of nature and a *metaphysics of morals.* Physics will therefore have its empirical part but it will also have a rational part; so too will ethics, though here the empirical part might be given the special name *practical anthropology*, while the rational part might properly be called *morals.*[c]

All trades, crafts, and arts have gained by the division of labor, namely when one person does not do everything but each limits himself to a certain task that differs markedly from others in the way it is to be handled, so as to be able to perform it most perfectly and with greater facility. Where work is not so differentiated and divided, where everyone is a jack-of-all-trades, there trades remain in the greatest barbarism. Whether pure philosophy in all its parts does not require its own special man might in itself be a subject not unworthy of consideration, and it might be worth asking whether the whole of this learned trade would not be better off if a warning were given to those who, in keeping with the taste of the public, are in the habit of vending the empirical mixed with the rational in all sorts of proportions unknown to themselves, who call themselves "independent thinkers,"[d] and others, who prepare the rational part only, "hair-splitters":[e] the warning not to carry on at the same time two jobs which are very distinct in the way they are to be handled, for each of which a special talent is perhaps required, and the combination of which in one person produces only bunglers. Here, however, I ask only whether the nature of science does not require that the empirical part always be carefully separated from the rational part, and that a metaphysics of nature be put before physics proper (empirical physics) and a metaphysics of morals before practical anthropology, with metaphysics carefully cleansed of everything empirical so that we may know how much pure reason can accomplish in both cases and from what sources it draws this a priori teaching of its own[f] – whether the latter job be carried on by all teachers of morals (whose name is legion) or only by some who feel a calling to it.

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Since my aim here is directed properly to moral philosophy, I limit the question proposed only to this: is it not thought to be of the utmost necessity to work out for once a pure moral philosophy, completely cleansed of everything that may be only empirical and that belongs to anthropology? For, that there must be such a philosophy is clear of itself from the common idea of duty and of moral laws. Everyone must grant that a law, if it is to hold morally, that is, as a ground of an obligation, must carry with it absolute necessity; that, for example, the command "thou

[c] *eigentlich Moral*, perhaps, "morals strictly speaking." *Moral* and *Sitten* are translated as "morals," *Moralität* and *Sittlichkeit* as "morality," *sittliche Weltweisheit* and *Moralphilosophie* as "moral philosophy," and *Sittenlehre* as "the doctrine of morals." Kant occasionally uses *Moral* in the sense of "moral philosophy."

[d] *Selbstdenker*

[e] *Grübler*

[f] *sie selbst diese ihre Belehrung a priori schöpfe*

shalt not lie" does not hold only for human beings, as if other rational beings did not have to heed it, and so with all other moral laws properly so called; that, therefore, the ground of obligation here must not be sought in the nature of the human being or in the circumstances of the world in which he is placed, but a priori simply in concepts of pure reason; and that any other precept, which is based on principles of mere experience – even if it is universal in a certain respect – insofar as it rests in the least part on empirical grounds, perhaps only in terms of a motive,[g] can indeed be called a practical rule but never a moral law.

Thus, among practical cognitions, not only do moral laws, along with their principles, differ essentially from all the rest,[h] in which there is something empirical, but all moral philosophy is based entirely on its pure part; and when it is applied to the human being it does not borrow the least thing from acquaintance with him (from anthropology) but gives to him, as a rational being, laws a priori, which no doubt still require a judgment sharpened by experience, partly to distinguish in what cases they are applicable and partly to provide them with access[i] to the will of the human being and efficacy for his fulfillment of them;[j] for the human being is affected by so many inclinations that, though capable of the idea of a practical pure reason, he is not so easily able to make it effective *in concreto* in the conduct of his life.

A metaphysics of morals is therefore indispensably necessary, not merely because of a motive to speculation – for investigating the source of the practical basic principles[k] that lie a priori in our reason – but also because morals themselves remain subject to all sorts of corruption as long as we are without that clue[l] and supreme norm by which to appraise them correctly. For, in the case of what is to be morally good it is not enough that it *conform* with the moral law but it must also be done *for the sake of the law*; without this, that conformity is only very contingent and precarious, since a ground that is not moral will indeed now and then produce actions in conformity with the law, but it will also often produce actions contrary to the

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[g] *Bewegungsgründe.* Kant subsequently (4:427) distinguishes this from an "incentive" (*Triebfeder*), and the force of some passages depends upon this distinction. However, he does not abide by the distinction, and no attempt has been made to bring his terminology into accord with it. He occasionally uses *Bewegursache*, in which case "motive," which seems to be the most general word available, has been used.

[h] Here, as elsewhere, the difference between German and English punctuation creates difficulties. It is not altogether clear from the context whether the clause "in which there is something empirical" is restrictive or nonrestrictive.

[i] Or "entry," "admission," *Eingang*

[j] *Nachdruck zur Ausübung*

[k] *Grundsätze.* Kant does not draw a consistent distinction between *Grundsatz* and *Prinzip* and often uses one where the other would seem more appropriate. *Prinzip* is always, and *Grundsatz* often, translated as "principle."

[l] *Leitfaden*

regard to its objects and the satisfaction of all our needs (which it to some extent even multiplies) – an end to which an implanted natural instinct would have led much more certainly; and since reason is nevertheless given to us as a practical faculty, that is, as one that is to influence the *will;* then, where nature has everywhere else gone to work purposively in distributing its capacities,[c] the true vocation of reason must be to produce a will that is good, not perhaps *as a means* to other purposes, but *good in itself,* for which reason was absolutely necessary. This will need not, because of this, be the sole and complete good, but it must still be the highest good and the condition of every other, even of all demands for happiness. In this case it is entirely consistent with the wisdom of nature if we perceive that the cultivation of reason, which is requisite to the first and unconditional purpose, limits in many ways – at least in this life – the attainment of the second, namely happiness, which is always conditional; indeed it may reduce it below zero without nature proceeding unpurposively in the matter, because reason, which cognizes its highest practical vocation in the establishment of a good will, in attaining this purpose is capable only of its own kind of satisfaction, namely from fulfilling an end which in turn only reason determines, even if this should be combined with many infringements upon the ends of inclination.

4:397 We have, then, to explicate[d] the concept of a will that is to be esteemed in itself and that is good apart from any further purpose, as it already dwells in natural sound understanding and needs not so much to be taught as only to be clarified – this concept that always takes first place in estimating the total worth of our actions and constitutes the condition of all the rest. In order to do so, we shall set before ourselves the concept of **duty,** which contains that of a good will though under certain subjective limitations and hindrances, which, however, far from concealing it and making it unrecognizable, rather bring it out by contrast and make it shine forth all the more brightly.

I here pass over all actions that are already recognized as contrary to duty, even though they may be useful for this or that purpose; for in their case the question whether they might have been done *from duty* never arises, since they even conflict with it. I also set aside actions that are really in conformity with duty but to which human beings have *no inclination* immediately[e] and

[c] *Anlagen*

[d] *entwickeln.* In the context of organisms generally, and more specifically with reference to man's talents and capacities, this is translated as "to develop." However, in the context of analytic and synthetic propositions, see the Jäsche *Logik* (9:111, *Anmerkung* 1), where it is said that in an implicitly identical proposition (as distinguished from a tautology), a predicate that lies *unentwickelt* (*implicite*) in the concept of the subject is made clear by means of *Entwicklung* (*explicatio*).

[e] *unmittelbar.* Kant occasionally uses *direkt* as a synonym; no temporal reference is intended.

which they still perform because they are impelled[f] to do so through another inclination. For in this case it is easy to distinguish whether an action in conformity with duty is done *from duty* or from a self-seeking purpose. It is much more difficult to note this distinction when an action conforms with duty and the subject has, besides, an *immediate* inclination to it. For example, it certainly conforms with duty that a shopkeeper not overcharge an inexperienced customer, and where there is a good deal of trade a prudent merchant does not overcharge but keeps a fixed general price for everyone, so that a child can buy from him as well as everyone else. People are thus served *honestly;* but this is not nearly enough for us to believe that the merchant acted in this way from duty and basic principles of honesty; his advantage required it; it cannot be assumed here that he had, besides, an immediate inclination toward his customers, so as from love, as it were, to give no one preference over another in the matter of price. Thus the action was done neither from duty nor from immediate inclination but merely for purposes of self-interest.

On the other hand, to preserve one's life is a duty, and besides everyone has an immediate inclination to do so. But on this account the often anxious care that most people take of it still has no inner worth and their maxim has no moral content. They look after their lives *in conformity with* 4:398
duty but not *from duty.* On the other hand, if adversity and hopeless grief have quite taken away the taste for life; if an unfortunate man, strong of soul and more indignant about 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 moral content.

To be beneficent[g] where one can is a duty, and besides there are many souls so sympathetically attuned that, without any other motive of vanity or self-interest they find an inner satisfaction in spreading joy around them and can take delight in the satisfaction of others so far as it is their own work. But I assert that in such a case an action of this kind, however it may conform with duty and however amiable it may be, has nevertheless no true moral worth but is on the same footing with other inclinations, for example, the inclination to honor, which, if it fortunately lights upon what is in fact in the common interest and in conformity with duty and hence honorable, deserves praise and encouragement but not esteem; for the maxim lacks moral content, namely that of doing such actions not from inclination but *from duty.* Suppose, then, that the mind of this philanthropist were overclouded by his own grief, which extinguished all sympathy with the fate of others, and that while he still had the means to benefit

[f] *getrieben. Antrieb* is translated as "impulse."

[g] *Wohltätig sein.* In view of Kant's distinction between *Wohltun* and *Wohlwollen* (6:393, 450 ff.), *Wohltun* and its cognates are translated in terms of "beneficence" and *Wohlwollen* in terms of "benevolence."

others in distress their troubles did not move him because he had enough to do with his own; and suppose that now, when no longer incited to it by any inclination, he nevertheless tears himself out of this deadly insensibility and does the action without any inclination, simply from duty; then the action first has its genuine moral worth. Still further: if nature had put little sympathy in the heart of this or that man; if (in other respects an honest[h] man) he is by temperament cold and indifferent to the sufferings of others, perhaps because he himself is provided with the special gift of patience and endurance toward his own sufferings and presupposes the same in every other or even requires it; if nature had not properly fashioned such a man (who would in truth not be its worst product) for a philanthropist, would he not still find within himself a source from which to give himself a far higher worth than what a mere good-natured temperament might have? By all means! It is just then that the worth of character
4:399 comes out, which is moral and incomparably the highest, namely that he is beneficent not from inclination but from duty.

To assure one's own happiness is a duty (at least indirectly); for, want of satisfaction with one's condition, under pressure from many anxieties and amid unsatisfied needs, could easily become a great *temptation to transgression of duty*. But in addition, without looking to duty here, all people have already, of themselves, the strongest and deepest inclination to happiness because it is just in this idea that all inclinations unite in one sum. However, the precept of happiness is often so constituted that it greatly infringes upon some inclinations, and yet one can form no determinate and sure concept of the sum of satisfaction of all inclinations under the name of happiness. Hence it is not to be wondered at that a single inclination, determinate both as to what it promises and as to the time within which it can be satisfied, can often outweigh a fluctuating idea, and that a man – for example, one suffering from gout – can choose to enjoy what he likes and put up with what he can since, according to his calculations, on this occasion at least he has not sacrificed the enjoyment of the present moment to the perhaps groundless expectation of a happiness that is supposed to lie in health. But even in this case, when the general[i] inclination to happiness did not determine his will; when health, at least for him, did not enter as so necessary into this calculation, there is still left over here, as in all other cases, a law, namely to promote his happiness not from inclination but from duty; and it is then that his conduct first has properly moral worth.

It is undoubtedly in this way, again, that we are to understand the

[h] *ehrlicher*. I have translated this as "honest" because Kant gives the Latin *honestas* as a parenthetical equivalent of such derivatives of *Ehre* as *Ehrbarkeit*. However, the context often makes it clear that he is not thinking of "honesty" in the narrow sense.
[i] *allgemeine*

passages from scripture in which we are commanded to love our neighbor, even our enemy. For, love as an inclination cannot be commanded, but beneficence from duty – even though no inclination impels us to it and, indeed, natural and unconquerable aversion opposes it – is *practical* and not *pathological*[j] love, which lies in the will and not in the propensity of feeling,[k] in principles of action and not in melting sympathy; and it alone can be commanded.

The second proposition is this: an action from duty has its moral worth *not in the purpose* to be attained by it but in the maxim in accordance with which it is decided upon, and therefore does not depend upon the realization of the object of the action but merely upon the *principle of volition* in 4:400
accordance with which the action is done without regard for any object of the faculty of desire. That the purposes we may have for our actions, and their effects as ends and incentives of the will, can give actions no unconditional and moral worth is clear from what has gone before. In what, then, can this worth lie, if it is not to be in the will in relation to the hoped for effect of the action? It can lie nowhere else *than in the principle of the will* without regard for the ends that can be brought about by such an action. For, the will stands between its a priori principle, which is formal, and its a posteriori incentive, which is material, as at a crossroads; and since it must still be determined by something, it must be determined by the formal principle of volition as such when an action is done from duty, where every material principle has been withdrawn from it.

The third proposition, which is a consequence of the two preceding, I would express as follows: *duty is the necessity of an action from respect for law*. For an object as the effect of my proposed action I can indeed have *inclination* but *never respect*, just because it is merely an effect and not an activity of a will. In the same way I cannot have respect for inclination as such, whether it is mine or that of another; I can at most in the first case approve it and in the second sometimes even love it, that is, regard it as favorable to my own advantage. Only what is connected with my will merely as ground and never as effect, what does not serve my inclination but outweighs it or at least excludes it altogether from calculations in making a choice[l] – hence the mere law for itself – can be an object of respect and so a command. Now, an action from duty is to put aside entirely the influence of inclination and with it every object of the will; hence there is left for the will nothing that could determine it except

[j] *pathologische*, i.e., dependent upon sensibility
[k] *Empfindung*. In the *Critique of Judgment* (5:206) Kant distinguishes an "objective sensation" (e.g., green) from a "subjective sensation" (e.g., pleasure) and suggests that misunderstanding could be avoided if "feeling" (*Gefühl*) were used for the latter. I have followed his suggestion, while indicating the German word in a note.
[l] *bei der Wahl*

objectively the *law* and subjectively *pure respect* for this practical law, and so
4:401 the maxim* of complying with such a law even if it infringes upon all my inclinations.

Thus the moral worth of an action does not lie in the effect expected from it and so too does not lie in any principle of action that needs to borrow its motive from this expected effect. For, all these effects (agreeableness of one's condition, indeed even promotion of others' happiness) could have been also brought about by other causes, so that there would have been no need, for this, of the will of a rational being, in which, however, the highest and unconditional good alone can be found. Hence nothing other than the *representation of the law* in itself, *which can of course occur only in a rational being*, insofar as it and not the hoped-for effect is the determining ground of the will, can constitute the preeminent good we call moral, which is already present in the person himself who acts in accordance with this representation and need not wait upon the effect of his action.†

4:402 But what kind of law can that be, the representation of which must determine the will, even without regard for the effect expected from it, in order for the will to be called good absolutely and without limitation? Since I have deprived the will of every impulse that could arise for it from obeying some law, nothing is left but the conformity of actions as such with universal law,‴ which alone is to serve the will as its principle, that is,

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

†It could be objected that I only seek refuge, behind the word *respect*, in an obscure feeling, instead of distinctly resolving the question by means of a concept of reason. But though respect is a feeling, it is not one *received* by means of influence; it is, instead, a feeling *self-wrought* by means of a rational concept and therefore specifically different from all feelings of the first kind, which can be reduced to inclination or fear. What I cognize immediately as a law for me I cognize with respect, which signifies merely consciousness of the *subordination* of my will to a law without the mediation of other influences on my sense. Immediate determination of the will by means of the law and consciousness of this is called *respect*, so that this is regarded as the *effect* of the law on the subject, and not as the *cause* of the law. Respect is properly the representation of a worth that infringes upon my self-love. Hence there is something that is regarded as an object neither of inclination nor of fear, though it has something analogous to both. The *object* of respect is therefore simply the *law*, and indeed the law that we impose upon *ourselves* and yet as necessary in itself. As a law we are subject to it without consulting self-love; as imposed upon us by ourselves it is nevertheless a result of our will; and in the first respect it has an analogy with fear, in the second with inclination. Any respect for a person is properly only respect for the law (of integrity and so forth) of which he gives us an example. Because we also regard enlarging our talents as a duty, we represent a person of talents also as, so to speak, an *example of the law* (to become like him in this by practice), and this is what constitutes our respect. All so-called moral *interest* consists simply in *respect* for the law.

‴ *die allgemeine Gesetzmäßigkeit der Handlungen überhaupt*

I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law. Here mere conformity to law as such, without having as its basis some law determined for certain actions, is what serves the will as its principle, and must so serve it, if duty is not to be everywhere an empty delusion and a chimerical concept. Common human reason also agrees completely with this in its practical appraisals and always has this principle before its eyes. Let the question be, for example: may I, when hard pressed, make a promise with the intention not to keep it? Here I easily distinguish two significations the question can have: whether it is prudent or whether it is in conformity with duty to make a false promise. The first can undoubtedly often be the case. I see very well that it is not enough to get out of a present difficulty by means of this subterfuge but that I must reflect carefully whether this lie may later give rise to much greater inconvenience for me than that from which I now extricate myself; and since, with all my supposed *cunning*, the results cannot be so easily foreseen but that once confidence in me is lost this could be far more prejudicial to me than all the troubles" I now think to avoid, I must reflect whether the matter might be handled *more prudently* by proceeding on a general maxim and making it a habit to promise nothing except with the intention of keeping it. But it is soon clear to me that such a maxim will still be based only on results feared. To be truthful from duty, however, is something entirely different from being truthful from anxiety about detrimental results, since in the first case the concept of the action in itself already contains a law for me while in the second I must first look about elsewhere to see what effects on me might be combined with it. For, if I deviate from the principle of duty this is quite certainly evil; but if I am unfaithful to my maxim of prudence this can 4:403
sometimes be very advantageous to me, although it is certainly safer to abide by it. However, to inform myself in the shortest and yet infallible way about the answer to this problem, whether a lying promise is in conformity with duty, I ask myself: would I indeed be content that my maxim (to get myself out of difficulties by a false promise) should hold as a universal law (for myself as well as for others)? and could I indeed say to myself that every one may make a false promise when he finds himself in a difficulty he can get out of in no other way? Then I soon become aware that I could indeed will the lie, but by no means a universal law to lie; for in accordance with such a law there would properly be no promises at all, since it would be futile to avow my will with regard to my future actions to others who would not believe this avowal or, if they rashly did so, would pay me back in like coin; and thus my maxim, as soon as it were made a universal law, would have to destroy itself.

I do not, therefore, need any penetrating acuteness to see what I have

" *alles Übel. Übeln* is translated as "troubles" or "ills." "Evil" is reserved for *Böse*.

counsel for avoiding some other ill – in which case what is said would be "you ought not to make a lying promise lest if it comes to light you destroy your credit" – but that an action of this kind must be regarded as in itself evil and that the imperative of prohibition is therefore categorical: one still cannot show with certainty in any example that the will is here determined merely through the law, without another incentive, although it seems to be so; for it is always possible that covert fear of disgrace, perhaps also obscure apprehension of other dangers, may have had an influence on the will. Who can prove by experience the nonexistence of a cause when all that experience teaches is that we do not perceive it? In such a case, however, the so-called moral imperative, which as such appears to be categorical and unconditional, would in fact be only a pragmatic precept that makes us attentive to our advantage and merely teaches us to take this into consideration.

We shall thus have to investigate entirely a priori the possibility of a
4:420 *categorical* imperative, since we do not here have the advantage of its reality being given in experience, so that the possibility would be necessary not to establish it but merely to explain it.[z] In the meantime, however, we can see this much: that the categorical imperative alone has the tenor of[a] a practical law; all the others can indeed be called *principles* of the will but not laws, since what it is necessary to do merely for achieving a discretionary purpose can be regarded as in itself contingent and we can always be released from the precept if we give up the purpose; on the contrary, the unconditional command leaves the will no discretion[b] with respect to the opposite, so that it alone brings with it that necessity which we require of a law.

Second, in the case of this categorical imperative or law of morality the ground of the difficulty (of insight into its possibility) is also very great. It is an a priori synthetic practical proposition;* and since it is so difficult to see the possibility of this kind of proposition in theoretical cognition, it can be readily gathered that the difficulty will be no less in practical cognition.

In this task we want first to inquire whether the mere concept of a categorical imperative may not also provide its formula containing the

*I connect the deed with the will, without a presupposed condition from any inclination, a priori and hence necessarily (though only objectively, i.e., under the idea of a reason having complete control over all subjective motives).[c] This is, therefore, a practical proposition that does not derive the volition of an action analytically from another volition already presupposed (for we have no such perfect will), but connects it immediately with the concept of the will of a rational being as something that is not contained in it.

[z] *und also die Möglichkeit nicht zur Festsetzung, sondern bloss zur Erklärung nötig wäre*

[a] *als . . . laute*

[b] *dem Willen kein Belieben . . . frei läßt*

[c] *Bewegursachen*

proposition which alone can be a categorical imperative. For, how such an absolute command is possible, even if we know its tenor, will still require special and difficult toil, which, however, we postpone to the last section.

When I think of a *hypothetical* imperative in general I do not know beforehand what it will contain; I do not know this until I am given the condition. But when I think of a *categorical* imperative I know at once what it contains. For, since the imperative contains, beyond the law, only the necessity that the maxim* be in conformity with this law, while the law 4:421
contains no condition to which it would be limited, nothing is left with which the maxim of action is to conform but the universality of a law as such; and this conformity alone is what the imperative properly represents as necessary.

There is, therefore, only a single categorical imperative and it is this: *act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law.*

Now, if all imperatives of duty can be derived from this single imperative as from their principle, then, even though we leave it undecided whether what is called duty is not as such an empty concept, we shall at least be able to show what we think by it and what the concept wants to say.

Since the universality of law in accordance with which effects take place constitutes what is properly called *nature* in the most general sense (as regards its form) – that is, the existence of things insofar as it is determined in accordance with universal laws – the universal imperative of duty can also go as follows: *act as if the maxim of your action were to become by your will a* **universal law of nature.**

We shall now enumerate a few duties in accordance with the usual division of them into duties to ourselves and to other human beings and into perfect and imperfect duties.†

1) Someone feels sick of life because of a series of troubles that has grown to the point of despair, but is still so far in possession of his reason 4:422
that he can ask himself whether it would not be contrary to his duty to

*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 determined by reason conformably with the conditions of the subject (often his ignorance or also his inclinations), and is therefore the principle in accordance with which the subject *acts;* but the law is the objective principle valid for every rational being, and the principle in accordance with which he *ought to act*, i.e., an imperative.

†It must be noted here that I reserve the division of duties entirely for a future *Metaphysics of Morals,* so that the division here stands only as one adopted at my discretion (for the sake of arranging my examples). For the rest, I understand here by a perfect duty one that admits no exception in favor of inclination, and then I have not merely external but also internal *perfect duties;* although this is contrary to the use of the word adopted in the schools, I do not intend to justify it here, since for my purpose it makes no difference whether or not it is granted me.

count upon every other to be faithful to the same maxim nor can he count upon the kingdom of nature and its purposive order to harmonize with him, as a fitting member, toward a kingdom of ends possible through himself, that is, upon its favoring his expectation of happiness; nevertheless that law, act in accordance with the maxims of a member giving universal laws for a merely possible kingdom of ends, remains in its full force because it commands categorically. And just in this lies the paradox that the mere dignity of humanity as rational nature, without any other end or advantage to be attained by it – hence respect for a mere idea – is yet to serve as an inflexible precept of the will, and that it is just in this independence of maxims from all such incentives that their sublimity consists, and the worthiness of every rational subject to be a lawgiving member in the kingdom of ends; for otherwise he would have to be represented only as subject to the natural law of his needs. Even if the kingdom of nature as well as the kingdom of ends were thought as united under one sovereign, so that the latter would no longer remain a mere idea but would obtain true reality, it would no doubt gain the increment of a strong incentive but never any increase of its inner worth; for, even this sole absolute lawgiver would, despite this, still have to be represented as appraising the worth of rational beings only by their disinterested conduct, prescribed to themselves merely from that idea. The essence of things is not changed by their external relations; and that which, without taking account of such relations, alone constitutes the worth of a human being is that in terms of which he must also be appraised by whoever does it, even by the supreme being. *Morality* is thus the relation of actions to the autonomy of the will, that is, to a possible giving of universal law through its maxims. An action that can coexist with the autonomy of the will is *permitted;* one that does not accord with it is *forbidden.* A will whose maxims necessarily harmonize with the laws of autonomy is a *holy,* absolutely good will. The dependence upon the principle of autonomy of a will that is not absolutely good (moral necessitation) is *obligation.* This, accordingly, cannot be attributed to a holy being. The objective necessity of an action from obligation is called *duty.*

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From what has just been said it is now easy to explain how it happens that, although in thinking the concept of duty we think of subjection to the law, yet at the same time we thereby represent a certain sublimity and *dignity* in the person who fulfills all his duties. For there is indeed no sublimity in him insofar as he is *subject* to the moral law, but there certainly is insofar as he is at the same time *lawgiving* with respect to it and only for that reason subordinated to it. We have also shown above how neither fear nor inclination but simply respect for the law is that incentive which can give actions a moral worth. Our own will insofar as it would act only under the condition of a possible giving of universal law through its maxims – this will possible for us in idea – is the proper object of respect; and the

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dignity of humanity consists just in this capacity to give universal law, though with the condition of also being itself subject to this very lawgiving.

AUTONOMY OF THE WILL
AS THE SUPREME PRINCIPLE OF MORALITY

Autonomy of the will is the property[a] of the will by which it is a law to itself (independently of any property of the objects of volition). The principle of autonomy is, therefore: to choose only in such a way that the maxims of your choice[b] are also included[c] as universal law in the same volition. That this practical rule is an imperative, that is, that the will of every rational being is necessarily bound to it as a condition, cannot be proved by mere analysis[d] of the concepts to be found in it, because it is a synthetic proposition; one would have to go beyond cognition of objects to a critique of the subject, that is, of pure practical reason, since this synthetic proposition, which commands apodictically, must be capable of being cognized completely a priori. This business, however, does not belong in the present section. But that the above principle of autonomy is the sole principle of morals can well be shown by mere analysis of the concepts of morality. For, by this analysis we find that its principle must be a categorical imperative, while this commands neither more nor less than just this autonomy.

HETERONOMY OF THE WILL
AS THE SOURCE OF ALL SPURIOUS PRINCIPLES OF MORALITY

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If the will seeks the law that is to determine it *anywhere else* than in the fitness of its maxims for its own giving of universal law – consequently if, in going beyond itself, it seeks this law in a property of any of its objects – *heteronomy* always results. The will in that case does not give itself the law; instead the object, by means of its relation to the will, gives the law to it. This relation, whether it rests upon inclination or upon representations of reason, lets only hypothetical imperatives become possible: I ought to do something *because I will something else.* On the contrary, the moral and therefore categorical imperative says: I ought to act in such or such a way even though I have not willed anything else. For example, the former says: I ought not to lie if I will to keep my reputation; but the latter says: I ought

[a] *Beschaffenheit*
[b] *zu wählen also so, dass die Maximen seiner Wahl.* Kant has apparently not yet drawn the distinction between *Wille* ("the will") and *Willkür* ("choice" or "the power of choice") so prominent in *The Metaphysics of Morals.*
[c] *mit begriffen seien*
[d] *Zergliederung*

not to lie even though it would not bring me the least discredit. The latter must therefore abstract from all objects to this extent: that they have no *influence* at all on the will, so that practical reason (the will) may not merely administer an interest not belonging to it,[c] but may simply show its own commanding authority as supreme lawgiving. Thus, for example, I ought to try to further the happiness of others, not as if its existence were of any consequence to me (whether because of immediate inclination or because of some indirect agreeableness through reason), but simply because a maxim that excludes this cannot be included as a universal law in one and the same volition.

DIVISION
OF ALL POSSIBLE PRINCIPLES OF MORALITY TAKEN FROM HETERONOMY ASSUMED AS THE BASIC CONCEPT

Here, as everywhere else, human reason in its pure use, as long as it lacks a critique, first tries all possible wrong ways before it succeeds in finding the only true way.

All principles that can be taken from this point of view are either
4:442 *empirical* or *rational*. The first, taken from the principle of *happiness*, are built upon physical or moral feeling; the second, taken from the principle of *perfection*, are built either upon the rational concept of perfection as a possible effect of our will or upon the concept of an independently existing perfection (the will of God) as the determining cause of our will.

Empirical principles are not at all fit to be the ground of moral laws. For, the universality with which these are to hold for all rational beings without distinction – the unconditional practical necessity which is thereby imposed upon them – comes to nothing if their ground is taken from the *special constitution of human nature* or the contingent circumstances in which it is placed. The principle of *one's own happiness*, however, is the most objectionable, not merely because it is false and experience contradicts the pretense that well-being always proportions itself to good conduct, nor yet merely because it contributes nothing at all to the establishment of morality, since making someone happy is quite different from making him good, or making him prudent and sharp-sighted for his own advantage is quite different from making him virtuous; it is the most objectionable because it bases morality on incentives that undermine it and destroy all its sublimity, since they put motives to virtue and those to vice in one class and only teach us to calculate better, but quite obliterate

[c] *fremdes Interesse. Fremd* is also translated as "alien," "foreign," or "another's."

the specific difference between virtue and vice. On the other hand, moral feeling – this supposed special sense* (however superficial the appeal to it is, inasmuch as those who cannot *think* believe they can help themselves out by feeling in what has to do merely with universal law,[f] and however little feelings, which by nature differ infinitely from one another in degree, can furnish a uniform standard of good and evil, and one cannot judge validly for others by means of one's feeling) – nevertheless remains closer to morality and its dignity inasmuch as it shows virtue the honor of ascribing to her *immediately* the delight[g] and esteem we have for her and 4:443
does not, as it were, tell her to her face that it is not her beauty but only our advantage that attaches us to her.

Among the *rational* grounds of morality or those based on reason,[h] the ontological concept of *perfection* (however empty, however indeterminate and hence useless it is for finding, in the immeasurable field of possible reality, the greatest sum appropriate to us; and however much, in trying to distinguish specifically the reality here in question from every other, it has an unavoidable propensity to get involved in a circle and cannot avoid covertly presupposing the morality which it is supposed to explain) is nevertheless better than the theological concept, which derives morality from a divine, all-perfect will; it is better not merely because we cannot intuit the perfection of this will but can only derive it from our concepts, among which that of morality is foremost, but because if we do not do this (and to do it would be a grossly circular explanation), the concept of his will still left to us, made up of the attributes[i] of desire for glory and dominion combined with dreadful representations of power and vengefulness, would have to be the foundation for a system of morals that would be directly opposed to morality.

But if I had to choose between the concept of the moral sense and that of perfection generally (both of which at least do not infringe upon morality, even though they are not at all fit to support it as its foundation), then I should decide[j] for the latter; for, since it at least withdraws the decision of the question from sensibility and brings it to the court of pure reason,

*I count the principle of moral feeling under that of happiness because every empirical interest promises to contribute to our well-being by the agreeableness that something affords, whether this happens immediately and without a view to advantage or with regard for it. One must likewise, with Hutcheson,[6] count the principle of sympathy with the happiness of others under the moral sense assumed by him.

[f] It is not altogether clear whether the clause "in what has to do merely with universal law" modifies "think" or "feeling."

[g] *Wohlgefallen*

[h] *Unter den rationalen oder Vernunftgründen*

[i] *Eigenschaften*

[j] *bestimmen*

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Section III
Transition from metaphysics of morals to the critique of pure practical reason

THE CONCEPT OF FREEDOM IS THE KEY TO THE EXPLANATION[n] OF THE AUTONOMY OF THE WILL

Will is a kind of causality of living beings insofar as they are rational, and *freedom* would be that property[o] of such causality that it can be efficient independently of alien causes *determining* it, just as *natural necessity* is the property of the causality of all nonrational beings to be determined to activity by the influence of alien causes.

The preceding definition[p] of freedom is *negative* and therefore unfruitful for insight into[q] its essence; but there flows from it a *positive* concept of freedom, which is so much the richer and more fruitful. Since the concept of causality brings with it that of laws in accordance with which, by something that we call a cause, something else, namely an effect, must be posited, so freedom, although it is not a property of the will in accordance with natural laws, is not for that reason lawless but must instead be a causality in accordance with immutable laws but of a special kind; for otherwise a free will would be an absurdity.[r] Natural necessity was a heteronomy of efficient causes, since every effect was possible only in accordance with the law that something else determines the efficient
4:447 cause to causality; what, then, can freedom of the will be other than autonomy, that is, the will's property of being a law to itself? But the proposition, the will is in all its actions a law to itself, indicates only the principle, to act on no other maxim than that which can also have as object itself as a universal law. This, however, is precisely the formula of the

[n] *Erklärung*
[o] *Eigenschaft*
[p] *Erklärung.* On the translation of *Erklärung* see *The Metaphysics of Morals* (6:226).
[q] *einzusehen.* As was noted above, Kant seems on the whole to use *einsehen* informally. In the Jäsche *Logik* (9: 64–5), however, he distinguishes seven levels of *Erkenntnis* in the general sense, the sixth of which is *einsehen* (*perspicere*), i.e., to cognize through reason or a priori, and the seventh *begreifen* (*comprehendere*), which adds to *einsehen* "sufficiently for our purpose." Some passages in Section III, notably 4:459 and 460, suggest that he has this distinction in mind.
[r] *Unding*

categorical imperative and is the principle of morality; hence a free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same.

If, therefore, freedom of the will is presupposed, morality together with its principle follows from it by mere analysis of its concept. But the principle of morality – that an absolutely good will is that whose maxim can always contain itself regarded as a universal law – is nevertheless always a synthetic proposition; for, by analysis of the concept of an absolutely good will that property of its maxim cannot be discovered. Such synthetic propositions are possible only in this way: that the two cognitions are bound together[s] by their connection with a third in which they are both to be found. The *positive* concept of freedom provides this third cognition, which cannot be, as in the case of physical causes, the nature of the sensible world (in the concept of which the concepts of something as cause in relation to *something else* as effect come together). What this third cognition is, to which freedom points us and of which we have an idea a priori, cannot yet be shown here and now; nor can the deduction of the concept of freedom from pure practical reason, and with it the possibility of a categorical imperative as well, as yet be made comprehensible; instead, some further preparation is required.

FREEDOM MUST BE PRESUPPOSED AS A PROPERTY OF THE WILL OF ALL RATIONAL BEINGS

It is not enough that we ascribe freedom to our will on whatever ground, if we do not have sufficient ground for attributing it also to all rational beings. For, since morality serves as a law for us only as rational beings, it must also hold for all rational beings; and since it must be derived solely from the property of freedom, freedom must also be proved[t] as a property of all rational beings; and it is not enough to demonstrate[u] it from certain supposed experiences of human nature (though this is also absolutely 4:448
impossible and it can be demonstrated only a priori), but it must be proved as belonging to the activity of all beings whatever that are rational and endowed with a will. I say now: every being that cannot act otherwise than *under the idea of freedom* is just because of that really free in a practical respect, that is, all laws that are inseparably bound up with freedom hold for him just as if his will had been validly pronounced[v] free also in itself and in theoretical philosophy.* Now I assert that to every rational being

[s] *untereinander verbunden werden*
[t] *bewiesen*
[u] *darzutun*
[v] *gültig für frei erklärt würde*
*I follow this route – that of assuming freedom, sufficiently for our purpose, only as laid down by rational beings merely *in idea* as a ground for their actions – so that I need not be

which alone he acts. For in such a being we think of a reason that is practical, that is, has causality with respect to its objects. Now, one cannot possibly think of a reason that would consciously receive direction from any other quarter with respect to its judgments, since the subject would then attribute the determination of his judgment not to his reason but to an impulse. Reason must regard itself as the author of its principles independently of alien influences; consequently, as practical reason or as the will of a rational being it must be regarded of itself as free, that is, the will of such a being cannot be a will of his own except under the idea of freedom, and such a will must in a practical respect[x] thus be attributed to every rational being.

OF THE INTEREST ATTACHING[y] TO THE IDEAS OF MORALITY

We have finally traced the determinate concept of morality back to the idea of freedom; but we could not even prove the latter as something real
4:449 in ourselves and in human nature; we saw only that we must presuppose it if we want to think of a being as rational and endowed with consciousness of his causality with respect to actions, that is, with a will, and so we find that on just the same grounds we must assign to every being endowed with reason and will this property of determining himself to action under the idea of his freedom.

But there also flowed from the presupposition of this idea consciousness of a law for acting: that subjective principles of actions, that is, maxims, must always be so adopted that they can also hold as objective, that is, hold universally as principles, and so serve for our own giving of universal laws. But why, then, ought I to subject myself to this principle and do so simply as a rational being, thus also subjecting to it all other beings endowed with reason? I am willing to admit that no interest *impels* me to do so, for that would not give a categorical imperative; but I must still necessarily *take* an interest in it and have insight into how this comes about; for this "ought" is strictly speaking a "will"[z] that holds for every rational being under the condition that reason in him is practical without hindrance; but for beings

bound to prove freedom in its theoretical respect[w] as well. For even if the latter is left unsettled, still the same laws hold for a being that cannot act otherwise than under the idea of its own freedom as would bind a being that was actually free. Thus we can escape here from the burden that weighs upon theory.

[w] *Absicht*

[x] *in praktischer Absicht.* The subject of "must be attributed" could be either "this idea" or "such a will."

[y] *welches den Ideen . . . anhängt*

[z] *dieses Sollen ist eigentlich ein Wollen*

kind, and in whose case that which reason by itself would do is not always done – that necessity of action is called only an "ought," and the subjective necessity is distinguished from the objective.

It seems, then, that in the idea of freedom we have actually only presupposed the moral law, namely the principle of the autonomy of the will itself, and could not prove by itself its reality and objective necessity; and in that case we should still have gained something considerable by at least determining the genuine principle more accurately than had previously been done, but we should have got no further with respect to its validity and the practical necessity of subjecting oneself to it; for, if someone asked us why the universal validity of our maxim as a law must be the limiting condition of our actions, and on what we base the worth we assign to this way of acting – a worth so great that there can be no higher interest anywhere – and asked us how it happens that a human being believes that only through this does he feel his personal worth, in comparison with 4:450
which that of an agreeable or disagreeable condition[a] is to be held as nothing, we could give him no satisfactory answer.

We do indeed find that we can take an interest in a personal characteristic[b] that brings with it no interest at all in a condition, if only the former makes us fit to participate in the latter in case reason were to effect the distribution, that is, that mere worthiness to be happy, even without the motive of participating in this happiness, can interest us of itself; but this judgment is in fact only the result of the importance we have already supposed belongs to the moral law (when by the idea of freedom we detach ourselves from all empirical interest); but we cannot yet see, in this way, that we ought to detach ourselves from such interest, that is, to regard ourselves as free in acting and so to hold ourselves yet subject to certain laws in order to find merely in our own person a worth that can compensate us for the loss of everything that provides a worth to our condition; and we cannot yet see how this is possible, and hence *on what grounds*[c] *the moral law is binding.*

It must be freely admitted that a kind of circle comes to light here from which, as it seems, there is no way to escape. We take ourselves as free in the order of efficient causes in order to think ourselves under moral laws in the order of ends; and we afterwards think ourselves as subject to these laws because we have ascribed to ourselves freedom of will: for, freedom and the will's own lawgiving are both autonomy and hence reciprocal concepts, and for this very reason one cannot be used to explain the other or to furnish a ground for it but can at most be used only for the logical

[a] *Zustand*

[b] *Beschaffenheit*

[c] *woher*

forward only as a *petitio principii*[e] disposed souls would gladly grant us, but never as a demonstrable[f] proposition. For we now see that when we think of ourselves as free we transfer ourselves into the world of understanding as members of it and cognize autonomy of the will along with its consequence, morality; but if we think of ourselves as put under obligation[g] we regard 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?

A rational being counts himself, as intelligence, as belonging to the world of understanding, and only as an efficient cause belonging to this does he call his causality a *will*. On the other side he is also conscious of himself as a part of the world of sense, in which his actions are found as mere appearances of that causality; but their possibility from that causality of which we are not cognizant cannot be seen; instead, those actions as belonging to the world of sense must be regarded as determined by other appearances, namely desires and inclinations. All my actions as only a member of the world of understanding would therefore conform perfectly with the principle of autonomy of the pure will; as only a part of the world of sense they would have to be taken to conform wholly to the natural law of desires and inclinations, hence to the heteronomy of nature. (The former would rest on the supreme principle of morality, the latter on that of happiness.) But because *the world of understanding contains the ground of the world of sense and so too of its laws*, and is therefore immediately lawgiving with respect to my will (which belongs wholly to the world of understanding) and must accordingly also be thought as such, it follows that I shall cognize myself as intelligence, though on the other side as a being
4:454 belonging to the world of sense, as nevertheless subject to the law of the world of understanding, that is, of reason, which contains in the idea of freedom the law of the world of understanding, and thus cognize myself as subject to the autonomy of the will; consequently the laws of the world of understanding must be regarded as imperatives for me, and actions in conformity with these as duties.

And so categorical imperatives are possible by this: that the idea of freedom makes me a member of an intelligible world and consequently, if I were only this, all my actions *would* always be in conformity with the autonomy of the will; but since at the same time I intuit myself as a member of the world of sense, they *ought* to be in conformity with it; and this *categorical* ought represents a synthetic proposition a priori, since to my will affected

[e] *Erbittung des Prinzips*
[f] *erweislichen*
[g] *als verpflichtet*

by sensible desires there is added the idea of the same will but belonging to the world of the understanding – a will pure and practical of itself, which contains the supreme condition, in accordance with reason, of the former will; this is roughly like the way in which concepts of the understanding, which by themselves signify nothing but lawful form in general, are added to intuitions of the world of sense and thereby 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 – not even the most hardened scoundrel, if only he is otherwise accustomed to use reason – who, when one sets before him examples of honesty of purpose, of steadfastness in following good maxims, of sympathy and general benevolence (even combined with great sacrifices of advantage and comfort), does not wish that he might also be so disposed. He cannot indeed bring this about in himself, though only because of his inclinations and impulses; yet at the same time he wishes to be free from such inclinations, which are burdensome to himself. Hence he proves, by this, that with a will free from impulses of sensibility he transfers himself in thought into an order of things altogether different from that of his desires in the field of sensibility, since from that wish he can expect no satisfaction of his desires and hence no condition[h] that would satisfy any of his actual or otherwise imaginable inclinations (for if he expected this, the very idea which elicits that wish from him would lose its preeminence); he can expect only a greater inner worth of his person. This better person, however, he believes himself to be when he transfers himself to the standpoint of a member of the world of understanding, as the idea of freedom, that is, of independence from *determining* causes of the world of sense, constrains him involuntarily[i] to do; and from this standpoint he is conscious of a good will that, by his own acknowledgments, constitutes the law for his evil will as a member of the world of sense – a law of whose authority he is cognizant even while he transgresses it. The moral "*ought*" is then his own necessary "*will*" as a member of an intelligible world, and is thought by him as "ought" only insofar as he regards himself at the same time as a member of the world of sense.
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ON THE EXTREME BOUNDARY OF ALL PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY

All human beings think of themselves as having free will.[j] From this come all judgments upon actions as being such that they *ought to have been done even though they were not done*. Yet this freedom is no concept of experi-

[h] *Zustand*
[i] *unwillkürlich*
[j] *denken sich dem Willen nach als frei*

From: Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, in Practical Philosophy, ed. M. Gregor (Cambridge University Press, 1996)

influence of one inclination preponderates and now that of another. To discover a law that under this condition would govern them all – that is to say, with omnilateral concord – is quite impossible.

5.
PROBLEM I

Supposing that the mere lawgiving form of maxims is the only sufficient determining ground of a will: to find the constitution of a will that is determinable by it alone.

Since the mere form of a law can be represented only by reason and is therefore not an object of the senses and consequently does not belong among appearances, the representation of this form as the determining ground of the will is distinct from all determining grounds of events in 5:29 nature in accordance with the law of causality, because in their case the determining grounds must themselves be appearances. But if no determining ground of the will other than that universal lawgiving form can serve as a law for it, such a will must be thought as altogether independent of the natural law of appearances in their relations to one another, namely the law of causality. But such independence is called *freedom* in the strictest, that is, in the transcendental, sense. Therefore, a will for which the mere lawgiving form of a maxim can alone serve as a law is a free will.

6.
PROBLEM II

Supposing that a will *is free:* to find the law that alone is competent to determine it necessarily.

Since the matter of a practical law, that is, an object of maxim, can never be given otherwise than empirically whereas a free will, as independent of empirical conditions (i.e., conditions belonging to the sensible world), must nevertheless be determinable, a free will must find a determining ground in the law but independently of the *matter* of the law. But, besides the matter of the law, nothing further is contained in it than the lawgiving form. The lawgiving form, insofar as this is contained in the maxim, is therefore the only thing that can constitute a determining ground of the will.

Remark

Thus freedom and unconditional practical law reciprocally imply each other.[h] Now I do not ask here whether they are in fact different or whether

[h] *weisen . . . wechselsweise auf einander zurück.* In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (4:450), Kant said that freedom and the lawgiving of one's own will are both autonomy and hence *Wechselbegriffe.*

it is not much rather the case that an unconditional law is merely the self-consciousness of a pure practical reason, this being identical with the positive concept of freedom; I ask instead from what our *cognition* of the unconditionally practical *starts,* whether from freedom or from the practical law. It cannot start from freedom, for we can neither be immediately conscious of this, since the first concept of it is negative, nor can we conclude to it from experience, since experience lets us cognize only the law of appearances and hence the mechanism of nature, the direct opposite of freedom. It is therefore the *moral law,* of which we become immediately conscious (as soon as we draw up maxims of the will for ourselves), that *first* offers itself to us and, inasmuch as reason presents it as a determining ground not to be outweighed by any sensible conditions and 5:30 indeed quite independent of them, leads directly to the concept of freedom. But how is consciousness of that moral law possible? We can become aware of pure practical laws just as we are aware of pure theoretical principles, by attending to the necessity with which reason prescribes them to us and to the setting aside of all empirical conditions to which reason directs us. The concept of a pure will arises from the first, as consciousness of a pure understanding arises from the latter. That this is the true subordination of our concepts and that morality first discloses to us the concept of freedom, so that it is *practical reason* which first poses to speculative reason, with this concept, the most insoluble problem so as to put it in the greatest perplexity, is clear from the following: that, since nothing in appearances can be explained by the concept of freedom and there the mechanism of nature must instead constitute the only guide; since, moreover, the antinomy of pure reason when it wants to ascend to the unconditioned in the series of causes gets it entangled in incomprehensibilities on one side as much as on the other, whereas the latter (mechanism) is at least useful in the explanation of appearances, one would never here ventured to introduce freedom into science had not the moral law, and with it practical reason, come in and forced this concept upon us. But experience also confirms this order of concepts in us. Suppose someone asserts of his lustful inclination that, when the desired object and the opportunity are present, it is quite irresistible to him; ask him whether, if a gallows were erected in front of the house where he finds this opportunity and he would be hanged on it immediately after gratifying his lust, he would not then control his inclination. One need not conjecture very long what he would reply. But ask him whether, if his prince demanded, on pain of the same immediate execution, that he give false testimony against an honorable man whom the prince would like to destroy under a plausible pretext, he would consider it possible to overcome his love of life, however great it may be. He would perhaps not venture to assert whether he would do it or not, but he must admit without hesitation that it would be possible for him. He judges, therefore, that he can do something