

Groundwork: Preface and First Section (through 4:401)

Immanuel Kant

October 5: the Preface is recommended. The First Section is required through “is not first to be expected from the effect.” (p. 17 / Ak. 4:401).

Source: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge University Press, revised edition, 2012. Translation by Mary Gregor, revised by Jens Timmermann; introduction by Christine M. Korsgaard.

This text and its PDF are converted from the supplied ebook. PDF page numbers are not the printed book page numbers. Kant's Akademie references are retained. The wording, emphasis, and notes come from the book.

Preface (recommended)

4:387 Preface

Ancient Greek philosophy was divided into three sciences: **physics**, **ethics**, and **logic**.¹ This division is perfectly suitable to the nature of the matter, and there is no need to amend it, except perhaps just to add its principle, partly so as to assure oneself in this way 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 occupied merely with the form of the understanding and of reason itself, and with the universal rules of thinking as such, regardless of differences among its objects. Formal philosophy is called **logic**, whereas material philosophy, which has to do with determinate objects and the laws to which they are subject, is once 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 called doctrine of nature, the latter doctrine of morals.

Logic can have no empirical part, i.e. one in which the universal and necessary laws of thinking would rest on grounds taken from experience; for in that case it would not be logic, i.e. a canon for the understanding, or for reason, that holds and must be demonstrated in all thinking. By contrast, natural as well as moral philosophy can each have its empirical part, since the former must determine the laws for nature, as an object of experience, the latter for the human being's will, in so far as it is affected by nature, the first as laws according to which everything 4:388 happens, the second as those according to which everything ought to happen, while still taking into consideration the conditions under which quite often it does not happen.

All philosophy in so far as it is based on grounds of experience can be called *empirical*, that which presents its doctrines solely from a priori principles *pure* philosophy. The latter, if it is merely formal, is called *logic*; but if it is limited to determinate objects of the understanding it is called *metaphysics*.

In this way there arises the idea of a twofold metaphysics, a *metaphysics of nature* and a *metaphysics of morals*. Physics will thus have its empirical, but also a rational part; so too will ethics, though here the empirical part might in particular be called *practical anthropology*, the rational part actually *moral science*.^a

All professions, crafts, and arts have gained by the distribution of labor, namely when one person does not do everything, but each limits himself to a certain task that differs noticeably from others in the way it is carried out, so as to be able to accomplish it most perfectly and with greater ease.² Where labor is not differentiated and distributed like that, where everyone is a jack-of-all-trades, professions still remain in a most barbarous state. It would by itself be an object not unworthy of consideration to ask: whether pure philosophy in all its parts might not require its own specialist, and whether the learned profession as a whole might not be better off if those who, conforming to the taste of their public, are in the habit of peddling the empirical mixed with the rational in all sorts of proportions unknown to themselves – who call themselves independent thinkers, but others, who prepare the merely rational part, ponderers – were warned not to pursue two occupations at once that are very dissimilar in the way they are to be carried out, for each of which a special talent is perhaps required, and which united in one person produce only bunglers. But here I just ask whether the nature of the science might not require that the empirical part always be carefully separated from the rational, and that actual (empirical) physics be prefaced by a metaphysics of nature, and practical anthropology by a metaphysics of morals, which would have to be carefully cleansed of everything empirical; so that we may know how much pure reason can^{4:389} accomplish in both cases, and from what sources it draws by itself this peculiar a priori instruction, whether the latter business be pursued by all teachers of morals (whose name is legion) or only by some, who feel a calling to it.

Since here my purpose is actually directed towards moral philosophy, I limit the question presented just 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 might be in some way empirical and belongs to anthropology? For that there must be such is of itself clear 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 the ground of an obligation, must carry with it absolute necessity; that the command: thou shalt not lie, does not just hold for human beings only, as if other rational beings did not have to heed it; and so with all remaining actual moral laws; hence that the ground of the 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 solely in concepts of pure reason, and that any other prescription that is founded on principles of mere experience – and even a prescription that is in some certain respect universal, in so far as it relies in the least part on empirical grounds, perhaps just for a motivating ground – can indeed be called a practical rule, but never a moral law.

Thus not only do moral laws, along with their principles, differ essentially in practical cognition from all the rest, in which there is something empirical,^b but all moral philosophy rests entirely on its pure part and, applied to the human being, it does not borrow the least thing from our acquaintance with him (anthropology), but gives him, as a rational being, laws a priori; which of course still require a power of judgment sharpened by experience, partly to distinguish in what cases they are applicable, partly to obtain for them access^c to the will of a human being and

momentum for performance, since he, as himself affected by so many inclinations, is indeed capable of the idea of a practical pure reason, but not so easily able to make it effective in concreto d in the conduct of his life.

A metaphysics of morals is thus indispensably necessary, not merely on the grounds of speculation, for investigating the source of the 4:390 practical principles e that lie a priori in our reason, but because morals themselves remain subject to all sorts of corruption as long as we lack that guideline and supreme norm by which to judge 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 its sake*; if not, that conformity is only very contingent and precarious, because the immoral ground f will indeed now and then produce actions that conform with the law, but in many cases actions that are contrary to it. But now the moral law in its purity and genuineness (which in practical matters is of the greatest significance) is to be sought nowhere else than in a pure philosophy; it (metaphysics) must thus come first, and without it there can be no moral philosophy at all; and that which mixes these pure principles in with empirical ones does not even deserve the name of a philosophy (which after all is distinguished from common rational cognition in that it presents in a separate science what the latter comprehends only as intermingled with other things), much less that of a moral philosophy, since it even infringes on the purity of morals themselves by this intermingling and proceeds contrary to its own end.

However, let it not be thought that what is here called for already exists in the guise of the propaedeutic g of the famous *Wolff* for his moral philosophy, namely that which he called *Universal Practical Philosophy*, and that we do not therefore have to open up an entirely new field. 3 Precisely because it was to be a universal practical philosophy it took into consideration not a will of any particular kind – such as one that is completely determined from a priori principles, without any empirical motivating grounds, and could be called a pure will – but rather willing generally, with all actions and conditions that belong to it in this general sense; and in that it differs from a metaphysics of morals, in just the way that general logic differs from transcendental philosophy, the first of which presents actions and rules of thinking *in general*, the latter the particular 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 are largely drawn from psychology. The fact that 4:391 (though contrary to all warrant) there is also talk of moral laws and duties in this universal practical philosophy constitutes no objection to my assertion. For the authors of that science remain true to their idea of it in this too: they do not distinguish motivating grounds that, as such, are represented completely a priori by reason alone and are actually moral, from empirical ones, which the understanding elevates to general concepts merely by comparing experiences, but they consider them, without attending to the difference of their sources, only in terms of their greater or lesser sum (as they are all viewed as being of the same kind), and thereby form their concept of *obligation*, which of course is anything but moral, but is still such as can only be demanded in a philosophy that never passes judgment on the *origin* of all possible practical concepts, whether they really take place a priori or merely a posteriori.

Intending, then, to publish some day a Metaphysics of Morals, I issue this Groundwork in advance. 4 Indeed, there is actually no foundation for it other than the Critique of a *pure practical reason*, 5 just as for metaphysics there is the Critique of pure speculative reason already published. 6 But in part the former is not of such utmost necessity as the latter, since human

reason, even in the commonest understanding, can easily be brought to a high measure of correctness and accuracy in moral matters, whereas in its theoretical but pure use it is totally and entirely dialectical; in part I require that the critique of a pure practical reason, if it is to be complete, also be able to present its unity with speculative reason in a common principle; because in the end there can be only one and the same reason, which must differ merely in its application. However, I could not yet bring it to such completeness here without introducing considerations of a wholly different kind and confusing the reader. On account of this I have availed myself of the label of a *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, and not of a *Critique of Pure Practical Reason* instead.

But since, thirdly, a Metaphysics of Morals, regardless of its daunting title, is still capable of a great degree of popularity and suitability for the common understanding, I find it useful to separate from it this preparatory work of laying its foundation, so that I may omit the 4:392 subtleties it unavoidably contains from more accessible doctrines in the future.

The present groundwork, however, is nothing more than the identification and corroboration of *the supreme principle of morality*, which by itself constitutes a business that is complete in its purpose and to be separated from every other moral investigation. My assertions – about this principal question, which is important and has until now been far from satisfactorily discussed – would indeed receive much light from the application of that principle to the entire system, and great confirmation from the adequacy that it exhibits everywhere; but I had to forgo this advantage, which would also fundamentally be more self-gratifying than in the general interest, since the ease with which a principle can be used and its apparent adequacy yields no wholly reliable proof of its correctness, but rather arouses a certain partiality against investigating and weighing it in all strictness by itself, regardless of the consequence.

In this work, I have adopted the method that is, I believe, most fitting if one wants to take one's route analytically from common cognition to the determination of its supreme principle and in turn synthetically from the examination of this principle and its sources back to common cognition, in which we find it used. That is why it is divided as follows:

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

First Section through Ak. 4:401 (required)

4:393 First section Transition from common to philosophical moral rational cognition

It is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be taken to be good without limitation, except a **good will**. Understanding, wit, judgment, and whatever else the *talents* of the mind may be called, or confidence, resolve, and persistency of intent, as qualities of *temperament*, are no doubt in many respects good and desirable; but they can also be extremely evil and harmful if the will that is to make use of these gifts of nature, and

whose distinctive constitution is therefore called *character*, is not good. It is just the same with *gifts of fortune*. Power, riches, honor, even health, and the entire well-being and contentment with one's condition, under the name of *happiness*, inspire confidence and thereby quite often overconfidence as well, unless a good will is present to correct and make generally purposiveⁱ their influence on the mind, and with it also the whole principle for acting; not to mention that a rational impartial spectator can nevermore take any delight in the sight of the uninterrupted prosperity of a being adorned with no feature of a pure and good will, and that a good will thus appears to constitute the indispensable condition even of the worthiness to be happy.

Some qualities are even conducive to this good will itself and can make its work much easier; but regardless of this they have no 4:394 inner unconditional worth, but always presuppose a good will, which limits the high esteem in which they are otherwise rightly held, and makes it impermissible to take them for good per se. Moderation in affects and passions, self-control and sober deliberation are not only good in many respects, they even appear to constitute part of the *inner* worth of a person; but they are far from deserving to be declared good without limitation (however unconditionally they were praised by the ancients). For without principles of a good will they can become most evil, and the cold blood of a scoundrel makes him not only far more dangerous, but also immediately more loathsome in our eyes than he would have been taken to be without it.

A good will is good not because of what it effects, or accomplishes, not because of its fitness to attain some intended end, but good just by its willing, i.e. in itself; and, considered by itself, it is to be esteemed beyond compare much higher than anything that could ever be brought about by it in favor of some inclination, and indeed, if you will, the sum of all inclinations. Even if by some particular disfavor of fate, or by the scanty endowment of a stepmotherly nature, this will should entirely lack the capacity to carry through its purpose; if despite its greatest striving it should still accomplish nothing, and only the good will were to remain (not, of course, as a mere wish, but as the summoning of all means that are within our control); then, like a jewel, it would still shine by itself, as something that has its full worth in itself. Usefulness or fruitlessness can neither add anything to this worth, nor take anything away from it. It would, as it were, be only the setting to enable us to handle it better in ordinary commerce, or to attract the attention of those who are not yet expert enough; but not to recommend it to experts, or to determine its worth.

Even so, in this idea of the absolute worth of a mere will, not taking into account any utility in its estimation, there is something so strange that, regardless of all the agreement with it even of common reason, a suspicion must yet arise that it might perhaps covertly be founded merely on some high-flown fantasticality, and that we may have misunderstood Nature's^j purpose in assigning 4:395 Reason to our will as its ruler. We shall therefore submit this idea to examination from this point of view.

In the natural predispositions of an organized being, i.e. one arranged purposively^k for life, we assume as a principle that no organ will be found in it for any end that is not also the most fitting for it and the most suitable. Now in a being that has reason and a will, if the actual end of Nature were its *preservation*, its *prosperity*, in a word its *happiness*, then she would have made very bad arrangements for this in appointing the creature's Reason as the accomplisher of this purpose. For all the actions that it has to perform with a view to this purpose, and the whole rule of its conduct, would be marked out for it far more accurately by instinct, and that end would thereby have been obtained much more reliably than can ever be done by reason; and if in addition reason should

have been bestowed on the favored creature, it would have had to serve it only to contemplate the fortunate predisposition of its nature, to admire it, to rejoice in it, and to be grateful for it to the beneficent cause; but not to subject its desiderative faculty¹ to that weak and deceptive guidance and meddle with Nature's purpose; in a word, Nature would have prevented Reason from striking out into *practical use*, and from having the impudence, with its feeble insights, to devise its own plan for happiness and for the means of achieving it. Nature herself would have taken over the choice not only of ends, but also of means, and as a wise precaution would have entrusted them both solely to instinct.

In actual fact, we do find that the more a cultivated reason engages with the purpose of enjoying life and with happiness, so much the further does a human being stray from true contentment; and from this there arises in many, and indeed in those who are most experienced in its use, if only they are sincere enough to admit it, a certain degree of *misology*, i.e. hatred of reason, since after calculating all the advantages they derive – I do not say from the invention of all the arts of common luxury, but even from the sciences (which in the end also appear to them to be a luxury of the understanding) – they still find that they have in fact just brought more hardship upon ^{4:396} their shoulders than they have gained in happiness, and that because of this they eventually envy, rather than disdain, the more common run of people, who are closer to the guidance of mere natural instinct, and who do not allow their reason much influence on their behavior. And to that extent one must admit that the judgment of those who greatly moderate and even reduce below zero the vainglorious eulogies extolling the advantages that reason was supposed to obtain for us with regard to the happiness and contentment of life, is by no means sullen, or ungrateful to the kindness of the government of the world; but that these judgments are covertly founded on the idea of another and far worthier purpose of their existence, to which, and not to happiness, reason is quite properly destined, and to which, as its supreme condition, the private purpose of a human being must therefore largely take second place.

For since reason is not sufficiently fit to guide the will reliably with regard to its objects and the satisfaction of all our needs (which in part it does itself multiply) – an end to which an implanted natural instinct would have led much more reliably – but reason as a practical faculty, i.e. as one that is meant to influence the *will*, has yet been imparted to us, its true function^m must be to produce a *will that is good*, not for other purposes *as a means*, but good *in itself* – for which reason was absolutely necessary – since nature has everywhere else gone to work purposively in distributing its predispositions. Therefore this will need not, indeed, be the only and the entire good, but it must yet be the highest good, and the condition of everything else, even of all longing for happiness; in which case it is quite consistent with the wisdom of nature when one perceives that the cultivation of reason, which is required for the first and unconditional purpose, in many ways limits – at least in this life – the attainment of the second, namely of happiness, which is always conditional, indeed that it may reduce it to less than nothing without nature's proceeding unpurposely in this; because reason, which recognizes as its highest practical function the grounding of a good will, in attaining this purpose, is capable only of a contentment after its own kind, namely from fulfilling an end that again is determined only by reason, even if this should involve much infringement on the ends of inclination.

^{4:397} In order, then, to unravelⁿ the concept of a will to be highly esteemed in itself and good apart from any further purpose, as it already dwells in natural sound understanding and needs not so much to be taught as rather just to be brought to light, ^o this concept that always comes first in

estimating the entire worth of our actions and constitutes the condition of everything else: we shall inspect 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 already recognized as contrary to duty, even though they may be useful in this or that respect; for in their case there is no question whether they might have been done *from duty*, since they even conflict with it. I also set aside actions that actually conform with duty but to which human beings immediately have *no inclination*, but which they still perform, because they are impelled to do so by another inclination. For there it is easy to distinguish whether the action that conforms with duty was done *from duty* or from a self-serving purpose. It is much more difficult to notice this difference when an action conforms with duty and the subject has in addition an *immediate* inclination towards it. E.g. it certainly conforms with duty that a shopkeeper not overcharge his inexperienced customer, and where there is much commerce, a prudent merchant actually does not do this, but keeps a fixed general price for everyone, so that a child may buy from him just as well as everyone else. Thus one is served *honestly*; but this is not nearly enough for us to believe that the merchant proceeded in this way from duty and principles of honesty; his advantage required it; it cannot be assumed here that he had, besides, an immediate inclination towards 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 a self-interested purpose.

By contrast, to preserve one's life is one's duty, and besides everyone has an immediate inclination to do so. But on account of this the often anxious care with which the greatest part of humanity attends to it has yet no inner worth, and their maxim no moral content. They preserve their lives *in conformity with duty*, but not *from duty*. By contrast, if adversities and hopeless grief have entirely taken away the taste for life; if the unfortunate man, strong of soul, 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 a moral content.

To be beneficent where one can is one's duty, and besides there are many souls so attuned to compassion that, even without another motivating ground of vanity, or self-interest, they find an inner gratification in spreading joy around them, and can relish the contentment of others, in so far as it is their work. But I assert that in such a case an action of this kind – however much it conforms with duty, however amiable it may be – still has no true moral worth, but stands on the same footing as other inclinations, e.g. the inclination to honor, which if it fortunately lights upon what is in fact in the general interest and in conformity with duty, and hence 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*. Suppose, then, that the mind of that friend of humanity were beclouded by his own grief, which extinguishes all compassion for the fate of others; that he still had the means to benefit others in need, but the need of others did not touch him because he is sufficiently occupied with his own; and that now, as inclination no longer stimulates him to it, he were yet to tear himself out of this deadly insensibility, and to do the action without any inclination, solely from duty; not until then does it have its genuine moral worth. Still further: if nature had as such placed little sympathy in the heart of this or that man; if (otherwise honest) he were by temperament cold and indifferent to the sufferings of others, perhaps because

he himself is equipped with the peculiar gift of patience and enduring strength towards his own, and presupposes, or even requires, the same in every other; if nature had not actually formed such a man (who would truly not be its worst product) to be a friend of humanity, would he not still find within himself a source from which to give himself a far higher worth than that of a good-natured temperament may be? Certainly! It is just there that the worth of character commences, which is moral 4:399 and beyond all comparison the highest, namely that he be beneficent, not from inclination, but from duty.

To secure one's own happiness is one's duty (at least indirectly); for lack of contentment with one's condition, in the trouble of many worries and amidst unsatisfied needs, could easily become a great *temptation to transgress one's duties*. But, even without taking note of duty, all human beings have already of their own the most powerful and intimate inclination to happiness, as it is just in this idea that all inclinations unite in one sum. However, the prescription of happiness is predominantly such, that it greatly infringes on some inclinations and yet human beings can form no determinate and reliable concept of the sum of the satisfaction of all under the name of happiness; which is why it is not surprising that a single inclination – if determinate with regard to what it promises, and to the time its satisfaction can be obtained q – can outweigh a wavering idea, and that a human being, e.g. someone suffering from gout of the foot, can choose to enjoy what he fancies and to suffer what he can since, according to his calculation, at least then he has not denied himself the enjoyment of the present moment because of perhaps groundless expectations of some good fortune that is meant to lie in health. But also in this case, if the universal inclination to happiness did not determine his will, if health, at least for him, did not enter into this calculation so necessarily, then here, as in all other cases, there still remains a law, namely to advance one's happiness, r not from inclination, but from duty; and it is not until then that his conduct has its actual moral worth.

It is in this way, no doubt, that we are to understand the passages from Scripture that contain the command to love one's neighbor, even our enemy. 7 For love as inclination cannot be commanded, but beneficence from duty itself – even if no inclination whatsoever impels us to it, indeed if natural and unconquerable aversion resists – is *practical* and not *pathological* s love, which lies in the will and not in the propensity of sensation, in principles of action and not in melting compassion; and only the former can be commanded.

The second proposition 8 is: an action from duty has its moral worth *not in the purpose* that is to be attained by it, but in the maxim according to which it is resolved upon, t and thus it does not depend on 4:400 the actuality of the object of the action, but merely on the *principle of willing* according to which – regardless of any object of the desiderative faculty – the action is done. That the purposes that we may have when we act, and their effects, as ends and incentives u of the will, can bestow on actions no unconditional and moral worth, is clear from what was previously said. In what, then, can this worth lie, if it is not to consist in the will with reference to their hoped-for effect? It can lie nowhere else *than in the principle of the will*, regardless of the ends that can be effected by such action; for the will stands halfway between its a priori principle, which is formal, and its a posteriori incentive, which is material, as it were at a crossroads, and since it must after all be determined by something, it will have to be determined by the formal principle of willing as such when an action is done from duty, as every material principle has been taken away from it.

The third proposition, as the conclusion from both previous ones, I would express as follows: *duty is the necessity of an action from respect^v for the law*. For the object as the effect of the action I have in mind I can indeed have *inclination*, but *never respect*, precisely because it is merely an effect and not activity of a will.^w Likewise, 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 of it, in the second at times love it myself, i.e. view it as favorable to my own advantage. Only what is connected with my will merely as ground, never as effect, what does not serve my inclination, but outweighs it, or at least excludes it entirely from calculations when we make a choice, hence the mere law by itself, can be an object of respect and thus a command. Now, an action from duty is to separate off entirely the influence of inclination, and with it every object of the will; thus nothing remains for the will that could determine it except, objectively, the *law* and, subjectively, *pure respect* for this practical law, and hence the maxim^{*} of complying with 4:401 such a law, even if it infringes on all my inclinations.

Thus the moral worth of the action does not lie in the effect that is expected from it, nor therefore in any principle of action that needs to borrow its motivating ground from this expected effect. For all these effects (agreeableness of one's condition, indeed even advancement of the happiness of others) could also have been brought about by other causes, and thus there was, for this, no need of the will of a rational being; even so, in it alone can the highest and unconditional good be found. Nothing other than the *representation of the law* in itself – *which of course can take place only in a rational being* – in so far as it, not the hoped-for effect, is the determining ground of the will, can therefore constitute the pre-eminent good that we call moral, which is already present in the person himself who acts according to it, and is not first to be expected from the effect.^{*}

Notes

1. The ancient division of philosophy into physics, ethics, and logic is commonly attributed to Xenocrates (396–314 BC), the third head of Plato's Academy. It was widely accepted in later antiquity, particularly by the Stoics.

a *Moral*, a word used in the eighteenth century for the systematic study of morality, not for morality itself (*Sittlichkeit*, *Moralität*) or morals (*Sitten*).

2. Kant is referring to the division of labor, which in the late eighteenth century, in the wake of the work of the Scottish philosopher and economist Adam Smith (1723–90), was beginning to affect many areas of human activity.

b Here, as elsewhere, differences between German and English punctuation create difficulties. It is not altogether clear from the context whether the clause “in which . . . empirical” is restrictive or non-restrictive.

c or “admission” (of laws, doctrines, or theories, to the will of an agent) by means of moral instruction

d tangibly, palpably; not abstract

e Kant does not consistently distinguish between *Grundsatz* and *Prinzip*. Both have been translated as “principle.”

f *der unsittliche Grund*; “non-moral” is probably too weak

g a preliminary or introductory work

3. Christian Wolff (1679–1754), the most influential follower of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz in Germany, published his *Philosophia Practica Universalis* in 1738–39.

4. Kant finally published two volumes entitled *The Metaphysics of Morals* in 1797. The two books concern legal philosophy (the “Doctrine of Right”) and ethics (the “Doctrine of Virtue”) respectively. The relationship between the *Groundwork* and the late *Metaphysics of Morals* is not as straightforward as the title of the earlier book may seem to

indicate. Note that here and elsewhere, the typographical conventions of the time sometimes make it difficult to decide whether Kant is referring to subject matter or book titles; though the two are, of course, closely connected.

5. It is unclear whether, in 1785, Kant intended to write a separate “Critique of Pure Practical Reason,” or whether the *Groundwork* was originally meant to be the sole foundational work in moral philosophy. However, in his 1788 *Critique of Practical* [sic!] *Reason*, he explicitly rejects the very project of a Critique of *pure* practical reason (5:3), and less explicitly the justificatory project of the third section of the *Groundwork* (5:47).

6. The *Critique of Pure Reason*, published in 1781 (second, revised edition 1787). The publication of a critical work in moral philosophy – the *Groundwork* – explains why, in retrospect, Kant restricts the scope of the first *Critique* to “speculative” or theoretical reason.

h or “unity with the critique of speculative reason,” as indicated by the first edition

i *allgemein-zweckmäßig*; alternatively “universally purposive,” a tricky expression not used elsewhere in the *Groundwork*

j Nature, Reason, Philosophy, and Virtue are occasionally capitalized, and referred to with the feminine pronoun, to indicate that Kant is using these words allegorically. Allegorical and literal passages are not always easy to distinguish.

k *Zweck* is translated as “end” except when it occurs as part of *zweckmäßig* (“purposive”) or *zwecklos* (“purposeless”).

l *Begehrungsvermögen*. For Kant’s definition of this term cf. the *Critique of Practical Reason* (5:8 n.) and the *Metaphysics of Morals* (6:211). In human beings, the desiderative faculty is the will.

m or “vocation” (Gregor), in the context of teleology; *Bestimmung* has been rendered “determination” elsewhere

n *entwickeln*; or perhaps “explicate” (Gregor)

o *aufgeklärt*; the usual English translation “clarified” obscures the connection with the project of the Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*)

p The standard translation is “is a duty,” but when Kant uses the expression *ist Pflicht* he does not mean to say that there is, as such, a specific duty to do something, but simply that a certain action is obligatory (that one has to do it).

q alternatively “sustained,” but Kant’s usage elsewhere appears to imply the translation adopted here

r or possibly “his happiness” (Gregor), but the command should probably be formulated impersonally, as at the beginning of this paragraph

7. Cf. Matthew 5:43–44, referring back to Leviticus 19:18, and Luke 6:27 and 6:35.

s love belonging to the passive, sensuous side of human nature, as opposed to reason; not used by Kant in the sense of morbid or obsessive

8. Kant does not explicitly formulate a “first proposition.” As a result, it is a matter of much scholarly debate which of the principles put forward so far is intended for this role.

t “but in . . . resolved upon” is an addition of the second edition

u Gregor’s term, now widely accepted, has been retained although it may seem to suggest some external thing that initiates motivation, rather than the internal “spring” or “drive” that Kant had in mind. Kantian “incentives” are motivating desires that propel the agent forward if he or she so decides. A *Triebfeder* is the mainspring of motion, as in a clock or an old-fashioned tin toy.

v H. J. Paton’s “reverence” is in some ways a more natural word for a positive motivating moral force like Kantian *Achtung*; but “respect” is now generally used in discussions of Kantian ethics, and it has the additional advantage of resonating with readers beyond the world of Kant scholarship.

w Second edition; the first edition has “effect of my will”

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

* I might be accused of using the word *respect* just to seek refuge in an obscure feeling, instead of giving distinct information about the matter in question by means of a concept of reason. But even though respect is a feeling, it is not one *received* by influence, but one *self-wrought* by a rational concept and therefore specifically different from all feelings of the former kind, which come down to inclination or fear. What I recognize immediately as a law for myself I recognize with respect, which signifies merely the consciousness of the *subordination* of my will to a law, without mediation of other influences on my sense. The immediate determination of the will by the law and the consciousness of this is called *respect*, so that it is viewed as the *effect* of the law on the subject and not as its *cause*. Respect is actually the representation of a worth that infringes on my self-love. Thus it is something that is considered an object neither of inclination, nor of fear, even though it is at the same time somewhat analogous to both. The *object* of respect is therefore solely the *law*, the one that we impose upon *ourselves* and yet as in itself necessary. As a law we are subject to it, without consulting self-love; as imposed upon us by ourselves, it is yet a consequence of our will, and in the first regard it has an analogy with fear, in the second with inclination. All respect for a person is actually only respect for the law (of righteousness etc.) of which he gives us the example. Because we also view expanding our talents as our duty, we represent a person of talents also, as it were, as the *example of a law* (to become like him in this by practice)^x and this is what constitutes our respect. All moral *interest*, so called, consists solely in *respect* for the law.

* I might be accused of using the word *respect* just to seek refuge in an obscure feeling, instead of giving distinct information about the matter in question by means of a concept of reason. But even though respect is a feeling, it is not one *received* by influence, but one *self-wrought* by a rational concept and therefore specifically different from all feelings of the former kind, which come down to inclination or fear. What I recognize immediately as a law for myself I recognize with respect, which signifies merely the consciousness of the *subordination* of my will to a law, without mediation of other influences on my sense. The immediate determination of the will by the law and the consciousness of this is called *respect*, so that it is viewed as the *effect* of the law on the subject and not as its *cause*. Respect is actually the representation of a worth that infringes on my self-love. Thus it is something that is considered an object neither of inclination, nor of fear, even though it is at the same time somewhat analogous to both. The *object* of respect is therefore solely the *law*, the one that we impose upon *ourselves* and yet as in itself necessary. As a law we are subject to it, without consulting self-love; as imposed upon us by ourselves, it is yet a consequence of our will, and in the first regard it has an analogy with fear, in the second with inclination. All respect for a person is actually only respect for the law (of righteousness etc.) of which he gives us the example. Because we also view expanding our talents as our duty, we represent a person of talents also, as it were, as the *example of a law* (to become like him in this by practice)^x and this is what constitutes our respect. All moral *interest*, so called, consists solely in *respect* for the law.