should do what my boss tells me to do or else I won't get the promotion that I want. In this example, obeying the boss is the necessary means to the unnecessary but wanted end of getting the promotion. Kant's meaning of "hypothetical" should not be confused with the dictionary definition of "hypothetical" which equates it with "imaginary" or "supposed" as in "a hypothetical case"; for Kant, hypothetical imperatives are very real, as are the desires and wants in the world of sense upon which such imperatives are based. 40

idea

Kant's use of 'idea' ('Idee' in the German) is peculiar. He typically means a representation that comes from pure reason and so which represents something transcendent and unconditional. Examples include the idea of God, the idea of duty, the idea of immortality, and the idea of freedom. He rarely, if ever, uses 'idea' in the ordinary sense of just a thought, conception, or notion. For this ordinary sense, Kant is more likely to use 'representation' ('Vorstellung' in the German). Some translators use 'Idea' for Kant's peculiar sense and 'idea' for the ordinary sense. v

incentive

An incentive ('Triebfeder' in the German) is just about anything that can influence the will, that can move us to action through an act of willing: feelings, desires, objects of desires, the expected effect of an action, secret or hidden springs of action, etc. They are typically empirical and of a sensuous sort and as such can never be a basis for morality. But Kant leaves it open as to whether there are non-empirical, pure, or a priori incentives. He says (p. 86), for instance, that respect (which is a special kind of feeling) for the law can be an incentive. And, though he holds it out as a possibility, Kant does not claim to be able to explain how something non-sensuous (such as an idea or a thought) could be an incentive (see pp. 123-6). Kant sometimes uses 'motive' ('Bewegungsgrund') for these possible non-sensuous incentives. 13

inclination

An inclination ('Neigung' in the German) is a kind of habitual desire that arises from needs and that is stimulated by sensibility (see the footnote on p. 38). Examples would include desires, either mediate or immediate, for food, sleep, sex, companionship, self-love, and happiness. Because inclinations arise from the needs we have as embodied beings, and are therefore thoroughly empirical in nature, Kant denies that inclinations can ever be a basis for morality. ix

intelligible

The intelligible world is that world of things in themselves, including our true selves, which we cannot know or even be acquainted with. According to Kant, we cannot know, for instance, whether the intelligible world exists in space and time or whether causal laws govern the relations between the objects (if there are such) in the intelligible world. We cannot have such knowledge because the intelligible world is not presented to us through sensibility. Because causality cannot be attributed to the intelligible world, when we, as rational beings, think of our true selves as belonging to that world, we must think of ourselves as having freedom of the will. Still (and perhaps inexplicably), Kant wants to go on to say that the intelligible world and its things in themselves lie behind, and are the rational ground of, the appearances in the world of sense that we interact with as embodied beings. Furthermore, this rational ground, reason itself, is the source of morality. So, although we, as rational beings with wills, must think of ourselves as free, we are not totally undetermined; for we, as rational beings, willingly conform to reason and thus to moral law. But, at the same time, we, as also embodied beings belonging to the world of sense, find our wills obligated by these moral laws which have their source in the intelligible world. 109

intuition

An intuition ('Anschauung' in the German), in Kant's technical vocabulary, is a kind of representation which is essential to the operation of the faculty of sensibility. Intuitions can be empirical, as when we have sensuous intuitions of objects in the world of sense; examples would be the mental imagery of a patch of color, the tactile impression of a felt texture, or the auditory awareness of a singular sound. These empirical intuitions, or passively received sensory inputs with uninterpreted content, are unlike non-empirical, pure, or a priori intuitions, which are formal and have no content at all; examples of these are the intuitions of space and time. 79

knowledge

For Kant, knowledge is the outcome of the understanding's job of combining intuitions with concepts. The result of the combination is a judgment. So knowledge always occurs in the form of a judgment. Depending on the intuitions and concepts involved, the judgment or knowledge might be either empirical or non-empirical. Examples of the latter kind are the categorical imperative and the claim that every event has a cause, both of which are synthetic a priori judgments. ix

law

There are several kinds of laws. Kant refers, for instance on p. 11, to laws of nature (e.g., theoretical laws such as the law of cause and effect), laws of freedom (e.g., practical laws such as moral laws), and laws of thought (e.g., formal laws of logic). What they all have in common is that they are true, universal, absolute, and necessary. iv

maxim

A maxim is a subjective principle of willing on which a rational being with a will acts. Maxims specify the end to be achieved by the action, the means or action used to achieve the end, and the contextual circumstances of the situation. A maxim does not have to be explicitly formulated by the acting rational being. When a maxim is consistent with the moral law then it holds not just subjectively (for the acting rational being) but also objectively (for all rational beings similarly situated). For all maxims that can succeed as moral principles, Kant says (p. 80) that they have: a form, a matter, and a complete determination according to universal law. 15

metaphysics

It is a subsidiary branch of philosophy; in particular, it is the non-formal (non-logic) part of pure philosophy that deals with objects of the understanding. The knowledge we get from metaphysics is synthetic a priori because it says something about how our experience (hence synthetic) of nature or of morals must (hence a priori) be. Kant thinks this kind of knowledge is possible because our mind, our understanding in particular, is an active participant in constructing our experience. In general, for Kant, metaphysics is possible just to the extent that it helps to explain the structure of our experience. Note, however, that Kant thinks that traditional metaphysics, which goes beyond possible experience by making claims, for instance, about God, the soul, and substance, is not possible. v

metaphysics of morals

This phrase refers to the pure, rational part of morals or ethics, the part of morals in which its principles (which are synthetic a priori propositions) are derived only from pure reason rather than also from empirical facts about the nature of human beings. The metaphysics of morals thus provides the rational basis for the system of moral duties that govern our behavior. Kant insists that morals must, for its foundations, have such a metaphysics, but he at the same time allows that morals, for its applications to human life, must have access to empirical facts about humans and their circumstances in the world of sense. v

misology

Kant makes use of this uncommon word, which means a distrust or hatred of reason and reasoning, in arguing that reason has not been given to us specifically in order to help us obtain happiness. 6

morals

1. Morals, in one meaning, is the system of obligations that govern how rational beings ought to behave toward each other. This is closer to the meaning of Kant's use of 'Sitten', 'Sittlichkeit', and 'Moralität' and is the meaning of 'Morals' in the English title of the work. See the first occurrence of 'morals' on page v, embedded in the phrase 'metaphysics of morals'. v

2. In another meaning, morals is the rational part of ethics or the rational part of the science (i.e., methodological study) of morality. This is closer to the meaning of Kant's use of 'Moral', 'Ethik', 'Moralphilosophie', and the entire phrase 'Metaphysik der Sitten'. See the second occurrence of 'morals' on page v. v

noumenon

This word does not occur in the *Groundlaying*, but it is a synonym for 'thing in itself', which does. The opposite of 'noumenon' is 'phenomenon' or an appearance. A noumenon is unknowable because it cannot be intuited and so cannot be an object of experience. If we try to intuit a noumenon and so try to make it an object of experience, we exceed the boundary of reason. Kant is critical of those philosophers who have tried to do this, and it is because of this error that he rejects traditional (speculative) metaphysics which claims knowledge of God, immortality, and freedom. A properly critiqued reason is limited to mere ideas, not knowledge, of such features of the noumenal or intelligible world. 106

objective

Kant frequently uses 'objective' in two adjectival contexts: to qualify 'reality' and to qualify terms such as 'principle', 'law', and 'necessity'. In the former context (e.g., p. 114), Kant means that there is an actual, really existing, object for a representation (such as an idea or thought) that we have constructed of that object. In the latter context (e.g., p. 37), Kant means that the principle, law, or necessity is valid, holds for, or is applicable to all rational beings simply because they are rational, independently of any individuating characteristics such as desires, wants, or physical abilities. 15

phenomenon

A phenomenon is an appearance in the world of sense. What lies behind the phenomenon is a noumenon, or thing in itself, in the intelligible world. 117

physics

It is one of the main branches of philosophy. The term is not synonymous with present-day physics and is even broader in scope than our contemporary notion of the natural sciences as a group of disciplines. iii

practical

Not used in the sense of 'feasible', 'practical' refers to behavior, conduct, or action. Moral principles are thus practical principles because they prescribe how we should behave, conduct ourselves, and act. And practical reason is the faculty or power of reason in its capacity to issue directives to action (i.e., to determine the will). The term should be understood in contrast to the theoretical and speculative. v

practical anthropology

It is the science of human beings with respect to customs and social behavior, in other words, the empirical part of ethics. Practical anthropology, being empirical, is not a part of the metaphysics of morals, but Kant also holds that practical anthropology is essential to the application of moral principles to human life. v

problematic

A category of hypothetical imperative, Kant uses this word to mark out those practical principles that pertain to merely possible purposes that a rational being might happen to have. On p. 40, Kant contrasts problematic principles with assertoric principles. 40

pure

Kant typically uses this adjective to describe concepts and motives that are unmixed with empirical content; it is nearly synonymous with 'a priori'. v

rational

This word indicates that something (e.g., a person or a principle) is not empirical or is not mixed or encumbered in some way with empirical or sensory elements. For example, 'the rational person' might refer to someone who makes decisions based on principles arrived at through reasoning instead of someone whose actions are caused by emotions or sentiment; it might also refer to the true self, the person considered from the point of view of the intelligible world rather than the world of sense. iii

rational being

This phrase refers to a special kind of being, a being with a will and so with the capacity to act on a principle. A typical human being is an example of such a being because typical humans have wills, have reason, and can (but do not always) allow their reason to guide their will. viii

reason

It is a capacity, faculty, or power of rational beings to think in a lawlike or rule-based (i.e., according to a canon of thought) way; it is thus what we use when we think logically, as when we make inferences from premises to a conclusion. It is also an original source of new and pure or a priori concepts. Kant says (p. 7) that the highest practical function of reason is to help our wills become good. This meaning of 'reason' (as a faculty or power) should be distinguished from the meaning of 'reason' as an account of why something is done or what justifies it; for something akin to these latter meanings, Kant's favorite word is perhaps 'ground'. iii

representation

Kant uses this word in a very special sense. For him, it is a generic term signifying any kind of output or object which we are mentally aware of and which our mind (in particular, our understanding) has actively processed. For example, all of the following are representations: concepts, ideas, intuitions, sensations. Representations can be of varying degrees of complexity, from the simple perception or intuition of a single patch of uniform color to the multi-layered comprehension of a proposition built up or synthesized out of several related concepts. Note, too, that representations do not have to be of actual objects; they can, for instance, be of imaginary objects such as centaurs and so do not have to represent something real. 15

respect

Respect ('Achtung' in the German) is a special kind of feeling (p. 16). This special feeling does not arise through empirical sensibility; rather, it arises when we become aware that the moral law places us under an obligation. So respect for the law is an effect that the law has on us, and it is thus not a cause of the law. 15

science

A science is any organized body of knowledge. Kant's meaning is much broader than in contemporary usage of the word which is more or less restricted to disciplines that employ rigorous experimental methodologies. iii

sensation

A sensation ('Empfindung' in the German) is the immediate or direct effect of something on the senses. There can be external and internal sensations, depending on whether the outer sense or inner sense is affected, but in any case are always empirical, never pure or a priori. For example, visually tracking a bird in flight would involve (external) sensations; consumption of alcohol might give rise to (internal) sensations associated with giddiness. Sensations are one kind of representation and furnish the material for empirical intuitions. 13

sensibility

Sensibility ('Sinnlichkeit' in the German) is the capacity, faculty, or power of having sensations and intuitions. 93

speculative

Used frequently in conjunction with 'reason', Kant emphasizes the use of the power of reason to engage in theoretical, as opposed to practical or action-based, pursuits; a first approximation might be to think of it as intellectual curiosity. Kant thinks that speculative reason can get carried away in its attempt to gain theoretical knowledge and in so doing overstep its bounds and hopelessly try to know the transcendent. xiii

subjective

Something is subjective insofar as it is particular to an individual at a given time or place, is not possessed by all rational beings, or relates to the perspective of the individual. So, for instance, desires are subjective in that they can differ in various ways (e.g., duration, intensity, existence) from individual to individual and even within the same individual. The opposite of 'subjective' is 'objective'. Another example, is sensibility; it, too, is variable, some individuals having greater perceptual acuity than others, for instance. It is their subjectivity that rules out desire and sensibility as candidates for the basis or source of morality, for Kant holds that morality exhibits universality and necessity. 12

synthetic

1. Part of Kant's method is to proceed in a synthetic fashion, that is, by transitioning from higher principles to lower principles and in so doing showing how the lower depend on the higher. For this meaning, see the last paragraph of the Preface. xvi

2. In another context, but in which it is still opposed to 'analytic', the word describes a particular kind of proposition in which conceptually separable concepts are joined. Kant holds that all empirical propositions are synthetic (and a posteriori), the propositions' component concepts being joined by experience (e.g., by intuitions). 45

synthetic practical proposition a priori

This is a practical proposition which is both synthetic and a priori. So, breaking this down further, it is first of all a practical proposition, a proposition in which at least one of its expressed concepts has to do with action or conduct. Then, second, it is synthetic so that the proposition asserts a connection between concepts that are conceptually distinct, separate, not internally linked just between themselves. Third, the linkage between concepts is a priori in that the concepts are necessarily (and so not empirically) joined together by something other than experience. In sum, it is a proposition in which action-related concepts that can be thought separately are nevertheless bound to each other in a necessary way. For an example, see the footnote on p. 50, where the concepts being connected are will and action. 50

teleology

Teleology is a theory that views processes as aiming for or striving to achieve goals or ends. The conception of nature as having purposes, for instance, is the core of teleological theory. Kant makes use (p. 80) of teleology in comparing an empire of ends with an empire of nature. Teleology also figures in his discussion (starting on p. 4) of the role of reason in the life of a rational being. 80

thing in itself

A thing in itself, also called a noumenon, is what exists in the intelligible world. We cannot know things in themselves because they cannot be intuited or represented to us and so cannot be possible objects of experience. But Kant claims that they exist and that they somehow lie behind, and provide the ground for, appearances in the world of sense. 106

transcendent

What is transcendent is what is beyond the possibility of experience; it is accordingly unknowable. The intelligible world of things in themselves, of noumena, is a transcendent realm. 126

transcendental

Kant uses this adjective to refer to what helps explain the possibility of experience. So, for instance, transcendental knowledge, such as the synthetic a priori proposition that every event has a cause, sets a condition that must be met in order for us to have any experience at all. Note that, according to Kant, transcendental knowledge is possible but that transcendent knowledge is not possible. xi

understanding

This word, a noun ('der Verstand' in German), has a special meaning in Kant's philosophy. The understanding is another of the powers, faculties, or capacities of the mind. Unlike the faculty of reason, the understanding is not a spontaneous source of new, pure (i.e., free from the impurities of the empirical) concepts. Rather, the understanding's main job is to take sensory inputs (empirical intuitions) and then process them (using schema) with the understanding's own pure concepts (the categories); the result is a cognition such as a thought or judgment. Unlike reason, the understanding needs sensory inputs or intuitions; without them, it would have nothing to do. iv

will

The will ('der Wille' being the German word for it) is an ability or power of a rational being to represent to itself a law, principle, or rule for the specific purpose of action; at one point (p. 36), Kant says that the will is practical reason. This ability (as it occurs in humans) can be compromised or weakened by non-rational empirical factors such as desires, incentives, inclinations, and impulses; a bad will, such as that of the villain, is frequently the result. It is also possible, however, that this ability is guided or determined solely by reason, in which case a good will is the result. But note that, in order for this good will actually to produce a good outcome, further steps and favorable circumstances are required; for instance, the rational being must be free to choose (i.e., must have free will or, in the German, 'die Willkür') to act on or carry out the representation of the law for action that the will has given it, and then the external circumstances must be such that the action will be efficacious. iv



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