

Preface

Why this *Critique*^a is not entitled a *Critique of Pure Practical Reason* but simply a *Critique of Practical Reason* generally, although its parallelism with the speculative seems to require the first, is sufficiently explained in this treatise. It has merely to show *that there is pure practical reason*, and for this purpose it criticizes reason's entire *practical faculty*. If it succeeds in this it has no need to criticize the *pure faculty itself* in order to see whether reason is merely making a claim in which it presumptuously *oversteps* itself (as does happen with speculative reason). For, if as pure reason it is really practical, it proves its reality and that of its concepts by what it does,^b and all subtle reasoning against the possibility of its being practical is futile.

With this faculty transcendental *freedom* is also established, taken indeed in that absolute sense in which speculative reason needed it, in its use of the concept of causality, in order to rescue itself from the antinomy into which it unavoidably falls when it wants to think the *unconditioned* in the series of causal connection; this concept, however, it could put forward only problematically, as not impossible to think, without assuring it objective reality, and only lest the supposed impossibility of what it must at least allow to be thinkable call its being into question and plunge it into an abyss of skepticism.

Now, the concept of freedom, insofar as its reality is proved by an apodictic law of practical reason, constitutes the *keystone* of the whole structure of a system of pure reason, even of speculative reason; and all other concepts (those of God and immortality), which as mere ideas remain without support in the latter, now attach themselves to this concept and with it and by means of it get stability and objective reality, that is, their *possibility* is *proved* by this: that freedom is real, for this idea reveals itself through the moral law.

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But among all the ideas of speculative reason freedom is also the only one the possibility of which we *know* a priori, though without having

^a *Kritik*. I have adopted the convention of using *Critique* when Kant seems to refer to a book or its content, even if the book does not have the title Kant uses, e.g., "the *Critique* of speculative reason." Otherwise, "critique" or "critical examination" or occasionally "critical philosophy" is used.

^b *durch die Tat*, possibly "by a deed." See AK 5:98 note a and 5:118 note a.

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5:5 insight^c into it, because it is the condition* of the moral law, which we do know. The ideas of *God* and *immortality*, however, are not conditions of the moral law but only conditions of the necessary object of a will determined by this law, that is, of the mere practical use of our pure reason; hence with respect to those ideas we cannot affirm that we *cognize* and *have insight into* – I do not merely say the reality but even the possibility of them. But they are, nevertheless, conditions of applying the morally determined will to its object given to it a priori (the highest good). Consequently their possibility in this practical relation can and must be *assumed*, although we cannot theoretically cognize and have insight into them. For practical purposes it is sufficient for this assumption^e that they contain no intrinsic impossibility (contradiction). Here there is a ground of assent that is, in comparison with speculative reason, merely *subjective* but that is yet *objectively* valid for a reason equally pure but practical; by means of the concept of freedom objective reality is given to the ideas of God and immortality and a warrant,^f indeed a subjective necessity (a need of pure reason) is provided to assume them, although reason is not thereby extended in theoretical cognition and, instead, all that is given is that their possibility, which was hitherto only a *problem*, here becomes an *assertion* and so the practical use of reason is connected with the elements of the theoretical. And this need is not a hypothetical one for some *discretionary* purpose of speculation, where one must assume something if one *wants* to ascend to the completion of the use of reason in speculation, but rather a *need having the force of law*,^g to assume something without which that cannot happen which one *ought* to set unfailingly as the aim of one's conduct.

It would certainly be more satisfying to our speculative reason to solve those problems for itself without this circuit and to have put them aside as insight for practical use; but, as matters stand, our faculty of speculation is not so well off. Those who boast of such high cognition should not keep it back but should present it publicly to be tested and esteemed. They want to *prove*: very well, let them prove, and the critical philosophy lays all its

*Lest anyone suppose that he finds an *inconsistency* when I now call freedom the condition of the moral law and afterwards, in the treatise, maintain that the moral law is the condition under which we can first *become aware* of freedom, I want only to remark^d that whereas freedom is indeed the *ratio essendi* of the moral law, the moral law is the *ratio cognoscendi* of freedom. For, had not the moral law *already* been distinctly thought in our reason, we should never consider ourselves justified in *assuming* such a thing as freedom (even though it is not self-contradictory). But were there no freedom, the moral law would *not be encountered* at all in ourselves.

^c *einzusehen*. See note 9 to *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* 4:446.

^d *erinnern*

^e *Für die letztere Forderung*

^f Or "authorization," *Befugnis*

^g *gesetzliches*

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weapons at their feet as the victors. *Quid statis? Nolint. Atqui licet esse beatis.*^h Since they then do not in fact want to, presumably because they cannot, we must take up these weapons again in order to seek in the moral use of reason and to base on it the concepts of *God, freedom, and immortality*, for the *possibility* of which speculation does not find sufficient guarantee.

Here, too, the enigma of the critical philosophy is first explained: how one can *deny* objective *reality* to the supersensible *use of the categories* in speculation and yet *grant* them this *reality* with respect to the objects of pure practical reason; for this must previously have seemed *inconsistent*, as long as such a practical use is known only by name. But now one becomes aware, by a thorough analysis of the latter, that the reality thought of here does not aim at any theoretical *determination of the categories* and extension of cognition to the supersensible but that what is meant by it is only that in this respect an *object* belongs to them, because they are either contained in the necessary determination of the will a priori or else are inseparably connected with the object of its determination; hence that inconsistency disappears because one makes a different use of those concepts than speculative reason requires. On the contrary, there is now disclosed a very satisfying confirmation of the speculative *Critique's consistent way of thinking* – one which was hardly to be expected before – inasmuch as it insisted on letting objects of experience as such, including even our own subject, hold only as *appearances* but at the same time on putting things in themselves at their basis and hence on not taking everything supersensible as a fiction and its concept as empty of content; now practical reason of itself, without any collusion with speculative reason, furnishes reality to a supersensible object of the category of causality, namely to *freedom* (although, as a practical concept, only for practical use), and hence establishes by means of a fact what could there only be *thought*. By this, the strange though incontestable assertion of the speculative *Critique, that even the thinking subject is in inner intuition a mere appearance to itself*, gets its full confirmation in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and that so thoroughly that one would have to arrive at it even if the former had never proved this proposition at all.*

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By this I also understand why the most considerable objections to the *Critique* that have so far come to my attention turn about just these two points: namely, *on the one side* the objective reality of the categories applied

*The union of causality as freedom with causality as natural mechanism, the first of which is established by the moral law, the second by the law of nature, and indeed in one and the same subject, the human being, is impossible without representing him with regard to the first as a being in itself but with regard to the second as an appearance, the former in *pure*, the latter in *empirical* consciousness. Otherwise the contradiction of reason with itself is unavoidable.

^h In Horace *Satires* 1.1.19, a god, having given men the opportunity to change places with each other, says "What are you waiting for? They are not willing. Yet they might be happy."

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5:7 to noumena, denied in theoretical cognition and affirmed in practical, and *on the other side* the paradoxical requirement to make oneself as subject of freedom a noumenon but at the same, with regard to nature, a phenomenon in one's own empirical consciousness; for, as long as one had as yet formed no determinate concepts of morality and freedom, one could not conjecture, on the one side, what one was to put as a noumenon at the basis of the alleged appearance and, on the other side, whether it was at all possible even to form a concept of it, since all the concepts of the pure understanding in its theoretical use had already been assigned exclusively to mere appearances. Only a detailed *Critique of Practical Reason* can remove all this misinterpretation and put in a clear light the consistent way of thinking that constitutes its greatest merit.

So much by way of justifying [the fact] that in this work the concepts and principles¹ of pure speculative reason, which have already undergone their special critique, are now and again subjected to examination; although this would not elsewhere be appropriate to the systematic procedure for constructing a science (since matters that have been decided should only be referred to and not raised again), it was *here allowed* and indeed necessary because reason is considered in transition to a quite different use of those concepts from what it made of them *there*. Such a transition makes it necessary to compare the old use with the new, in order to distinguish well the new path from the previous one and at the same time to draw attention to their connection. Accordingly, considerations of this kind, including those that are once more directed to the concept of freedom, though in the practical use of pure reason, should not be regarded as interpolations which might serve only to fill up gaps in the critical system of speculative reason (for this is complete for its purpose), or as like the props and buttresses that are usually added afterwards to a hastily constructed building, but as true members that make the connection of the system plain, so that concepts which could there be represented only problematically can now be seen in their real presentation. This reminder is especially relevant to the concept of freedom, with regard to which one cannot help observing with surprise that so many boast of being quite well able to understand² it and to explain its possibility while they consider it only in its psychological context, whereas if they had earlier pondered it carefully in its transcendental context they would have cognized its *indispensability* as a problematic concept in the complete use of speculative reason as well as its complete *incomprehensibility*,³ and if they afterwards proceeded with it to practical use, they would have had to

¹ *Grundsätze*. Here again, as in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant draws no consistent distinction between *Grundsatz* and *Prinzip*. *Prinzip* is always, and *Grundsatz* often, translated as "principle."

² *einzusehen*

³ *Unbegreiflichkeit*

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arrive by themselves at the very same determination of it with respect to its principles that they are now so unwilling to agree to. The concept of freedom is the stumbling block for all *empiricists*, but also the key to the most sublime practical principles for *critical* moralists, who thereby see that they must necessarily proceed *rationally*. For this reason I beg the reader not to pass lightly over what is said about this concept at the conclusion of the *Analytic*. 5:8

I must leave it to connoisseurs of a work of this kind to estimate whether such a system of pure practical reason as is here developed from the *Critique* of it has cost much or little trouble, especially so as not to miss the right point of view from which the whole can be correctly traced out. It presupposes, indeed, the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, but only insofar as this constitutes preliminary acquaintance with the principle of duty and provides and justifies a determinate formula of it;* otherwise, it stands on its own. That the *complete classification*¹ of all practical sciences was not added, such as the *Critique* of speculative reason carried out, has a valid ground in the constitution^m of this practical rational faculty itself. For, the special determination of duties as human duties, with a view to classifying them, is possible only after the subject of this determination (the human being) is cognized as he is really constituted, though only to the extent necessary with reference to duty generally; this, however, does not belong to a *Critique of Practical Reason* as such, which has only to give a complete account of the principles of its possibility, of its extent, and of its limits, without special reference to human nature. Here, accordingly, the classification belongs to the system of science, not to the system of critique.

In the second chapter of the *Analytic* I have, I hope, dealt adequately with the objection of a certain reviewer² of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, one who is devoted to truth and astute and therefore always worthy of respect: that *there the concept of the good was not established before the moral principle* (as, in his opinion, was necessary).[†] I have also taken 5:9

*A reviewer¹ who wanted to say something censuring this work hit the mark better than he himself may have intended when he said that no new principle of morality is set forth in it but only a *new formula*. But who would even want to introduce a new principle of all morality and, as it were, first invent it? Just as if, before him, the world had been ignorant of what duty is or in thoroughgoing error about it. But whoever knows what a *formula* means to a mathematician, which determines quite precisely what is to be done to solve a problem and does not let him miss it, will not take a formula that does this with respect to all duty in general as something that is insignificant and can be dispensed with.

[†]The further objection could have been put to me, why have I not previously explicated the concept of the *faculty of desire* or of the *feeling of pleasure*, although this reproach would be unfair because this explication as given in psychology could reasonably be presupposed. However, the definition there could admittedly be so framed that the feeling of pleasure

¹ *Einteilung*

^m *Beschaffenheit*

5:10 into consideration many other objections that have reached me from men who show that they have at heart the discovery of truth, and I shall continue to do so (for, those who have only their old system before their eyes and who have already settled what is to be approved or disapproved do not desire any discussion that might stand in the way of their private purpose).

When it is a matter of determining a particular faculty of the human soul as to its sources, its contents, and its limits, then, from the nature of human cognition, one can begin only with the *parts*, with an accurate and complete presentation of them (complete as far as is possible in the present situation of such elements as we have already acquired). But there is a second thing to be attended to, which is more philosophic and *architectonic*: namely, to grasp correctly the *idea of the whole* and from this idea to see all those parts in their mutual relation by means of their derivation from the concept of that whole in a pure rational faculty. This examination and guarantee is possible only through the most intimate acquaintance with the system; and those who find the first inquiry too irksome and hence do not think it worth their trouble to attain such an acquaintance cannot reach the second stage, namely the overview, which is a synthetic return to what had previously been given analytically; and it is no wonder that they find inconsistencies everywhere, although the gaps they suppose they find are not in the system itself but only in their own incoherent train of thought.

would ground the determination of the faculty of desire (as is in fact commonly done), and thus the supreme principle of practical philosophy would necessarily turn out to be *empirical*, although this has to be settled first and in the present *Critique* is altogether refuted. I will, therefore, give this explication here in the way it must be given in order, as is reasonable, to leave this contested point undecided at the beginning – Life is the faculty of a being to act in accordance with laws of the faculty of desire. The **faculty of desire** is a being's *faculty to be by means of its representations the cause of the reality of the objects of these representations*. Pleasure is the *representation of the agreement of an object or of an action with the subjective conditions of life*, i.e., with the faculty of the *causality of a representation with respect to the reality of its object* (or with respect to the determination of the powers of the subject to action in order to produce the object). For the purposes of this *Critique* I have no further need of concepts borrowed from psychology; the *Critique* itself supplies the rest. It is easily seen that the question whether pleasure must always be put at the basis of the faculty of desire or whether under certain conditions pleasure only follows upon its determination, is left undecided by this exposition; for it is composed only of marks belonging to the pure understanding, i.e., categories, which contain nothing empirical. Such a precaution – namely, not to anticipate one's judgments by definitions ventured before complete analysis of the concept, which is often achieved very late – is to be highly recommended throughout philosophy, and yet is often neglected. It may be observed throughout the course of the critical philosophy (of theoretical as well as practical reason) that many opportunities are presented to make up for defects in the old dogmatic procedure of philosophy and to correct errors that are not noticed until one makes such a use of concepts of reason as is directed to the whole.

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I have no fear, with respect to this treatise, of the reproach that I want to introduce a *new language*, because here the kind of cognition itself approaches popularity. This reproach with respect to the first *Critique* could also not have occurred to anyone who had thought it through and not merely turned over the pages. To invent new words where the language already has no lack of expressions for given concepts is a childish effort to distinguish oneself from the crowd, if not by new and true thoughts yet by new patches on an old garment. If, therefore, the readers of that work know of more popular expressions that are still just as suitable to the thought as the ones I used seem to me, or if they think they can show the nullity of these thoughts themselves and so too of the expressions signifying them, they would by the first very much oblige me, for I only desire to be understood; but with respect to the second, they would deserve well of philosophy. However, as long as these thoughts stand, I very much doubt that expressions suitable for them and yet more common can be found.*

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In this way the a priori principles of two faculties of the mind, the 5:12

*Here I am less worried (about that unintelligibility) than about occasional misinterpretation with respect to some expressions that I have sought out with the greatest care in order that the concepts to which they point may not be missed. Thus, in the table of categories of *practical* reason under the heading Modality, the *permitted* and the *forbidden* (the practically objectively possible and impossible), have almost the same sense in the common use of language as the immediately following categories, *duty* and *contrary to duty*; here, however, the *first* mean that which harmonizes or conflicts with a merely *possible* practical precept (as, say, the solution of all problems of geometry and mechanics), the *second*, that which is similarly related to a law *actually* present in reason as such; and this distinction in meaning is not altogether foreign even to the common use of language, although it is somewhat unusual. Thus, for example, it is *forbidden* to an orator, as such, to forge new words or constructions; this is to some extent *permitted* to a poet; in neither case is there any thought of duty. For if anyone is willing to forfeit his reputation as an orator, no one can prevent him. We have here to do only with the distinction of *imperatives* under *problematic*, *assertoric*, and *apodictic* determining grounds. So too, in the note where I compared the moral ideas of practical perfection in different philosophic schools, I distinguished the idea of *wisdom* from that of *holiness*, although I explained them as identical in their ground and objectively. In that place, however, I understood by wisdom only that wisdom to which the human being (the Stoic) lays claim, and thus took it *subjectively*, as an attribute ascribed to the human being. (Perhaps the expression *virtue*, which the Stoic also made much of, could better indicate what is characteristic of his school.) But the expression, a *postulate* of pure practical reason, could most of all occasion misinterpretation if confused with the meaning that postulates of pure mathematics have, which bring with them apodictic certainty. The latter, however, postulate the *possibility of an action*, the object of which has been previously theoretically cognized a priori with complete certitude as *possible*. But the former postulate the possibility of an *object* itself (God and the immortality of the soul) from apodictic *practical* laws, and therefore only on behalf of a practical reason, so that this certainty of the postulated possibility is not at all theoretical, hence also not apodictic, i.e., it is not a necessity cognized with respect to the object but is, instead, an assumption necessary with respect to the subject's observance of its objective but practical laws, hence merely a necessary hypothesis. I could find no better expression for this subjective but nevertheless unconditional rational necessity.

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faculty of cognition and that of desire, would be found and determined as to the conditions, extent, and boundaries of their use, and a firm basis would thereby be laid for a scientific system of philosophy, both theoretical and practical.

Nothing worse could happen to these labors than that someone should make the unexpected discovery that there is and can be no a priori cognition at all.³ But there is no danger of this. It would be tantamount to someone's wanting to prove by reason that there is no reason. For, we say that we cognize something by reason only when we are aware that we could have known it even if it had not presented itself to us as it did in experience; hence rational cognition and cognition a priori are one and the same. It is an outright contradiction to want to extract necessity from an empirical proposition (*ex pumice aquam*)ⁿ and to give a judgment, along with necessity, true universality (without which there is no rational inference and so not even inference from analogy, which is at least a presumed universality and objective necessity and therefore presupposes it). To substitute subjective necessity, that is, custom, for objective necessity, which is to be found only in a priori judgments, is to deny to reason the ability to judge an object, that is, to cognize it and what belongs to it; it is to deny, for example, that when something often or always follows upon a certain prior state one could *infer* it from that (for this would mean objective necessity and the concept of an a priori connection) and to say only that we may expect similar cases (just as animals do), that is, to reject the concept of cause fundamentally as false and a mere delusion of thought. As for wanting to remedy this lack of objective and hence universal validity by saying that one sees no ground for attributing to other rational beings a different way of representing things:^o if that yielded a valid inference then our ignorance would render us greater service in enlarging our cognition than all our reflection. For, merely because of our not knowing rational beings other than human beings, we would have a right to assume them to be constituted just as we cognize ourselves to be, that is, we would really know them. I do not even mention here that universality of assent does not prove the objective validity of a judgment (i.e., its validity as cognition) but only that, even if universal assent should happen to be correct, it could still not yield a proof of agreement with the object; on the contrary, only objective validity constitutes the ground of a necessary universal agreement.

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Hume would be quite content with this system of universal empiricism of principles; for, as is well known, he asked nothing more than that a merely subjective meaning of necessity, namely custom, be assumed in place of any objective meaning of necessity in the concept of cause, so as

ⁿ "water from a pumice stone." Plautus, *The Persians* 1.1.42.

^o *Vorstellungsart*

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to deny to reason any judgment about God, freedom, and immortality: and, if once his principles were granted, he certainly knew very well how to draw conclusions from them with all logical validity. But Hume himself did not make empiricism so universal as to include mathematics.⁴ He held its propositions to be analytic, and if this were correct they would in fact be apodictic also: but from this no inference could be drawn to reason's ability to make apodictic judgments in philosophy as well, namely judgments that would be synthetic (as the proposition of causality is). However, if one assumes a *universal* empiricism of principles, then mathematics will be included.

Now, if mathematics comes into conflict with a reason that admits only empirical principles, as inevitably happens in the antinomy where mathematics proves incontestably the infinite divisibility of space, which empiricism cannot allow, then the greatest possible evidence of demonstration is in manifest contradiction with the alleged inferences from empirical principles, and one has to ask, like Cheselden's blind man, "Which deceives me, sight or touch?"⁵ (For empiricism is based on a necessity *felt*, but rationalism on a necessity *seen*.)⁶ And thus universal empiricism reveals itself as genuine skepticism, which in this unlimited sense has been falsely ascribed to Hume,^{*} since he left at least one certain touchstone of experience in mathematics, whereas genuine skepticism admits no such touchstone at all (which can only be found in a priori principles), although experience consists not of feelings only but also of judgments.

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Since, however, in this philosophic and critical age such empiricism can scarcely be taken seriously, and it is presumably put forward only as an exercise for judgment and in order to put the necessity of rational a priori principles in a clearer light by contrast, one can only be grateful to those who are willing to trouble themselves with this otherwise unproductive work.

^{*}Names that designate the followers of a sect have always been accompanied with a good deal of injustice;⁶ this would be much the case if someone said, *N is an idealist*. For, although he not only admits but even insists that real objects, external things, correspond to our representations of external things, he nevertheless holds that the form of intuition of them does not depend on them but only on the human mind.

^p *eingesehenen*

Introduction
On the idea of a critique of practical reason

The theoretical use of reason was concerned with objects of the cognitive faculty only, and a critique of it with regard to this use really dealt only with the *pure* cognitive faculty, since this raised the suspicion, which was afterwards confirmed, that it might easily lose itself beyond its boundaries, among unattainable objects or even among contradictory concepts. It is quite different with the practical use of reason. In this, reason is concerned with the determining grounds of the will, which is a faculty either of producing objects corresponding to representations or of determining itself to effect such objects (whether the physical power is sufficient or not), that is, of determining its causality. For, in that, reason can at least suffice to determine the will and always has objective reality insofar as volition alone is at issue. The first question here, then, is whether pure reason of itself alone suffices to determine the will or whether it can be a determining ground of the will only as empirically conditioned. Now there enters here a concept of causality justified by the *Critique of Pure Reason* although not capable of being presented empirically, namely that of *freedom*; and if we can now discover grounds for proving that this property does in fact belong to the human will (and so to the will of all rational beings as well), then it will not only be shown that pure reason can be practical but that it alone, and not reason empirically limited, is unconditionally practical. Consequently, we shall not have to do a critique of *pure practical* reason but only of *practical* reason as such. For, pure reason, once it is shown to exist, needs no critique. It is pure reason that itself contains the standard for the critical examination of every use of it. It is therefore incumbent upon the *Critique of Practical Reason* as such to prevent empirically conditioned reason from presuming that it, alone and exclusively, furnishes the determining ground of the will. If it is proved that there is pure reason, its use is alone immanent; the empirically conditioned use, which lays claim to absolute rule,⁹ is on the contrary transcendent and expresses itself in demands and commands that go quite beyond its

⁹ *Alleinherrschaft*

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sphere – precisely the opposite relation from what could be said of pure reason in its speculative use.

Since, however, it is still pure reason whose cognition here lies at the basis of its practical use, the division of a *Critique of Practical Reason* must in its general outline be arranged in conformity with that of the speculative. We shall therefore have to have a *Doctrine of Elements*^r and a *Doctrine of Method* for it; and within the former, an *Analytic*, as the rule of truth, as the first part, and a *Dialectic*, as the exposition and resolution of illusion^s in the judgments of practical reason. However, the order in the subdivision of the Analytic will be the reverse of that in the *Critique* of pure speculative reason. For, in the present *Critique* we shall begin with *principles* and proceed to *concepts*, and only then, where possible, from them to the senses, whereas in the case of speculative reason we had to begin with the senses and end with principles. The ground for doing so lies, again, in this: that now we have to do with a will and have to consider reason not in its relation to objects but in relation to this will and its causality; thus the principles of empirically unconditioned causality must come first, and only afterward can the attempt be made to establish our concepts of the determining ground of such a will, of their application to objects and finally to the subject and its sensibility. Here the law of causality from freedom, that is, some pure practical rational principle, constitutes the unavoidable beginning and determines the objects to which alone it can be referred.

^r *Elementarlehre*. On “doctrine” in its strict sense, see the text from the *Critique of Judgment* (5:170) referred to in the note to *The Metaphysics of Morals* (6:205).

^s *Schein*

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be supported by a valid receipt or invoice. This ensures transparency and allows for easy auditing of the accounts.

In addition, it is noted that regular reconciliation of bank statements with the company's ledger is essential. This process helps to identify any discrepancies early on and prevents them from becoming more significant over time.

Furthermore, the document highlights the need for clear communication between all parties involved in the financial process. This includes providing timely updates to stakeholders and ensuring that all team members understand their roles and responsibilities.

Finally, it is stressed that maintaining up-to-date financial records is not just a legal requirement, but also a key to the long-term success of the business. Accurate data allows for better decision-making and helps to build a strong financial foundation.

*The
critique of practical reason
Part one*

*Doctrine of the elements
of
pure practical reason*

Book one
The analytic of pure practical reason

Chapter I
On the Principles of Pure Practical Reason

I.
DEFINITION¹

Practical *principles* are propositions that contain a general determination of the will, having under it several practical rules. They are subjective, or *maxims*, when the condition is regarded by the subject as holding only for his will; but they are objective, or practical *laws*, when the condition is cognized as objective, that is, as holding for the will of every rational being.

Remark

If it is assumed that *pure* reason can contain within itself a practical ground, that is, one sufficient to determine the will, then there are practical laws; otherwise all practical principles will be mere maxims. Within a pathologically² affected will of a rational being there can be found a conflict of maxims with the practical laws cognized by himself. For example, someone can make it his maxim to let no insult pass unavenged and yet at the same time see that this is no practical law but only his maxim – that, on the contrary, as being in one and the same maxim a rule for the will of every rational being it could not harmonize with itself. In cognition of nature³ the principles of what happens (e.g., the principle of equality of action and reaction in the communication of motion) are at the same time laws of nature; for there the use of reason is theoretical and determined by the constitution of the object. In practical cognition – that is, cognition having to do only with determining grounds of the will – the principles that one makes for oneself are not yet laws to which one is unavoidably

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¹ *Erklärung*. See *Critique of Pure Reason* (A:730; B:758), and note *m* to *The Metaphysics of Morals* (6:226).

² *pathologisch*. Kant uses “pathological” in the sense of “dependent upon sensibility.”

³ *Naturekenntnis*

subject, because reason, in the practical, has to do with the subject, namely with his faculty of desire, which by its special constitution can make various adjustments to the rule.¹⁰ A practical rule is always a product of reason because it prescribes action as a means to an effect, which is its purpose. But for a being in whom reason quite alone is not the determining ground of the will, this rule is an *imperative*, that is, a rule indicated by an “ought,” which expresses objective necessitation to the action and signifies that if reason completely determined the will the action would without fail take place in accordance with this rule. Imperatives, therefore, hold objectively and are quite distinct from maxims, which are subjective principles. But the former either determine the conditions of the causality of a rational being as an efficient cause merely with respect to the effect and its adequacy to it or they determine only the will, whether or not it is sufficient for the effect. The first would be hypothetical imperatives and would contain mere precepts of skill; the second, on the contrary, would be categorical and would alone be practical laws. Thus maxims are indeed *principles* but not *imperatives*. But imperatives themselves, when they are conditional – that is, when they do not determine the will simply as will but only with respect to a desired effect, that is, when they are hypothetical imperatives – are indeed practical *precepts* but not *laws*. The latter must sufficiently determine the will as will even before I ask whether I have the ability required for a desired effect or what I am to do in order to produce it, and must thus be categorical: otherwise they are not laws because they lack the necessity which, if it is to be practical, must be independent of conditions that are pathological and therefore only contingently connected with the will. Tell someone, for example, that he must work and save in his youth in order not to want in his old age; this is a correct and also important practical precept of the will. But it is readily seen that here the will is directed to something *else* which it is presupposed that it desires, and as to this desire, it must be left to the agent himself whether he foresees other resources than means acquired by himself, or does not hope to live to old age, or thinks that in case of future need he can make do with little. Reason, from which alone can arise any rule that is to contain necessity, does indeed put necessity even into this precept (for otherwise it would not be an imperative), though it is only a subjectively conditioned necessity and cannot be presupposed in the same degree in

5:21 all subjects. But it is requisite to reason’s lawgiving that it should need to presuppose only *itself*, because a rule is objectively and universally valid only when it holds without the contingent, subjective conditions that distinguish one rational being from another. Now tell someone that he ought never to make a lying promise; this is a rule that has to do only with his will, regardless of whether the purposes the human being may have can be thereby attained; the mere volition is that which is to be determined

¹⁰ *sich die Regel vielfältig richten kann*

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completely a priori by this rule. If, now, it is found that this rule is practically correct, then it is a law because it is a categorical imperative. Thus practical laws refer only to the will, without regard to what is attained by its causality, and one may abstract from this letter (as belonging to the world of sense) so as to have them pure.

2.

THEOREM I

All practical principles that presuppose an *object* (matter) of the faculty of desire as the determining ground of the will are, without exception, empirical and can furnish no practical laws.

By "the matter of the faculty of desire" I understand an object whose reality is desired. Now, when desire for this object precedes the practical rule and is the condition of its becoming a principle, then I say (*first*) that this principle is in that case always empirical. For, the determining ground of choice^x is then the representation of an object and that relation of the representation to the subject by which the faculty of desire is determined to realize the object. Such a relation to the subject, however, is called *pleasure* in the reality of an object. This would therefore have to be presupposed as a condition of the possibility of the determination of choice. But it cannot be cognized a priori of any representation of an object, whatever it may be, whether it will be connected with *pleasure* or *displeasure* or be *indifferent*. Hence in such a case the determining ground of choice must always be empirical, and so too must be the practical material principle that presupposes it as a condition.

Now (*second*) a principle that is based only on the subjective condition of receptivity to a pleasure or displeasure (which can always be cognized only empirically and cannot be valid in the same way for all rational beings) can indeed serve as his *maxim* for the subject who possesses this receptivity but not as a *law* even for him (because it is lacking in objective necessity, which must be cognized a priori); such a principle can, accordingly, never furnish a practical law.

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3.

THEOREM II

All material practical principles as such are, without exception, of one and the same kind and come under the general principle of self-love or one's own happiness.

Pleasure arising from the representation of the existence^y of a thing,

^x *Willkür*. See *The Metaphysics of Morals* (6: 213-14, 226). *Wahl* is translated as "a choice" and *wählen* as "to choose."

^y *Existenz*. The word translated as "existence" later in this clause is *Dasein*.

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insofar as it is to be a determining ground of desire for this thing, is based on the *receptivity* of the subject, since it *depends* upon the existence of an object; hence it belongs to sense (feeling) and not to the understanding, which expresses a relation of a representation *to an object* by concepts, not to the subject by feelings. It is, then, practical only insofar as the feeling^z of agreeableness that the subject expects from the reality of an object determines the faculty of desire. Now, a rational being's consciousness of the agreeableness of life uninterruptedly accompanying his whole existence is *happiness*, and the principle of making this the supreme determining ground of choice is the principle of self-love. Thus all material principles, which place the determining ground of choice in the pleasure or displeasure to be felt in the reality of some object, are wholly *of the same kind* insofar as they belong without exception to the principle of self-love or one's own happiness.

Corollary

All *material* practical rules put the determining ground of the will in the *lower faculty of desire*, and were there no *merely formal* laws of the will sufficient to determine it, then neither could *any higher faculty of desire* be admitted.

Remark I

5:23 It is surprising that men, otherwise acute, believe they can find a distinction between the *lower* and the *higher* faculty of desire according to whether the **representations** that are connected with the feeling of pleasure have their origin *in the senses* or in the *understanding*. For when one inquires about the determining grounds of desire and puts them in the agreeableness expected from something or other, it does not matter at all where the *representation* of this pleasing object comes from but only how much it *pleases*. If a representation, even though it may have its seat and origin in the understanding, can determine choice only by presupposing a feeling of pleasure in the subject, its being a determining ground of choice is wholly dependent upon the nature of inner sense, namely that this can be agreeably affected by the representation. However dissimilar representations of objects may be – they may be representations of the understanding or even of reason, in contrast to representations of sense – the feeling

^z *Empfindung*. On Kant's use of *Empfindung* and *Gefühl*, see note k to the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, (4:399). In order to avoid excessive annotation, in the present context "feeling" is used for both *Empfindung* and *Gefühl* unless the sense of *Empfindung* seems doubtful.

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of pleasure by which alone they properly constitute the determining ground of the will (the agreeableness, the gratification^a expected from the object, which impels activity to produce it) is nevertheless of one and the same kind not only insofar as it can always be cognized only empirically but also insofar as it affects one and the same vital force that is manifested in the faculty of desire, and in this respect can differ only in degree from any other determining ground. Otherwise, how could one make a comparison in *magnitude* between two determining grounds quite different as to the kind of representation, so as to prefer the one that most affects the faculty of desire? The same human being can return unread an instructive book that he cannot again obtain, in order not to miss a hunt; he can leave in the middle of a fine speech in order not to be late for a meal; he can leave an intellectual conversation, such as he otherwise values highly, in order to take his place at the gaming table; he can even repulse a poor man whom at other times it is a joy for him to benefit because he now has only enough money in his pocket to pay for his admission to the theater. If the determination of his will rests on the feeling of agreeableness or disagreeableness that he expects from some cause, it is all the same to him by what kind of representation he is affected. The only thing that concerns him, in order to decide upon a choice, is how intense, how long, how easily acquired, and how often repeated this agreeableness is. Just as, to someone who wants money to spend it is all the same whether the material in it, the gold, was dug out of a mountain or washed out of sand provided it is accepted everywhere at the same value, so no one asks, when he is concerned only with the agreeableness of life, whether representations belong to the understanding or to the senses but only *how much* and *how great* satisfaction they will furnish him for the longest time. Only those who would like to deny to pure reason the ability to determine the will without some feeling being presupposed could deviate so far from their own definition^b as to explain^c as quite heterogeneous what they have themselves previously brought under one and the same principle. Thus it is found, for example, that we can find satisfaction in the mere *exercise of our powers*, in consciousness of our strength of soul in overcoming obstacles opposed to our plans, in cultivating our talents of spirit, and so forth, and we correctly call these joys and delights *more refined* because they are more under our control than others, do not wear out but rather strengthen feeling for further enjoyment of them, and while they delight they at the

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^a See note v to the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (4:393). In the following pages Kant again uses a variety of words for "pleasure," and no attempt has been made to distinguish, in particular, between *Zufriedenheit* and *Vergnügen*.

^b *Erklärung*

^c *erklären*

same time cultivate. But as for passing them off, on this account, as a different way of determining the will then merely through sense, even though they presuppose for the possibility of that satisfaction a feeling for it implanted in us as the first condition of this pleasure: this is just as when ignorant people who would like to dabble in metaphysics think of matter so refined, so superrefined, that they make themselves giddy with it and then believe that in this way they have devised a *spiritual* and yet extended being. If, with Epicurus, we have virtue determine the will only by means of the gratification it promises, we cannot afterward find fault with him for holding that this is of exactly the same kind as those of the coarsest senses; for we have no ground at all to charge him with ascribing the representations by which this feeling is excited in us to the bodily senses only. As far as can be conjectured, he sought the source of many of them in the use of the higher cognitive faculty; but this did not and could not prevent him from holding, in accordance with the principle mentioned above, that the satisfaction itself which those intellectual representations afford us and by which alone they can be determining grounds of the will is of exactly the same kind. *Consistency* is the greatest obligation^d of a philosopher and yet the most rarely found. The ancient Greek schools give us more examples of it than we find in our *syncretistic* age, in which a certain *coalition system* of contradictory principles, replete with dishonesty and shallowness, is contrived, because it commends itself better to a public that is satisfied with knowing something of everything and nothing as a whole, so that it can turn its hand to anything. The principle of one's own happiness, however much understanding and reason may be used in it, still contains no determining ground for the will other than such as is suitable to the *lower* faculty of desire; and thus either there is no higher faculty of desire at all or else *pure reason* must be practical of itself and alone, that is, it must be able to determine the will by the mere form of a practical rule without presupposing any feeling and hence without any representation of the agreeable or disagreeable as the matter of the faculty of desire, which is always an empirical condition of principles. Then only, insofar as reason of itself (not in the service of the inclinations) determines the will, is reason a true *higher* faculty of desire, to which the pathologically determinable is subordinate, and then only is reason really, and indeed *specifically*, distinct from the latter, so that even the least admixture of the latter's impulses infringes upon its strength and superiority, just as anything at all empirical as a condition in a mathematical demonstration degrades and destroys its dignity and force. In a practical law reason determines the will immediately, not by means of an intervening feeling of pleasure or displeasure, not even in this law; and that it can as pure reason be practical is what alone makes it possible for it to *be lawgiving*.

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^d *Obliegenheit*

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Remark II

To be happy is necessarily the demand of every rational but finite being and therefore an unavoidable determining ground of its faculty of desire. For, satisfaction with one's whole existence is not, as it were, an original possession and a beatitude,⁶ which would presuppose a consciousness of *one's independent self-sufficiency*, but is instead a problem imposed upon him by his finite nature itself, because he is needy and this need is directed to the matter of his faculty of desire, that is, something related to a subjective feeling of pleasure or displeasure underlying it by which is determined what he needs in order to be satisfied with his condition. But just because this material determining ground can be cognized only empirically by the subject, it is impossible to regard this problem as law, since a law, as objective, must contain the *very same determining ground* of the will in all cases and for all rational beings. For, although the concept of happiness *everywhere* underlies the practical relation of *objects* to the faculty of desire, it is still only the general name for subjective determining grounds, and it determines nothing specific about it although this is all that matters in this practical problem and without such determination the problem cannot be solved at all. That is to say, in what each has to put his happiness comes down to the particular feeling of pleasure and displeasure in each and, even within one and the same subject, to needs that differ as this feeling changes; and a law that is *subjectively necessary* (as a law of nature) is thus *objectively* a very *contingent* practical principle, which can and must be very different in different subjects, and hence can never yield a law because, in the desire for happiness, it is not the form of lawfulness that counts but simply the matter, namely whether I am to expect satisfaction from following the law, and how much. Principles of self-love can indeed contain universal rules of skill (for finding means to one's purposes), but in that case they are only theoretical principles* (such as, e.g., how someone who would like to eat bread has to construct a mill). But practical precepts based on them can never be universal because the determining ground of the faculty of desire is based on the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, which can never be assumed to be universally directed to the same objects.

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But suppose that finite rational beings were thoroughly agreed with respect to what they had to take as objects of their feelings of pleasure and

*Propositions that in mathematics or physics are called *practical* should properly be called *technical*. For in these teachings it is not at all a question of the determination of the will; they only point out the manifold of the possible action that is sufficient to produce a certain effect, and are thus as theoretical as any proposition that asserts the connection of a cause with an effect. Whoever approves the effect must also be willing to approve the cause.

⁶ *eine Seligkeit*

pain and even with respect to the means they must use to obtain the first and avoid the other; even then they could by no means pass off the *principle of self-love as a practical law*; for, this unanimity itself would still be only contingent. The determining ground would still be only subjectively valid and merely empirical and would not have that necessity which is thought in every law, namely objective necessity from a priori grounds, unless one had to say that this necessity is not practical at all but only physical, namely that the action is as unavoidably forced from us by our inclination as is yawning when we see others yawn. It would be better to maintain that there are no practical laws at all but only *counsels* on behalf of our desires than to raise merely subjective principles to the rank of practical laws, which absolutely must have objective and not merely subjective necessity and which must be cognized a priori by reason, not by experience (however empirically universal this may be). Even the rules of uniform appearances are called laws of nature (e.g., mechanical laws) only when they are either cognized really a priori or (as in the case of chemical laws) when it is assumed that they would be cognized a priori from objective grounds if our insight went deeper. But in the case of merely subjective practical principles it is expressly made a condition that they must have as their basis not objective but subjective conditions of choice, and hence that they must always be represented as mere maxims, never as practical laws. This latter remark seems at first glance to be mere cavilling at words; but it defines the terms^f of the most important distinction that can ever be considered in practical investigations.

5:27

4.

THEOREM III

If a rational being is to think of his maxims as practical universal laws, he can think of them only as principles that contain the determining ground of the will not by their matter but only by their form.

The matter of a practical principle is the object of the will. This is either the determining ground of the will or it is not. If it is the determining ground of the will, then the rule of the will is subject to an empirical condition (to the relation of the determining representation to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure), and so is not a practical law. Now, all that remains of a law if one separates from it everything material, that is, every object of the will (as its determining ground), is the mere *form* of giving universal law. Therefore, either a rational being cannot think of *his* subjectively practical principles, that is, his maxims, as being at the same time universal laws or he must assume that their mere form, by which *they are fit for a giving of universal law*, of itself and alone makes them practical laws.

^f sie ist die Wortbestimmung

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Remark

The most common understanding can distinguish without instruction what form in a maxim makes it fit for a giving of universal law and what does not. I have, for example, made it my maxim to increase my wealth by every safe means. Now I have a *deposit* in my hands, the owner of which has died and left no record of it. This is, naturally, a case for my maxim. Now I want only to know whether that maxim could also hold as a universal practical law. I therefore apply the maxim to the present case and ask whether it could indeed take the form of a law, and consequently whether I could through my maxim at the same time give such a law as this: that everyone may deny a deposit which no one can prove has been made. I at once become aware that such a principle, as a law, would annihilate itself since it would bring it about that there would be no deposits at all. A practical law that I cognize as such must qualify for a giving of universal law: this is an identical proposition and therefore self-evident. Now, if I say that my will is subject to a practical *law*, I cannot cite my inclination (e.g., in the present case my avarice) as the determining ground of my will appropriate to a universal practical law; for this is so far from being qualified for a giving of universal law that in the form of a universal law it must instead destroy itself.

5:28

It is, therefore, strange that intelligent men could have thought of passing off the desire for happiness as a universal *practical law* on the ground that the desire, and so too the *maxim* by which each makes this desire the determining ground of his will, is universal. For whereas elsewhere a universal law of nature makes everything harmonious, here, if one wanted to give the maxim the universality of a law, the most extreme opposite of harmony would follow, the worst conflict, and the complete annihilation of the maxim itself and its purpose. For then the will of all has not one and the same object but each has his own (his own welfare), which can indeed happen to accord with the purposes of others who are likewise pursuing their own but which is far from sufficing for a law because the exceptions that one is warranted in making upon occasion are endless and cannot be determinately embraced in a universal rule. In this way there results a harmony like that which a certain satirical poem depicts in the unanimity between a married couple bent on going to ruin: "*O marvellous harmony, what he wants she wants too*" and so forth, or like what is said of the pledge of King Francis I to the Emperor Charles V: "What my brother Charles would have (Milan), that I would also have." Empirical determining grounds are not fit for any universal external legislation⁸ and are no more fit for internal lawgiving; for each puts at the basis of inclination his subject – another, another subject – and even within each subject now the

⁸ *allgemeinen äußern Gesetzgebung*

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

5.
PROBLEM I

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

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

6.
PROBLEM II

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

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

Remark

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

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

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

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because he is aware that he ought to do it and cognizes freedom within him, which, without the moral law, would have remained unknown to him.

7.
FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF PURE PRACTICAL
REASON

So act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle in a giving of universal law.

5:31

Remark

Pure geometry has postulates as practical propositions which, however, contain nothing further than the presupposition that one *could* do something if it were required that one should do it, and these are the only propositions of pure geometry that concern an existing thing.¹ They are thus practical rules under a problematic condition of the will. Here, however, the rule says: one ought absolutely to proceed in a certain way. The practical rule is therefore unconditional and so is represented a priori as a categorical practical proposition by which the will is objectively determined absolutely and immediately (by the practical rule itself, which accordingly is here a law). For, pure reason, *practical of itself*, is here immediately lawgiving. The will is thought as independent of empirical conditions and hence, as a pure will, as determined *by the mere form of law*, and this determining ground is regarded as the supreme condition of all maxims. The thing is strange enough, and has nothing like it in all the rest of our practical cognition. For, the a priori thought of a possible giving of universal law, which is thus merely problematic, is unconditionally commanded as a law without borrowing anything from experience or from some external will. But it is also not a precept in accordance with which an action by which a desired effect is possible should be done (for then the rule would always be physically conditioned); it is instead a rule that determines the will a priori only with respect to the form of its maxims; and so it is at least not impossible to think of a law that serves only for the *subjective* form of principles as yet a determining ground through the *objective* form of a law as such. Consciousness of this fundamental law may be called a fact of reason because one cannot reason it out from antecedent data of reason, for example, from consciousness of freedom (since this is not antecedently given to us) and because it instead forces itself upon us of itself as a synthetic a priori proposition that is not based on any intuition, either pure or empirical, although it would be analytic if the freedom of the will were presupposed; but for this, as a positive concept, an intellectual intuition

¹ *ein Dasein*

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would be required, which certainly cannot be assumed here. However, in order to avoid misinterpretation in regarding this law as *given*, it must be noted carefully that it is not an empirical fact but the sole fact of pure reason which, by it, announces itself as originally lawgiving (*sic volo, sic jubeo*).^j

Corollary

Pure reason is practical of itself alone and gives (to the human being) a universal law which we call the *moral law*.

Remark

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The fact mentioned above is undeniable. One need only analyze the judgment that people pass on the lawfulness of their actions in order to find that, whatever inclination may say to the contrary, their reason, incorruptible and self-constrained, always holds the maxim of the will in an action up to the pure will, that is, to itself inasmuch as it regards itself as a priori practical. Now this principle of morality, just on account of the universality of the lawgiving that makes it the formal supreme determining ground of the will regardless of all subjective differences, is declared by reason to be at the same time a law for all rational beings insofar as they have a will, that is, the ability^k to determine their causality by the representation of rules, hence insofar as they are capable of actions in accordance with principles and consequently also in accordance with a priori practical principles (for these alone have that necessity which reason requires for a principle). It is, therefore, not limited to human beings only but applies to all finite beings that have reason and will and even includes the infinite being as the supreme intelligence. In the first case, however, the law has the form of an imperative, because in them, as rational beings, one can presuppose a *pure* will but, insofar as they are beings affected by needs and sensible motives, not a *holy* will, that is, such a will as would not be capable of any maxim conflicting with the moral law. Accordingly the moral law is for them an *imperative* that commands categorically because the law is unconditional; the relation of such a will to this law is *dependence* under the name of obligation, which signifies a *necessitation*, though only by reason and its objective law, to an action which is called *duty* because a choice that is pathologically affected (though not thereby determined, hence still free) brings with it a wish arising from *subjective* causes, because of which it can often be opposed to the pure objective determining ground and thus needs a resistance of practical reason which, as moral necessita-

^jWhat I will, I command. Juvenal *Satire* 6.

^k*Vermögen*

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5:33 tion, may be called an internal but intellectual constraint. In the supremely self-sufficient intelligence, choice is rightly represented as incapable of any maxim that could not at the same time be objectively a law, and the concept of *holiness*, which on that account belongs to it, puts it, not indeed above all practically restrictive laws and so above obligation and duty. This holiness of will is nevertheless a practical *idea*, which must necessarily serve as a *model* to which all finite rational beings can only approximate without end and which the pure moral law, itself called holy because of this, constantly and rightly holds before their eyes; the utmost that finite practical reason can effect is to make sure of this unending progress of one's maxims toward this model and of their constancy in continual progress, that is, virtue; and virtue itself, in turn, at least as a naturally acquired ability, can never be completed, because assurance in such a case never becomes apodictic certainty and, as persuasion, is very dangerous.

8.

THEOREM IV

Autonomy of the will is the sole principle of all moral laws and of duties in keeping with them; *heteronomy* of choice, on the other hand, not only does not ground any obligation at all but is instead opposed to the principle of obligation and to the morality of the will. That is to say, the sole principle of morality consists in independence from all matter of the law (namely, from a desired object) and at the same time in the determination of choice through the mere form of giving universal law that a maxim must be capable of. That *independence*, however, is freedom in the *negative* sense, whereas this *lawgiving of its own*¹ on the part of pure and, as such, practical reason is freedom in the *positive* sense. Thus the moral law expresses nothing other than the *autonomy* of pure practical reason, that is, freedom, and this is itself the formal condition of all maxims, under which alone they can accord with the supreme practical law. If, therefore, the matter of volition, which can be nothing other than the object of a desire that is connected with the law, enters into the practical law as a **condition of its possibility**, there results heteronomy of choice, namely dependence upon the natural law of following some impulse or inclination, and the will does not give itself the law but only the precept for rationally following pathological law; but a maxim which, in this way, can never contain within it the form of giving universal law not only establishes no obligation but is itself opposed to the principle of a *pure* practical reason and so also to the moral disposition, even though the action arising from it may be in conformity with the law.

¹ *diese eigene Gesetzgebung*

Remark I

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Thus a practical precept that brings with it a material (hence empirical) condition must never be reckoned a practical law. For, the law of the pure will, which is free, puts the will in a sphere quite different from the empirical, and the necessity that the law expresses, since it is not to be a natural necessity, can therefore consist only in the formal conditions of the possibility of a law in general. All the matter of practical rules rests always on subjective conditions, which afford it no universality for rational beings other than a merely conditional one (in case I *desire* this or that, what I would then have to do in order to make it real), and they all turn on the principle of *one's own happiness*. Now it is indeed undeniable that every volition must also have an object and hence a matter; but the matter is not, just because of this, the determining ground and condition of the maxim; for if it is, then the maxim cannot be presented in the form of giving universal law, since expectation of the existence of the object would then be the determining cause of choice, and the dependence of the faculty of desire upon the existence of some thing would have to be put at the basis of volition; and since this dependence can be sought only in empirical conditions, it can never furnish the basis for a necessary and universal rule. Thus, the happiness of other beings can be the object of the will of a rational being. But if it were the determining ground of the maxim, one would have to presuppose that we find not only a natural satisfaction in the well-being of others but also a need, such as a sympathetic sensibility^m brings with it in human beings. But I cannot presuppose this need in every rational being (not at all in God). Thus the matter of the maxim can indeed remain, but it must not be the condition of the maxim since the maxim would then not be fit for a law. Hence the mere form of a law, which limits the matter, must at the same time be a ground for adding this matter to the will but not for presupposing it. Let the matter be, for example, my own happiness. This, if I attribute it to each (as, in the case of finite beings, I may in fact do) can become an *objective* practical law only if I include in it the happiness of others. Thus the law to promote the happiness of others arises not from the presupposition that this is an object of everyone's choice but merely from this: that the form of universality, which reason requires as the condition of giving to a maxim of self-love the objective validity of a law, becomes the determining ground of the will; and so the object (the happiness of others) was not the determining ground of the pure will; this was, instead, the mere lawful form alone, by which I limited my maxim based on inclination in order to afford it the universality of a law and in this way to make it suitable for pure practical reason; only from this limitation, and not from the addition of an external

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^m *Sinnesart*

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incentive," could there arise the concept of *obligation* to extend the maxim of my self-love to the happiness of others as well.

Remark II

The direct opposite of the principle of morality is the principle of *one's own* happiness made the determining ground of the will; and, as I have shown above, whatever puts the determining ground that is to serve as a law anywhere else than in the lawgiving form of the maxim must be counted in this. This conflict, however, is not merely logical, like that between empirically conditioned rules that one might nevertheless want to raise to necessary principles of cognition; it is instead practical and would ruin morality altogether were not the voice of reason in reference to the will so distinct, so irrepressible, and so audible even to the most common human beings; thus it can maintain itself only in the perplexing speculations of the schools, which are brazen enough to shut their ears to that heavenly voice in order to support a theory they need not break their heads over.

Suppose that an acquaintance whom you otherwise liked tried to justify to you his having given false testimony by first pleading what he asserts to be the sacred duty of his own happiness and then by recounting all the advantages he had acquired by doing so, pointing out the prudence he had observed in order to be secure from discovery even by yourself, to whom he reveals the secret only because he can deny it at any time; and suppose he were then to affirm, in all seriousness, that he has fulfilled a true human duty: you would either laugh in his face or shrink back from him with disgust, even though, if someone has directed his principles solely to his own advantage, you would not have the least objection to bring against these measures. Or suppose that someone recommends to you as steward a man to whom you could blindly trust all your affairs and, in order to inspire you with confidence, extols him as a prudent human being with masterly understanding of his own advantage and also as an indefatigably active one, who lets pass no opportunity to advance it; and finally, lest any concern about a vulgar selfishness in him stand in the way, the recommender praises his understanding of how to live with refinement, seeking his satisfaction not in making money or in coarse luxury but in enlarging his knowledge, in select and instructive society, and even in beneficence to the needy, while as to the means (which of course derive all their worth or lack of it from the end) he is not particular and is ready to use other people's money and goods for his end as if they were his own, provided he knows that he can do so without being discovered or thwarted; you would

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ⁿ *Triebfeder*. It subsequently becomes clear that Kant does not maintain the distinction drawn between *Triebfeder* and *Bewegungsgrund* in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (4:427).

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believe either that the recommender was making a fool of you or that he had lost his mind. So distinctly and sharply drawn are the boundaries of morality and self-love that even the most common eye cannot fail to distinguish whether something belongs to the one or the other. The few remarks that follow may seem superfluous where the truth is so evident, but they may serve at least to afford the judgement of common human reason somewhat greater distinctness.

The principle of happiness can indeed furnish maxims, but never such as would be fit for laws of the will, even if *universal* happiness were made the object. For, because cognition of this rests on sheer data of experience, each judgement about it depending very much upon the opinion of each which is itself very changeable, it can indeed give *general* rules but never *universal* rules, that is, it can give rules that on the average are most often correct but not rules that must hold always and necessarily; hence no practical *laws* can be based on it. Just because an object of choice is here put at the basis of its rule and must therefore precede it, the rule can be referred to and can be based upon nothing other than what one approves,^o and so it refers to and is based upon experience, and then the variety of judgment must be endless. This principle, therefore, does not prescribe the very same practical rules to all rational beings, even though the rules come under a common heading,^p namely that of happiness. The moral law, however, is thought as objectively necessary only because it is to hold for everyone having reason and will.

The maxim of self-love (prudence) merely *advises*; the law of morality *commands*. But there is a great difference between that which we are *advised* to do and that to which we are *obligated*.

What is to be done in accordance with the principle of the autonomy of choice is seen quite easily and without hesitation by the most common understanding; what is to be done on the presupposition of heteronomy of choice is difficult to see and requires knowledge of the world; in other words, what *duty* is, is plain of itself to everyone, but what brings true lasting advantage, if this is to extend to the whole of one's existence, is always veiled in impenetrable obscurity, and much prudence is required to adapt the practical rule in accordance with it to the ends of life even tolerably, by making appropriate exceptions. But the moral law commands compliance from everyone, and indeed the most exact compliance. Appraising what is to be done in accordance with it must, therefore, not be so difficult that the most common and unpracticed understanding should not know how to go about it, even without worldly prudence.

To satisfy the categorical command of morality is within everyone's power at all times; to satisfy the empirically conditioned precept of happi-

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^o *empfiehlt*. Hartenstein reads *empfindet* (feels).

^p *Titel*

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ness is but seldom possible and is far from being possible for everyone even with respect to only a single purpose. The reason is that in the first case it is a question only of the maxim, which must be genuine and pure, whereas in the latter case it is also a question of one's powers and one's physical ability to make a desired object real. A command that everyone should seek to make himself happy would be foolish, for one never commands of someone what he unavoidably wants already. One would have to command of him only the measures – or, better, provide him with them, since he cannot do all that he wants to do. But to command morality under the name of duty is quite reasonable; for, first, it is not the case that everyone willingly obeys its precept when it is in conflict with his inclinations; and as for the measures – how he can comply with it – here these need not be taught; for in regard to this, what he wills to do, that he also can do.

He who has *lost* at play can indeed be *chagrined* with himself and his imprudence; but if he is conscious of having *cheated* at play (although he has gained by it), he must *despise* himself as soon as he compares himself with the moral law. This must, therefore, be something other than the principle of one's own happiness. For, to have to say to himself "I am a *worthless* man^q although I have filled my purse," he must have a different criterion of judgment from that by which he commends himself and says "I am a *prudent* man,^r for I have enriched my cash box."

Finally there is in the idea of our practical reason something further that accompanies the transgression of a moral law, namely its *deserving punishment*. Now, becoming a partaker in happiness cannot be combined with the concept of a punishment as such. For, although he who punishes can at the same time have the kindly intention of directing the punishment to this end as well, yet it must first be justified in itself as punishment, that is, as mere harm,^s so that he who is punished, if it stopped there and he could see no kindness hidden behind this harshness, must himself admit that justice was done to him^t and that what was allotted him was perfectly suited to his conduct. In every punishment as such there must first be justice,^u and this constitutes what is essential in this concept. Kindness can, indeed, be connected with it, but the one who deserves punishment for his conduct has not the least cause to count on this. Thus punishment is a physical harm that, even if it is not connected with moral wickedness as a *natural* consequence, would still have to be connected with it as a

^q *Unwürdiger*

^r *Mensch*

^s Or "ill-being," *Übel*. In the following passage *Böse* is translated as "wickedness." On the distinction between *Übel* and *Böse* see AK5:59–60.

^t *es sei ihm Recht geschehen*

^u *Gerechtigkeit*

consequence in accordance with the principles of a moral lawgiving. Now if every crime, even without regard to the physical consequence with respect to the agent, is of itself punishable – that is, forfeits happiness (at least in part) – it would obviously be absurd to say that the crime consisted just in his having brought a punishment upon himself and thereby infringed upon his own happiness (which, in accordance with the principle of self-love, would have to be the proper concept of all crime). The punishment would in this way be the ground for calling something a crime, and justice would have to consist instead in omitting all punishment and even warding off that which is natural; for then there would no longer be any wickedness in the action, since the harm that would otherwise follow upon it and on account of which alone the action would be called wicked would now be prevented. But to look upon all punishments and rewards as mere machinery in the hands of a higher power, serving only to put rational beings into activity toward their final purpose (happiness) is so patently a mechanism which does away with the freedom of their will that it need not detain us here.

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More refined, though equally untrue, is the pretense of those who assume a certain special moral sense which, instead of reason, determines the moral law and in accordance with which consciousness of virtue is immediately connected with satisfaction and pleasure, and consciousness of vice with mental unease and pain, so that everything is still reduced to desire for one's own happiness. Without repeating what has been said above, I want only to note the deception^v going on here. In order to represent someone vicious as tormented with mental unease by consciousness of his offenses they must first represent him as morally good, at least to some degree, in what is most basic to his character, just as they must represent someone who is delighted by consciousness of his dutiful actions as already virtuous. The concept of morality and duty would therefore have to precede any regard for this satisfaction and cannot be derived from it. Now, one must first value the importance of what we call duty, the authority of the moral law, and the immediate worth that compliance with it gives a person in his own eyes, in order to feel that satisfaction in consciousness of one's conformity with it and bitter remorse if one can reproach oneself with having transgressed it. Thus one cannot feel such satisfaction or mental unease prior to cognition of obligation and cannot make it the basis of the latter. Someone must be at least half way toward being an honest man even to frame for himself a representation of those feelings. For the rest, as the human will is by virtue of its freedom immediately determinable by the moral law, I certainly do not deny that frequent practice in conformity with this determining ground can finally produce subjectively a feeling of satisfaction with oneself; on the contrary, to estab-

^v *Täuschung*

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5:39 lish and to cultivate this feeling, which alone deserves to be called moral feeling strictly speaking, itself belongs to duty; but the concept of duty cannot be derived from it – otherwise we should have to think of a feeling of a law as such^w and make what can only be thought by reason an object of sensation;^x and this, if it is not to be a flat contradiction, would quite do away with any concept of duty and put in its place merely a mechanical play of refined inclinations sometimes contending with the coarser.

If we now compare our *formal* supreme principle of pure practical reason (as that of an autonomy of the will) with all previous *material* principles of morality, we can set forth all the rest, as such, in a table in which all possible cases are actually exhausted, except the one formal principle; and thus we can prove visually that it is futile to look around for any other principle than that now presented. That is to say, all possible determining grounds of the will are either merely *subjective* and therefore empirical or also *objective* and rational; and both are either *external* or *internal*.

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Practical Material Determining Grounds⁷
in the principle of morality are
Subjective

<i>External</i>	<i>Internal</i>
Of education (according to Montaigne)	Of physical feeling (according to Epicurus)
Of the civil constitution (according to Mandeville)	Of moral feeling (according to Hutcheson)
<i>Objective</i>	
<i>Internal</i>	<i>External</i>
Of perfection (according to Wolff and the Stoics)	Of the will of God (according to Crusius and other theo- logical moralists)

5:41 Those in the first group^y are without exception empirical and obviously not at all qualified for the universal principle of morality. But those in the second group are based on reason (for, perfection as a *characteristic*^z of things, and the supreme perfection represented in *substance*, i.e. God, are both to be thought only by means of rational concepts). However, the first concept, namely that of *perfection*, can be taken either in the *theoretical* sense, and then it signifies nothing other than the completeness of each thing in its kind (transcendental perfection) or of a thing merely as a thing in general (metaphysical perfection), and we are not concerned with that here. But the concept of perfection in the *practical* sense is the fitness or

^w ein Gefühl eines Gesetzes als eines solchen

^x Empfindung

^y "on the left side," as the table is set up in the Academy edition, i.e., the "subjective principles."

^z Beschaffenheit

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adequacy of a thing for all sorts of ends. This perfection, as a *characteristic* of the human being and so as internal is nothing other than *talent* and what strengthens or completes this, *skill*. The supreme perfection in *substance* – that is, God – and so as external (from a practical point of view) is the adequacy of this being to all ends in general. Now, if ends must first be given to us, in relation to which alone the concept of *perfection* (whether internal in ourselves or external in God) can be the determining ground of the will; and if an end as an *object* which must precede the determination of the will by a practical rule and contain the ground of the possibility of such a determination – hence as the *matter* of the will taken as its determining ground – is always empirical; then it can serve as the Epicurean principle of the doctrine of happiness but never as the pure rational principle of the doctrine of morals and of duty (so too, talents and their development only because they contribute to the advantages of life, or the will of God if agreement with it is taken as the object of the will without an antecedent practical principle independent of this idea, can become motives of the will only by means of the happiness we expect from them); from this it follows, *first*, that all the principles exhibited here are *material*; *second*, that they include all possible material principles; and, finally, the conclusion from this, that since material principles are quite unfit to be the supreme moral law (as has been proved), the *formal practical principle* of pure reason (in accordance with which the mere form of a possible giving of universal law through our maxims must constitute the supreme and immediate determining ground of the will) is the *sole* principle that can *possibly* be fit for categorical imperatives, that is, practical laws (which make actions duties), and in general for the principle of morality, whether in appraisals or in application to the human will in determining it.

I.

ON THE DEDUCTION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF PURE PRACTICAL REASON

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This Analytic shows that pure reason can be practical – that is, can of itself, independently of anything empirical, determine the will – and it does so by a fact in which pure reason in us proves itself actually practical, namely autonomy in the principle of morality by which reason determines the will to deeds. At the same time it shows that this fact is inseparably connected with, and indeed identical with, consciousness of freedom of the will, whereby the will of a rational being that, as belonging to the sensible world cognizes itself as, like other efficient causes, necessarily subject to laws of causality, yet in the practical is also conscious of itself on another side, namely as a being in itself, conscious of its existence as determinable in an intelligible order of things – conscious of this not, indeed, by a special intuition of itself but according to certain dynamic

laws that can determine its causality in the sensible world; for it has been sufficiently proved elsewhere⁸ that freedom, if it is attributed to us, transfers us into an intelligible order of things.

If we compare with this Analytic the analytical part of the *Critique* of pure speculative reason, we see a contrast between them worth noting. Not principles but instead pure sensible *intuition* (space and time) was there the first datum that made a priori cognition possible and, indeed, only for objects of the senses. Synthetic principles from mere concept without intuition were impossible; instead, such principles could be had only with reference to intuition, which was sensible, and so only with reference to objects of possible experience, since the concepts of the understanding joined with such intuition alone make possible that cognition which we call experience. Speculative reason was quite rightly denied anything positive for *cognition* beyond objects of experience, hence of things as noumena. Nevertheless, speculative reason went so far as to secure the concept of noumena – that is, the possibility and indeed the necessity of thinking them – and, for example, to preserve against all objections the assumption of freedom, regarded negatively, as quite compatible with those principles and limitations of pure theoretical reason, though without letting us cognize anything determinate and enlarging about such objects, inasmuch as it instead cut off altogether any prospect of that.

On the other hand, the moral law, even though it gives no *prospect*, nevertheless provides a fact absolutely inexplicable from any data of the sensible world and from the whole compass of our theoretical use of reason, a fact that points to a pure world of the understanding and, indeed, even *determines* it *positively* and lets us cognize something of it, namely a law.

This law is to furnish the sensible world, as a *sensible nature* (in what concerns rational beings), with the form of a world of the understanding, that is, of a *supersensible* nature, though without infringing upon the mechanism of the former. Now, nature in the most general sense is the existence of things under laws. The sensible nature of rational beings in general is their existence under empirically conditioned laws and is thus, for reason, *heteronomy*. The supersensible nature of the same beings, on the other hand, is their existence in accordance with laws that are independent of any empirical condition and thus belong to the *autonomy* of pure reason. And since the laws by which the existence of things depends on cognition are practical, supersensible nature, so far as we can make for ourselves a concept of it, is nothing other than *a nature under the autonomy of pure practical reason*. The law of this autonomy, however, is the moral law, which is therefore the fundamental law of a supersensible nature and of a pure world of the understanding, the counterpart of which is to exist in the sensible world but without infringing upon its laws. The former could

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be called the *archetypal world* (*natura archetypa*) which we cognize only in reason, whereas the latter could be called the *ectypal world* (*natura ectypa*) because it contains the possible effect of the idea of the former as the determining ground of the will. For, the moral law in fact transfers us, in idea,^a into a nature in which pure reason, if it were accompanied with suitable physical power, would produce the highest good, and it determines our will to confer on the sensible world the form of a whole of rational beings.

The most ordinary attention to oneself confirms that this idea is really, as it were, the pattern for the determinations of our will.

When the maxim on which I intend to give testimony is tested by practical reason, I always consider what it would be if it were to hold as a universal law of nature. It is obvious that in this way everyone would be necessitated to truthfulness. For it cannot hold with the universality of a law of nature that statements should be allowed as proof and yet be intentionally untrue. Similarly, the maxim that I adopt with respect to disposing freely of my life is at once determined when I ask myself what it would have to be in order that a nature should maintain itself in accordance with such a law. It is obvious that in such a nature no one could end his life *at will*,^b for such an arrangement would not be an enduring natural order. And so in all other cases. But in actual nature, insofar as it is an object of experience, the free will is not of itself determined to such maxims as could of themselves establish a nature in accordance with universal laws, or even to such maxims as could of themselves fit into a nature arranged in accordance with them; they are, instead, private inclinations which do constitute a natural whole in accordance with pathological (physical) laws but not a nature that would be possible only through our will in accordance with pure practical laws. Yet we are conscious through reason of a law to which all our maxims are subject, as if a natural order must at the same time arise from our will. This law must therefore be the idea of a nature not given empirically and yet possible through freedom, hence a supersensible nature to which we give objective reality at least in a practical respect, since we regard it as an object of our will as pure rational beings.

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Hence the difference between the laws of a nature to which *the will is subject* and of a *nature which is subject to a will* (as far as the relation of the will to its free actions is concerned) rests on this: that in the former the objects must be the causes of the representations that determine the will, whereas in the latter the will is to be the cause of the objects, so that its causality has its determining ground solely in the pure faculty of reason, which can therefore also be called a pure practical reason.

There are, accordingly, two very different problems: how, *on the one*

^a *der Idee nach*

^b *willkürlich*

5:45 *side*, pure reason can *cognize* objects a priori and how, *on the other side*, it can be an immediate determining ground of the will, that is, of the causality of a rational being with respect to the reality of objects (merely through the thought of the universal validity of its own maxims as law).

The first, as belonging to the *Critique* of pure speculative reason, requires that it first be explained how intuitions, without which no object at all can be given and without which, therefore, none can be cognized synthetically, are possible a priori; and its solution turns out to be that these are without exception sensible only and therefore do not make possible any speculative cognition that would go further than possible experience reaches and, consequently, that all principles of that pure speculative reason do no more than make experience possible, either of given objects or of those that may be given to us ad infinitum but are never completely given.

The second, which belongs to the *Critique of Practical Reason*, requires no explanation of how objects of the faculty of desire are possible, for that, as a problem of theoretical cognition of nature, is left to the *Critique* of speculative reason, but only how reason can determine maxims of the will, whether this takes place only by means of empirical representations as determining grounds of whether pure reason might also be practical and might be a law of a possible order of nature not empirically cognizable. The possibility of such a supersensible nature, the concept of which can also be the ground of its reality through our free will, requires no a priori intuition (of an intelligible world), which in this case, as supersensible, would also have to be impossible for us. For it is a question only of the determining ground of volition in maxims of volition, whether it is empirical or whether it is a concept of pure reason (of its lawfulness in general), and how it can be the latter. Whether the causality of the will is adequate for the reality of the objects or not is left to the theoretical principles of reason to estimate, this being an investigation into the possibility of objects of volition, the intuition of which is accordingly no component of the practical problem. It is here a question only of the determination of the will and of the determining ground of its maxims as a free will, not of its result. For, provided that the will conforms to the law of pure reason, then
5:46 its power in execution^c may be as it may, and a nature may or may not actually arise in accordance with these maxims of giving law for a possible nature; the *Critique* which investigates whether and how reason can be practical, that is, whether and how it can determine the will immediately, does not trouble itself with this.

In this undertaking the *Critique* can therefore not be censured for beginning with pure practical laws and their reality, and it must begin there. Instead of intuition, however, it takes as its basis those laws, the

^c *Vermögen . . . in der Ausführung*

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concept of their existence in the intelligible world, namely the concept of freedom. For this concept means nothing else, and those laws are possible only in relation to the freedom of the will; but on the presupposition of freedom they are necessary or, conversely, freedom is necessary because those laws are necessary, as practical postulates. How this consciousness of moral laws or, what is the same thing, this consciousness of freedom is possible cannot be further explained; its admissibility can, however, be defended in the theoretical *Critique*.

The *exposition* of the supreme principle of practical reason is now finished, that is, it has been shown, first, what it contains, that it stands of itself^d altogether a priori and independently of empirical principles, and then what distinguishes it from all other practical principles. With the *deduction*, that is, the justification of its objective and universal validity and the discernment^e of the possibility of such a synthetic proposition a priori, one cannot hope to get on so well as was the case with the principles of the pure theoretical understanding. For, these referred to objects of possible experience, namely appearances, and it could be proved that these appearances could be *cognized* as objects of experience only by being brought under the categories in accordance with these laws and consequently that all possible experience must conform to these laws. But I cannot not take such a course in the deduction of the moral law. For, the moral law is not concerned with cognition of the constitution of objects that may be given to reason from elsewhere but rather with a cognition insofar as it can itself become the ground of the existence of objects and insofar as reason, by this cognition, has causality in a rational being, that is, pure reason, which can be regarded as a faculty immediately determining the will.

But all human insight is at an end as soon as we have arrived at basic powers or basic faculties;^f for there is nothing through which their possibility can be conceived, and yet it may not be invented and assumed at one's discretion. Therefore, in the theoretical use of reason only experience can justify us in assuming them. But this substitute, adducing empirical proofs in place of a deduction from sources of cognition a priori, is also denied us here with respect to the pure practical faculty of reason. For, whatever needs to draw the evidence for its reality from experience must be dependent for the grounds of its possibility upon principles of experience, whereas pure but practical reason, by its very concept, cannot possibly be held to be dependent in this way. Moreover the moral law is given, as it were, as a fact of pure reason of which we are a priori conscious and which is apodictically certain, though it be granted that no example of exact observance of it can be found in experience. Hence the objective reality of

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^d für sich bestehe

^e Einsicht

^f Grundkräften oder Grundvermögen

the moral law cannot be proved by any deduction, by any efforts of theoretical reason, speculative or empirically supported, so that, even if one were willing to renounce its apodictic certainty, it could not be confirmed by experience and thus proved a posteriori; and it is nevertheless firmly established of itself.

But something different and quite paradoxical⁸ takes the place of this vainly sought deduction of the moral principle, namely that the moral principle, conversely itself serves as the principle of the deduction of an inscrutable faculty which no experience could prove but which speculative reason had to assume as at least possible (in order to find among its cosmological ideas what is unconditioned in its causality, so as not to contradict itself), namely the faculty of freedom, of which the moral law, which itself has no need of justifying grounds, proves not only the possibility but the reality in beings who cognize this law as binding upon them. The moral law is, in fact, a law of causality through freedom and hence a law of the possibility of a supersensible nature, just as the metaphysical law of events in the sensible world was a law of the causality of sensible nature; and the moral law thus determines that which speculative philosophy had to leave undetermined, namely the law for a causality the concept of which was only negative in the latter, and thus for the first time provides objective reality to this concept.

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This kind of credential of the moral law – that it is itself laid down as a principle of the deduction of freedom as a causality of pure reason – is fully sufficient in place of any a priori justification, since theoretical reason was forced *to assume* at least the possibility of freedom in order to fill a need of its own. For, the moral law proves its reality, so as even to satisfy the *Critique* of speculative reason, by adding a positive determination to a causality thought only negatively, the possibility of which was incomprehensible to speculative reason, which was nevertheless forced to assume it; it adds, namely, the concept of a reason determining the will immediately (by the condition of a universal lawful form of its maxims), and thus is able for the first time to give objective though only practical reality to reason, which always became extravagant when it wanted to proceed speculatively with its ideas, and changes its *transcendent* use into an *immanent* use (in which reason is by means of ideas itself an efficient cause in the field of experience).

The determination of the causality of beings in the sensible world can as such never be unconditioned, and yet for every series of conditions there must necessarily be something unconditioned and so too a causality that is altogether self-determining. Hence the idea of freedom as a faculty of absolute spontaneity was not a need but, *as far as its possibility is concerned*, an analytic principle of pure speculative reason. It is, however,

⁸ *Widersinnisches*

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absolutely impossible to give anywhere in experience an example of it, since among the causes of things as appearances no determination of causality that would be absolutely unconditioned can be found; hence we could *defend* the *thought* of a freely acting cause, when we apply this to a being in the sensible world, only insofar as this being is also regarded on the other side as a noumenon, by showing that it is not self-contradictory to regard all its actions as physically conditioned insofar as they are appearances and yet also to regard their causality as physically unconditioned insofar as the acting being is a being of the understanding,^h and thus making the concept of freedom a regulative principle of reason; by it I do not cognize at all the object to which such causality is attributed – what the object may be – but I nevertheless remove the obstacle inasmuch as on the one side, in the explanation of events in the world and so too of the actions of rational beings, I grant the mechanism of natural necessity the justice of going back from the conditioned to the condition ad infinitum, while on the other side I keep open for speculative reason the place which for it is vacant, namely the intelligible, in order to transfer the unconditioned into it. But I could not *realize* this *thought*, that is, could not convert it into *cognition* of a being acting in this way, not even of its mere possibility. Pure practical reason now fills this vacant place with a determinate law of causality in an intelligible world (with freedom), namely the moral law. By this, speculative reason does not gain anything with respect to its insight but it still gains something only with respect to the *security* of its problematic concept of freedom, which is here afforded *objective* and, though only practical, undoubted *reality*. Even the concept of causality, which has application and so too significance strictly speakingⁱ only in reference to appearances, in order to connect them into experiences (as the *Critique of Pure Reason* proves) is not enlarged in such a way as to extend its use beyond the boundaries mentioned. For, if reason sought to do this it would have to try to show how the logical relation of ground and consequence could be used synthetically with a kind of intuition different from the sensible, that is, how a *causa noumenon* is possible; this it cannot do, but as practical reason it does not even concern itself with this inasmuch as it only puts the *determining ground* of the causality of the human being as a sensible being (which is given) *in pure reason* (which is therefore called practical), and accordingly uses the concept of cause itself – from whose application to objects for theoretical cognition it can here abstract altogether (since this concept is always found a priori in the understanding, even independently of any intuition) – not in order to cognize objects but to determine causality with respect to objects in general, and so for none other than a practical purpose; and thus it can transfer the determin-

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^h *Verstandeswesen*

ⁱ *dessen Anwendung, mithin auch Bedeutung eigentlich nur . . . stattfindet*

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5:50 ing ground of the will into the intelligible order of things inasmuch as it readily admits at the same time that it does not understand how the concept of cause might be determined for cognition of these things. It must, of course, cognize in a determinate way causality with respect to the actions of the will in the sensible world, since otherwise practical reason could not actually produce any deed. But as for the concept which it makes of its own causality as noumenon, it need not determine it theoretically with a view to cognition of its supersensible existence and so need not be able to give it significance in this way. For, the concept receives significance apart from this – though only for practical use – namely, through the moral law. Even regarded theoretically it always remains a pure concept of the understanding given a priori, which can be applied to objects whether they are given sensibly or not sensibly, although in the latter case it has not determinate theoretical significance or application but is merely the understanding's formal though still essential thought of an object in general. The significance which reason furnishes it through the moral law is solely practical, namely that the idea of the law of a causality (of the will) itself has causality or is its determining ground.

II.

ON THE WARRANT OF PURE REASON IN ITS PRACTICAL USE TO AN EXTENSION WHICH IS NOT POSSIBLE TO IT IN ITS SPECULATIVE USE

In the moral principle we have presented a law of causality which puts the determining ground of the latter above all conditions of the sensible world; and as for the will and hence the subject of this will (the human being),^j we have not merely *thought* it, as it is determinable inasmuch as it belongs to an intelligible world, as belonging to a world of pure understanding though in this relation unknown to us (as can happen according to the *Critique* of speculative reason): we have also *determined* it with respect to its causality by means of a law that cannot be counted as any natural law of the sensible world; and thus we have *extended* our cognition beyond the boundaries of the latter, a claim that the *Critique of Pure Reason* declared void in all speculation. How, then, is the practical use of pure reason here to be united^k with its theoretical use with respect to determining the boundaries of its competence?^l

David Hume, who can be said to have really begun all the assaults on the rights of pure reason which made a thorough investigation of them

^j I take the pronouns in the rest of this sentence to refer to "the will," although "the human being" is a possible referent.

^k *vereinigt*, perhaps "reconciled"

^l *ihres Vermögens*

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necessary, concluded as follows. The concept of *cause* is a concept that contains the *necessity* of the connection of the existence of what is different just insofar as it is different, so that if A is posited I cognize that something altogether different from it, B, must necessarily also exist. But necessity can be attributed to a connection only insofar as the connection is cognized a priori; for, experience would enable us to cognize of such a conjunction^m only that it is, not that it is necessarily so. Now it is impossible, he says, to cognize a priori and as necessary the connection between one thing and *another* (or between one determination and another altogether different from it) if they are not given in perception. Therefore the concept of a cause is itself fraudulent and deceptive and, to speak of it in the mildest way, an illusion to be excused insofar as the *custom*ⁿ (a *subjective* necessity) of perceiving certain things or their determinations as often associated along with or after one another in their existence is insensibly taken for an *objective* necessity of putting such a connection in the objects themselves; and thus the concept of a cause is acquired surreptitiously and not rightfully – indeed, it can never be acquired or certified because it demands a connection in itself void, chimerical, and untenable before reason, one to which no object can ever correspond. So, with respect to all cognition having to do with the existence of things (mathematics thus remaining excepted) *empiricism* was first introduced as the sole source of principles, but along with it the most rigorous *skepticism* with respect to the whole of natural science (as philosophy). For, on such principles we can never *infer* a consequence from the given determinations of things as existing (since for this the concept of a cause, which contains the necessity of such a connection, would be required) but can only expect, by the rule of imagination, cases similar to preceding ones, though this expectation is never secure however often it is fulfilled. Of no event could one say: something *must* have preceded it, upon which it *necessarily followed, that is, it must have a cause*; and thus, however frequent the cases one knew of in which there was such an antecedent, so that a rule could be derived from them, one could still not, on account of this, assume it as always and necessarily happening in this way, and one would also have to give blind chance its right, with which all use of reason ceases; and this firmly grounds and makes irrefutable skepticism with respect to inferences rising from effects to causes. 5:51

Mathematics escaped well so far because Hume held that its propositions were all analytic, that is, proceeded from one determination to another by virtue of identity and consequently by the principle^o of contradiction (but this is false since they are instead all synthetic; and although,

^m *Verbindung*

ⁿ Or "habit," *Gewohnheit*

^o *Satze*

e.g., geometry does not have to do with the existence of things but only with their determination a priori in a possible intuition, it nevertheless passes, just as through the causal concept, from one determination (A) to another altogether different one (B) as still necessarily connected with the former). But in the end that science, so highly esteemed for its apodictic certainty, must also succumb to *empiricism in principles* on the same ground on which Hume put custom in the place of objective necessity in the concept of cause; despite all its pride, it must consent to lower its bold claims commanding a priori assent and expect approval of the universal validity of its propositions from the kindness of observers who, as witnesses, would not refuse to admit that what the geometer propounds as principles they have always perceived as well, and who would therefore allow it to be expected in the future even though it is not necessary. In this way Hume's empiricism in principles also leads unavoidably to skepticism even with respect to mathematics and consequently in every *scientific* theoretical use of reason (for this belongs either to philosophy or to mathematics). I leave each to appraise for himself whether (in view of such a terrible downfall of the chief branches of cognition) the common use of reason will come through any better and will not instead become irretrievably entangled in this same destruction of all science, so that from the same principles a *universal* skepticism will have to follow (though it would, admittedly, concern only the learned).

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As for my labor in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which was occasioned by that Humean skeptical teaching but went much further and included the whole field of pure theoretical reason in its synthetic use and so too the field of what is generally called metaphysics, I proceeded as follows with respect to the doubt of the Scottish philosopher concerning the concept of causality. When Hume took objects of experience as things in themselves (as is done almost everywhere) he was quite correct in declaring the concept of cause to be deceptive and a false illusion; for, as to things in themselves and the determinations of them as such, it cannot be seen why, because something, A, is posited, something else, B, must necessarily be posited also, and thus he could certainly not admit such an a priori cognition of things in themselves. Still less could this acute man grant an empirical origin of this concept, since this directly contradicts the necessity of the connection that constitutes what is essential in the concept of causality; hence the concept was proscribed and into its place stepped custom in observation of the course of perceptions.

From my investigations, however, it resulted that the objects with which we have to do in experience are by no means things in themselves but only appearances and that, although in the case of things in themselves it is not to be understood and is indeed impossible to see^p how, if A

^p nicht abzusehen ist, ja unmöglich ist einzusehen

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is posited it should be *contradictory* not to posit B which is quite different from A (the necessity of the connection between A as cause and B as effect), yet it can very well be thought that as appearances they must necessarily be connected *in one experience* in a certain way (e.g., with respect to temporal relations) and cannot be separated without *contradicting* that connection by means of which this experience is possible, in which they are objects and in which alone they are cognizable by us. And it was found to be so in fact as well; and thus I was able not only to prove the objective reality of the concept of cause with respect to objects of experience but also to *deduce* it as an a priori concept because of the necessity of the connection that it brings with it, that is, to show its possibility from pure understanding without empirical sources; and thus, after removing empiricism from its origin, I was able to overthrow the unavoidable consequence of empiricism, namely skepticism first with respect to natural science and then, because skepticism in mathematics follows from just the same grounds, with respect to mathematics as well, both of which sciences have reference to objects of possible experience; in this way I was able to eradicate total doubt of whatever theoretical reason professes to have insight into. 5:54

But how is it with the application of this category of causality (and so too of all the others, for without them no cognition can be had of what exists) to things that are not objects of possible experience but lie beyond its boundaries? For I was able to deduce the objective reality of these concepts only with respect to *objects of possible experience*. But what gives them a place in the pure understanding, from which they are referred to objects in general (whether sensible or not) is just this: that I also saved them only in case I proved that objects may nevertheless be *thought* through them although not determined a priori. If anything is still wanting, it is the condition *for the application* of these categories and especially that of causality to objects, namely intuition; where this is not given, application with *a view to theoretical cognition* of an object as a noumenon is made impossible, so that such cognition, when someone ventures upon it, is altogether forbidden (as also happens in the *Critique of Pure Reason*), while the objective reality of the concept (of causality) nevertheless remains and can be used even of noumena, although this concept cannot be theoretically determined in the least and thereby produce a cognition. For, that this concept, even in relation to an object, contains nothing impossible was proved by this: that in any application to objects of the senses, its seat in the pure understanding was secured; and even though, when it might subsequently be referred to things in themselves (which cannot be objects of experience), it is not capable of being determined so as to represent *a determinate object* for the sake of theoretical cognition, yet for the sake of something else (the practical, perhaps) it could be capable of being determined for its application; and this would not be the case if, as

Hume maintained, this concept of causality contained something that it is always impossible to think.

5:55 In order now to discover this condition of the application of the concept in question to noumena, we need only recall *why we are not satisfied with its application to objects of experience* but would like to use it of things in themselves as well. For then it soon becomes apparent that it is not a theoretical but a practical purpose that makes this a necessity for us. Even if we were successful in this application we would still have made no true acquisition for speculation, in cognition of nature or, in general, with respect to any objects that might be given to us; instead we would at most have taken a long step from the sensibly conditioned (and we already have enough to do to remain in it and diligently go through the chain of causes) to the supersensible, in order to complete our cognition on the side of grounds and to fix its boundary, although an infinite gulf between that boundary and what we know remains always unfilled and we would have listened to a frivolous curiosity rather than a solid desire for knowledge.

However, besides the relation in which the *understanding* stands to object (in theoretical cognition) it has also a relation to the faculty of desire, which is therefore called the will and is called the pure will insofar as the pure understanding (which in this case is called reason) is practical through the mere representation of a law. The objective reality of a pure will or, what is the same thing, of a pure practical reason is given a priori in the moral law, as it were by a fact – for so we may call a determination of the will that is unavoidable even though it does not rest upon empirical principles. In the concept of a will, however, the concept of causality is already contained, and thus in the concept of a pure will there is contained the concept of a causality with freedom, that is, a causality that is not determinable in accordance with laws of nature and hence not capable of any empirical intuition as proof of its reality, but that nevertheless perfectly justifies its objective reality a priori in the pure practical law, though not (as is easily seen) with a view to the theoretical use of reason but only to its practical use. Now, the concept of a being that has free will is the concept of a *causa noumenon*; and one is already assured that this concept does not contradict itself since the concept of a cause, as having arisen wholly from the pure understanding, also has its objective reality with respect to objects in general assured by the deduction inasmuch as, being in its origin independent of all sensible conditions and so of itself not restricted to phenomena (unless one should want to make a determinate theoretical use of it), the concept could certainly be applied to things as beings of the pure understanding. But because no intuition, which can only be sensible, can be put under this application, *causa noumenon* with respect to the theoretical use of reason is, though a possible, thinkable concept, nevertheless an empty one. But I do not now claim to *know theoretically* by this concept the

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constitution of a being *insofar as* it has a *pure* will; it is enough for me to thereby only designate it as such a being and hence only to connect the concept of causality with that of freedom (and with what is inseparable from it, the moral law as its determining ground); and I am certainly authorized to do so by virtue of the pure, not empirical origin of the concept of cause, inasmuch as I consider myself authorized to make no other use of it than with regard to the moral law which determines its reality, that is, only a practical use.

Had I, with Hume, deprived the concept of causality of objective reality in its practical⁹ use not only with respect to things in themselves (the supersensible) but also with respect to objects of the senses, it would be declared devoid of all meaning and, as a theoretically impossible concept, quite unusable; and since no use at all can be made of what is nothing,^r the practical use of a concept *theoretically null* would have been absurd. Now, however, the concept of an empirically unconditioned causality is indeed theoretically empty (without any intuition appropriate to it) but it is nevertheless possible and refers to an undetermined object; in place of that, however, the concept is given significance in the moral law and consequently in its practical reference; thus I have, indeed, no intuition that would determine its objective theoretical reality for it, but it has nonetheless a real application which is exhibited *in concreto* in dispositions or maxims, that is, it has practical reality which can be specified; and this is sufficient to justify it even with regard to noumena.

But this objective reality of a pure concept of the understanding in the field of the supersensible, once introduced, gives all the other categories objective reality as well, though only insofar as they stand in *necessary* connection with the determining ground of the pure will (the moral law) – an objective reality which is, however, of only practical applicability and has not the least influence on theoretical cognition of these objects, as insight into their nature by pure reason, so as to extend this. As we shall also find in the sequel, these categories have reference only to beings as *intelligences*, and in them only to the relation of *reason* to the *will* and consequently always to the *practical* only, and beyond this they lay claim to no cognition of these beings; as for whatever other properties, belonging to the theoretical way of representing such supersensible things, may be brought forward in connection with these categories, these are without exception to be counted not as knowledge but only as a warrant (for practical purposes, however, a necessity) to admit and presuppose them, even where supersensible beings (such as God) are assumed by analogy, that is, by a purely rational relation of which we make a practical use with respect to what is sensible; and so, by this application to the supersensible

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⁹ Vorländer amends this to read *im theoretischen Gebrauche*, “in its theoretical use.”
^r *von Nichts*

but only for practical purposes, pure theoretical reason is not given the least encouragement to fly into the transcendent.⁵

The analytic of practical reason

Chapter II

On the concept of an object of pure practical reason

5:58 By a concept of an object of practical reason I understand the representation of an object as an effect possible through freedom. To be an object of practical cognition so understood signifies, therefore, only the relation of the will to the action by which it or its opposite would be made real, and to appraise whether or not something is an object of *pure* practical reason is only to distinguish the possibility or impossibility of *willing* the action by which, if we had the ability to do so (and experience must judge about this), a certain object would be made real. If the object is taken as the determining ground of our faculty of desire, the *physical possibility* of it by the free use of our powers must precede our appraisal of whether it is an object of practical reason or not. On the other hand, if the a priori law can be regarded as the determining ground of the action, and this, accordingly, can be regarded as determined by pure practical reason, then the judgment whether or not something is an object of pure practical reason is quite independent of this comparison with our physical ability, and the question is only whether we could *will* an action which is directed to the existence of an object if the object were within our power;⁶ hence the *moral possibility* of the action must come first, since in this case the determining ground of the will is not the object but the law of the will.

The only objects of a practical reason are therefore those of the *good* and the *evil*. For by the first is understood a necessary object of the faculty of desire, by the second, of the faculty of aversion,⁷ both, however, in accordance with a principle of reason.

If the concept of the good is not to be derived from an antecedent practical law but, instead, is to serve as its basis, it can be only the concept of something whose existence promises pleasure and thus determines the causality of the subject, that is, the faculty of desire, to produce it. Now because it is impossible to see a priori which representation will be accompanied with *pleasure* and which with *displeasure*, it would be up to experience alone to make out what is immediately good or evil. The property of the

⁵ zum Schwärmen ins Überschwengliche

⁶ in unserer Gewalt

⁷ des Begehrungs- . . . des Verabscheuungsvermögen