The imperative is then conditional: 'If, or because one wants this object, one ought to act thus or thus'. Consequently this imperative can never command morally, that is, categorically. In whatever way the object determines the will—whether by means of inclination, as in the principle of one's own perfect happiness, or by means of reason directed to objects of our possible volitions generally, as in the principle of perfection—the will in these cases never determines itself directly by the thought of an action, but only by the motivation which the anticipated effect of the action exercises on the will. 'I ought to do something because I want something else'. And the basis for this imperative must be the assumption of yet another law in my person, whereby I necessarily will this 'something else'—and this law in turn requires an imperative to limit this maxim. Because the idea of an object commensurate to our own powers stimulates in the will of the subject an impulse in accordance with our natural constitution, this impulse belongs to the nature of the subject, whether to sensibility, i.e., inclinations and taste, or to understanding and reason, whose operation on an object is accompanied by delight due to the particular constitution of their nature. Strictly speaking, therefore, it is nature that would prescribe the law. This law, as a law of nature, not only must be known and proved by experience and therefore is in itself contingent and consequently unfitted to serve as an apodictic rule of action such as a moral rule must be, but it is always merely heterogeneous of the will. The will would not prescribe the law to itself, but an alien stimulus would do so through the medium of the subject's own nature which is attuned to receive it.

42. [What Remains to Be Established]

An absolutely good will, whose principle must be a categorical imperative, will therefore be undetermined with respect to all objects and will contain only the form of willing in general and that form is autonomy. In other words, the fitness of the maxim of every good will to make itself a universal law is itself the sole law that the will of every rational being spontaneously imposes on itself without requiring any incentive or interest for support.

How such a synthetic practical proposition is possible a priori and why it is necessary—that is a problem whose solution does not lie within the boundaries of the metaphysics of morals; nor have we claimed it to be true or, still less, pretended to have a proof of it in our power. We have merely shown by developing the generally accepted concept of morality that autonomy of the will is unavoidably bound up with it or rather is its very foundation. Wherever therefore takes morality to be something real and not merely an illusory idea that lacks truth, must at the same time admit its principle, which we have presented here. This chapter, consequently, like the first, has been merely analytical. To prove that morality is not a mere phantom of the brain—a conclusion that follows if the categorical imperative, and with it the autonomy of the will is true and is absolutely necessary as an a priori principle—requires a possible synthetic use of pure practical reason. But we cannot venture on this synthetic use of reason without prefacing it by a critique of this faculty of reason itself. In our final chapter we outline, sufficiently for our purpose, the main features of such a critique.

Chapter Three. Final Step from a Metaphysics of Morals to a Critique of Pure Practical Reason

The Concept of Freedom is the Key to Explain Autonomy of the Will

The will is a kind of causality that living beings have so far as they are rational. Freedom would then be that property whereby this causality can be active, independently of alien causes determining it; just as natural necessity is a property characterizing the causality of all non-rational beings—the property of being determined to activity by the influence of alien causes.

The above definition of freedom is negative and therefore sterile when it comes to grasping freedom's essence; but a positive concept springs from it, which is richer and more fruitful. Since the
concept of causality carries with it that of laws, implying that because of something we call a cause, something else—namely, its effect—must be posited, so freedom, although it is not a property the will has by virtue of natural laws, is not for that reason totally lawless. Freedom must rather be a causality that accords with immutable laws, though laws of a special kind; for otherwise a free will would be a fiction. Natural necessity, as we have seen, is a heteronomy of efficient causes; for we saw that every effect was only possible according to the law that something else gets the efficient cause to act as a cause. What else then can freedom of will be but autonomy—that is, the property that a will has of being a law to itself? However, the proposition "Will is in all its actions a law to itself" expresses only the principle of acting on no other maxim than one that can also have being itself a universal law for its object. But this is precisely the formula of the Categorical Imperative and the principle of morality. Thus a free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same.

Consequently if freedom of the will is presupposed, then morality, together with its principle, follows from this presupposition by mere analysis of its concept. Nevertheless the principle of morality is still a synthetic proposition, namely: An absolutely good will is one whose maxim can always include itself considered as a universal law; for this characteristic of its maxim cannot be discovered by analysis of the concept of an absolutely good will. Such synthetic propositions are however possible only if two cognitions are bound together by their connection with a third in which both of them are to be found. The positive concept of freedom supplies this third cognition, which cannot, as is the case with physical causes, be the nature of the sensible world (in the concept of which the concepts of something as a cause in relation to something else as effect come together). What this third cognition is, to which freedom directs us and of which we have an Idea a priori, cannot yet be shown here; nor can we as yet make comprehensible the deduction of the concept of freedom from pure practical reason and so the possibility of a categorical imperative. Some further preparation is needed.

1. Freedom Must be Presupposed as a Property of the Will of all Rational Beings

It is not enough to ascribe freedom to our will, on whatever basis unless we have sufficient reason to attribute the same freedom to all rational beings. For since morality serves as a law for us only insofar as we are rational beings, it must be equally valid for all rational beings; and since it must be derived solely from the property of freedom, we need to prove that freedom too is a property of the will of all rational beings. And it is not enough to demonstrate freedom by appeal to certain alleged experiences of human nature (though to demonstrate freedom in this way is in any case absolutely impossible—it can be demonstrated only a priori). Rather, we must prove that freedom belongs universally to the activity of rational beings endowed with a will. Now I say that every being who cannot act except under the Idea of freedom is just for that reason really free—from the standpoint of practice. That is to say, all laws inseparably bound up with freedom are valid for such a being just as if his will could be proved to be free in itself and by means of proofs taken from theoretical philosophy. I maintain too that we must necessarily grant the idea of freedom to every rational being who has a will, since only under that idea can such a being act. For we think of such a being as having a power of reason that is practical, i.e., that has causality in regard to its aims. But it is impossible to conceive of a power of reason that consciously regards its own judgements as directed from outside; for in that case the subject would attribute the determination of his power of judgement to some impulse, not to his reason. Reason must regard itself as the author of its own principles independently of alien influences. It follows that reason, as practical reason, or as the will of a rational being, must regard itself as

* I use this approach here because I take it as sufficient for our purpose if all rational beings in their actions presuppose freedom merely as an Idea. Thus I avoid having to prove freedom also from a theoretical point of view. For even if this latter problem is left unsettled, the laws that would obligate a being who was really free are equally valid for a being who cannot act except under the idea of his own freedom. In this way we can escape from the burden that weighs upon the theory.
free. That is to say, the will of a rational being can be a will of its own only under the idea of freedom, and it must therefore—for purposes of action—that is, presupposed the principle of the autonomy of the will itself—without being able to give an independent proof of its reality and objective necessity. But in that case we would still have gained something quite considerable, since we would at least have formulated the genuine principle more precisely than has been done before. However, we would have made no progress at all with proving the principle's validity and the practical necessity of subjecting ourselves to it. For if someone asks us: Why must the universal validity of our maxim as a law be the condition that restricts our action, and what is the basis of the worth we ascribe to this way of acting—a worth supposedly so great that there cannot be any interest higher than it—and asks how it happens that human beings believe this alone to be the source of their personal worth, in contrast to which the worth of a pleasant or painful condition counts as nothing? To these questions we could give no sufficient answer.

We do indeed find that we can take an interest in a personal characteristic that involves no interest in any condition, but only if that characteristic makes us fit to share in the latter condition in case reason were to determine its distribution. That is to say, the mere fact of deserving to be happy, even without the motive of sharing in this happiness, can by itself interest us. But such a judgement is in fact merely the result of the importance we have already assumed moral laws to have (when by means of the Idea of freedom we detach ourselves from every empirical interest). But we cannot as yet see why we ought to detach ourselves from such interest—that is, why we ought to regard ourselves as free in our actions and yet bound by certain laws, in order to find solely in our own person a worth that can compensate us for the loss of everything that makes our condition valuable. We do not see how this is possible nor consequently on what grounds the moral law can be binding.

We must frankly admit that a kind of circle shows up here, from which there seems to be no escape. We suppose ourselves to be free in the order of efficient causes in order that we may conceive ourselves to be under moral laws in the order of ends; and then we proceed to think of ourselves as subject to moral laws on the ground that we have ascribed freedom of will to ourselves.

2. Of the Interest Attached to the Ideas of Morality

43. [The Apparently Circular Reasoning]

We have at last traced the distinct concept of morality back to the Idea of freedom, but we could not demonstrate freedom as something real in human nature nor even in ourselves. We saw only that we must presuppose it if we want to conceive a being as rational and as endowed with consciousness of its causality in regard to actions—that is, as endowed with a will. Thus we find that on precisely the same grounds we must attribute to every being endowed with reason and a will this property of determining himself to action under the Idea of his freedom.

From the presupposition of this Idea there sprang also, as we saw, the consciousness of a law governing action, the law that subjective principles of action—that is, maxims—must always be so chosen that they can also hold as objective principles—that is, universally—and can therefore serve for our own enactment of universal law. But why should I subject myself to this principle simply as a rational being and in so doing also subject it to every other being endowed with reason? I am willing to admit that no interest drives me to do so, since that would not produce a categorical imperative. Yet I must necessarily take an interest in it and understand how this happens; for this 'I ought to' is actually an 'I intend to' that would hold necessarily for every rational being—if reason in him were practical without hindrance. For beings like us, who are affected also by the senses—that is, by motives of a different kind—and who do not always act as reason by itself would act, this necessity of action is only an 'ought' and the subjective necessity is distinguished from the objective.

It thus looks as though we have in fact merely presupposed the moral law in our Idea of freedom—70, in practicaler Absicht.

70. It is difficult to render Kant's phrase naturally in English, retaining his nice rhyme: diese Sollen ist eigentlich ein Wollen.
For freedom and the will's lawgiving of its own laws are both autonomy, and therefore reciprocal concepts. But just for this reason one of them cannot be used to explain the other or to furnish its ground. It can at most be used for the logical purpose of reducing seemingly different ideas of the same object to a single concept (as different fractions of the same value can be reduced to the lowest common terms).

44. [The Solution: Two Perspectives on Human Agency]

One route, however, still remains open to us. We can inquire whether we do not take one standpoint when, through freedom, we think of ourselves as causes acting a priori, and another standpoint when we contemplate ourselves in the light of our actions as effects that we see before our eyes.

A remark that does not require any subtle reflection and that we may assume even the most ordinary intelligence can make—no doubt in its own way, by some obscure distinction in the power of judgement that it calls 'feeling', is this: all ideas that come to us involuntarily (as do those of the senses) allow us to know objects only as they affect us: what those objects may be in themselves remains unknown. Consequently, ideas of this kind, no matter how strenuously the understanding attempts to exert focus and clarity on them, serve only to give us knowledge of appearances, never of things in themselves. Once this distinction is drawn (it may be merely by noting the difference between ideas given to us from without, where we ourselves are passive, and ideas which we produce entirely from ourselves, ideas that therefore manifest our own activity), it follows directly that behind appearances we must admit and assume something else which is not appearance—namely, things in themselves. Since we can never be acquainted with these, but only with the way in which they affect us, we must however resign ourselves to the fact that we can never get any nearer to them and can never know what they are in themselves. This thought must yield a distinction, however rough, between a sensible world and the intelligible world, the first of which can vary a great deal because of differences in sensibility among different observers, while the second, which is its foundation, always remains the same. Even as regards himself—so far as a human being is acquainted with himself by inner sensation—he has no right to claim to know what he is in himself. For since he does not as it were create himself, and since he acquires his concept of himself not a priori but empirically, it is natural that he can get information even about himself only through inner sense and so only through the way his nature appears and the way his consciousness is affected. Beyond this constitution of himself as a subject, compounded of nothing but appearances, he must assume that there is something else that is its foundation—namely, his ego; however it may be constituted in itself. Thus, as far as mere perception and the capacity for receiving sensations are concerned, he must count himself as belonging to the world of sense, but as regards whatever pure activity there may be in him (whatever reaches consciousness directly and not by affecting the senses), he must count himself as belonging to the intellectual world. Of that world, however, he knows nothing more.

A reflective human being must reach a conclusion of this kind about all things that may present themselves to him. Such a conclusion is presumably to be found even in the most common understanding, which, as is well known, is always inclined to look behind the objects of the senses for something further that is invisible and is spontaneously active. But such an understanding goes on to spoil this invisible something by immediately trying to make it into something sensible—that is to say, it wants to make it an object of intuition, so by this procedure the common understanding does not become the least wiser.

Now, a human being actually finds in himself a power by which he distinguishes himself from all other things—and even from himself so far as he is affected by objects. That power is reason. As pure spontaneity, reason is elevated even above the understanding in the following respect: although the latter too is spontaneous activity and is not, like sense, confined to ideas that arise only when we are affected by things (and therefore are passive), it can produce by its own activity only concepts whose sole purpose is to bring sensations representations under rules and so to unite them in
one consciousness. Without using sensibility, the understanding would think nothing at all. Reason, on the other hand—in what are called ‘Ideas’—shows a spontaneity so pure that it goes far beyond anything sensibility can offer. It manifests its highest function in distinguishing the world of sense from the intelligible world and thereby prescribing limits to the understanding itself.

Because of this a rational being must regard himself, as an intelligence (i.e., not from the perspective of his lower powers), as belonging to the world of the understanding rather than the world of sense. Consequently he has two perspectives from which he can consider himself and from which he can acknowledge the laws governing the use of his powers and consequently governing all his actions. He can consider himself first so far as he belongs to the world of sense, under laws of nature (heteronomy); and secondly—so far as he belongs to the intelligible world—under laws that are not empirical but, being independent of nature, are founded on reason alone.

As a rational being, and consequently as a being who belongs to the intelligible world, a human being can never conceive the causality of his own will except under the Idea of freedom; for independence from the determining causes of the sensible world (and this is what reason must always ascribe to itself) is freedom. To the Idea of freedom there is inseparably attached the concept of autonomy, but to the latter in turn the universal principle of morality—a principle which ideally is the ground of all the actions of rational beings, just as the law of nature is the ground of all appearances.

We have now removed the suspicion which we raised earlier, namely, that there might be a hidden circle in our reasoning from freedom to autonomy and from autonomy to the moral law, the suspicion that in effect we had perhaps assumed the Idea of freedom only because of the moral law in order later to derive the moral law from freedom; and that we were thus unable to offer any ground at all for the moral law, but had merely begged the question by putting forward a principle which well-meaning souls would gladly concede us, but never as a demonstrable proposition. We see now that when we think of ourselves as free, we transfer ourselves into the world of the understanding as members and we recognize the autonomy of the will together with its consequence, morality; whereas when we think of ourselves as under obligation, we view ourselves as belonging to the world of sense and yet simultaneously to the world of understanding.

3. How Is a Categorical Imperative Possible?

As an intelligence, a rational being counts himself as belonging to the world of the understanding, and simply as an efficient cause belonging to that world, he calls his causality a will. On the other hand, however, he is also conscious of himself as a part of the world of sense, where his actions are encountered as mere appearances of that causality. But we can have no insight into how these actions are possible by means of such a causality, since we have no direct acquaintance with it. Instead, these actions, when viewed as belonging to the world of sense, have to be understood as determined by other appearances—namely, by desires and inclinations. Hence, if I were solely a member of the world of understanding, all my actions would conform perfectly to the principle of the autonomy of a pure will; if I were solely a part of the sensible world, they would have to be taken as conforming completely to the natural law of desires and inclinations, consequently to the heteronomy of nature. (In the first case they would rest on the supreme principle of morality; in the second case on that of happiness.) But since the world of understanding contains the ground of the world of sense and therefore also of its laws, it thus gives laws directly to my will (which belongs entirely to the world of understanding) and must be conceived as thus lawgiving. Therefore, although I regard myself from one point of view as a being that belongs to the world of sense, I shall have to recognize that, as an intelligence, I am subject to the law of the world of understanding—that is, of reason, which contains this law in the Idea of freedom, and thus in the autonomy of the will. I must therefore regard the laws of the world of the understanding as imperatives for me and see the actions that conform to this principle as duties.

And thus categorical imperatives are possible, because the Idea of freedom makes me a member
of an intelligible world. If I were only that, then all my actions would thereby invariably be in accord with the autonomy of the will. But since I see myself at the same time as a member of the world of sense, my actions ought to be in accord with it. This categorical 'ought' presents us with a synthetic a priori proposition, since to my will as affected by sensuous desires there is added the idea of that same will, viewed, however, as a pure will belonging to the world of understanding and active of its own accord—a will which, according to reason, contains the supreme condition of the former, my sensuously affected will. This is similar to the way in which concepts of the understanding, which by themselves signify nothing but lawful form in general, are added to intuitions of the world of sense and so make possible synthetic a priori propositions on which all knowledge of nature is based.

The use of common human reason in matters of conduct confirms the correctness of this deduction. There is no one, not even the most malicious villain, provided only that he is otherwise accustomed to use reason, who, when presented with examples of honesty of purpose, of faithfulness to good maxims, of sympathy, and of general benevolence even when requiring great sacrifice of advantages and comfort, does not wish that he too might have these qualities. He cannot bring this about in himself, only because of his desires and impulses, but at the same time he wishes he could be free from these burdensome inclinations. By such a wish he proves that with a will free from sensuous impulses he transfers himself in thought into an order of things altogether different from that of his desires in the field of sensibility. For he cannot expect that the fulfillment of this wish would gratify any of his sensuous desires, nor that any of his actual or even conceivable inclinations will be satisfied (since such an expectation would cause the very idea that elicited the wish to forfeit its excellence). All he can expect is a greater inner worth of his own person. He believes himself to be this better person when he transfers himself to the standpoint of a member of the world of understanding. It is the Idea of freedom that involuntarily constrains him to do this—that is, the Idea of being independent of determining causes of the world of sense; and from this standpoint he is conscious of possessing a good will which, on his own admission, constitutes the law for his evil will as a member of the world of sense—a law of whose authority he is conscious even while transgressing it. The moral 'I ought' is thus his own necessary 'I will' as a member of the intelligible world; and he thinks of it as an 'I ought' only insofar as he regards himself at the same time to be a member of the world of sense.

4. The Extreme Limit of Practical Philosophy

45. [The Apparent Contradiction between Free Will and Natural Necessity]

All human beings think of themselves as having free will. That is the basis of all the judgements of actions that say they ought to have been done, although they were not done. But this freedom is not an empirical concept, nor can it be, since it still holds although experience shows the contrary of those requirements that are viewed as necessary under the presupposition of freedom. On the other hand, it is equally necessary that everything that takes place should be inexorably determined in accordance with the laws of nature; and this necessity of nature is likewise not an empirical concept, precisely because it carries with it the concept of necessity and thus the concept of an a priori cognition. This concept of a system of nature is, however, confirmed by experience and must unavoidably be presupposed if experience—that is, coherent knowledge of sensible objects in accordance with universal laws—is to be possible. Hence, while freedom is only an Idea of Reason whose objective reality is in itself questionable, nature is a concept of the understanding, which proves, and must necessarily prove, its reality in examples from experience.

From this there arises a dialectic of reason, since the freedom ascribed to the will seems to contradict the necessity of nature. Although at this parting of the ways reason, for cognitive purposes, finds the path of natural necessity much more beaten and serviceable than that of freedom, yet for purposes of action the footpath of

73. eine Natur
74. spekulativer Ansicht
75. in praktischer Ansicht
freedom is the only one on which we can make use of our reason in our conduct. Hence it is as impossible for the subtlest philosophy as it is for the most common human reason to argue freedom away. Philosophy must therefore presuppose that no genuine contradiction will be found between freedom and natural necessity ascribed to the very same human actions, for it cannot give up the concept of nature any more than that of freedom.

46. [Resolution Sought in the Two Perspectives]

All the same, even if we should never be able to grasp how freedom is possible, this seeming contradiction must at least be eradicated convincingly. For if even the thought of freedom contradicts itself or contradicts nature—a concept which is equally necessary—freedom would have to be given up altogether in favour of natural necessity.

It would be impossible to escape from this contradiction if the subject who believes himself free thought of himself in the same sense, or in precisely the same relationship, when he calls himself free as when he assumes that in the same action he is subject to the law of nature. Hence speculative philosophy has the unavoidable task of showing at least that its illusion about the contradiction rests on our thinking of the human being in one sense and relation when we call him free and in another when we consider him, as a part of nature, to be subject to nature’s laws. And philosophy must show not merely that both characteristics can very well coexist, but that they must be thought of as necessarily united in one and the same subject. For otherwise we could not explain why we should burden reason with an idea which—even if it can without contradiction be united with another concept that has been adequately justified—entangles us in a perplexity that sorely embarrasses reason in its theoretical use. This duty is imposed on speculative philosophy only in order that it may clear a path for practical philosophy. Thus philosophers have no choice as to whether they will remove the seeming contradiction or leave it untouched; for in the latter case the theory on this topic would be bonum vacans [unoccupied property—a good that belongs to no one], of which the fatalist can justifiably take possession and can chase all of morality out of its supposed property, which it has no title to hold.

Nevertheless we cannot yet say that at this point the boundary of practical philosophy begins. For the settlement of this controversy is not part of practical philosophy, which merely requires speculative reason to bring to an end the dissension in which it is entangled on theoretical questions, so that practical reason may have peace and security from external attacks which could contest its right to the ground on which it seeks to build.

The legitimate title to freedom of the will claimed even by common human reason is grounded on the consciousness and the accepted presupposition that reason is independent of purely subjective determining causes which collectively make up all that belongs to sensation and comes under the general name of sensibility. In thus regarding himself as an intelligence, a human being puts himself into another order of things, and into relation with determining causes of quite another sort, when he thinks of himself as an intelligence endowed with a will and consequently with causality, than he does when he perceives himself as a phenomenon (which he actually is as well) in the world of sense, and sees his causality as the result of external determination in accordance with laws of nature. He then soon realizes that both of these can, and indeed must, take place at the same time. For there is not the slightest contradiction in holding that a thing as an appearance (as belonging to the world of sense) is subject to certain laws, laws of which it is independent as a thing or a being in itself. That he must think and conceive of himself in this twofold way rests, as regards the first way, on the consciousness of himself as an object affected through the senses; as concerns the second way, it rests on the consciousness of himself as an intelligence—that is, as independent of sensible impressions in his use of reason (and so as belonging to the world of understanding).

This is why the human being claims for himself a will that does not allow him to be accountable for anything that belongs merely to his desires and inclinations. Rather, he conceives of actions that can be done only by disregarding all desires and incitements of sense as possible—indeed as
necessary—through this will. The causality of such actions lies in him as intelligence and in the laws of effects and actions according to the principles of an intelligible world. Of that world he knows nothing but this—that in that intelligible world, reason alone, and indeed pure reason independent of sensibility, is the source of law; and also that since in that world he is his true self, an intelligence only (while as a human being he is merely an appearance of himself), these laws apply to him directly and categorically. It follows that what desires and impulses (and therefore the whole nature of the sensible world) spur him to do cannot impair the laws of his will as intelligence. Indeed he does not even hold himself responsible for those desires and impulses nor impute them to his true self, that is, to his will, though he does impute to himself the indulgence he would show them if he were to let them influence his maxims to the detriment of the rational laws of his will.

47. [The Limits of What We Can Know and Explain: The Intelligible World, Freedom, and Interest in Morality]

Practical reason does not overstep its limits in the least by thinking itself into the world of understanding. It would do so only if it sought to inspect [hineinschauen] or feel itself into that world. That thinking is a merely negative thought—that the world of sense gives reason no laws for determining the will. It is a positive thought only in one point: that that freedom, as a negative characteristic, is combined with a (positive) power as well—a causality of reason we call a will—the power to act so that the principle of our actions accords with the essential character of a rational cause, that is, with the condition that the maxim of these actions have the universal validity of a law. But if practical reason were also to take from the intelligible world an object of the will, that is, a motivating cause of action, it would overstep its limits and pretend to be acquainted with something of which it knows nothing. The concept of a world of understanding is thus only a standpoint that reason finds itself constrained to adopt outside of appearances, in order to think of itself as practical. If the influences of sensibility were determining for human beings, this would be impossible. It is nev-
consider the human being as an appearance; and now that they are asked to think of him as an intelligence and also as a thing in himself, they persist in looking at him as an appearance in this respect also. In that case, admittedly, to exempt the human being’s causality (that is, his will) from all the natural laws of the sensible world, in one and the same subject, would yield a contradiction. But that contradiction would fall away if they were willing to reflect and to admit, as is only fair, that behind appearances there must lie things in themselves as their hidden ground, and that we cannot expect the laws by which things in themselves act to be identical with those laws that govern their appearances.

The subjective impossibility of explaining the freedom of the will is one and the same as the impossibility of locating and making comprehensible an interest* that a human being can take in moral laws; and yet he does really take such an interest. We call the foundation in us of this interest “moral feeling”—a feeling that has been mistakenly taken by some people to be the standard for our moral judgement. It ought to be regarded rather as the subjective effect exercised on our will by the law. It is reason alone that supplies the objective grounds for that law.

In order to will actions that reason by itself prescribes to a rational, yet sensuously affected being as what he ought to do, it is certainly necessary that reason should have a power of infusing a feeling of pleasure or a feeling of satisfaction in the fulfillment of duty, and consequently that it should possess a kind of causality by which it can determine sensibility in accordance with rational principles. It is, however, wholly impossible to comprehend—that is, to make intelligible a priori—how a mere thought containing nothing sensible in itself can bring about a sensation of pleasure or displeasure; for there is here a special kind of causality, and—as with all causality—we are totally unable to determine its character a priori. For any knowledge of such a causality, we must consult experience alone. But experience cannot provide us with a relation of cause and effect except between two objects of experience—whereas here pure reason by means of mere Ideas (which furnish absolutely no objects for experience) has to be the cause of an effect admittedly found in experience. Hence for us human beings it is wholly impossible to explain how and why the universality of a maxim as a law—and therefore morality—should interest us. This much only is certain: the law is not valid for us because it interests us (for this is heteronomy and makes practical reason dependent on sensibility—that is to say, on an underlying feeling—in which case practical reason could never give us moral laws). The law interests us because it is valid for us as human beings in virtue of having sprung from our will as intelligence and so from our true self. But what belongs to mere appearance is necessarily subordinated by reason to the character of the thing in itself.

48. [Review]

Thus the question ‘How is a categorical imperative possible?’ can be answered to this extent: We can supply the sole presupposition under which it is possible—namely, the Idea of freedom—and we can discern the necessity of this presupposition. This is sufficient for the practical use of reason—that is, to convince us of the validity of this imperative, and so too of the moral law. But human reason will forever lack insight into how this presupposition itself is possible. On the presupposition that the will of an intelligence is free, its autonomy follows necessarily as the formal condition under which alone it can be determined. It is not only perfectly possible to presuppose such freedom of the will (as speculative philosophy can prove, and without contradicting the principle that natural necessity governs the interconnection of appearances in the world of sense); it is also
unconditionally necessary, that is, necessary in Idea that a rational being conscious of exercising his causality by means of reason and so of having a will (which is distinct from desires) should take such freedom as the fundamental condition of all his voluntary actions. But how pure reason can be practical by itself without any further motives drawn from some other source; that is, how the bare principle of the universal validity of all its maxims as laws (which would certainly be the form of a pure practical reason) can by itself—without any material (or object) of the will in which we might take some prior interest—how pure reason can supply a motive and create an interest which could be called purely moral; or, in other words, how pure reason can be practical—all human reason is totally incapable of explaining this, and all the pains and labour to seek such an explanation are wasted.

It is precisely the same as if I sought to fathom how freedom itself as the causality of a will is possible. For in doing this I would abandon the philosophical basis of explanation, and I have no other. I could, no doubt, proceed to daydream in the intelligible world, which still remains to me—the world of intelligences; but although I have a well-founded Idea of it, I have not the slightest knowledge of it and cannot hope to arrive at any by all the efforts of my natural power of reason. My Idea of this intelligible world signifies only a 'something' that remains when I have excluded from the grounds determining my will everything that belongs to the world of sense; its sole purpose is to restrict the principle of motivating causes (Beweisgründe) from the field of sensibility, by setting bounds to this field and by showing that it does not encompass absolutely everything within itself, but that there is still more beyond it; yet with this 'more' I have no further acquaintance. All that remains for me of the pure reason that formulates this ideal, after I have excluded all material—that is, all knowledge of objects—from it, is its form: the practical law that maxims should be universally valid, plus the corresponding conception of reason, in its relation to a purely intelligible world, as a possible efficient cause, that is, as a cause determining the will. Here the sensuous motive [Triebfeder] must be entirely absent; for this Idea of an intelligible world would itself have to be the motive or that in which reason took a direct interest. But to make this comprehensible is precisely the problem that we cannot solve.

Here then is the supreme limit of all moral inquiry. To define it is of great importance so that reason may not, on the one hand, hunt around in the sensible world, to the detriment of morality, for the supreme motive and for some comprehensible but empirical interest; and so that it will not, on the other hand, impotently flap its wings in the space (for it, an empty space) of transcendent concepts known as 'the intelligible world', flailing without moving from the spot, and thus losing itself among phantoms of the brain. For the rest, the Idea of a pure world of the understanding, as a whole of all intelligences to which we ourselves belong as rational beings (although from another point of view we are also members of the world of sense), remains always as a useful and permitted Idea for the purposes of a reasonable faith though all knowledge ends at its border. It serves to produce in us a lively interest in the moral law by means of the splendid ideal of a universal kingdom of ends in themselves (rational beings), to which we can belong as members only if we are scrupulous to conduct ourselves in accordance with maxims of freedom, as if they were laws of nature.

Concluding Remark

The speculative use of reason in regard to nature leads to the absolute necessity of some supreme cause of the world; the practical use of reason with respect to freedom leads also to absolute necessity, but only to the absolute necessity of the laws of actions for a rational being as such. Now it is an essential principle for every use of reason to push its knowledge to a consciousness of its necessity (for without necessity it would not be rational knowledge). But it is an equally essential limitation of this same reason that it cannot have insight into the necessity either of what is or of what happens, or of what ought to happen, unless a condition is presupposed under which it is or happens or ought to happen. In this way, however, by continual asking for the condition, reason's satisfaction is merely postponed.

74. vernünftigen Glaubens. This can also mean a rational faith or belief.
again and again. Hence reason restlessly seeks the unconditionally necessary and sees itself compelled to assume it without any means of making it comprehensible, though it is happy enough if only it can find a concept compatible with this presupposition. Thus it is no discredit to our deduction of the supreme principle of morality, but rather a reproach which must be brought against reason as such, that it cannot make comprehensible the absolute necessity of an unconditioned practical law (such as the categorical imperative must be). For reason cannot be blamed for its unwillingness to do this by means of a condition—namely, by basing this necessity on some underlying interest—since in that case there would be no moral law, that is, no supreme law of freedom. And thus, while we do not comprehend the practical unconditional necessity of the moral imperative, we do comprehend its incomprehensibility. This is all that can fairly be demanded of a philosophy that presses forward in its principles to the very frontier of human reason.

ON A SUPPOSED RIGHT TO LIE BECAUSE OF PHILANTHROPIC CONCERNS

Immanuel Kant

Translated by James W. Ellington

In the periodical Franque for 1797, Part VI, No. 1, page 123, in an article bearing the title "On Political Reactions" by Benjamin Constant, there is contained on p. 123 the following passage:

"The moral principle stating that it is a duty to tell the truth would make any society impossible if that principle were taken singly and unconditionally. We have proof of this in the very direct consequences which a German philosopher has drawn from this principle. This philosopher goes as far as to assert that it would be a crime to tell a lie to a murderer who asked whether our friend who is being pursued by the murderer had taken refuge in our house." [1]

The French philosopher [Constant] on p. 124 [of the periodical Franque] refutes this [moral] principle in the following way:

"It is a duty to tell the truth. The concept of duty is inseparable from the concept of right. A duty is what in one man corresponds to the right of another. Where there are no rights, there are no duties. To tell the truth is thus a duty, but is a duty only with regard to one who has a right to the truth. But no one has a right to a truth that harms others."

The πρῶτον υποδοχή, here lies in the statement, "To tell the truth is a duty, but is a duty only with regard to one who has a right to the truth.”

referred to in this passage.”—K. F. Cramer [Karl Friedrich Cramer (1752-1807), the editor of the periodical Frankreich, was formerly professor of Greek, oriental languages, and homiletics at Kiel until his dismissal in 1794 because of his open sympathy for the French Revolution, after which dismissal he became a book dealer in Paris.]

6. I hereby admit that this was actually said by me somewhere, though I cannot now recollect the place.—I. Kant.

7. [Kant does say something similar in the "Casuistical Questions" appended to the article on "Lying" contained in the Metaphysical Principles of the Doctrine of Virtue (Part II of the Metaphysics of Morals). See the Royal Prussian Academy edition, Vol. VI, p. 431.]

8. [the first fallacy.]