

or dejected, wishes for death, and yet preserves his life, without loving it, not from inclination, or from fear, but from duty; then has his maxim a moral worth.

To be beneficent, where one can, is duty, and besides there are many souls so attuned to participation, that they, without any other motive, either of vanity, or of self-interest, feel an inward pleasure, to spread joy around them, and who can take delight in the contentment of others, so far as it is their work. But I maintain, that in a like case such an action, let it be ever so agreeable to duty, ever so amiable, has nevertheless no true moral value, but is on the very same footing with other inclinations, for example, the inclination for honour, which, when it happily hits on what in fact is of public utility and conformable to duty, consequently respectable, merits praise and encouragement, but not high esteem; for the moral worth is wanting to the maxim, namely, not to perform such an action from inclination, but *from duty*. Let us suppose also, that the mind of that philanthropist is clouded with proper sorrow, which extinguishes all participation in the fate of others, that he has still the ability to do good to those suffering want, but the wants of others touch him not, because he is sufficiently occupied about his own, and now, as no inclination incites him more, should he force himself out of this mortal insensibility, and do the action without any inclination whatever, merely out of duty, then has the action first its genuine moral

value. Again, when nature has bestowed little sympathy of heart on a person, when he (otherwise an honourable man) is by temperament cold and indifferent to the sufferings of others, perhaps, because he himself, endowed with the peculiar gifts of patience, fortitude, and persevering strength in supporting his own, presupposes such in others likewise, or even requires them; when nature has not properly formed such a man (who indeed would not be her worst production) for being a philanthropist, would he then not find in himself still a source of means to give himself a much higher value, than that of a temperament of a good quality may be? Certainly! the worth of the character, which is moral and beyond all comparison the highest, begins exactly here, namely, to do good, not from inclination, but from duty.

To secure one's own felicity is duty, (at least indirectly), for the discontent with one's situation, in a multitude of cares and among unsupplied wants, may easily become a great *temptation to the transgression of duties*. But, without considering duty here, men have of themselves the most powerful and most intimate inclination to felicity, because exactly in this idea all the inclinations unite themselves into one sum. Only, the precept of felicity is for the most part of such a nature, as to derogate greatly from some inclinations, and yet man cannot form to himself a determinate and certain conception of the sum of the satisfaction of them all, under the denomination of felicity; wherefore it is
not

not surprising, how a single determinate inclination, in regard of what it promises, and of the time, wherein its satisfaction may be obtained, can preponderate a wavering id a, and how man, for instance, one afflicted with the gout, can chuse to enjoy what is agreeable to him and to suffer what he can, because he, according to his calculation, has not, here at least, deprived himself of the enjoyment of the present moment by perhaps groundless expectations of a fortune, which is to lie in health. But also in this case, should the universal inclination to felicity not determine his will, should health not be so necessary for him in this calculation at least, there still remains here, as in all other cases, a law, namely, to promote his felicity, not from inclination, but from duty, and only then has his conduct the proper moral value.

Thus without doubt are to be understood the parts of the scripture, wherein it is commanded, to love one's neighbour, even our enemy. For love as inclination cannot be commanded, but to do good from duty itself, though no inclination at all incites thereto, nay, even though natural and insuperable aversion opposes, is not *pathological*, but *practical* love, which lies in the will and not in the propensity of sensation, in principles of action and not in melting participation; practical love only can be commanded.

The second position is, An action from duty has its moral value *not in the purpose* which shall thereby be answered, but in the

maxim, according to which it is resolved on, doth not therefore depend on the actuality of the object of the action, but merely on the *principle of volition*, according to which the action, abstracting from all the objects of the appetitive faculty, is performed. From the preceding it is clear, that the intentions, which we may have by actions, and their effects, as ends and springs of the will, can confer no unconditional and moral value on the actions. Wherein then can this value lie, if it shall not consist in the will, in reference to their hoped for effect? It can lie nowhere else, *than in the principle of willing*, abstracting from the ends, which may be effected by such an action; for the will is in the middle between its principle *à priori*, which is formal, and its spring *à posteriori*, which is material, as if on a crossway, and, as it must be determined by something or other, it must in general, being deprived of every material principle, when an action is done out of duty, be determined by the formal principle of volition.

The third position, as a consequence of the two preceding ones, I would express thus, *Duty is the necessity of an action out of reverence for the law.* For the object as the effect of my intended action I can have *inclination*, indeed, but *never reverence*, because it is an effect merely and not activity of a will. In the same manner I cannot have reverence for inclination in general, whether it be mine or another's, I can in the first case approve of it at most, in the second sometimes even love it,
that

that is, consider it as favourable to my own advantage. Only that, which is connected with my will as ground merely, but never as effect, which doth not serve my inclination, but out-weighs it at least excludes this entirely from its calculation in the choice, consequently the mere law of itself, can be an object of reverence and herewith a command. Now an action from duty ought to separate totally the influence of inclination, and with it every object of the will, therefore nothing remains for the will, which can determine it, but, objectively, the *law*, and subjectively, *pure reverence* for this practical law, by consequence the maxim,* to obey such a law, even in derogation to all my inclinations.

The moral value of the action then lies not in the effect, which is expected therefrom, therefore not in any one principle of the action, which requires to borrow its motive from this expected effect. For all these effects (agreeableness of one's situation, nay, even promoting other's happiness) could be brought to pass by other causes also, and it therefore requires not thereto the will of a rational being; wherein only the highest and unconditional good can be met with. Wherefore nothing but the *representation of the law* in itself, which indeed has place but in rational beings, provided it, but not the hoped for effect, be

* *Maxim* is the subjective principle of volition; the objective principle (that is, that, which would serve all rational beings subjectively also for a practical principle, if reason had full potency over the faculty of appetition) is the practical *law*.

the determination of the will, constitutes the so preferable good, that we name moral, which is already present in the person himself, who acts accordingly, but must not be first expected from the effect.*

But what sort of a law can that be, whose representation, even without having regard to the effect expected therefrom, must determine the will, that this may absolutely and without limitation be denominated good? As I have deprived the will of all the incitements that could arise to it from the obeying of any

* One might upbraid me, as if I sought but shelter in an obscure feeling behind the word *reverence*, instead of giving distinct information on the question by a conception of reason. But though reverence is a feeling, it is no feeling *received* by influence, but *self-effectuated* by a conception of reason, and therefore specifically distinguished from all feelings of the first sort, which may be reduced to either inclination or fear. What I immediately cognise as law for me, I cognise with reverence, which signifies the consciousness merely of the *subordination* of my will to a law, without the mediation of other influences on my sense. The immediate determination of the will by the law and the consciousness of it is named *reverence*, so that it is considered as the *effect* of the law on the subject and not as the *cause* of it. Reverence is properly the representation of a value, which derogates from my self-love. It is therefore something, which is contemplated, neither as object of inclination, nor of fear, although it has something analogical with both at the same time. The *object* of reverence then is the *law*, and indeed that, which we impose on *ourselves* and nevertheless as necessary in itself. As law we are subject to it, without inquiring of self-love; as imposed on us by ourselves, it is however a consequence of our will, and has in the first consideration analogy with fear, in the second with inclination. All reverence for a person is properly but reverence for the law (for the righteousness etc.), of which he gives us the example. Since we consider the improvement of our talents as duty likewise, we represent to ourselves in a person of talents, as it were, the *example of a law* (by exercise to become similar to him in this) and that constitutes our reverence. All moral interest, commonly so termed, consists entirely *in the reverence for the law*.

one law, nothing remains but the universal legality of actions in general, which only must serve the will for a principle, that is, I ought never to act otherwise, than so, *that I can be willing that my maxim shall become an universal law.* Here is now the mere legality in the general (without bottoming upon any one law destined for certain actions), that which serves the will for a principle, and must serve it for such, if duty shall not be every-where an empty fancy and a chimerical conception; herewith harmonises completely the common reason of mankind in its practical judgment, and has the said principle always in view.

Let the question be, for example, May I not, when I am in a pressing necessity, make a promise, with a view not to perform it? I easily make the distinction here, which the meaning of the question can have, whether it be prudent, or whether it be conformable to duty, to perform a false promise. The former no doubt may often have place. I perceive perfectly, that it is not sufficient, to relieve myself from a present embarrassment by means of this subterfuge, but it must be well considered, whether a greater inconvenience may not afterwards arise to me out of this lie, than this is, from which I at present free myself, and, as the consequences, notwithstanding all my imaginary *cunning*, are not so easily foreseen, that a confidence once lost may be much more disadvantageous to me, than all the evil that I think to avoid at present, whether it be not more *prudently*

acted, to proceed in this according to an universal maxim, and to acquire a habit, not to promise any thing, but with the intention to perform it. But it occurs to me immediately, that such a maxim always bottoms upon the dreaded consequences only. Now it is however quite a different thing, to be veracious out of duty, and out of dread of the disadvantageous consequences; because in the first case, the conception of the action comprises in itself a law for me, but in the second, I must first look round me every-where, to see what effects for me may possibly be combined with it. For, when I deviate from the principle of duty, it is most certainly bad; but if I quit my maxim of prudence, it may nevertheless be sometimes very advantageous to me, though it is indeed the safest, not to quit it. But in order to inform myself in the shortest and yet the most infallible manner with regard to the solution of this problem, I put the question to myself, Would I be contented, that my maxim (to disembarass myself by the false promise) should be valid as an universal law (as well for me as for others), and could I say to myself, Every one, when he finds himself in an embarrassment, from which he cannot otherwise relieve himself, may make a false promise? Thus I immediately perceive, that I may indeed will the lie, but by no means an universal law to lie; for according to such a one, there would be properly no promise, because it were in vain to declare my will with respect to my future actions to others, who do not believe

believe this declaration, or, if they should inadvertently, would however repay me with the same coin, consequently my maxim, the moment of its being ordained an universal law, must destroy itself.

I therefore require no great acumen to know what I have to do, in order that my volition shall be morally good. Unexperienced with regard to the course of the world, incapable of comprehending all the events happening in it, I question myself, only, Canst thou will, that thy maxim become an universal law? if not, it is rejectable, and that not on account of a disadvantage accruing to you, or to others, but because it is not congruent as a principle in a possible universal legislation, but for this reason obliges me to have an immediate reverence, of which at present I do not yet *perspect* upon what it bottoms (let the philosopher investigate that), but I understand this much at least, that it is an estimation of the value, which surpasses by far all the value of what is commanded by inclination, and that the necessity of my action out of *pure* reverence for the practical law is that, which constitutes duty, to which every other motive must yield, because it is the condition of a will good *in itself*, whose value exceeds every thing.

Thus are we arrived in the moral cognition of the common reason of man to its very principle, which, it is true, it doth not think separated in this manner in an universal form, but has it always actually in view nevertheless and uses it as the standard of its judgment.

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It would be very easy to show here, with this compass in hand, how it knows exactly in all occurring cases to distinguish, what is good, what bad, conformable to duty, or contrary to duty, when, without teaching it any thing in the least new, one makes it attentive, as Socrates did, to its own principle, and that there is no science or philosophy necessary, in order to know what one has to do, to be honest and good, nay, even wise and virtuous. It was easy to be presumed, that the knowledge of what is to be done, consequently, to be known (scire) is incumbent on every man, and becomes the affair of every one, even of the most common man. One cannot however contémptrate here without admiration, how the practical faculty of judging has so much the advantage of the theoretical in the common understanding of man. In the latter, when common reason ventures to swerve from the laws of experience and from the perceptions of the senses, it falls into mere incomprehensibilities and contradictions with itself, or at least into a chaos of uncertainty, obscurity, and inconstancy. But in the practical field the power of judgement begins but just then to shew itself the most advantageously, when the common understanding excludes all sensible springs from practical laws. It then becomes even subtle, it may happen, that it will chicane its conscience, or other pretensions relatively to what shall be named right, or will also sincerely determine the value of the actions of its own instruction, and, what is more, it may
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in the latter case hope to hit it justly, as well as any philosopher can ever promise to himself, nay, it is in this almost surer still, than even the latter, because he can have no other principle than it, but his judgment may, by a multitude of considerations foreign to the affair, easily be perplexed and made to deviate from the straight direction. Were it not consequently more adviseable in moral things to acquiesce in the judgment of common reason, and at most but to apply philosophy in order to exhibit more conveniently the system of morals so much the more complete and more conceivable (but still more for the purpose of disputing), but not in order to dissuade, even in a practical view, the common understanding of man from its happy simplicity, and to bring it by means of philosophy to a new way of investigation and instruction.

Innocence is an excellent thing, but it is on the other hand very bad, that it cannot be easily preserved, and is not difficult to be seduced. Wherefore wisdom itself — which otherwise consists more in acting, than in knowing — stands in need of science, not in order to learn from it, but to procure for its precept at once an inlet and stability. Man feels in himself a powerful counterpoise to all the commandments of duty, which reason represents to him so worthy of high reverence, in his wants and inclinations, whose whole satisfaction he comprises under the name of felicity. Now reason commands the observance of its precepts, incessantly, without however promising the inclinations any thing,

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consequently, as it were, by slighting and not paying attention to those pretensions so impetuous and yet seeming so equitable (which will not suffer themselves to be annulled by any command). But from this arises a *natural dialectic*, that is, a propensity to reason against that strict law of duty, and to doubt of its validity, or at least of its purity and strictness, and, if possible, to render it more suitable to our wishes and inclinations, that is, to corrupt it entirely and to deprive it of its dignity, of which however, even the common practical reason cannot at last approve.

The *common reason of man*, then, is never incited by any need of speculation, (which need never occurs to it, so long as it is contented to be mere sound reason), but from practical grounds, to go out of its sphere, and to take a step into the field of a *practical philosophy*, and there, concerning the source and proper determination of its principle in comparison with its maxims, which bottom upon need and inclination, to receive information and guidance, in order to be relieved from the embarrassment on account of pretensions on both sides, and to run no risk by the ambiguity, into which it easily falls, to be deprived of all genuine moral principles. Therefore there arises, imperceptibly, as well in the practical common reason, when it cultivates itself, a *dialectic*, which obliges it to seek assistance in philosophy, as in its theoretical use, and on that account the former will find as little rest, as the latter, any where else, than in a complete critic of our reason.

SECTION

S E C T I O N II.

TRANSITION FROM THE POPULAR MORAL PHILOSOPHY TO THE METAPHYSICS OF MORALS.

Though we hitherto have taken our conception of duty from the common use of our practical reason, it is by no means to be concluded therefrom, that we have treated it as a conception of experience. But rather, when we attend to the actions of men, we meet with many, and as we ourselves acknowledge, just complaints, that no sure example at all can be produced of the mindedness, to act from pure duty, that, though many things may be done *conformably* to what *duty* commands, it is still always doubtful, whether they be done *out of duty*, and have therefore a moral value. Hence there have at all times been philosophers, who absolutely denied the actuality of this mindedness manifested in human actions, and have ascribed every thing to the more or less refined self-love, without however on that account entertaining a doubt of the rightness of the conception of morality, but rather mention, with inward regret, the fragility and impurity of human nature, which indeed is noble enough, to make an idea so worthy of reverence its precept, but at the same time too weak, to observe it, and uses reason, which ought to serve it for legislation, but in order to take care of the interest
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of the inclinations, either singly, or, when it rises higher, in their greatest concord with one another.

In fact it is absolutely impossible to make out with perfect certainty a single case by experience, where the maxim of an action otherwise agreeable to duty rested upon moral grounds entirely and upon the representation of one's duty. For it is sometimes the case, it is true, that, in the strictest self-trial, we meet with nothing at all which, besides the moral ground of duty, could have been powerful enough to move us to this or that good action and so to a great sacrifice; but it cannot therefrom be concluded with any certainty at all, that actually no secret incentive of self-love whatever, under the mere appearance of the idea of duty, was the proper determining cause of the will, we however flatter ourselves willingly with a nobler motive which we appropriate to ourselves falsely, but in fact, by even the severest trial cannot fully detect the secret springs, because, when the moral value is the subject in agitation, it doth not depend on the actions which one sees, but on that internal principle of them, which one doth not see.

One cannot do those, who deride all morality, as a mere phantom, or an offspring of a human phansy transcending itself through self-conceit, any service more wished for, than to grant them that the conception of duty (as one, for the sake of ease, willingly persuades one's self, that all other conceptions are likewise of the same nature), must be
taken

taken from experience entirely; for in that case one prepares for them a certain triumph. Out of philanthropy I shall grant, that the most of our actions are conformable to duty; but when one observes their aims more closely, one sees every-where the dear self always prominent, upon which, and not upon the strict command of duty, which for the most part would require self-denial, rests their design. One needs not just be an enemy to virtue, but only a cool observer, who does not immediately take the most eager wish for the good to be its reality, in order (principally in advanced years and with a judgement partly tried by experience, and partly sharpened for observation) in certain moments to become doubtful, whether any where in the world real virtue is actually to be met with. And here nothing can guard us against the total apostasy from our ideas of duty, and preserve a grounded reverence for its law in the soul, but the clear conviction, that, though there never were actions, which arose from such pure sources, it is by no means the question here, whether this thing or the other happens, but reason of itself and independently on all phenomena commands, what ought to happen; consequently actions, of which the world hitherto hath perhaps given no example whatever, of whose feasibility he, who grounds every thing upon experience, might doubt very much, are nevertheless absolutely commanded by reason, and that, for instance, pure sincerity in friendship may not be the less required of every one, though

as yet there may not at all have been a sincere friend, because this duty, as duty in general, lies before all experience in the idea of a reason determining the will by grounds *à priori*.

When it is added, that, if one doth not oppugn the conception of morality and dispute all its truth and reference to any one possible object, one cannot deny, that its law is of such extensive meaning, that it must be valid not only for men, but for all *rational beings in general*, not merely under casual conditions and with exceptions, but *absolutely necessary*; thus it is clear, that no experience ever can be the cause of concluding the possibility even of such apodictical laws. For by what right can we bring into illimited reverence that, which is valid perhaps but under the fortuitous conditions of humanity, as universal precept for every rational nature, and how are laws of the determination of *our* will to be held laws of the determination of the will of a rational being in general, and, but as such, how are they to be held our laws even, if they were empirical merely, and did not take their origin fully *à priori* from pure, but practical reason?

Morality cannot be worse hit, than by endeavouring to borrow it from examples. For every example, which is represented to me of it, must itself first be judged according to principles of morality, whether it be worthy of serving for the original example, that is, for a pattern, but it can by no means furnish its highest conception. Even the Holy of the Gospel must previously be compared with our
ideal

ideal of moral perfection, ere he is cognised as such; he says of himself, Why do ye name me (whom ye see) good? nobody is good (the archetype of the good) but the only God (whom ye do not see). But whence have we the conception of God, as the chief good? Entirely from the IDEA, which reason frames *à priori* of moral perfection; and inseparably connects with the conception of a free will. Imitation has no place at all in the moral field, and examples serve but for encouragement, that is, they put beyond a doubt the practicability of what the law commands, they render intuitive that, which the practical rule expresses more universally, but can never justify, to set aside their true original, which lies in reason, and to accommodate one's self to them.

If there is then no genuine chief principle of morality, which must not independently on all experience rest upon pure reason merely, I am inclined to believe, that it is not necessary, even but to inquire, whether it be good to propound in the universal (*in abstracto*) these conceptions, as they, together with the principles appertaining to them, stand firm *à priori*, unless the cognition shall distinguish itself from what is vulgar and be denominated philosophical. But in our times this may be needful. For, were the suffrages to be collected, Whether the preference is to be given to pure cognition of reason separated from all that is empirical, by consequence metaphysics of morals, or to popular practical

philosophy; it is easy to conjecture on which side would be the preponderance.

This condescendence to popular conceptions is certainly very laudable, when the elevation to the principles of pure reason has previously taken place and is attained to full satisfaction, and that would be said to be *grounding* the doctrine of morals upon metaphysics, but afterwards, when it is once established, to procure it *entrance* by means of popularity. It is however highly absurd to be willing to comply with this in the first investigation, upon which depends all rightness of principles. Not only, that this procedure can never lay claim to the very rare merit of a true *philosophical popularity*, but because there is no art whatever in making one's self generally understood, when one chuses to renounce all manner of solid well-grounded insight into a matter; thus is produced a nauseous hodge-podge of compiled observations and half digested principles, with which shallow brains regale themselves, because it is nevertheless very useful for tabletalk, but where those, who can penetrate into the matter, feel confusion, and dissatisfied, without being able to help themselves, turn away from it, although philosophers, who perfectly see through the illusion, are but little attended to; when they divert for a while from the pretended popularity, in order but first, after acquired precise introspection, to dare with right to be popular.

One needs but look at the attempts towards morality in that favourite taste, to meet with a wonderful farrago, sometimes the peculiar
destina-

destination of human nature; (therewith how-
 ever the idea of a rational nature in general),
 sometimes perfection, sometimes happiness;
 here moral feeling or sentiment, there the fear
 of God, of this something, of that likewise
 something, without its ever occurring to in-
 quire, whether any where in the knowledge
 of human nature (which we can have but
 from experience) the principles of morality
 are to be looked for, and, if this is not, if
 the latter are to be met with fully *à priori*,
 free from all that is empirical, absolutely in-
 pure conceptions of reason and nowhere else,
 not even in the smallest degree, to form the
 design, rather to separate entirely this per-
 quisition as pure practical philosophy, or (if
 a name so much decried dare be mentioned)
 as metaphysics* of morals, to bring it of itself
 only to its whole perfection, and to amuse
 the public, which requires popularity, till
 the issue of this undertaking.

It is however such metaphysics of morals
 completely isolated, as are mixed with no
 anthropology, with no theology, with neither
 physics, nor hyperphysics, and still less with
 occult qualities (which, if you please, may be
 termed hypophysical), not only an indispens-
 able substratum of all theoretical precise

* One may distinguish, if one pleases, (as the pure mathema-
 tics and logic are distinguished from the applied) the pure
 philosophy of morals (metaphysics) from the applied (namely,
 to human nature). By these denominations one is put in
 mind, that the moral principles must not be founded upon
 the properties of human nature, but must subsist of them-
 selves *à priori*; from such however, as for every rational
 nature, therefore for the human, practical rules must be able
 to be derived.

cognition of duties, but at the same time a desideratum of the utmost importance to the actual fulfilling of their precepts. For the pure representation of duty with no alloy of empirical incitements, and of the moral law in general, has on the human heart by the way of reason only (which hereby first perceives, that it of itself can also be practical) an influence more powerful, than all other springs,* which may be called in from the empirical field, as it in the consciousness of its dignity despises the latter, and can by degrees become their master; instead of which a mixt moral philosophy, that is composed of springs of feelings and inclinations and at the same time of conceptions of reason, must occasion the mind to waver between motive causes, which cannot be brought under any principle, and which can lead but very accidentally to the good, but frequently to the bad likewise.

* I have a letter of the worthy Sultzer's, wherein he asks me, What is the reason why the teachers of ethics, notwithstanding that they have so much of what is convincing for reason, effectuate so little? My answer was delayed by the preparation, to give it completely. However it is no other, than that the teachers themselves have not rendered their conceptions distinct, and, endeavouring to do it too well, by collecting all sorts of motive causes of the moral good, in order to make the medicine very strong, they spoil it. For the most common observation shows, that, when an honest action is represented, how it, separated from all views of any one advantage, either in this world, or in another, is performed with a stedfast soul, even under the greatest temptations of want, or of allurements, it leaves far behind it and obscures every similar action, which was but in the smallest degree affected by a foreign spring, it elevates the soul and excites the wish, to be able so to act likewise. Even children of a middle age feel this impression, and duties ought never to be represented to them otherwise.

From

From what has been said it is evident, that all moral conceptions have their seat and origin in reason totally *à priori*, and this in the most common reason of man, as well as in that of the speculative in the most eminent degree; that they cannot be derived from any empirical and, on that account, merely casual cognition; that in this purity of their origin lies their dignity even, to serve us for the highest practical principles; that as much as one adds any thing empirical, so much does one diminish their genuine influence and the unlimited value of the actions; that it does not only require the greatest necessity in a theoretical view, when speculation merely is concerned, but it is of the greatest practical import also, to draw their conceptions and laws from the well of pure reason, to propound them purely and unmingled, nay, to determine the circuit of this whole practical or pure cognition of reason, that is to say, the whole faculty of pure practical reason, but not in this, as speculative philosophy allows, ay, even finds necessary sometimes, to render the principles dependent on the peculiar nature of human reason, but, because moral laws ought to be valid for every rational being in general, to derive them from the universal conception of a rational being in general, and in this manner to propound completely (which in this species of quite separate cognition may be easily performed) all moral, which for its *application* to men stands in need of anthropology, first independently on this, consequently as pure philosophy, that is, as metaphysics,

physics, well knowing, that it is in vain, without being in possession of them, I will not say, to determine precisely for the speculative judgment the moral of duty in all that, which is conformable to duty, but that it is impossible in even the merely common and practical use, especially in the moral instruction, to found morals upon their genuine principles and thereby to effectuate, and to graft in the minds for the highest welfare of the world, pure moral sentiments.

In order however in this elaboration not to proceed by the natural steps from the common moral judgment merely (which is here very worthy of reverence) to the philosophical, as was hitherto the case, but from a popular philosophy, which goes no farther, than it can through groping by means of examples, to metaphysics (which allow themselves to be detained no longer by any thing empirical, and, as they must measure the whole complex of the cognition of reason of this sort, even proceed to ideas, where examples leave us), we must follow and distinctly exhibit the practical faculty of reason from its universal rules of determination, to where the conception of duty springs out of it.

Every one thing of nature acts according to laws. Only a rational being has the faculty of acting *according to the representation* of laws, that is, according to principles, or a *will*. As, to the derivation of actions from laws *reason* is requisite, so is the will nothing else, than practical reason. If reason infallibly determines the will, the actions of
such

such a being, which are cognised as objectively necessary, are subjectively necessary likewise; that is to say, the will is a faculty, to choose *that only*, which reason, independently on inclination, cognises as practically necessary, that is, good. But when reason of itself only doth not determine the will sufficiently, when this is subjected to subjective conditions, still (to certain springs), which do not always harmonise with the objective ones; in a word, when the will is not *in itself* fully conformable to reason (as is actually the case in men); thus are the actions, which are objectively cognised as necessary, subjectively contingent, and the determination of such a will, agreeable to objective laws, is *necessitation*; that is, the relation of the objective laws to a will not thoroughly good is represented as the determination of the will of a rational being by grounds of reason, it is true, but to which this will from its nature is not necessarily obedient.

The representation of an objective principle, provided it be necessitating for a will, is named a commandment (of reason) and the formula of the commandment, an *imperative*.

All imperatives are expressed by *shall* or *ought*, and thereby denote the relation of an objective law of reason to a will, which according to its subjective quality is not thereby necessarily determined, (a necessitation). They say, that to do or to forbear something would be good, but they say it to a will, which doth not always do something, because it is represented to it, that to do it is good. Practically good, however, is what determines the will

by means of representations of reason, by consequence not from subjective but objective causes; that is, from grounds, which are valid for every rational being, as such. It is distinguished from the *agreeable*, as that, which has influence on the will but by means of sensation* from subjective causes merely, that are valid for the sense of but this one or the other, and not as a principle of reason, which is valid for every body.

A perfectly good will would therefore rank just as well under objective laws (of the good), but not thereby be able to be represented as *necessitated* to legal actions, because it of itself, according to its subjective quality, can be determined but by the representation of the good. Wherefore no imperatives are valid for the *Divine* will, nor in general for a *sacred* one; here the word *shall* is improper, because the *volition* is already of itself necessarily

* The dependence of the appetitive faculty on sensations is denominated inclination, and this always evinces a *want*. But the dependence of a casually determinable will on principles of reason is termed an *interest*. This therefore has place but in a dependent will, which is of itself not always conformable to reason; in the *Divine* will one cannot conceive any interest. But the human will may take an *interest* in a thing, without *acting*, on that account, *out of interest*. That signifies the *practical* interest in the action, this the *pathological* interest in the object of the action. That denotes but dependence of the will on principles of reason in itself, this on its principles for the behoof of inclination as reason furnishes but the practical rule, how the wants of inclination are to be supplied. In the first case the action interests me; in the second (the object of the action, *provided* it be agreeable to me). In the first section we have already seen, that in regard to an action out of duty the interest in the object must not be considered, but merely in the action itself and its principle in reason (the law).

consonant to the law. Hence imperatives are but formules, to express the relation of objective laws in general to the subjective imperfection of the will of this or of that rational being, for instance, the human will.

All imperatives now command, either *hypothetically*, or *categorically*. Those represent the practical necessity of a possible action as a mean to attain something else that one wills (or is possible to be willed). The categorical imperative is that, which represents an action apart, without reference to another end, as objectively necessary.

As every practical law represents a possible action as good and therefore, for a subject practically determinable by reason, as necessary, so all imperatives are formules of the determination of an action which, according to the principle of a will in any one way good, is necessary. When now the action is good but *for something else*, as a mean, the imperative is *hypothetical*; if it is represented as good *in itself*, consequently as necessary in a will, as its principle, conformable in itself to reason, it is *categorical*.

The imperative then inquires, which action possible through me would be good, and represents the practical rule in relation to a will, that doth not immediately do an action, because it is good, partly as the subject does not always know, that it is good, and partly because, if he knew this even, his maxims might be contrary to the objective principles of a practical reason.

The

The hypothetical imperative therefore says, only, that the action is good for any one possible, or actual, design. In the former case it is a *problematical*, in the latter, an *assertive*, practical principle. The categorical imperative, which explains the action as objectively necessary, without reference to any one purpose; that is, without any other end for itself, is valid as an *apodictical* (practical) principle.

One may conceive that, which is possible but by the powers of any one rational being, as a possible design for any one will, and for which reason there are in fact an infinite number of principles of action, provided this be represented as necessary, in order to accomplish a possible design thereby to be effected. All sciences have some one practical part, which consists of problems, that some one end is possible for us, and of imperatives, how it may be attained. These may therefore be named imperatives of *address* in general, Whether the end be reasonable and good, is by no means the question here, but only what is to be done, in order to attain it.

The recipes of the physician, for the purpose of curing his patient radically, and those of a poisoner, for the purpose of poisoning him with certainty, are of equal value in as much as each serves to obtain its object perfectly. As one in youth does not know what ends may occur in life, parents endeavour to make their children learn a great variety of things, and take care of the *address* or dexterity in the use of the means to all sorts of ends *at pleasure* of which

which they cannot determine, whether it may not actually become in future a design of their pupil, but which it is *possible*, that he may one day or other have, and this care is so great, as to occasion their neglecting to form and to correct the judgment of their children on the value of things, which they might perhaps make their ends.

There is however an end, which may actually be presupposed of all rational beings, (so far as imperatives are applicable to them, to wit, as dependent beings), and also a design, which they not only *may* have, but which one may presuppose with certitude, that they *have* according to a necessity of nature, and that is the design of *felicity*. The hypothetical imperative, which represents the practical necessity of the action, as a mean to the promotion of felicity, is *assertive*. It must not be propounded as merely necessary to an uncertain, barely possible design, but to a design, which may be presupposed in every man with certainty and *à priori*, because it pertains to his very being. Now the address in the choice of the means to his own greatest wellbeing may in the strictest sense be distinguished by the name of *prudence*.* Therefore

* The word *prudence* is taken in a twofold signification in the one it may bear the name of mundane *prudence*, and in the other that of private *prudence*. The former is the address of a person to have influence on others, in order to use them for his own purpose. The latter is the knowledge of uniting all these purposes for his own permanent advantage. The latter is properly that to which the value of even the former is reduced, and whoever is prudent in the former manner, but not in the latter, of him may rather be said, that he is acute and cunning, but in the main imprudent.

the imperative, which refers to the choice of the means to the proper felicity, that is, the precept of prudence, is always *hypothetical*; the action is not absolutely commanded, but as a mean only to another purpose.

In fine there is an imperative, which, without founding as a condition upon any other design to be accomplished by a certain conduct, immediately commands this conduct. This imperative is *categorical*. It doth not concern the matter of the action and what is to follow it, but the form and the principle, from which it issues itself, and the essential good of it consists in the mindedness, let the consequence be what it will. This imperative may be entitled that of *morality*.

The volition according to these three sorts of principles is clearly distinguished by the *inequality* of the necessitation of the will. In order now to render these conspicuous, I believe they would be named in their order the most suitably, were it said, That they are either *rules* of address, or *counsels* of prudence, or *commandments (laws)* of morality. For the law only carries with it the conception of an *unconditional* and indeed objective and by consequence universally valid *necessity*, and commandments are laws, which must be kept, that is, obeyed even contrary to inclination. *Counsel*, it is true, comprehends necessity, but which may be valid under subjective conditions merely at pleasure, whether this or the other man counts this or that to his happiness; whereas the categorical imperative is limited by no condition whatever, and may properly

properly as absolutely, objectively, practically necessary be denominated a law. The first imperative might be named *technical* also (belonging to art), the second *pragmatical** (belonging to welfare), and the third *moral* (belonging to the free conduct in general, that is, morals).

The question now occurs, How are all these imperatives possible? This question does not require to know, how the accomplishment of the action, which the imperative commands, can be thought, but how the necessitation of the will merely, which the imperative expresses in the problem, can. How the imperative of address is possible, requires no particular exposition. Who wills the end, wills (provided reason have a decisive influence on his actions) the thereto indispensably necessary mean also, which is in his power. The position, as to the volition, is analytical; for in the volition of an object, as my effect, is thought my causality, as acting cause, that is, the use of the mean, and the imperative draws the conception of actions necessary to this end from the conception of a volition of this end, (to determine the means themselves to a proposed design, thereto belong by all means synthetical positions, but which do not concern the ground, the act of the will, but to render the

* Meseems, the proper meaning of the word *pragmatic* might be thus determined the most precisely. For the *sanctions* are named *pragmatic*, which properly do not flow from the right of states, as necessary laws, but from the *care* of the universal welfare. A *history* is pragmatically composed, when it renders prudent, that is to say, instructs the world, how they may take better care of their own advantage, or at least as good, as former ages.

object

object actual). That, in order according to a sure principle to bisect or divide a line into two equal parts, I must describe from its ends two segments of a circle, this the mathematics teach by synthetical propositions only; but that, when I know, that the said effect cannot take place but by such an action, I, if I will the effect completely, will the action also, which is thereto requisite, in an analytical position; for to represent something as an effect possible by me in a certain manner, and to represent myself, with regard to it, acting in the same manner, are quite identical.

The imperatives of prudence, were it but as easy to give a determinate conception of felicity, would entirely coincide with those of address, and be in the same manner analytical. For here, as well as there, it would run, Whoever wills the end, wills (conformably to reason, of necessity) the sole means too, which are thereto in his power. But it is a misfortune, that the conception of felicity is a conception so indefinite, that, though every one wishes to attain felicity, he never can say precisely and in unison with himself, what he properly wishes and wills. The reason is, because all the elements, which appertain to the conception of felicity, are collectively empirical, that is, must be borrowed from experience, that to the idea of felicity is requisite an absolute whole, a *maximum* of being-well in one's present and in every future state. Now it is impossible, that the most perspicacious and at the same time
the

the most powerful, but finite being should form a precise conception to himself of what he wills here. If great knowledge and penetration be the objects of his will, perhaps these might become but a sharper eye, to show him the more horribly the evils, which at present hide themselves from him, and yet cannot be avoided, or to heap up still more wants for his appetites, which already create him troubles enow. Does he desire long life; who can answer for its not being a long misery? If he wish for health, how often has a valetudinary state of body withheld from debauchery, into which illimited health would have allowed to fall, etc. In short, he is not able, according to any one principle, to determine with full certainty, what would really make him happy, because to this would be requisite omniscieny. Therefore one cannot act according to determinate principles, in order to be happy, but according to empirical counsels, for instance, of diet, of œconomy, of politeness, of reserve, etc. which experience teaches, that they one with another promote the most the being-well. Hence follows, that the imperative of prudence, strictly speaking, cannot command at all, that is, represent actions objectively as practically necessary, that they are rather to be considered as advices, than as commandments of reason, that the problem, To determine certainly and universally what action would promote the felicity of a rational being, is totally insolvable, consequently no imperative in respect of it possible, which in the

strict sense could command to do what renders happy, because felicity is not an ideal of reason, but of the imagination, which rests upon empirical grounds merely, of which one expects in vain, that they should determine an action, whereby the totality of in fact an infinite series of consequences would be attained. This imperative of prudence however, when it is supposed, that the means to felicity can be certainly furnished, would be an analytical practical position; For it is distinguished from the imperative of address but herein, that in this the end is possible merely, but in that, given: as both however command the means barely to the accomplishment of that, of which it is presupposed, that one willed it as end; so the imperative, which commands the volition of the means for him, who wills the end, is in both cases analytical. There is then no difficulty with regard to the possibility of such an imperative.

On the other side, how the imperative of *morality* is possible, is beyond a doubt the only query, which stands in need of a solution, as it is by no means hypothetical, and therefore the necessity objectively represented cannot rest upon any prior position, as in the hypothetical imperatives. It must always be remembered, that it is to be made out by *no example*, by consequence not empirically, whether there be any where any such imperative, but to take care, that all those, which seem categorical, may not be in a hidden manner hypothetical. For example, when it is said, Thou shalt not make a false promise;
and

and it is supposed, that the necessity of this forbearance is not mere counsel to avoid any other evil, so that it might run thus, Thou shalt not promise falsely, in order, were it known, not to destroy thy credit; but an action of this species must be considered as bad of itself, the imperative of the interdiction is therefore categorical; thus it cannot be evinced with certitude in any example, that the will is determined here without other springs, merely by the law, although it seems so; for it is always possible that in secret, fear of shame, perhaps obscure apprehension of other dangers too, may have influence on the will. Who can prove through experience the nonexistence of a cause, since that teaches nothing more, than that we do not perceive it? In such a case however the moral imperative, so named, which as such appears categorical and unconditional, in fact would be but a pragmatistical precept, that makes us attentive to our advantage, and teaches us to take care of this merely.

We therefore shall have to investigate totally *à priori* the possibility of a *categorical* imperative, as the advantage here is of no use to us, that the actuality should be given in experience, and thus the possibility not necessary to the establishment, but merely to the explication. So much however may be previously introspected, That the categorical imperative only is a practical *law*, the other imperatives in general may indeed be denominated *principles* of the will, but not laws; because, what is necessary to be done to accomplish

comply with a design, may be considered as contingent in itself, and we may always get rid of the precept, when we renounce the design, on the contrary the unconditional commandment, with regard to the opposite, leaves no choice free to the will, consequently carries with it that sole necessity, which we require to the law.

In the second place, with respect to this categorical imperative or law of morality, the ground of the difficulty (the possibility of perspecting it) is very great. It is a synthetic practical position* *à priori*, and as the possibility of perspecting laws of this sort is attended with so much difficulty in the theoretical cognition, it may be easily conjectured, that in the practical they will not be attended with less.

In this problem we shall first essay, whether the mere conception of a categorical imperative does not furnish its formule that contains the position, which only can be a categorical imperative; for to know how such an absolute commandment is possible, notwithstanding our being acquainted with its tenour, will still require a peculiar and a difficult labour, but which we shall defer till the last section.

* I connect with the will, without a presupposed condition from any one inclination whatever, the fact, *a priori*, consequently necessarily, (though but objectively, that is, under the idea of a reason, which has full power over all subjective motive causes). This is then a practical position, which doth not derive analytically the volition of an action from another which is already foreseen, (for we have no such perfect will), but immediately connected with the conception of the will as a rational being, as something, which is not comprised in it.

When

When I conceive a *hypothetical* imperative in general, I do not know beforehand, what it will contain, till the condition is given me. But when I conceive a *categorical* imperative, I know directly what it contains. For as the imperative, besides the law, contains but the necessity of the maxim,* to be conformable to this law, but the law contains no condition, to which it is limited, so nothing remains, but the universality of a law in general, to which the maxim of the action must be conformable, and which conformity solely represents the imperative as necessary,

The categorical imperative is therefore but a single one, and runs thus; ACT ACCORDING TO THAT MAXIM ONLY, WHICH THOU CANST AT THE SAME TIME WILL TO BECOME AN UNIVERSAL LAW.

If now all imperatives of duty may be derived from this single imperative, as their principle, we, though we leave it undetermined, whether that in general, which is named duty, be not a void conception, will however be able to point out at least, what we thereby think and what this conception means.

As the universality of the law, according to which effects happen, constitutes what is

* *Maxim* is the subjective principle of acting, and must be distinguished from the *objective principle*, namely, the practical law. That comprehends the practical rule, which reason determines conformably to the conditions of the subject (but frequently to its ignorance or even its inclinations), and is therefore the principle, according to which the subject acts; but the law is the objective principle, valid for every rational being, and the principle, according to which it *ought to act*, that is, an imperative.

termed *nature* in the most general sense (as to the form), that is, the existence of things, on condition that it be determined according to universal laws; so the universal imperative of duty may likewise be expressed thus: ACT IN SUCH A MANNER, AS IF THE MAXIM OF THY ACTION WERE BY THY WILL TO BECOME AN UNIVERSAL LAW OF NATURE.

We shall now enumerate a few duties, according to the usual division of them, into duties towards ourselves and towards other men, into perfect and imperfect duties.*

1. One who, by a series of evils, that is increased to despair, feels *a tedium vite*, but is still so far in the possession of his reason, as to be able to interrogate himself, whether it be not contrary to the duty towards himself, to take his own life. Now he tries, Whether the maxim of his action can become an universal law of nature. But his maxim is, I make it my principle from self-love, when life by prolonging it threatens with more evil, than it promises agreeableness, to abridge it. The question is, whether this principle of self-love can become an universal law of nature. It is however instantly perceived, that a nature, whose law it is, to destroy life itself

* I request the reader to remember, that I totally reserve the division of duties for the future *Metaphysics of Morals* this division then is made but at pleasure (for the purpose of ordering my examples). However I understand here by a perfect duty, that, which allows no exception for the advantage of inclination, and not only external, but internal *perfect duties* are included in this, which runs counter to the language adopted in the schools, but my intention is not to account for this at present, because it is indifferent to my purpose, whether it be granted me or not.

by the same sensation, whose destination it is to excite to the promotion of life, would be inconsistent with itself and therefore not subsist as nature, consequently that maxim cannot possibly have place as an universal law of nature, and of course is totally repugnant to the chief principle of all duty.

2. Another finds himself compelled by necessity to borrow money. He knows perfectly that he never can repay it, but perceives that it would not be lent him, unless he positively promised to repay it on a certain day. He is inclined to make such a promise; but has still so much conscience, as to question himself; Is it not illicit and contrary to duty to relieve one's self in such a manner from want? Let us however suppose that he resolved on it, his maxim would then be to this purpose, When I am in want of money, I will borrow and promise to pay, though I know it will never be performed. This principle of self-love, or of proper advantage, may perhaps coincide very well with my future welfare, but the question is at present, Whether it be right? In order to answer this, I shall transform the demand of self-love into an universal law, thus, What would be the consequence, were my maxim an universal law? It is immediately obvious that this maxim never can be valid as an universal law of nature and consonant with itself, but must of necessity contradict itself. For the universality of a law, that every one, who thinks himself in want, may promise whatever he pleases with the intention not to perform it,

would render impossible both the promise and the end, which one might have in view, because nobody would believe that any thing was promised, but would laugh at every such utterance as a mere pretext.

3. A third discovers in himself a talent, which by means of a little culture might render him in every respect a useful member of society. But he finds himself easy in his circumstances, and prefers rather to addict himself to pleasure, than to exert himself in extending and improving the happy natural predispositions, with which he is endowed. He inquires however, Whether, besides the agreement, that his maxim of the neglect of his gifts of nature has in itself with his propensity to pleasure, it harmonise with that, which is named duty. He now perceives, that a nature may indeed subsist according to such an universal law, though man (like the inhabitants of the southsea) neglected his talents, and thought about passing his life in idleness merely, amusements, propagation, or in one word, enjoyment; but it is impossible he can *will*, that this shall become an universal law, or as such be implanted in us by instinct. For as a rational being he wills of necessity, that all the faculties in him shall be developed, because they are serviceable and given to him for all sorts of possible purposes.

A *fourth* still, who is favoured by fortune, thinks, when he sees that others have to struggle with great difficulties (which he might easily remove), What's that to me? let every one be as happy, as heaven pleases, or as he
can

can make himself, I would not lessen it in the least, nay, nor even envy him his happiness; only, I have no idea of contributing any thing, either to his welfare, or to his assistance in time of need! Were such a way of thinking an universal law of nature, the human species might by all means subsist very well, and no doubt still better, than when every one talks of participation and benevolence, and also strives, on occasion, to exercise these, but, on the other hand, cheats, wherever he can, and either sells the rights of mankind, or at least, derogates from them. But, though it is possible that, according to that maxim, a universal law of nature might subsist, it is impossible to *be willing*, that such a principle shall be every-where valid as a law natural. For a will, which resolved on this, would clash with itself, as many cases may happen, where one stands in need of the love and participation of others, and where he, by such a law of nature arisen from his own will, would deprive himself of all hope of the assistance, for which he wishes.

These are now a few of the many duties actual, or at least held such by us, whose division is evident from the sole principle already mentioned. One must *be able to will*, that a maxim of our action shall become an universal law; this is the canon of the moral judgment of it in general. Some actions are of that nature, that their maxim cannot without a contradiction be even *thought* as an universal law of nature; much less, can one *be willing*, that it shall become one. In others

that internal impossibility is not to be found, but it is nevertheless impossible to *will*, that their maxim be elevated to the universality of a law of nature, because such a will would be in contradiction with itself. It is obvious, that the former collide with the stricter or narrower (indispensable) duty, but the latter with the larger (meritorious) duty only, and thus all duties, as to the mode of obligation (not the object of their action), are by these examples completely displayed in their dependence on the sole principle.

When we attend to ourselves in every transgression of a duty, we find, that we are really not willing, that our maxim shall become an universal law, for that is impossible, but its opposite shall rather remain universally a law; only, we take the liberty, for ourselves, or (but for this once) in favour of our inclination, to make an *exception*. Consequently, if we considered every thing from the same point of view, namely, from reason, we should meet with a contradiction in our own will, to wit, that a certain principle is objectively necessary as a universal law, and yet must not be universally valid subjectively, but must allow exceptions. But, in the first place, as we contemplate our action from the point of view of a will totally conformable to reason, but secondly contemplate likewise the very same action from the point of view of a will affected by inclination, there is actually no contradiction here, but by all means a resistance of the inclination against the precept of reason, (*antagonismus*) by which the universality

versality of the principle (*universalitas*) is transformed into a mere generality (*generalitas*), that the practical principle of reason, to use the expression, may meet the maxim half way. Though in our own judgment impartially formed this cannot be justified, it evinces, that we actually acknowledge the validity of the categorical imperative, and allow ourselves (with all the reverence for it) but a few exceptions, as it seems to us, unimportant and extorted from us.

We have then proved so much at least, that, if duty is a conception, which is to comprise meaning and actual legislation for our actions, it can be expressed in categorical imperatives only, but by no means in hypothetical; in like manner, we have already performed a great deal, in having distinctly exhibited and determined for every use the matter of the categorical imperative, which must embrace the principle of all duty (if there be in general any such). But we are not yet so far advanced, to prove *à priori*, that such an imperative actually has place, that there is a practical law, which absolutely commands of itself and without all springs, and that the obeying of this law is duty.

With the view of attaining it, it is of the utmost consequence, to let this serve for a warning, not even to frame in the imagination an endeavour to derive the reality of this principle from the *peculiar property of human nature*. For duty ought to be the practical unconditional necessity of the action; it must therefore be valid for all rational beings (whom
only

only an imperative can affect), and *but on that account* be a law for all human wills. What, on the contrary, is derived from the peculiar natural predisposition of humanity, what from certain feelings and propensions, nay, if possible, even from a peculiar bent, which is proper to human reason, and must not necessarily be valid for the will of every rational being, can furnish, it is true, a maxim for us, but no law, a subjective principle, according to which we have a propensity and inclination to act, but not an objective one, according to which we are *directed* to act, though all our propensity, inclination and natural œconomy were contrary, it even verifies the more the sublimity and internal dignity of the commandment in a duty, the less the subjective causes are for it, the more they are against it, without on that account either weakening but in the smallest degree the necessitation by the law, or abating any thing of its validity.

Here now we see philosophy placed, in fact, in a very dangerous station, which, notwithstanding it is neither hung on, nor supported by any thing, either in heaven, or on earth, must be firm. There she is to evidence her purity, as emperess of her laws, but not as herald of those, that an implanted sense, or who knows what guardian nature infuses into her, which, though they may be better than nothing at all, can collectively never yield principles that reason dictates, and which must absolutely have their source totally *à priori*, and herewith at the same time their

commanding

commanding authority; to expect nothing from the inclination of man, but every thing from the supremacy of the law and the reverence due to it, or on the contrary to condemn men to self-contempt and internal aversion.

All therefore that is empirical, is, as an *additamentum* to the principle of morality, not only totally unsuitable to it, but highly disadvantageous to the purity of morals themselves, as the proper value of an absolutely good will raised above all price consists exactly in the principle of action being free from every influence of contingent grounds, which experience only can furnish. One cannot warn too much or too often against the negligence or even the low cast of mind in searching for the principle among empirical motive causes and laws, because human reason in its lassitude willingly reposes upon this pillow, and in the dream of sweet delusions (which surround it, instead of Juno, however, with a cloud,) substitutes in the room of morality a bastard production patched up of members of a totally different nature, that looks like every thing one pleases, except virtue, to those, who have once beheld her in her true form.*

The question then is this, Is it a necessary law for all rational beings, always to judge their actions according to such maxims, as

* To behold virtue in her true form, is nothing but to exhibit morality, divested of all mixture of the sensible, and of all false ornament of reward, or of self-love. How much she then eclipses every thing else, which seems charming to the inclinations, every one, by means of the smallest exertion of his reason, that is not become entirely useless for all abstraction, may easily perceive.

they themselves can be willing to ordain universal laws? If there is such a one, it must be combined (totally *à priori*) with the conception of the will of a rational being in general. But in order to discover this connection, one must, let the aversion be ever so great, take a step into metaphysics, though into a district of them, which is different from that of speculative philosophy, namely, the metaphysics of morals. In a practical philosophy, where it is not our business, to assume grounds from that, which *happens*, but laws from that, which *ought to happen*, though it never happens, that is, objective practical laws: there it is not necessary to make investigations of the grounds, why something pleases or displeases, how the pleasure of mere sense is distinguished from taste, and whether this be different from a universal complacency of reason; upon what rests feeling of pleasure and displeasure, and how from this spring appetites and inclinations, but from these, by the cooperation of reason, maxims; for all that belongs to an empirical psychology, which would make up the second part of physics, when they are contemplated as *philosophy of nature*, so far as it is founded upon *empirical laws*. But objective practical laws are in present agitation, consequently the relation which a will bears to itself, so far as it determines itself by reason merely, as then all that has reference to the empirical drops of course; because, when *reason of itself only* determines the conduct, (of which
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we shall just now inquire into the possibility,) it must of necessity do this *à priori*

The will is thought as a faculty, to determine itself to action, *conformably to the representation of certain laws*. And such a faculty can be met with in rational beings only. That which serves the will for the objective ground of its self-determination, is the **END**, and this, when it is given by mere reason, must be equally valid for all rational beings. What, on the other hand, contains the ground of the possibility of the action merely, whose effect is end, is named the **MEAN**. The subjective ground of appetition is the **SPRING**, the objective ground of volition the **MOTIVE**: hence distinction between subjective ends, which the rest upon springs, and objective ones, that depend on motives, which are valid for every rational being. Practical principles are **FORMAL**, when they abstract from all subjective ends; but they are **MATERIAL**, when they lay these, consequently certain springs, as a foundation. The ends, which a rational being proposes to himself at pleasure as effects of his action (material ends) are altogether but relative; for only their relation merely to a peculiarly natured appetitive faculty of the subject gives them the value, which for that reason can furnish no universally valid and necessary principles for all rational beings, and for every volition too, that is, practical laws. Hence all these relative ends are but the ground of hypothetical imperatives.

But let us take for granted, that there is something, *whose existence in itself* has an absolute

solute value, which, as *end in itself*, can be a ground of determinate laws; there would lie in it, and in it only, the ground of a possible categorical imperative, that is, a practical law.

Now I say, Man or generally speaking every rational being; *exists* as an end in itself, *not barely as a mean* for the use of this or of that will at pleasure, but must, in all his actions directed, as well towards himself, as towards other rational beings, always be contemplated *at the same time as an end*. All the objects of inclination have but a conditional value; for, were not the inclinations and the wants founded upon them, their object would be of no value. The inclinations themselves however, as sources of the wants, have so little an absolute value, in order to wish for them themselves, that rather, to be entirely exempt from them, must be the universal wish of every rational being. Therefore the value of all objects *to be acquired* by our action is always conditional. The beings, whose existence depends not, it is true, on our will, but on nature, have, when they are irrational beings, but a relative value, as means, and on that account are denominated THINGS, whereas rational beings are named PERSONS, because their nature distinguishes them as ends in themselves, that is, as something, which dares not be used as a mean, consequently limits so far all arbitrament (and is an object of reverence). These are then not merely subjective ends, whose existence, as effect of our action, is of value *to us*; but

objective

objective ends, that is, things, whose existence is an end in itself, and indeed such a one, in whose place no other end can be put, if they were to serve for means *barely*, because without this, nothing at all of *absolute value* would be to be metwith; were value however conditional, and of course contingent, no highest practical principle could be any-where met with for reason.

If then there shall be a chief practical principle, and, in regard of the human will, a categorical imperative, such a one must be, as constitutes an *objective* principle of the will, the representation of that, which is an end for every body, because it is *an end in itself*, consequently can serve for a universal practical law. The ground of this principle is, *Rational nature exists as an end in itself*. Thus man necessarily represents to himself his own existence; so far is it therefore a *subjective* principle of human actions. But every other rational being represents to himself in the like manner his existence, in pursuance of the very same ground of reason, which is valid for me; therefore it is at the same time an objective principle, from which, as a chief practical ground, all the laws of the will must be able to be derived. The practical imperative is then: ACT SO, THAT THOU ALWAYS USE THE HUMANITY, AS WELL IN THY PERSON, AS IN THE PERSON OF EVERY OTHER, AT THE SAME TIME AS AN END, BUT NEVER AS A MEAN BARELY. Let us see, whether this can be put in execution.

* This position we set forth here as a postulate. The grounds of this will be found in the last section.

To adhere to the foregoing examples, *First*, according to the conception of the necessary duty towards one's self, he, who designs suicide, will put the question to himself, Whether his action can subsist with the idea of humanity, *as an end in itself*. When he, in order to escape from a tiresome state, destroys himself, he makes use of a person, barely as *a mean*, to the preservation of a supportable state till the end of life. But man is not a thing, consequently not something, which can be used as a mean *barely*, but must in all his actions be considered always as an end in itself. Therefore I cannot dispose of the man in my person, to mutilate, to destroy, or to kill him. (I must here pass by the nearer determination of this principle for the purpose of avoiding all misunderstanding, for instance, of the amputation of members, in order to preserve my life, the danger, to which I expose my life, in order to preserve it etc. that determination belongs to moral properly so named).

Secondly, as to the necessary duty, or the duty due towards others, he, who has a mind to make a false promise to others, will directly perceive, that he has the intention of making use of another man *as a mean barely*, without his comprising at the same time the end in itself. For he, whom I intend to employ for my purposes, cannot possibly consent to my manner of proceeding with him, and therefore comprise in himself the end of this action. This collision with the principle of other men becomes more conspicuous, when examples
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