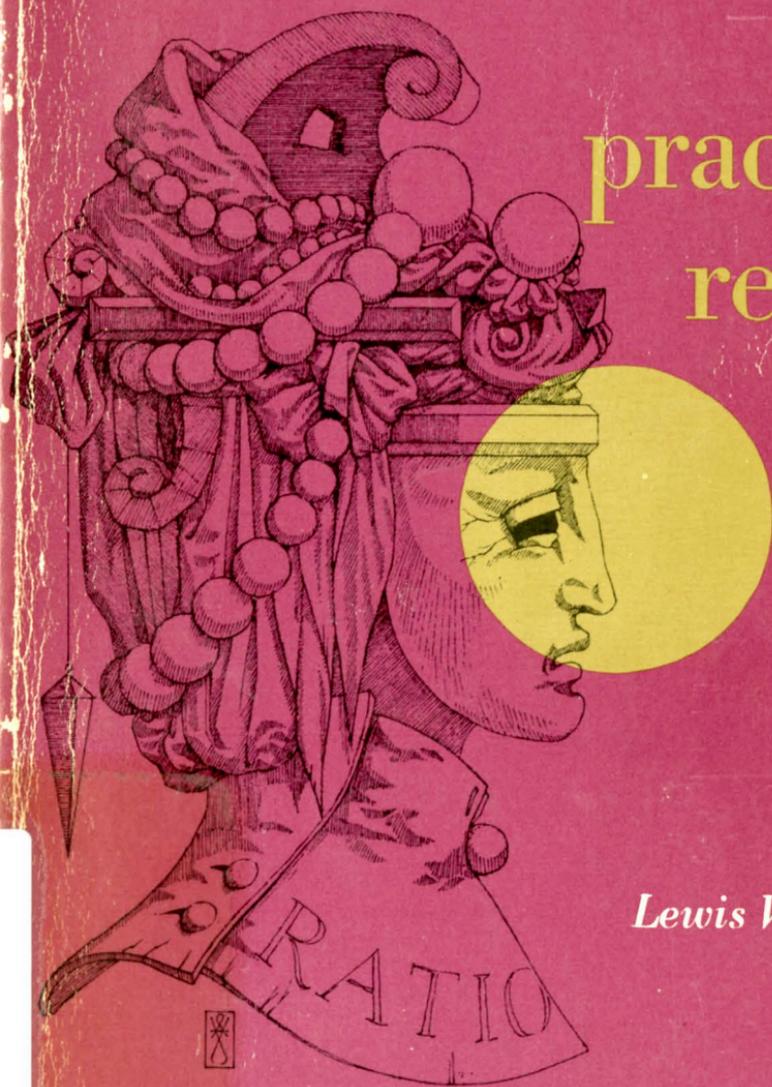


A commentary on Kant's

critique
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practical
reason



Lewis White Beck

*A Commentary on Kant's
Critique of Practical Reason*

By

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Phoenix Books

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

CHICAGO & LONDON

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Annandale-on-Hudson, N. Y.

scholarship to be prerequisite to understanding the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is not called for here.

We do not know much about the actual writing of the book. But in the light of evidence about to be adduced, it is probable that the book was begun in the spring of 1787, brought nearly to completion by June, and finished by September. I speak only of the actual writing; most of the contents of the book had been clear in Kant's mind at least as early as 1785. But the plan of writing a *Critique of Practical Reason* as a single, integral work did not slowly mature. The book was not long anticipated, and Kant came suddenly, and presumably with reluctance, to the decision to write it.

In order to understand this decision, it is necessary to go back toward the beginning of Kant's literary career to see what the book was that he did want and plan to write.

§ 2. THE DEFERRED PLAN TO WRITE A METAPHYSICS OF MORALS

Kant's writings in the 1750's and 1760's were almost all in the field of the natural sciences. But his interest in them was genuinely philosophical, and he was concerned most of all with questions of the method and scope of the sciences. Even in these works, however, when occasion offered, he commented freely upon ethical and religious questions which had become involved in the cosmological speculations of the day. This direction of his thinking is especially clear in his most important scientific work, the *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* (1755).

The so-called *Prize Essay: An Inquiry into the Evidence of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morals*, published by the Berlin Academy in 1764, is the first of his works which deals more than incidentally with questions of moral philosophy. Even here, as is seen from its title, it was the foundations and methods of ethics that were in the center of his interest. This essay, often interpreted as manifesting a commitment to the moral-sense theory of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, and hence to empiricism in ethics, ends with a query the answer to which gives direction to all his subsequent work in moral philosophy. He says there that "it is still a question to be settled whether it is simply the cognitive faculty or whether it is feeling . . . which decides the basic principles of practical philosophy."⁵

Metaphysics is regarded in the *Prize Essay* as a "philosophy of the ultimate grounds of our knowledge," as philosophy "applied to the more universal rational insights." While rejecting the alleged identity

⁵ *Prize Essay*, II, 300 (Beck, 285).

of the methods of mathematics and those of metaphysics—an identity almost definitive of the dominant metaphysics of the time—Kant believed that metaphysics, following its own method of analyzing experience, could find indemonstrable propositions as certain as those of mathematics.⁶ The basic indemonstrable propositions of metaphysics would be self-evident rational principles, though not definitions or intuitively certain axioms as in mathematics. He thought metaphysics to be possible as a rigorous science, and already to exist in natural theology. The metaphysical foundations of morals, however, were yet to be found: "The primary grounds of morals are not yet, in their present state, capable of all requisite evidence."⁷

Kant must soon have felt capable of supplying this lack. In a letter to Lambert the next year, he announced a fateful plan that, in one form or another, was to attract, even almost to haunt, him throughout his mature life. It was the plan to write a work "on the metaphysical foundations of practical philosophy."⁸ The title of this work and a report on his progress with it were given in a letter to Herder in 1768, in which he said that he was then at work on a "Metaphysics of Morals" and that he hoped to complete it within a year.⁹

We can only speculate on what would have been the contents and structure of this work, had it been completed at that time. But we do not need to make any conjectures about it for our present purposes.

⁶ It was in this spirit that he favorably compared Rousseau to Newton, for both discovered "the hidden law the observation of which justifies providence" (*Bemerkungen zu den Beobachtungen*, XX, 58–59). Similarly, he esteemed the work of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Hume as containing the method by which "the abiding nature of man" can be discerned in the variety of his empirical appearances. This, he said, is "an excellent discovery of our days," and accordingly he promised to evaluate historically and philosophically what happens before showing what *ought* to happen (*Nachricht von der Einrichtung seiner Vorlesungen in dem Winterhalbjahr von 1765–1766*, II, 311). Each of these passages indicated the analytical method he was to use, beginning with observations and rising by abstraction from empirical to metaphysical concepts. The passage in the announcement of his lectures, however, does not indicate that Kant at this time thought a descriptive, merely empirical, ethics to be possible, though it has been interpreted as evidence for this by some writers.

⁷ *Prize Essay*, II, 298 (Beck, 282).

⁸ To Lambert, December 31, 1765 (X, 56).

⁹ To Herder, May 9, 1768 (X, 74). The book itself was announced as forthcoming by the publisher Kanter, under the title "Critique of Moral Taste." The term "metaphysics of morals" was little used before Kant. It seems to have originated with Canz, *Disciplinae morales omnes* (1739), according to Max Wundt, *Die deutsche Schulphilosophie im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1945), p. 223. Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 251, on A. F. Hoffmann's conception (*Vernunftlehre* [1737]) of metaphysics and moral philosophy, which was closer to Kant than to Wolff.

For though Kant's thoughts on ethics were undoubtedly undergoing changes during this period, the most important change at this time occurred in his view of the nature of metaphysics itself. His views on this, unlike his ethical views at this time, can be documented and described with confidence.

These changes were clearly shown in his *Inaugural Dissertation: The Forms and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World*, published in 1770 on the occasion of his accession to the professorship in Königsberg. This is a brief systematic treatise on metaphysics. It not only distinguished but also sharply separated the sensible and the intellectual elements in knowledge, and it discussed the "real use" of the intellect in metaphysics whereby truths are discovered, contrasting it with the "logical use" in merely drawing inferences from given judgments. It contained a clear, though later surrendered, claim on the proper method and realm of metaphysics as knowledge of an intelligible world, with nothing borrowed from sensible knowledge of phenomena. Metaphysics, as pure knowledge dealing with concepts not derived from experience but "given by the pure intellect itself," was held to be possible and valid only when pursued according to a rule for preventing the principles of sensibility from "passing their boundaries and meddling with the intellectual."¹⁰ Such a rule, of course, depended upon a clear and systematic discernment of the roots of our concepts—a discernment that he believed he had achieved and which he never seriously revised, even when he later concluded that metaphysics, as envisioned in this work, was impossible.

Metaphysics of morals thereafter took on a very different look. Whereas "metaphysics" had previously meant hardly more than the most general conceptual knowledge issuing from an analysis of experience, it now came to mean systematic philosophy containing nothing empirical but referring to a world beyond experience.¹¹ Metaphysics is knowledge of things as they are, and concepts of the appearances of things, i.e., space and time, do not belong within it. A metaphysics of morals, therefore, could not be a continuation of the empirical-anthropological investigations of Shaftesbury; thenceforth Kant invariably made clear the independence of metaphysics of morals from all anthropology, even from "pragmatic anthropology," which deals with how men should conduct themselves in the ordinary affairs of life. Rather, metaphysics of morals had to have its basis in a Platonism of a non-phenomenal world. "Moral philosophy, so far as it supplies the first principles of moral judgment, is known only through the pure under-

¹⁰ *Inaugural Dissertation*, § 24 (Handyside, 73).

¹¹ Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 843 = B 871.

standing, and itself belongs to pure philosophy," i.e., metaphysics.¹² It contains no empirical concepts of human nature.

That he was satisfied with this new path to metaphysics and with its goal, at least for a while, is shown by a letter of the same year to Lambert, in which he says he planned "this winter to complete my investigations concerning pure moral philosophy and . . . the metaphysics of morals,"¹³ in which there would be no empirical principles. Contrary to this fond hope, however, the *Inaugural Dissertation* marked the beginning of the "silent decade" in which he published almost nothing but during which the herculean labor of writing the *Critique of Pure Reason* was performed, while the "Metaphysics of Morals," still repeatedly promised, was delayed again and again.

Less than a year later he wrote Marcus Herz that he was at work on a book to be titled "The Boundaries of Sensibility and Reason"—the book the world now knows as the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The book as then planned was to contain not only a theory of appearances ("Phenomenology") but also the essentials of a theory of morals, taste, and metaphysics.¹⁴ On February 21, 1772, he described, again to Herz, his plan for this book. It was to contain a section on metaphysics, one part of which was to give "the ultimate grounds of morality," and it was to be published within three months.¹⁵ In 1773, in still another letter to Herz, he announced his plan to complete "my transcendental philosophy, which is really a critical examination of pure reason,"¹⁶ and then "to get to metaphysics, which has only two parts, the metaphysics of nature and the metaphysics of morals, the latter of which I shall finish first, and towards which I am looking forward with pleasure."¹⁷

The letter of 1772 shows Kant's dissatisfaction with the method of the *Dissertation* in establishing the possibility of a priori knowledge of a

¹² *Inaugural Dissertation*, § 9 (Handyside, 49). Moral concepts, though confused, are not sensible or empirical but are known by the pure intellect itself. Earlier rationalistic philosophers had thought of "sensible" and "confused" as corollaries in descriptions of modes of cognition, and the obscurity of ethical principles had therefore led them to combine, in a most astonishing manner, empiricism in ethics with rationalism in their philosophy as a whole. Kant shows in the *Dissertation* that this confusion no longer troubles him, that he has now outgrown it, if he ever had fallen into it.

¹³ To Lambert, September 2, 1770 (X, 97).

¹⁴ To Herz, June 7, 1771 (X, 123).

¹⁵ To Herz, February 21, 1772 (X, 132).

¹⁶ Literally, "Critique of Pure Reason," though probably these words were not meant then as a title of the book.

¹⁷ To Herz, end of 1773 (X, 144).

purely intelligible world; but there was not yet any sign of his having to give up the hope and expectation of being able to establish speculative metaphysics on a solid ground. After the letter of 1772, however, Kant's "recollection of Hume" awakened him from his "dogmatic slumber," and he gave up forever the dream of a speculative metaphysics of the intelligible world. Still, the transcendental philosophy or critical examination of pure reason, as elaborated in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, did provide the prerequisites, in Kant's opinion, for a "Metaphysics of Morals" in two senses: a systematic presentation of the a priori laws of morality, and a practical rather than a speculative answer to traditional metaphysical questions.

So in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as it was at last published in 1781, Kant still spoke of the metaphysics of morals. He distinguished two parts of philosophy: critique, or propaedeutic philosophy, which "investigates the faculty of reason in all its pure a priori knowledge," and metaphysics, or the "system of pure reason" which "exhibits in systematic connection the whole body . . . of philosophical knowledge arising out of pure reason." "Metaphysics," he continued, "is divided into that of the speculative and that of the practical employment of pure reason, and is therefore either metaphysics of nature or metaphysics of morals."¹⁸ The entire faculty of reason, including the practical, was subjected to critique; that is, the *Critique of Pure Reason* was meant to be propaedeutic to metaphysics in both its divisions.¹⁹

In spite of mentioning the metaphysics of morals as a division of pure philosophy, in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant did not promise to write such a work; he projected only a "Metaphysics of Nature."²⁰ Transcendental philosophy, which is the system of all principles of reason so far as it concerns knowledge of objects, contains only pure a priori concepts and principles, and thus it excludes ethics. For though the highest principles of ethics were said even then to be a priori and intellectual, "in the construction of a system of pure morality empirical concepts must necessarily be brought into the concept of duty."²¹

¹⁸ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 841 = B 869.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, A xii, note.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, A xxi.

²¹ *Ibid.*, B 29. The *Critique of Pure Reason* excludes moral philosophy from transcendental philosophy, not because the former is not pure, but because the latter is concerned solely with the cognitive (cf. A 801 = B 829). Kant tacitly widened the concept of transcendental philosophy (as he narrowed that of metaphysics) until it is hardly distinguishable from critique itself; and though he never explicitly included moral philosophy in transcendental philosophy, we shall see the

Instead of a "metaphysics of morals," therefore, we have in the *Critique of Pure Reason* a "Canon of Pure Reason," i.e., a statement of the a priori principles of the correct employment of pure reason. This employment is entirely and exclusively practical, not speculative. The Canon does not answer the practical problem as such, viz., "What ought I to do?" but the problem he calls both theoretical and practical, to wit, "What may I hope if I do my duty?" Thus was introduced the discussion of the immortality of the soul and the existence of God, which are Ideas of pure theoretical reason, dialectical and empty for theoretical cognition. It is only in relation to man's will that these Ideas have any necessary use, as guides or regulative principles for the pursuit of happiness through becoming worthy of it.²²

Again, Kant did not long remain satisfied with a mere Canon of Pure Reason. He soon returned to the long-deferred plan, not mentioned in the *Critique* itself, to write a systematic work on ethics, presumably to include a metaphysics of morals, for he referred in 1783 to being at

full apparatus of transcendental philosophy in discussions included in the *Critique of Practical Reason*.

The tacit inclusion is due not merely to a widening of the scope of transcendental philosophy, however; it is also to be attributed to a deepening of the level of moral analysis itself. Thus the passage just quoted says that in a system of moral philosophy empirical concepts will have to be brought into the *concept of duty*, whereas in A 15, the corresponding passage in the first edition, he had said, with less caution, that "the concepts of pleasure and pain, and of desires and inclinations, etc. will have to be presupposed." In both editions he distinguished between the doctrine of virtue, or applied ethics, and pure ethics, the former of which alone is in part dependent on empirical or psychological principles (A 54-55 = B 79). The *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* are meant, of course, to be pure ethics in the sense of this passage, even though in the *Critique* he makes use of definitions of psychological concepts needed in the concept of duty and in depicting the relation of man to the moral law, which requires no psychological concepts for its formulation. But in actual composition of the second *Critique* and even of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, as we shall see (below, p. 53), Kant made no very consistent effort to separate discussion of pure from applied ethics, or metaphysics from critique, or either from system.

We shall see that the ascribing of something very like, if not identical with, transcendental status to practical principles was one of the factors leading to the decision to publish the second *Critique* on the same level with the first and not subordinate to it, as a metaphysics of morals would have been subordinate to it. Later Kant came to regard the first *Critique* as not a sufficient propaedeutic to all metaphysics, and he indicates this implicitly in constantly referring to the first *Critique* not by its correct title but by such expressions as "the critique of speculative reason," as in the first paragraph of the second *Critique* (3[87]).

²² *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 806 = B 834. It is not quite accurate to say that this is their *only* use; for they are also regulative of inquiry, but they contribute nothing substantively to knowledge.

work on "the first part of my ethics."²³ We do not know whether he was referring to the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* or not. But when the *Foundations* was published in April, 1785, he again mentioned his plan, now twenty years old, for a "Metaphysics of Morals" to which the *Foundations* was only preliminary.²⁴

The *Foundations* differs sufficiently from the Canon of Pure Reason to make it easy to explain Kant's decision to write the *Foundations* as still another propaedeutic to the ever receding "Metaphysics of Morals." The Canon presented a view of moral problems without the concept of autonomy and independent of the solution of the problem of freedom that had already been worked out in the first *Critique*—the two foundation stones on which all his later work in practical philosophy was to be based.

Fragment 6 of the *Lose Blätter*,²⁵ which I think must have been written between 1781 and 1784, shows the transition to the new position in asking of practical judgments the question that the *Critique of Pure Reason* raised with respect to theoretical judgments: How are synthetic judgments a priori possible? For he realized at this time that morality requires synthetic a priori judgments, that these judgments cannot be justified in exactly the same way that their theoretical counterparts had been justified, and that to justify them requires a more positive concept of freedom than that used in the Canon. Justification of synthetic a priori judgments everywhere in Kant requires what he invariably calls a "Deduction," not a canon of use. And the proper place for a deduction is a critique.

But, instead of a critique, in 1785 Kant presented the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*. And yet:

There is, to be sure, no other foundation for such a metaphysics of morals than a *Kritik* of pure practical reason, just as there is no other foundation for a metaphysics than the already published *Kritik* of pure speculative reason. But, in the first place, a *Kritik* of pure practical reason is not of such extreme importance as that of speculative reason, because the human reason, even in the commonest mind, can easily be brought to a high degree of correctness and completeness in moral matters, while, on the other hand, in its theoretical but pure use it is entirely dialectical. In the second place, I require of a *Kritik* of pure practical reason, if it is to be complete, that the unity of the practical reason and the speculative be subject to presentation under a common principle, because in the final analysis there can be but one and the same reason, which must be differentiated only in applica-

²³ To Mendelssohn, August 16, 1783 (X, 346-47).

²⁴ *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 391 (6).

²⁵ Reflexion 7202.

of saving time for his "proposed scheme of providing a metaphysics of nature and a metaphysics of morals"²⁹ and makes no mention of the work that was actually to occupy him that summer—the writing of the *Critique of Practical Reason*.

§ 3. THE DECISION TO WRITE THE "CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON"

In 1786 a preliminary work on the metaphysics of nature (*Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*) was published, and Kant turned to the heavy labor of preparing the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. It was begun by April, 1786, and completed by April, 1787. With his usual optimism in such matters, he had estimated that the revision would take six months. He told Bering that his "System of Metaphysics" would be delayed by two years, because he was also planning a "System of Practical Philosophy" to be published before the book on metaphysics proper.³⁰

What was this "System of Practical Philosophy"? We do not know, but we may presume that it was the "Metaphysics of Morals," so often promised, so long postponed. Certainly it was not the *Critique of Practical Reason*; Kant almost always distinguished between the words "critique" and "system" and "metaphysics," even though their scopes in fact overlap to a large extent. So, as late as April, 1786, we know that the *Critique of Practical Reason* was not planned as such.

We first hear of a "Critique of Pure Practical Reason" as a specific literary project on November 8, 1786. Born, in a reply to a letter from Kant not now extant, spoke of the new work as an addition to the *Critique of Pure Reason*.³¹ The *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung* (Jena) on November 21, in an announcement of the future publication of the second edition, said: "To the Critique of pure speculative reason contained in the first edition, in the second there will be appended a critique of pure practical reason."³²

²⁹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, B xliii. In the Preface to A, only a "metaphysics of nature" was promised.

³⁰ To Bering, April 7, 1786 (X, 441). Bering, in his reply of May 10 (X, 445) regretted the delay and expressed the wish that he could talk with Kant. "Perhaps soon," he wrote, "our aeronauts will make their trips less expensive and dangerous, and then a trip of 140 miles [*sic*—from Marburg to Königsberg] will be a trivial thing."

³¹ Born to Kant, November 8, 1786 (X, 471).

³² The notice is reprinted in Ak. III, 556. That this information came from Kant himself, or at least that it did not originate with the editor (Schütz), is made clear in Schütz's letter to Kant of November 3, 1786 (X, 469). Kant had written to Born and Schütz on the same day (May 26) and may have mentioned his plan to them at that time, for Born clearly had the information before it was published by Schütz. Unfortunately, the letters of May 26 are not extant.

During 1786 and 1787, therefore, Kant must have entertained at various times the following plans: (a) to write a "Metaphysics of Morals" based on the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Foundations*; (b) to write a "System of Practical Philosophy" as soon as he had completed the revision of the *Critique of Pure Reason*; (c) to append a "Critique of Pure Practical Reason" to the new edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*; (d) to write the *Critique of Practical Reason*, as we know it today. The first two projects were no doubt substantially identical.³³ What interests us is the shift from *a* and *b*, considered together, to *c*, and the final decision to go forward with *d*. As we shall see, Kant did not go directly from *c* to *d*.

The step from *b* to *c* represents the magnitude of development in Kant's views from the Canon of Pure Reason to the *Foundations*. The *Critique of Pure Reason*, when it was written, was regarded as a propaedeutic to both divisions of metaphysics; but by 1785 the proper basis of a metaphysics of morals was located in the concept of autonomy, a concept not so much as mentioned in the first *Critique*. But plan *c* was dropped, not at first in favor of *d* but because of a return to *a* or *b*, as shown in the Preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Some of the reasons for dropping it must have been external. The success of the *Foundations* had created a demand for a new edition of the first *Critique*, and there was considerable urgency in meeting it. By November, 1786, the "six months" that Kant had estimated for the revision had already elapsed, and the work was still six months from completion; and, even so, all the revisions were in parts which have little or no direct bearing on questions of practical philosophy. He left untouched the rest of the Dialectic (with the exception of the Paralogisms) with the surprising explanation that he had not found any serious misunderstanding of the other parts³⁴—misunderstandings which he found in plenty when he came, in 1787, to deal with the critics who had charged that the *Critique* and the *Foundations* were incompatible. The differences between the teachings of the Canon and of the *Foundations*

³³ The two divisions of work, when it was no longer a question of two different literary projects, were later distinguished from each other in the statement that a "system of practical philosophy" would contain anthropological data and would presuppose a metaphysics of morals, which would take nothing from anthropology (*Metaphysik der Sitten*, Einleitung, § ii [VI, 216–17]). In actual execution, however, the *Metaphysik der Sitten* is more like the projected "system." The manifold changes in Kant's conception of what "metaphysics of morals" should contain are traced by Georg Anderson, "Kant's Metaphysik der Sitten—ihre Idee und ihr Verhältnis zur Ethik der Wolffschen Schule," *Kant-Studien*, XXVIII (1923), 41–61.

³⁴ *Critique of Pure Reason*, B xli.

dations were too great to add an architectonic paraphrase of the latter to the former; there would have had to be extensive rewriting as well, and the architectonic structure of the Methodology of the first *Critique* would have been completely destroyed. His solution of this problem was to provide a new and extensive Preface to the second edition, which showed his thinking on the ethical problem, while leaving the Canon unchanged.

Furthermore, the original *Critique* was too long to add another major work to it, even if it could have been fitted into its shape; the revisions he did make added another thirty to its original 850 pages. Again, the winter of 1786–87 was a time when Kant was rector of the University, and on this occasion, at least, this was not simply a sinecure or position of honor. There were the ceremonies attendant upon the death of Frederick the Great in August, 1786, and the accession of Friedrich Wilhelm II later in the year, in all of which Kant had a major role to play.³⁵ All these facts help explain Kant's desire to restrict the revisions of the *Critique of Pure Reason* to the absolutely essential, and we know his impatience to get on with plan *a* or *b*, now deferred nearly twenty years.

We may then suppose that the plan to write a separate *Critique of Practical Reason* as a separate work was formed later than April, 1787, the date of the Preface to the second edition of the first *Critique*, replacing the plan mentioned there for going ahead with a "Metaphysics of Morals." What reasons led to this final, fateful, decision?

I shall suggest several. The first was Kant's acknowledgment, even in 1785, that a complete critical examination of practical reason was not given in the *Foundations*. Two fundamental topics were not dealt with in that work, and at least one of them was a topic both intrinsically important and fascinating to Kant's turn of mind: the proof of the ultimate unity of theoretical and practical reason. The second was the connection between the moral law, applicable to rational beings in general, and man, a connection not to be based upon anthropology but on an a priori connection that Kant discerned between will and feeling. This transition to specifically human reason was adumbrated in the *Foundations*, but it was essential to plans *a* and *b* that it be fully elaborated. Thus arose the necessity for what we now have as chapter iii of the Analytic of the second *Critique*.

Another must have been the desire, natural to Kant and welcome to his audience, to develop more systematically his concept of "the key-

³⁵ It should perhaps be remembered also that Joseph Green died in 1786, and Kant's earliest biographers, e.g., Jachmann, tell us how much this event affected the philosopher and the daily course of his life.

stone of the whole architecture of pure and even speculative reason" (3 [88]), i.e., the concept of freedom. This concept had been established only as a possibility, i.e., as not self-contradictory, in the first *Critique*; discussion of it in its full depth was ruled out as being unnecessary in practical philosophy as such; and it had been explored, but not systematically, in the third section of the *Foundations*; but it needed full encyclopedic and critical treatment.

Fourth, there was the objection that in the *Foundations* Kant had gone against the injunctions made against speculative knowledge in the first *Critique*. This was a charge made by a man he respected (Pistorius), which, if valid, threatened the entire critical philosophy, in both its theoretical and its practical parts. It was a charge that had to be met at all costs.³⁶ The method of postulates, used in the Canon, easily led to such criticisms; but the development of an antinomy and its successful resolution was always Kant's way of exposing illicit pretensions, and he could not renounce the opportunity to develop an antinomy in the concept of the highest good as a way of showing that he was not, in fact, advancing speculative claims.

Very closely related to all these reasons was Kant's desire to answer the critics who had raised still other objections, before building on foundations that had been widely challenged.

Finally, I think Kant saw an opportunity to strengthen the conviction that he had sought to establish in the first *Critique* by writing another book, from another point of view, which would lead to some of the same conclusions by a different route. *The second Critique* is not a continuation of the first, though the Preface to it may make the reader forget that it is not. *The second Critique* made an entirely fresh beginning in another realm of experience; and Kant warned repeatedly against self-consciously trying to avoid discussions already completed in the first and against keeping the first so much in mind that the natural path of the second would be affected by extraneous considerations (7, 106 [92, 201]). The first point of fruitful contact between the two books was reached only in the Deduction. At that place it was essential to Kant's argument that the *independence* of the two works be granted; the argument required that there be a common focus from two quite different angles, and, at the end of the Analytic, Kant insisted, perhaps more than was justified, upon this independence of the two works—as if the common focus were a gratifying surprise to him because "their agreement was by no means sought after" (106 [201]). Such a "confirmation," however specious it may seem to a reader who

³⁶ *Critique of Practical Reason*, 6–7 (91–92): "Only a detailed *Critique of Practical Reason* can set aside all these misconceptions."

is not convinced that there can be such single-mindedness in any man's work on a single part of a larger whole,³⁷ was one that could not even have been proposed in a work that was either a part of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (plan *c*) or in a metaphysics of morals based on the first *Critique* (plans *a* and *b*).

These and perhaps still other reasons determined Kant, after April, 1787 (the date of the Preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*), to undertake the new and unannounced book. On June 25 of that year he wrote Schütz that the *Critique of Practical Reason* was nearing completion and would be sent to the publisher within a week. We do not know when it was actually finished, though in September he wrote that it was in the hands of the publisher.³⁸ There was a delay in getting a font of new and sharper type for it, but it was delivered to Kant in December, with the publication date given as 1788. Even this book, however, he called only preliminary to a "Metaphysics of Morals" (161 [260]).

Taking all the evidence in hand, the book cannot have taken more than fifteen months to write; and this maximal estimate is based on the supposition that he actually worked on plans *a*, *b*, and *c* and that he worked on them at the very same time that he was making the very heavy revisions, in quite other topics, of the first *Critique*. The second supposition conflicts with all we know of Kant's working habits; and if the first is correct, there is no evidence of it in any "stratification" or "patchwork" structure of the completed book. Moreover, this maximal estimate leaves quite unexplained Kant's silence on plans for such a book in April, 1787. Apart from the initial incredibility of supposing that a man could do such a feat, it is in best accord with all our definite evidence to conclude that the book was begun not earlier than April, 1787, and finished before September. The initial incredibility weighs little, however, when we remember that the *Critique of Pure Reason* was "brought to completion" in an equally short interval.

Such was the long series of deferred plans, evolving through more than thirty years from the *Prize Essay* to the final *Metaphysics of Mor-*

³⁷ And it will appear especially unconvincing to one who remembers that Kant said that it was practical concerns that led to the distinction between phenomena and noumena, and his remark that the foundation of the critical philosophy lay in the concept of freedom, in considering the imputability of actions (cf. *Lose Blätter zur Preisschrift über die Fortschritte der Metaphysik*, XX, 335; *Reflexion* 6339). In the *Fortschritte der Metaphysik* itself (XX, 311), however, he does modify this and state that there are "two angles" around which metaphysics or critique (it is not possible to tell which is the antecedent of *sie*) turns: the theory of the ideality of space and time and the reality of the concept of freedom.

³⁸ To Schütz, June 25, 1787 (X, 490); to Jakob, September 11, 1787 (X, 494).

ments. He held that mathematical judgments, such as the theorems of mathematics, and the principles of a "pure science of nature," like "Every event has a cause," are a priori synthetic. Hume, as Kant tells us (13, 52 [99, 142]), regarded mathematical judgments as analytic because he recognized that they were a priori, and he believed that scientific principles like that of causation were a posteriori because they were not analytic. The consequence of regarding the causal principle as merely a product of custom or habit, built upon induction and therefore a posteriori, is skepticism in science as well as in metaphysics; and Hume, Kant says, was saved from universal skepticism only by retaining the apriority of mathematical knowledge, which he saved from skepticism only because he mistakenly believed that it was analytic.

It is easy enough to explain the possibility of judgments of the first two kinds. Previous philosophers had not even noticed that the third kind of judgment existed; for Kant, however, they are essential even for synthetic a posteriori judgments, since any judgment based on experience, such as "The sun warms the stone," presupposes an a priori synthetic judgment of the connection of one event to another as cause to effect. The problem of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is, therefore, How are synthetic a priori judgments possible?

§ 3. THE "COPERNICAN REVOLUTION"

The answer to the question is vividly described in what has been called Kant's "Copernican Revolution" in philosophy. In a justly famous passage in the Preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant compares his new theory of knowledge to the Copernican system in astronomy. The predecessors of Copernicus had had difficulty in explaining the apparent motions of the planets on the assumption that they all revolved around the earth. Before Kant, it was similarly impossible in philosophy to explain how there could be a priori knowledge of things on the assumption that knowledge is a passive conformity to an object. "Failing of satisfactory progress in explaining the movements of the heavenly bodies on the assumption that they all revolved around the spectator," Kant says, Copernicus "tried whether he might not have better success if he made the spectator to revolve and the stars to remain at rest."² By analogy, Kant did the same thing. If the phenomenal characteristics of objects, the way they appear to us, are explained in terms of the conditions of our knowing them, it is possible to see how knowledge of these characteristics can be a priori, because they are dependent in part at least upon the functions of the spectator. Then it becomes necessary, of course, to make a clear dis-

² *Critique of Pure Reason*, B xvi.

distinction between the phenomenal and the real characteristics of objects, just as Copernicus, in rejecting the Ptolemaic epicycles, had to make a clear distinction between the real and the apparent planetary motions. Let the things in themselves be as they may, the objects of knowledge, which are their appearances to us, must conform to the structure and synthetic activity of the knowing mind.

The faculties of the knowing mind which make knowledge of phenomena possible are sensibility, or receptivity to data, which presents the sensations for our conceptions and through which our conceptions are related to actual objects, and understanding, which connects the conceptions into synthetic judgments about objects. The a priori forms of the data, to which they must all conform, are space and time. Therefore, all objects that we can know must be spatiotemporal. The a priori rules for the synthesis of concepts into judgments about objects are twelve categories of the understanding, which are derived from the forms of judgments in formal logic.

Both the forms of intuition and the categories may be called "subjective" in the sense that they are forms of our experience, not of metaphysical realities or things in themselves. But they are "objective" in the sense that they are not personal, psychological features of this or that mind, but are rules for the conduct of experience from the reception of data to the establishment of knowledge of public objects in one space and time, the same for all observers. They are thus the foundation for the kind of objectivity that characterizes knowledge and distinguishes it from mere fancy and error, to wit, objectivity as universality and necessity, producing a standard for all knowing minds and underlying agreement among various observers about their common objects.

Both sensibility or intuition and understanding or concepts are necessary to knowledge. Intuitions without concepts are blind, a blooming, buzzing confusion. Concepts without intuitions are empty, an unearthly ballet of bloodless categories.

From this it follows that we can have knowledge only of a phenomenal world, for we have no intuition of things as they are. Since intuition is necessary to knowledge and touches only on things in space and time, what is metaphysical, in the literal sense of the word as that which lies beyond physics, is not attainable by human knowledge.

Thus we can say that that which makes objective knowledge of nature possible, namely, the a priori forms of intuition, is lacking in alleged metaphysical knowledge, and this lack makes metaphysics impossible. Hume rejected metaphysics, rightly, but on the wrong grounds, for his grounds of rejecting metaphysics forced him also to reject nec-

no rationalist, who held that sensibility is only the lowest form of knowledge and not a necessary condition of all knowledge. Kant tried to show directly that such knowledge was in fact impossible, by exposing errors involved in all arguments designed to prove the existence of God or the existence and immortality of the soul. More dramatically, he attempted to uncover an "antinomy" in speculative reason by showing that for every synthetic a priori judgment it produced, an equally good and necessary argument could prove its contradictory. For reasons we are about to see, Kant called the antinomy "the most fortunate perplexity" into which pure reason could ever fall (107 [203]).

An antinomy is a pair of contradictory statements, each of which is validly proved and each of which expresses an inescapable interest of reason. There are four in the first *Critique*. We shall here be concerned only with the third, that between freedom and natural causation.

The antinomies strictly limit theoretical reason to the world of space and time, nullifying all speculative flights from the results of science and all attempts to use scientific hypotheses in speculations beyond the limits of sense. But their resolution permits an altogether different use of reason; their occurrence and resolution indicate reason's broader competence as a faculty not exclusively devoted to cognition.⁴

This is very clear in the third antinomy. This arises from the conflict in the idea of causality—if every single thing must have a cause, then all causality is in time under the law of nature; but if all things have a cause, there must be a cause which is not an event in time under the law of nature. Each of these is essential if we are to give absolute validity to the causal principle; yet both of them, it seems, cannot be true.

The resolution is this: The thesis, which asserts the reality of causes not subsumed under the law of nature, and the antithesis, which asserts that all causation is under the laws of nature now known or yet to be discovered, may each be true if their respective scopes are distinguished.⁵

The field of application of each is defined by the nature of the argument supporting it, and neither can be validly employed beyond the area to which the respective proofs extend. The proof of the thesis pre-

⁴ Actually, Kant had discovered the antinomy before he had fixed the final lines of his theory of knowledge, and it was probably the discovery of the later antinomies which led him to retreat from the position taken in the *Inaugural Dissertation* that metaphysical knowledge was possible. He told Garve that the discovery of the antinomy was the beginning of his critical philosophy (September 21, 1798 [XII, 257]).

⁵ This is strictly true only of the third and fourth antinomies, as pointed out in *Critique of Practical Reason*, 104 (199).

sents the interest of reason, which requires a sufficient cause for each and every phenomenon. The sufficient cause cannot be found within phenomena, because every phenomenal cause is itself the product of prior causes and hence not, by itself, a sufficient explanation of subsequent phenomena. The proof of the antithesis, on the other hand, presents the claim of the understanding in applying the law of natural causation to all members of a series of events in space and time. The argument shows that the assumption of a free cause (i.e., of a cause that is not itself an effect) within phenomena would disrupt the reign of law required by our conception of nature. The counterargument, however, shows that if we do not assume a free cause, we cannot assume a first cause, and therefore that we cannot give a *complete* causal explanation of anything, regardless of how much progress we may make in knowledge.

The antinomy is resolved by showing that the thesis can be applied to the relationship between noumena (things in themselves) and phenomena, and the antithesis is restricted to relations among phenomena. These separate and distinct but compatible applications are all that is legitimized by the two proofs. The solution is attained by a distinction between the world of appearance and a noumenal world. *This dualism is a necessary presupposition of Kant's ethical theory* and is the principal conclusion of his criticism of speculative metaphysics.

By this dualism, science is limited in two respects: a boundary is fixed beyond which scientific knowledge cannot aspire, and the possibility is established that natural law is not the only formula of causality. But beyond the scope of science, there may be another use of reason. "I have therefore found it necessary," says Kant, "to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith."⁶ If this denial of knowledge had not been effected—and effected on solid epistemological grounds and not by human wish and obscurantism—it would be morality and not science that we should have to surrender.

§ 6. TRANSITION FROM THE PROBLEMATIC TO THE ASSERTORIC
JUDGMENT OF FREEDOM⁷

Note that only the possibility of another kind of causality with its own law is established by the resolution of the third antinomy. Nothing is said (except incidentally) in the *Critique of Pure Reason* to show that freedom as a mode of causality is actual or that there is an a priori law for such causality. If there is not such a causality, however, the at-

⁶ *Critique of Pure Reason*, B xxx.

⁷ This transition is fully discussed in chap. x.

tempt of theoretical reason to establish in principle a complete system of causes is condemned to failure; even theoretical reason needs such a concept for its own completion, but cannot establish it. Without such a conception, however, the very being of theoretical reason is endangered, and its lack may "plunge it into an abyss of skepticism" (3 [88]).

Such a concept can be established only by showing that it alone can do for some realm of experience what the principle of natural causation does for the sciences of nature. That is, there must be some realm of experience which, upon analysis, shows the necessity of some a priori synthetic judgment which is possible only if free causes are asserted actually to exist. The *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* show that there is an unconditional necessity in the moral law. The moral law is an a priori synthetic practical proposition, and these two works show that it is possible. It is possible if and only if the will is a free cause. "There really is freedom, for this Idea is revealed by the moral law." The moral law is the *ratio cognoscendi* of freedom, and freedom is the *ratio essendi* of the moral law (4 n. [88 n.]).

Nevertheless, we thereby have no knowledge of freedom. A category, that of causality, is applied to a supersensible object, viz., ourselves as noumena. We *think* ourselves free, though in another context (nature) we *know* ourselves as phenomena under the law of nature. The contradiction between what we must think and what we know is resolved just as the third antinomy was resolved: we distinguish our reality from our phenomenal appearance. We thereby gain no knowledge which has been interdicted by the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but likewise, if we properly understand the meaning of practical reason,⁸ we involve ourselves in no contradiction.

In the Dialectic of the first *Critique*, Kant considers two other Ideas, viz., that of the soul as substance characterized by immortality and that of God as a perfect being. He refutes arguments for each, but not to prove that the soul is not immortal or that God does not exist. He proves only that theoretical proof of each is impossible. Each is a necessary object of thought, playing a regulative role in the guidance of our search for completeness in theory; but neither is an object of knowledge.

The *Critique of Practical Reason* converts the problematic judgments of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (such as "The soul may, for all

⁸ *Critique of Practical Reason*, 6 (90): "This must have seemed an inconsistency so long as the practical use of reason was known only by name," i.e., so long as it was thought that practical reason was only a special kind of cognitive faculty.

Even before the event, the psychologist may be able to say that such and such a percentage of men brought up as his subject was and placed in the situation in which his subject is found could be expected to delay their action for a day, saying that they wanted to think it over before deciding, and then that a specific percentage of them would do precisely so and so. A certain number of men will try to decide whether they should continue smoking when their physician advises them not to, and they will try to decide in long deliberations whose outcome they do not know. But the psychologist, armed only with statistics on past cases, might be able to say, "Whatever they think, x per cent will go right on smoking and cite y as a good ground for doing so."

But none of this perhaps frightening knowledge, even supposing that the psychologist had it and gave it to the actor, in the least serves as a sufficient condition for the actor's making up his mind in a particular way. He does not know whether he will belong to the fraction of men who will do this predicted so and so or whether he will belong to the other group; and the only way for him to find out is to do the considering and decide the issue, which should, in principle, have been predicted by the observer. The actor may know the statistics and be wise to the little hypocrisies and rationalizations he practices; but he must *decide*, and not merely know, whether he will be guided by this knowledge to do what rationalization suggests he will do or whether he will do the other, precisely because he recognizes rationalization for what it is. If it were merely a matter of knowing, so that he could predict his behavior with the same certainty that the perfect psychologist could have, the experience of deliberation, taking thought, and deciding would not be just illusory, as the observer may believe it to be; it would not even occur.

In a word, from the point of view of the actor making a decision, there is the experience that deliberation is effective, that thinking makes a difference, that one is free and not wholly determined by causes beyond his control. From the spectator's point of view, this may be an illusion: "*Du glaubst zu schieben und du wirst geschoben,*" as Mephistopheles said.²

Kant's theory that man's actions are both free and predictable is, apart from its metaphysical explanation, a report on the distinction between the two points of view and the assumptions which define each of them. When wishing to avoid having to "prove freedom in its theoretical aspect," Kant avails himself directly of the different assumption necessary in the attitude of the actor, and he says: "The laws

² *Faust*, Part I, Walpurgisnacht.

While psychology has vastly deepened our knowledge of the impulsive in its many and mysterious ramifications in normal life, neurosis, art, religion, politics, philosophy, and even science, Kant was primarily concerned with the cognitive or conceptual factor in willing. What he has to say about this has been, I think, little affected except in terminology by recent science. For science is developed from the spectator's point of view, from which the cognitive condition of action is likely to be sometimes tacitly assumed and at other times overlooked or even denied.

§ 3. PRACTICAL REASON AND WILL

Though Plato had distinguished willing from mere desiring, Aristotle was the originator of the distinction between practical reason (*nous praktikos*) and theoretical reason (*nous theoretikos*).⁸ The Schoolmen translated the former as *intellectus practicus*,⁹ and they also used the terms *intellectus activus*¹⁰ and *ratio practica*.¹¹ The Wolffians did not use these terms in their Latin works or give literal translations in their German works, but nevertheless they maintained the distinction in their terminology of *cognitio movens* and *cognitio iners*¹² and recognized the cognitive as well as the conative elements in volition in such terms as *appetitus rationalis*.¹³ Kant originated the term *praktische Vernunft* in 1765.¹⁴

⁸ *De anima* 433^a 15 ff.; cf. *Politics* 1333^a 18 ff.

⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *In decem libros ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomachum expositio* § 1132.

¹⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Prima, Q. 79, art. 11; Secunda secundae, Q. 179, art. 2. A fourteenth-century translation (*Middle High German Translation of the Summa theologiae*, ed. B. Q. Morgan and F. W. Strothmann ["Stanford University Publications in Language and Literature," Vol. VIII, No. 1 (1950)], p. 371) renders *intellectus practicus* as *da3 wuirkliche verstan*. Cf. also M. Grabmann, *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben* (Munich, 1926), p. 434.

¹¹ *Summa theologiae*, Sec. sec., Q. 83, art. 1, ad 3.

¹² Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, §§ 669, 690.

¹³ Wolff, *Psychologia empirica*, §§ 880 ff.; cf. also *Vernuunftige Gedancken von den Kraefften des menschlichen Verstandes*, § 15, where the term *lebendige Erkenntnis* is used.

¹⁴ *Nachricht von der Einrichtung seiner Vorlesungen im Winterhalbjahr von 1765-66* (II, 312); at least, no earlier Beleg is given by Grimm. Mellin (*Kunstsprache der Kantischen Philosophie* [1798], p. 283) says: "The expression *praktische Vernunft* was not usual before Kant; one spoke only of *Verstand* and *Wille*." (I am indebted to Professor Paul Schrecker for calling Mellin's remark to my attention.) I can find no English use of the words "practical reason" before Richard Burthogge's *Organum vetus et novum, or Discourse on Reason and Truth*, sec. 61 (1678). The term does not, I think, occur in any of the British moralists Kant knew, with the exception of Reid, *Essay on the Active Powers of the Mind*, Book III, Part iii, sec. 2; but this was published in 1788, after the *Critique*.

Even the words used give some indication of the progress that Kant had made beyond the Wolffians in the conception of the will. In making his distinction between reason and understanding,¹⁵ Kant ascribed to reason the task of going beyond the order of things, as given, to an ideal order of systematic connection of experience, a systematic connection that is never passively found in knowledge but must be striven for according to regulative Ideas. Reason is spontaneous in formulating Ideas that can never be adequately represented in our sense experience of the actual, even though this is categorized by the understanding. The understanding is, of course, spontaneous, but its spontaneity is restricted to a re-working of what is or can be given in perception. Though Kant acknowledged a practical function of the understanding (23, 55 [109, 145]), in making reason the prime practical faculty he did three things. First, he called attention to the manner in which it is theoretical knowledge in its systematic and ideal integrity that is relevant to the act of voluntary choice, and not some isolated bit of experience or rule of thumb. Second, he called attention to the fact that in practice we sometimes demand an unconditional certainty comparable to that which reason alone is supposed to afford us in our theoretical occupations. Third, and most important, through the connection asserted between reason and will, he prepared the way for a new definition of will itself, with all the moral consequences to be drawn from this conception.

Will is the faculty of acting according to a conception of *law*, which is not a product or discovery of understanding but of reason. In contrast, his predecessors had thought of will as only rational desire, i.e., the faculty of acting according to a clear (rational) representation of the object of desire.¹⁶ They could discern a difference only between the lower and higher faculties of desire and were never able, according

¹⁵ Wolff translates *ratio* as *Vernunft* and defines it as "insight into the connection [*Zusammenhang*] of truth," and hence as the art of inference; *intellectus* is translated as *Verstand* and is the faculty of clearly representing the possible. Pure understanding (*intellectus purus*) is understanding separated (*abgesondert*) from senses and imagination, but human understanding is never completely pure (cf. *Vernünftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen* [1736], §§ 368, 381, 277, 282, 285). Logically, this corresponds very well to Kant's distinction between reason as the faculty of inference and understanding as the faculty of concepts; but the important Kantian distinction between the real and the merely logical use of reason and understanding and the equally important theory of the generic difference between sense and the discursive faculties are not anticipated.

¹⁶ Cf. Wolff, *Vernünftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt, und der Seele des Menschen*, § 492, and *Psychologia empirica* (1737), § 880; Crusius, *Entwurf der nothwendigen Vernunftwahrheiten* (1753), § 445. The gradualistic conception of the distinction between *ratio* and *intellectus* is fundamental to this.

to Kant, to single out the unique feature of willing and, a fortiori, of moral willing. For these reasons, Kant rejects, as inadequate to ethics, their conception of a universal practical philosophy and, as inconsistent with their own views, their attempt to distinguish in any ethically significant way between the lower and the higher faculties of desire (22 f. [109 f.]).

Yet there are two puzzles which arise from Kant's way of speaking of the relationship among will, practical reason, and theoretical reason, and these must be cleared up before we come to the most important of his doctrines, to wit, that pure reason can be practical.

First, Kant identifies will with practical reason, but he often confuses the reader by speaking of reason as the determiner of the will. Theoretical reason, which demands an order in the totality of the data of possible experience, is practical when, through the order it projects as possible if such and such an action is executed, it becomes a determinant in behavior whose dynamic component is provided by impulse or desire. That is, theoretical reason provides the knowledge of the law which can be applied in the satisfaction of desire, and, insofar as it does so, it is practical reason. Thus far, at least, there are not two reasons, a theoretical and a practical, but one reason—the faculty of formulating laws and principles—which has two applications. One gives knowledge of things as they are (or appear); the other gives direction to the changes we introduce into this natural order by means of voluntary action. The following two sentences therefore mean the same thing: (a) Will is impulse guided by reason; and (b) Will is practical reason. From a it is easy to move to another sentence, (c) Reason can determine the will, which seems to be incompatible with b, for b identifies them. But, properly understood, b and c are not incompatible. The last sentence means simply: (c') Reason determines the action by which impulse is to be satisfied; when it does so, it is called "practical reason," and the action chosen is called an "act of will."

Second, another puzzle is presented by Kant's often speaking of practical reason as a cognitive faculty¹⁷ and as a faculty of desire.¹⁸ He mentions the danger of taking the words "practical reason" as if the "object" of practical reason were comparable to an object of theoretical reason, i.e., as an epistemological object and not as an object of de-

¹⁷ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 633 = B 661: "The practical use of reason is that through which it is known a priori what ought to take place"; also draws distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 66 (157): pure practical concepts are directly cognitions, not having to wait upon, or be applied to, intuition.

¹⁸ *Critique of Practical Reason*, 24 (111); *Erste Einleitung in die Kritik der Urteilskraft*, XX, 245-46; *Critique of Judgment*, Introduction, III (V, 177 [13]).

sire or volition.¹⁹ We should be warned by this against taking "practical reason" to denote merely the faculty by which we gain knowledge of right and wrong, though we should not forget that practical reason does have this cognitive function. It provides the cognitive factor in the guidance of action whose *dynamis* is impulse. The sentences of theoretical reason or understanding, such as "A is the cause of B," become the practical proposition or cognition of practical reason, "If you desire B, do A" (26 n. [113 n.]). The latter proposition might better be called a cognition of technical or practical understanding when B is some specific, well-defined object or situation. A prudent policy of life, on the other hand, as an allegedly unconditional ground for choice not only of means to happiness but also and more importantly of the genuine composition of such an ideal, could properly be called the object of a cognition of practical reason, as its pursuit is undertaken because of a maxim of practical reason. We should then retain the name "cognition of pure practical reason" for knowledge of the moral law and of the highest moral aims.

§ 4. PURE PRACTICAL REASON

If practical reason can hold before us a law valid for practice but not derived from our experience of the way things go in the world when we attempt to satisfy some specific desire, this would be a law of a kind entirely different from those of interest in theory. The relevance of the latter kind of law, though essential for intelligent practice, is always contingent upon there being some experienced situation by reference to which we choose, from all the actual laws of nature, those which are concerned with the causes of the object of the specific desire. Such laws in their theoretical formulation may be necessary; but, when formulated as practical rules, they are always contingent upon there being in us the desires which can be satisfied through successful application of our knowledge of them. If there is an unconditional practical law, it could be discovered only by a reason that is intrinsically practical, and not by a theoretical reason which is only extrinsically and contingently practical, i.e., one issuing laws which may or may not be applicable in practice, depending upon the desires and the situation. Such an intrinsically practical reason is called *pure* practical reason.²⁰

¹⁹ *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5 (90). We shall see later, in chap. ix, Kant's justification for referring to both as objects.

²⁰ Kant uses the word "pure" to refer to both cognitions and faculties. In the former usage it refers to (a) cognitions which are independent of experience and (b) cognitions in which there is no empirical content. Meaning a is equivalent to a priori, and Kant said later (not quite accurately) that the *Critique of Pure Reason*

That pure reason can be practical is the chief thesis of the Kantian moral philosophy; it is equivalent to the assertion that there are unconditional practical laws. Kant rejected the Aristotelian thesis²¹ that reason alone cannot move us and the Humean thesis²² that reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions. Reason is concerned not with the choice among ways to some end projected by desire; this is its merely logical use. It establishes the goals of action through the formulation of an intrinsically practical and unconditional law. This is its real use.²³

Pure reason, in its real use, is always concerned with unconditioned conditions. Pure practical reason is the faculty of providing an unconditioned condition for voluntary action, which is a law demanding direct obedience without a *quid pro quo*. As Kant is to show in the early parts of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, such unconditioned conditions cannot be found in or by an empirically practical reason, which is indeed the slave of the passions. If pure reason is practical, however, there is some intrinsically practical law and some motive independent of the contingent and empirically discovered human desires. This motive must be our knowledge of the law itself through the respect that it creates in us. An action having this motive is moral, and a being which acts from this motive has a good will. The *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* stated, in this way, the requirement that an action must meet if it is to be counted moral, and it concluded that pure reason must be practical if morality is not a mere chimera.

But can pure reason, in its real use, be practical? Or is this analysis of morality an analysis of a vain and empty delusion? To show that pure reason can be practical, we are told in the first paragraph, is the prime task of the *Critique of Practical Reason*.

was concerned only with "pure" in this sense (*Über den Gebrauch teleologischer Prinzipien in der Philosophie*, VIII, 183-84). When used in reference to a faculty, "pure" indicates that the faculty is a priori legislative (*Critique of Judgment*, V, 179 [15]). It is important not to confuse these two meanings, though they are closely related. The moral law is pure in senses a and b; the concept of duty is pure only in sense a; practical reason is pure, or may be pure, in the sense that it is an a priori legislating faculty, giving the moral law.

²¹ *De anima* 433^a 23.

²² *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book II, Part III, sec. iii (Selby-Bigge ed., p. 415). Kant was not the first in his time to state that reason is both the necessary and the sufficient condition of action; in this he was anticipated by a critic of Hutcheson's, namely, John Balguy (*The Foundation of Moral Goodness* [1728] [Selby-Bigge, *British Moralists*, II, 92-93]), and by Price (*Review of the Principal Questions of Morals* [1758], chap. viii). There is no evidence that Kant knew of Balguy or Price.

²³ For this distinction cf. above, p. 7.

Interest is that by which reason determines the will.³ But since practical reason is identical with will, it is more accurate to say that interest "indicates an incentive of the will as it is presented by reason" (79 [172]). In a dependent will, i.e., one not wholly rational, there is always an interest which is expressed in a maxim; unless it is so expressed, and thus subject to intelligent inspection, we do not have a will but only blind impulse. Will differs from mere desire in that in the latter there is an image of an object which is the target of behavior; while in willing, on the other hand, there is also guidance by knowledge of a law or principle which relates the action objectively to what it is that is desired. Thus animals have desires, but only rational beings can have a will.

The objects of the ideas—the objects being the final causes of action, the ideas being among the efficient causes—are also called "objects of interest or of inclination."⁴ The objects are the purposes of the action, since purpose is defined as the concept of an object considered as the cause of the reality of the object.⁵ The idea is one of the efficient causes of the object by virtue of being one of the factors which determine the

cept when *Triebfeder* refers to the moral incentive or motive. Abbott translates *Triebfeder* as "motive" or "spring." "Spring" follows a usage going back to the early seventeenth century, but not common now. There is good etymological justification for it, since *Feder* refers, e.g., to the mainspring of a watch. "Motive" is a less fortunate choice, because Kant carefully distinguished between *Triebfeder* and *Bewegungsgrund* (= "motive") in the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 427 (45). Yet the fault is Kant's, not Abbott's, for in this chapter of the *Critique* he is using *Triebfeder* in the sense in which the *Foundations* defined *Bewegungsgrund*. Picavet translates it as *mobile*, Capra as *movente*, Born (following a Kantian parenthesis) as *elater*. I have followed the translation suggested by Greene and Hudson in their rendition of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*. But I have done so with growing dissatisfaction, for the meaning of *Triebfeder* is obvious to a German, while *incentive* must be explained to a reader of English. It does not seem possible to find an entirely suitable English equivalent, and I suspect that the reason for this is that Kant himself did not use the word univocally. On the terminology and its variations see Käubler, *Der Begriff der Triebfeder in Kants Ethik* (1917).

³ *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 459 (80 n.); *Metaphysik der Sitten*, VI, 212–13; *Critique of Judgment*, §§ 2, 3.

⁴ "Object of inclination" and "object of interest" must be distinguished from "object of practical reason." It is only the latter that is defined as the good or evil. "Object of choice [*Willkür*]" is used by Kant in the legal sense, referring to that which I may dispose of as I choose, i.e., property (*Metaphysik der Sitten*, VI, 246) as well as in the sense of "that which I choose" (e.g., *Critique of Practical Reason*, 36 [125]).

⁵ *Critique of Judgment*, V, 180 (17).

that I am not the creator of a world, and in this world I know, all too well, that not everyone is going to act the way I do, be it for good or ill. But implicit in the notion of a moral order is that of an order of interacting wills (the third category of relation), and the best model we have for such a world is the order of nature under law.⁶⁸ That is, what would not be possible in an order of nature under law is not morally possible, though what is actual in nature (a matter which empirical intuition must decide) has no judicative function in the abstract determination of what is morally possible and necessary.⁶⁹

"The order of nature under law" means two things, one of which, as Paton points out,⁷⁰ is largely forgotten today. First, it means a uniform sequence of phenomena under causal law, and its distinguishing feature is the universal uniformity of nature. Nature, as a mechanical system, was believed, in the eighteenth century, to be "governed" by such laws having universal application. Before passing to the second of the meanings of the "order of nature," we must inquire into the practical significance of this concept of uniformity.

The first test of a maxim is the mere universalizability of the maxim, i.e., the interpretation of it as a descriptive universal principle. Of some maxims, Kant says that they destroy themselves if made universal.⁷¹

⁶⁸ From time to time Kant pushed the analogy very far. Thus he early compared the good will in Rousseau to the force of gravity in Newton, seeing in each an organizing principle in an orderly realm (*Träume eines Geistersehers*, II, 330, 335; *Reflexion* 5429). He told Mendelssohn (April 8, 1766 [X, 72]) that this did not express a serious opinion but was only an example of how far one could go in *Erdichtung* where data are lacking for knowledge. But the thought evidently had a certain fascination for him, for we find it again in *Metaphysik der Sitten*, Tugendlehre, § 24 (VI, 449) and *Opus postumum*, XXI, 35.

⁶⁹ Though, of course, it has a contributory function, since every action is predicated upon empirical knowledge, which provides the content for the abstract principle of choosing means suitable to a given end.

⁷⁰ *The Categorical Imperative*, pp. 150 ff., 161 ff. I hesitate to follow Paton in only one point in his definitive and exemplary exposition: I do not think that he is correct in asserting (p. 149) that only the second of these conceptions of the order of nature plays a part in the typic. The concept of causal uniformity does have, I think, at least a minor role, as I try to show in the text.

⁷¹ Kant says this repeatedly. In the *Critique*, however, he speaks also of actions as being universalizable. (Note that in the first and second formulas in the *Foundations* [421 (38, 39)] he speaks of universalizable maxims, while in the typic it is the universalizability of the action itself which is mentioned.) This is an inaccuracy in the *Critique*. If lying were universal, we would be able to get along far better than in this world, where it is only frequent; we should simply interpret affirmative sentences negatively and negative ones affirmatively. But if the *maxim* is to deceive another person, the best way of doing it is by sometimes telling the truth and sometimes not.

That is, the effectiveness of such a maxim is dependent upon the fact that it does not correspond to a universal, or even general, description of human behavior. It is not possible to will rationally that such a maxim should be universal, even though the proposition "All men should lie" is not logically self-contradictory. A maxim like "I should lie" depends for its effectiveness upon the fact that it is not universal, that its theoretical correlate "I lie" is not universalizable into a judgment, "All men always lie"; for, if it were, there would be no such thing as a lie at all.⁷² One's lies show mendacity and cleverness only because they are exceptions to a general rule. But general rules which have exceptions are not laws of nature; the latter have no exceptions.

Attention should here be called to a matter already discussed above (p. 121). The universalizability of a maxim is a negative test of its validity as a law. But many maxims can in fact be universalized which do not have the status of law. In this way, the type of the moral law as a universal and uniform natural law is only a negative criterion for moral judgment.

The second meaning of the order of nature is one according to which all the laws and the phenomena under them are in such a relation that nature as a whole can be interpreted as an organic unity,⁷³ which suggested to the natural theologian that it had been designed by a wise creator. For Kant, the inference to a wise creator is logically invalid; but the thought of a teleological organization is required as a regulative principle in our search for as yet unknown causal connections. Natural theology and natural teleology regard the world of nature as such a realm, though for Kant only the Idea of it is a valid methodological assumption. Moral teleology, on the other hand, sees such a realm as an ideal to be achieved in action;⁷⁴ it is a regulative Idea for practice and not for knowledge only. This Idea is that of a realm of ends, organized by the third category of practical relation, that of community of persons under common law, the whole being

⁷² This is said independently of the logical problem of the Epimenides paradox. Let it be supposed that all men except Epimenides did, in fact, invariably lie. The logical paradox would not then ensue, but the practical effectiveness of lying would disappear. We should simply say that Epimenides said "Yes" when other men said "No," and no one would be deceived, and if Epimenides willed that all other men should lie, there would be no sense or purpose in his lying. Hence the maxim would be "self-destructive" just as surely as his statement about *all* men was paradoxical.

⁷³ The moral significance of this conception has already been touched upon lightly (cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 27-28 [115], and above, p. 99).

⁷⁴ *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 436 n. (55 n.).

Kant's readiness to appeal to what the ordinary man thinks in moral matters does not strike the twentieth-century reader as being startling, for to us this is the only place to begin. But the sharpness of the reply to Tittel³ shows that there was a spirit of novelty (at least in Continental philosophy) in going into moral problems from this direction, instead of in the more usual way of erecting a world system that might subsequently be used to explain, or often to explain away, ordinary moral phenomena. In this procedure, Kant is indebted to Rousseau⁴ and to the conscientiousness of pietism, which manifested itself in the profound but simple-minded righteousness of his parents, whom he openly revered all his life. Yet this moral consciousness may be illusory; duty may be a "vain delusion and a chimerical concept."⁵ We do not know that true virtue can be found anywhere in the world, even if the concept is valid; and no examples can prove that it does exist.⁶

The tone of Kant's argument suddenly changes in § 7. He no longer attempts to restrict himself to hypothetical statements about what would be true if pure reason were practical, but boldly asserts: "Pure reason is practical of itself alone, and it gives (to man) a universal law, which we call the moral law."⁷ To show the contrast between the analysis and the assertion, compare the following two passages:

Sometimes we find, or at least believe we find, that the ideas of reason have in actual fact proved their causality in respect to the actions of men, as appearances.⁸

³ *Critique of Practical Reason*, 8 n. (93 n.); cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 831 = B 859: "Do you really require that a mode of knowledge that concerns all men should transcend the common understanding and should only be revealed to you by philosophers? Precisely what you find fault with is the best confirmation of the correctness of these assertions."

⁴ "By inclination I am an inquirer. I feel a consuming thirst for knowledge, the unrest which goes with desire to progress in it, and satisfaction in every advance in it. There was a time when I believed this constituted the honor of humanity, and I despised the people, who know nothing. Rousseau corrected me in this. This blinding prejudice disappeared and I learned to honor man. I would find myself more useless than the common laborer if I did not believe that this attitude of mine [as an inquirer] can give worth to all others in establishing the rights of mankind" (XX, 44).

⁵ *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 402 (18).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 407 (23-24).

⁷ *Critique of Practical Reason*, 31 (120). Here appears the confusion between law and imperative which we have already noticed occasionally. Kant should have said: "It gives a universal law which we call the 'moral law,' valid for all rational beings, and to man it issues a corresponding categorical imperative."

⁸ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 550 = B 578.

XI

Freedom

§ 1. INTRODUCTION

Discussions of freedom are so frequent in Kant's works that the full compass of the concept and its attendant problems cannot well be surveyed in a running commentary on passages taken seriatim. In this chapter, therefore, I shall attempt to examine Kant's ideas on freedom, following an order which will be made clear in the second section.

Some of the difficulties in interpreting the *Critique* become more manageable when we realize that its central doctrine of freedom of the will involves two different concepts of freedom and two different concepts of the will. Each of these pairs of concepts had a long and troubled history before Kant, and each was used in his own earlier work. His most important contribution in the second *Critique* was to show that what is sound in each involves the other. But he did not help the reader see that this is what he was doing, because he did not first establish, or even define, the two pairs of concepts and then bring them together; the unwary reader may not realize that Kant was using two sets of concepts, because he shifts from one to the other without notice and his language does not often indicate directly which he is using. Furthermore, it is by no means certain that he was himself at all times aware of the duality of his concepts and of the problem he was working on.

We must take the confusing fabric he wove, trace out the various threads which form two patterns, and then, if at all, try to find a single larger pattern composed of both. This program of work is summarized in § 2 and occupies §§ 3-12, and it should be judged only in the light of these later sections; §§ 13 and 14 discuss two points which are independent of the major hypothesis of this chapter.

§ 2. TWO CONCEPTIONS OF WILL AND FREEDOM

In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, the concept of will, which has freedom as its attribute, is equivocal. Theories of freedom of the will which do not seem to be consistent with one another are presented side by side, but they are actually theories about different things and

answer different questions. The *Critique* is the meeting place of two different, but not explicitly distinguished, conceptions of the will and its freedom, one of which comes chiefly from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the other of which is a heritage from the *Foundations*. The two conceptions are explicitly distinguished only in the later works, after their interdependence has been shown in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. We must see the *Critique*, therefore, as a bridge where the tangled paths of the earlier works converge and then for the first time clearly separate on the other side.

From the *Critique of Pure Reason* there is inherited the concept of freedom as spontaneity, the faculty of initiating a new causal series in time. From the *Foundations* there is taken the concept of freedom as autonomy, as lawgiving, and hence as independence from any pre-given law. The two faculties are generally called by one name, "will," and the name of one problem, that of "freedom of the will." Only later did Kant give the reader any help in distinguishing between them, when he "officially" called the former faculty *Willkür*¹ and the latter *Wille*. He had often before used these words, sometimes to indicate a tacit distinction and sometimes apparently interchangeably; but at no time had he intentionally and consistently restricted himself to one of the topics to the exclusion of the other. Even in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, where the attempt is made to draw a good distinction and to avoid confusing them, he does not often succeed in keeping discussion of one of them from interrupting discussion of the other.

¹ There is so much dispute about the exact meaning and proper translation of *Willkür* that I shall frequently leave it in German. Born translated it as *arbitrium*, following Kant's own suggestion, and thus distinguished it from *voluntas*. Barni translated it as *arbitre* and Picavet as *libre choix*; on the French words cf. Khodoss, *La Philosophie pratique*, Glossary, p. 242. Capra's translation is *libero arbitrio*. Kant: *La Philosophie pratique*, § 519: "Freedom of the soul is the faculty of the soul to choose, through its own *Willkür*, between two equally possible things the one that pleases it more"; the "Erstes Register" (Glossary) of this work translates *Willkür* as *spontaneitas*, and Baumeister, *Philosophia definitiva* (1768), § 911, following Wolff, in turn defines *spontaneitas*: "est principium sese ad agendum determinandi intrinsecum." A distinction suggesting that between *Wille* and *Willkür* is drawn by Wolff, *Psychologia empirica*, § 882: "The very act of willing [*actus volendi*] is called *volitio* in opposition to *voluntas*, since the latter denotes a faculty of mind or a power or possibility of eliciting that act." Similarly, Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, § 690: "A rational act of desiring something is a *volitio*. Therefore I have a faculty of willing [*volendi*] or a will [*voluntas*]." Baumeister, *op. cit.*, § 893: "*Volitio* est ipse *actus volendi*. . . ." *Volitio* does not exist in classical Latin in this sense.

His formal definitions of will are drawn up as if will were a faculty or combination of faculties which can be observed and of which we have a direct awareness. Will is the faculty of determining our causality through a conception of rules (32 [120]), and, since for the derivation of an action from a rule or law reason is required, will is nothing but practical reason. It is the relationship between understanding and the faculty of desire (55 [145]). The faculty which makes a rule of reason the efficient cause of an action through which the object is to be made real is will; the will is never determined directly by the object or our conception of it, but always by a rule of reason (60 [151]). That the will is, in this sense, free from direct sensuous necessitation is an empirical fact.² This conception of will, as a faculty of desire guided by a rule of reason taken as a maxim, later becomes more specifically *Willkür*, the faculty of choosing an object which is left incompletely determined by the maxim itself. It has, therefore, an incentive (*Triebfeder*) for action in addition to the law, while *Wille* has no *Triebfeder*.³ *Willkür* may or may not be free, according to the kind of law it puts into the maxim or the degree to which the maxim and not the momentary representation of the object determines the action. It does not give rise to laws but only to maxims, but it may, and when moral it must, make laws its maxims.⁴

In contrast to this, there is a concept of will not as the direct determiner of action but as the lawgiver to the maxims which will determine action. In this sense, Kant says, not quite accurately, that laws determine what ought to happen and maxims determine what does happen.⁵ But the point made is sound enough: reason is necessary to the formulation of a law, but a maxim determines behavior directly. In the formulation of a law, we have to do with the *real use* and not with the mere logical use of reason;⁶ by the "real use" is meant the establishment of an a priori synthetic proposition, and by the "logical use" is meant merely the inferring of actions from a rule. Pure practical reason has

² *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 802 = B 830, there called *Willkür*. It is illustrated, but not defined, by reference to the faculty of choice known empirically (*Metaphysik der Sitten*, VI, 226).

³ *Vorarbeiten zur Tugendlehre*, XXIII, 378.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 383; *Metaphysik der Sitten*, VI, 226.

⁵ *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 420 n. (38 n.).

⁶ On the general distinction between the real and the logical use of reason, cf. above, pp. 7, 75. An empirical practical reason is always merely logical in its use. Kant draws the distinction in *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 800 = B 828, by calling the logical use the "regulative use" of pure practical reason and contrasting it with the "constitutive use" by which reason gives the law.

nothing to do with the logical derivation of actions from given rules. There is little or no verbal justification in calling such a pure practical reason a "will" at all. But it makes perfectly good sense to speak of it as determining the will (*Willkür*) and of its doing so freely, independently of sensuous conditions.

If practical reason determines the will (*Willkür*), then we can say that the latter is free in the psychological or comparative sense (96 [190]), even though there may be a natural law connecting the conception of practical reason with the action and even if conceiving this law is itself a naturally caused event in the inner life and even if the law is a practical translation of a natural law. But to think that this is freedom in the sense needed by ethics seemed to Kant to be a "miserable subterfuge." If all the causes of action are internal to man, not external, if they are intellectual and not sensuous, and if the laws of their connection with action are psychic and not physical (97 [190-91]), still the corresponding concept of freedom, regarded as adequate by Kant's predecessors and by himself in the *Nova dilucidatio* (1755),⁷ is inadequate to the needs of ethics.

A new conception of freedom is called for. A law which is given for moral obedience must not be a law of the connection of means to a desired end and hence what I have called the "practical translation of a natural law." It must be a law given by reason to a nature to be made real, not one taken from a nature already realized. A will or *Willkür* which can obey such a law must be independent of the mechanism of nature, in which all connections are among phenomena, for a law which demands absolute and not contingent obedience must be purely formal, commanding by virtue of its form which is known by reason, and not its phenomenal content. This independence of the mechanism of nature is "freedom in the strictest sense" or transcendental freedom, whose logical possibility was established in the first *Critique* (29 [116]).

But what of the origin of the law itself? Kant's most important discovery is that the law is not a mere restriction on freedom but is itself a product of freedom. Precisely this conception marks the chief advance of the second over the first *Critique*. This is the Copernican Revolution in moral philosophy. The *Critique of Pure Reason* saw reason as that which set bounds to a freedom which is itself without law,⁸ but it did not show how it does so; it established neither the provenance of the law nor the mechanism by which it is effective.

The law is a product of the freedom of *Wille* as pure practical rea-

⁷ *Nova dilucidatio*, Proposition ix (England, 231).

⁸ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 569 = B 597.

son, not of *Willkür*. (Though one must complain sometimes that Kant writes *Wille* when *Willkür* would be correct, I do not believe he ever used *Willkür* to refer to *Wille* as pure practically legislative reason.) We cannot say that the actions of *Wille* are free, because *Wille* does not act.⁹ It gives only a law for the submission of *Willkür*, which does act. Yet it is free in that its decree follows from its own nature. It does not mediate laws of nature to *Willkür* bent upon the satisfaction of some arbitrary purpose; that is the function of practical reason in its logical use. It does not counsel, but commands, and it commands as a principal, not as an agent. Through submission to it, *Willkür* supplements its negative freedom with a positive freedom which comes from submission to its own idealized nature as purely rational will. Using a political metaphor, as he so often did in speaking of the realms and territories of the legislation of reason, Kant says it is autonomous, free in itself,¹⁰ i.e., free in the positive sense. *Willkür* participates in this autonomy to the degree that its negative freedom vis-à-vis nature is exercised in adherence to the law of pure practical reason. Pure practical reason spontaneously creates an Idea of a *natura archetypa*,¹¹ and *Willkür*, taking this as its object, can become an efficient cause of giving to the world of nature the form of such an intelligible world.

But we must never suppose that there are two faculties related to each other in some external, coercive way. There is only one, but it has prima facie two kinds of freedom, though one of them will eventually be shown to be the perfection or logical form of the other. *Willkür* is fully spontaneous only when its action is governed by a rule given by pure practical reason, which is its legislative office. It is very hard to avoid speaking as if there were two faculties without falling into the opposite error of failing to distinguish between the two roles and the two meanings of freedom. But unless we are to make Kant more difficult and obscure than he already is, we must be on our guard against both an oversimple identification of function and a "two-faculty theory."

Freedom in the positive sense is not so fraught with problems as that in the negative sense. If we could presuppose freedom, Kant says, the law would follow analytically from it (31 [120]), and a will (in this

⁹ *Metaphysik der Sitten*, VI, 226.

¹⁰ *Vorarbeiten zur Tugendlehre*, XXIII, 383. Its autonomy is contrasted with the heteronomy of *Willkür*; the freedom of *Willkür*, which is independence of material of desire, is freedom in the negative sense, while the legislation, or autonomy, of *Wille* is freedom in the positive sense (*Critique of Practical Reason*, 33 [122]).

¹¹ *Critique of Practical Reason*, 43 (132); cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 548 = B 576.

cur. In searching for this unconditioned, or at least in forming a clear concept of it, even though it is the concept of something that cannot be given directly in any single experience, we have two alternatives before us: (1) We can suppose that the series of conditions is infinite, so that no member of the series is unconditioned, while the series as a whole is unconditioned. (2) We can suppose that the series is finite and that there is an unconditioned member (the first member) in it. The first is equivalent to supposing that natural causation, the relation of one temporal event (cause) to another (effect), is the only kind of causation; and, since no event in time can be found that is not also the effect of an earlier one, we commit ourselves to the doctrine of an infinite series of events as the condition of any given event. The second is equivalent to assuming that the natural causation is not the only kind, since in an infinite series the unconditioned cannot be found. And this is equivalent to assuming another kind of causation, a "causality of freedom," i.e., a causality that is absolutely spontaneous, "whereby a series of appearances, which proceeds in accordance with laws of nature, begins of itself."¹⁶

Neither of these is an arbitrary supposition. In spite of their contrariety, each must be supposed, and thus theoretical reason necessarily falls into an antinomy. The opposition between the two in the antinomy is not just a curiosity of philosophy but is an inescapable opposition between two not-to-be-gainsaid interests of mind. It is an opposition that must be resolvable by the instrumentality of reason, since it is produced by reason; and it is not an opposition that philosophy could calmly accept with resignation, because its own interests are so deeply involved in each side and in their reconciliation.¹⁷

Let us recount briefly the demonstration of each of the conflicting theorems. The thesis is this: "Causality in accordance with the laws of nature is not the only causality from which the appearances of the world can one and all be derived. To explain these appearances it is necessary to assume that there is another causality, that of freedom." The proof is largely a repetition of the Aristotelian-Thomistic proof of the impossibility of an infinite series of causes and hence of the necessity of a first cause, i.e., of a cause that is not itself an effect and hence is free in the sense defined. That is, in a series of conditions and conditions of conditions, there is never a first condition; but the law of nature is that nothing occurs without a condition that is a priori sufficient. Hence, granting that something does occur, the law of nature is self-contradictory when taken in unlimited generality. Therefore, nat-

¹⁶ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 446 = B 474.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, A 480 = B 508; cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 3 (88).

the noumenal action, for that is nothing other than the moral law. Kant appeals to noumenal causation, therefore, only where there is some reason to go beyond the phenomenal causation, and these are found only in human volition; even when morality is not in question, there is this occasion for use of the concept of noumenal causation:

In lifeless, or merely animal nature, we find no ground for thinking that any faculty is conditioned otherwise than in a merely sensible [mechanical, phenomenal] manner. Man, however, who knows all the rest of nature solely through the senses, knows himself also through pure apperception, and this indeed in acts and inner determinations which he cannot regard as impressions of the senses.³⁶

Now the "interest of pure reason," which Kant said at the beginning is on the side of the thesis, comes into its own. The practical concept of freedom, he says, is based on the transcendental Idea of freedom, and without it cannot stand.³⁷ Freedom in the practical sense is the independence of Willkür from coercion through sensuous impulses. In man, there is a power of self-determination which is independent of nature. Practical freedom presupposes that, although something has not happened, it ought to have happened, i.e., that the cause in the field of appearance was not so determining that it necessarily excluded a causality of our will. Though everything that we might will might be due, indirectly, to sensuous impulse, the impulses and all phenomena under the law of nature cannot give rise to the concept of "ought," which entails a concept of free causation and not of natural causation. "No matter how many natural grounds or how many sensuous impulses may impel me to will, they can never give rise to the 'ought,' but only to a willing which, while very far from being necessary, is always conditioned; and the 'ought' pronounced by reason confronts such willing with a limit and an end,—nay more, forbids or authorizes it."³⁸ The thought of "ought" is impossible if all laws are natural laws;³⁹ the thought of "ought" implies the thought of a free "can," and if pure reason is actually effective in the control of conduct, then there is free causation in the transcendental as well as in the practical sense. Thereby, also, transcendental freedom ceases to be an all-embracing and hence empty concept.

Kant is insistent, in both *Critique's*, on the necessity of transcenden-

³⁶ *Ibid.*, A 546 = B 574; cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 49, 99, 100 (139, 193, 194).

³⁷ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 534 = B 562.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, A 548 = B 576.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, A 547 = B 575: "We cannot say of anything in nature that it ought to be other than what it actually is in all its temporal relations."

that "his future conduct could be predicted with as great a certainty as the occurrence of an eclipse," we could nevertheless still assert that the man is free" (99 [193])? This requires us to accept a secularized version of the classical theological quandary of man's freedom and God's foresight, and it seems no more intelligible in structure and equitable in outcome than that hoary mystery.

If by "freedom" we mean noumenal causation and assert that we know no noumena, then there is no justifiable way, in the study of phenomena, to decide that it is permissible in application to some but not others of them to use the concept of freedom. The uniformity of human actions is, in principle, as great as that of the solar system; there is no reason to regard statements about the freedom of the former as having any empirical consequences. If the possession of noumenal freedom makes a difference to the uniformity of nature, then there is no uniformity; if it does not, to call it "freedom" is a vain pretension.

There seems to me to be only one way out of the dilemma. There are faint suggestions of it in two widely separated works of Kant, but he never fully developed them. He does not seem to have felt the paradox in his own views that all his critics and most of his disciples felt.

The first suggestion is this: Instead of regarding the world as consisting of two realms—a phenomenal under one set of laws and a noumenal under another—can we not think of one world under two aspects, the aspects to be defined methodologically with reference to the purposes we have in holding these two perspectives on a common world, and not ontologically? Kant intimates such a two-aspect theory, instead of the more commonly known "two-world theory," in his contrast between the observing, theoretical attitude and the acting, practical attitude⁴⁵ and in his statement that "supersensuous nature is nothing else than nature under the autonomy of pure practical reason" (43 [132]).

The other suggestion, necessary to the full development of the preceding one, is his conclusion in the third *Critique*⁴⁶ that the distinction between natural and moral law is dependent on the peculiar nature of our understanding. We can read these passages as a suggestion to regard the two kinds of laws as co-ordinate, not one as subordinate to the other in constitutive authority in experience. The only evidence we have that Kant entertained such a view is in § 70 of the *Critique of Judgment*, where he speaks of the thesis of the complete mechanical determination of nature, in its antinomic relation to that of teleological causation, as a regulative Idea even in respect to nature. It would be easy to extend this to the antinomic relation between freedom and nat-

⁴⁵ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 550 = B 578; cf. chap. iii, above.

⁴⁶ *Critique of Judgment*, §§ 70 and 76.

ural causation. The Idea is expressed as a maxim: "All production of material things and their forms must be judged to be possible according to merely mechanical laws."

Had Kant said, in the solution to the third antinomy in the first *Critique*, that the true meaning of the antithesis is that it is a maxim for procedure and not a constitutive principle of nature, then we would have had two maxims: "Always (in science) search for mechanical causes and allow no non-natural causes to enter into the explanation of natural phenomena," and "Always (in ethics) act as if the maxim of the will were a sufficient determining ground of the conduct to be executed or judged." Neither of these is a declarative a priori statement; they tell us, rather, what we must do in order to be a spectator or an actor, but one cannot be both at the same time and with respect to the same item of conduct.⁴⁷

It may well be that we would, under these rules, sometimes hold a man responsible for actions that he could not have avoided doing, for human freedom is far more limited, I think, than Kant held it to be. In this event, we are simply unjust judges. It may well be that we give an abstract, schematic causal explanation to some event which did not, in fact (though we shall never possibly know it), have a sufficient natural cause; in this event, we are dogmatic (unavoidably so) in our scientific work. But the alternative to sometimes being unjust is that of always being unjust when we hold a man responsible for any of his actions when, if Kant is correct, none of them could have been left undone in the course of nature and history as constituted by natural law.

The solution proposed here involves reading back into the Transcendental Analytic of the first *Critique* some of the conclusions of the Transcendental Dialectic. Specifically, it requires that the sharp distinction between constitutive category and regulative Idea be given up, that even the categories be regarded as devices for the regulation of experience and not as structures necessarily given in a fixed constitution of our experience of nature, and that the Analogies of Experience, which Kant called "regulative" in a very modest sense,⁴⁸ be reinterpreted as regulative in the full sense of the Dialectic.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Cf. above, chap. iii. The second of the maxims need not be interpreted in the manner of the fictionalists, i.e., on the assumption that the "as if" introduces a contrary-to-fact condition. There is no more need to assume that the latter is any more fictional than the former or that the former is constitutive while the latter is merely regulative.

⁴⁸ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 179 = B 222.

⁴⁹ Such an interpretation of the Transcendental Analytic, in fact, can be recommended on purely epistemological grounds, though it no doubt distorts Kant's own estimate of the relation of the functions of understanding and of reason.

If we undertake to make these revisions, we are allowed to regard the moral or practical realm as a perspective of the realm of experience, which, through other regulative ideas (categories), is seen as the realm of nature. We will then no longer have to think of science as dealing with appearances (in some ontologically pejorative sense) and morals as dealing with noumena (in some epistemologically pejorative sense). Both can keep their a priori structures intact; both will claim to cover all the relevant experience;⁵⁰ but each will be carried out for different purposes and only occasionally will come into conflict with each other—a conflict to be settled by moral scrutiny sensitive to all the myriad facts of life—instead of invariably doing so, as, according to the orthodox Kantian theory, they must. That one of these realms is a limiting case of the other, that the categories of one of them can be derived from those of the other, is a view, classically developed by Fichte and strongly represented in both idealism and pragmatism, which goes far beyond anything Kant said or probably would accept, though the germ of it is present in the third *Critique*.

§ 8. FREEDOM AS AN ACTOR-CONCEPT; SPONTANEITY

That we have a right and even find it necessary to make use of the concept of freedom in our actions, regardless of how the antinomy is resolved and whether freedom is compatible with natural causation or not—in short, that the actor in a moral situation must act as if he were free and thereby shoulder all the responsibilities that he would have if it were theoretically proved that he is free—is shown by Kant in several ways. It is not shown, however, by appealing to what Kant calls comparative freedom, i.e., empirically observed relative independence from outward stimuli and inward impulse through the exercise of intelligent foresight. It is shown only through an elaboration of the inward phenomenon of choice and a regression upon its conditions.

In the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* there emerges a conception of one's own existence which is not present, at least so explicitly, in the first edition. It is the conception that we have a direct experience of our own spontaneous activity as a substance.⁵¹ This ex-

⁵⁰ Cf. *Critique of Judgment*, Introduction, II: The realm of theoretical reason and that of practical reason do not limit each other in their legislation, but they perpetually do so in the world of sense.

⁵¹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 157–58 n.: "I cannot determine [i.e., know categorially] my existence as that of a self-acting being; all that I can do is represent to myself the spontaneity of my thought, that is, of the determination; and my existence is still determinable only sensibly, that is, as the existence of an appearance. But it is owing to this spontaneity that I entitle myself an intelligence." Similarly, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 451 (71); *Critique of Practical Reason*, 56 (147).

perience is neither a sensuous intuition⁵² nor an abstract thought. Kant never tells us what its epistemic character is, but that it occurs is a fact to which the epistemology of the *Critique of Pure Reason* does scant justice.

Such self-awareness of one's spontaneity and the attendant presupposition of freedom is found even in the act of theoretical thinking, though we can use this conception of the self as a thinking substance in no theoretical explanation of the inner life.⁵³

But the clearest evidence of one's spontaneous freedom—sometimes said to be the only evidence⁵⁴—is one's awareness of obligation, which is a necessitation of a wholly different kind from all natural necessitation and which produces a unique kind of feeling (92 [185]). It has this revelatory function when, in fact, the moral law is not obeyed but only acknowledged.⁵⁵ As wholly different from natural determination, it cannot be understood in theoretical terms. The freedom that can be understood, he says in his review of Ulrich, is of no use in eth-

⁵² When Kant, in the precritical period, believed that there was an intellectual intuition, it was to this faculty that he ascribed consciousness of the self (see *Reflexionen* 4228, 4336, 6001). With the denial of intellectual intuition to man, no so-to-speak official position is taken on knowledge of one's own spontaneity, but the experience is not denied. On the whole question, with a collection of sources, cf. Heimsoeth, *Studien zur Philosophie Immanuel Kants*, pp. 245 ff., and Ingeborg Heidemann, *Spontaneität und Zeitlichkeit*, pp. 173 ff.

⁵³ The theoretical uselessness of this conception is the main point in the Paralogisms of the first *Critique*; even there the practical importance of the concept is recognized and preserved (B 431–32). Cf. *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 448, 451–52 (67, 70–71), on the awareness of spontaneity. In *Besprechung von Schulz's Sittenlehre* (1785), VIII, 13, Kant remarks that the determinist in metaphysics claims freedom for himself in the conduct of his own thinking and a fortiori in his action. Cf. also *Beantwortung der Frage: Ist es eine Erfahrung, dass wir denken?* (Cassirer ed., IV, 519–20), where it is denied that the awareness of thinking is an *Erfahrung*, and it is called merely "transcendental consciousness"; similarly *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 117 n.

⁵⁴ *Critique of Pure Reason*, B xxxiii, B 430–31; *Critique of Practical Reason*, 42 (131).

⁵⁵ The pair of examples in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, 30 (118), brings out this contrast between natural necessitation, which is effective, and a moral necessitation, which may or may not be effective. The first example, concerning the man who says his lust is uncontrollable, resembles one in Rousseau: "Let us suppose the maddest of men, the man who has his senses least under control; let him see the preparations for his death; let him realize that he will certainly die in torment a quarter of an hour later; not only would he from that time forward be able to resist temptation, he would even find it easy to do so" (*Émile*, Book IV ["Everyman"] ed., pp. 289–90). The second example anticipates one to be used in the Methodology (155–56 [254]).

ics, and the freedom needed in ethics cannot be understood.⁵⁶ All that we can do is to comprehend its incomprehensibility⁵⁷ and accept it as guaranteed by the fact of pure reason, the moral law which reveals it to us.⁵⁸

With this argument, that the consciousness of the moral law itself proves the reality of freedom,⁵⁹ we are brought to a somewhat different conception of freedom, which we must now examine.

§ 9. FREEDOM AS SUPREME LEGISLATION; AUTONOMY

Let us suppose that the *Critique of Pure Reason* has proved that it is not self-contradictory to say that there is in man a *causa noumenon* or a faculty of initiating a new causal series in the world. This faculty would be called "freedom in the negative sense"⁶⁰ or freedom from nature. But freedom is not lawless caprice, any more than it is lawless in its effects found in nature and history. But what limits freedom and renders it lawful? The *Critique of Pure Reason* says that reason places a limit on freedom,⁶¹ but how it does so is left unexplored and unexplained.

To answer this question is one purpose of the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*. The problem is to determine a law that the will can obey without losing its freedom through that very act of obeisance to law. The will can "obey" laws of nature in the sense of intentionally using them, in the form of means-end statements, in seeking men's goals in nature. But to be free even from the importunities of the desire for happiness—a goal given by man's natural existence—requires that the law of reason be not such a law borrowed from nature and hence, indirectly, leaving action under the domination of nature. The law must be given by reason. Just as the will (*Willkür*) considered as a faculty in man may be free in the negative sense of spontaneous activity, practical reason is spontaneous in the sense of giving law instead of subject-

⁵⁶ Ak., VIII, 458.

⁵⁷ *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 463 (84).

⁵⁸ Cf. above, chap. x, and *Critique of Practical Reason*, 31 (120).

⁵⁹ It is likewise taken as a route to the consciousness of self, independent of empirical conditions, and thus serves to supplement the failures of rational psychology as a doctrine of the soul, though without making any contribution to theoretical knowledge (cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 430-31; *Critique of Practical Reason*, 105-6 [200-201]).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, A 553 = B 581; *Critique of Practical Reason*, §§ 5, 6, 8 (29, 33 [116-17, 122]).

⁶¹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 569 = B 597. It exercises this control even in issuing hypothetical imperatives, i.e., in its logical as well as in its real use (*ibid.*, A 548 = B 576).

imperative and the conditions necessary to obedience to it have a common source which Kant's predecessors never found—indeed, never even sought. They were consequently never able to convert their formalistic ethics into a practical doctrine without jeopardizing or destroying the alleged formality of the principle.

The doctrine of autonomy was anticipated only by Rousseau, for only Rousseau saw the essential connection between law and freedom, while others in the eighteenth century saw law only as a restriction on freedom. Though Rousseau worked out their essential connection only in politics and had his doctrine there adopted with little change by Kant, the doctrine of self-government through law by free citizens is deepened into a moral and metaphysical doctrine by Kant. With Rousseau, Kant can then say that obedience to a law that one has himself prescribed is the only real freedom.⁷²

Obedience and prescription are and remain, however, quite different functions. Can our human will be autonomous as well as spontaneous? The question can be answered affirmatively on several grounds. First, it cannot be spontaneous without being autonomous,⁷³ unless it is to be lawless and, accordingly, useless to morals as well as incompatible with science. Second, reasoning in the opposite direction, it can be spontaneous because, under autonomy, it ought to be.⁷⁴ If the awareness of our duty placed impossible demands upon us, as it would if our *Willkür* were not potentially free, then the thought of duty would be illusory. How do we know that it is not? Only because of the positive evidence of the fact of pure reason⁷⁵ and the resolution of the third antinomy—the latter making it possible, the former making it actual. Third, Kant believes that the empirical nature of man is such that arguments from human nature which would show autonomy to be impossible can be shown to be false.

⁷² "Obedience to a law which one has prescribed to himself is freedom" (Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book I, chap. viii).

⁷³ Even the evil will is autonomous in the sense that the person who does moral evil freely incorporates an incentive into his maxim and makes it (what it is not in itself) a rule in accordance with which he will conduct himself (*Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, VII, 24 [Greene and Hudson, 19]; cf. below, § 12).

⁷⁴ One of Kant's most famous "statements"—"Thou canst because thou shouldst"—does not exist in his writings in this neat form (cf. David Baumgardt, "Legendary Quotations and the Lack of References," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, VII [1946], 99-102, and L. W. Kahn, "Legendary Quotations," *ibid.*, VIII [1947], 116). But statements that express this inference less succinctly abound, e.g., *Critique of Practical Reason*, 30 (118-19); *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 807 = B 835; *Über den Gemeinspruch . . .*, VIII, 287; *Metaphysik der Sitten*, VI, 380; *Streit der Fakultäten*, VII, 43-44; *Vorlesungen über Metaphysik* (Kowalewski ed.), p. 600; *Opus postumum*, XXI, 16.

⁷⁵ This is discussed in chap. i of the Analytic and in chap. xii of this commentary.

It has often been objected that there are two paradoxes in Kant's ethics: (1) Kant is, or is reputed to be, "individualistic" in his ethics, while the moral person is, for him, only an abstraction that is meant in some way to dominate and restrict the individual person. (2) Kant's ethics is so autonomous that the social or universalistic aspect of morality is left unfounded because it is an outward restriction on the freedom he insists upon.⁷⁶

Quite apart from the fact that these two alleged paradoxes cancel each other out, it is possible to show that neither is valid and that both arise from a misinterpretation of the point we are now discussing. Each, if fully expanded, would entail the supposition that in Kant's doctrine there are two wills, and which paradox is drawn depends upon the critic's belief concerning which is the more important to Kant (which happens always to be the one that is less important to the critic—for such are the ways of philosophical polemics). (1) If the *Wille* or pure practical reason as an abstract epistemic or moral concept is emphasized, then the individual human *Willkür* is restricted and is not free. (2) If the legislation is thought of as issuing from an individual *Willkür*, it is not possible to see how the laws issued will meet the requirements of social universality and harmony.⁷⁷

But there are not two wills. There is one will with its formal condition, which is universally valid reason, and its material condition arising from the specificity of its involvement in the world at particular times and places. And the two paradoxes are not paradoxes of Kant's ethics so much as manifestations of the human predicament in which we find in ourselves individualized manifestations of universal mandates and injunctions. Man is the only being in the world that not only is a manifestation of some universals but ought to be an instance of others; he is an individual that gives no valid laws to others that he does not lay upon himself, that gives no privileges to himself that he does not allow to others. Had the Kantian teaching missed what is true in these paradoxes, it would have been less true and less responsive to the paradoxical aspect of human life itself, in which man finds himself neither a brute nor a god, neither a mere particular nor a mere universal.

But, of all the misinterpretations of Kant, perhaps none is more ob-

⁷⁶ It is noteworthy that the same "paradoxes" have been found in Rousseau. Was Rousseau the father of an impersonal fascism or of democratic individualism run wild? An affirmative answer to either of these questions shows a misunderstanding of Rousseau analogous to the misunderstanding of Kant explored here.

⁷⁷ Cf. George Santayana, *Egotism in German Philosophy* (1916; 2d ed., New York, 1940), pp. 50-51.

viciously wrong or more widely accepted than the accusation that Kant represents something vaguely called "Prussian philosophy," in which blind obedience to law is so esteemed as an absolute virtue that neither political nor moral freedom is allowed to be more than a name. The accusation is too ridiculous to deserve serious consideration on its own merits and should be refuted only because of its widespread acceptance.⁷⁸ But the refutation is easy: it not only separates two wills within the individual but puts each in a different person, attributing rights to one and duties to the other.⁷⁹ It forgets that all moral discipline is, for Kant, self-discipline and that self-discipline, while not the whole of morality, is a necessary condition of it. It forgets that Kant taught that all just government is self-government. The same man, by virtue of the same faculty in its positive and negative use, is both subject and legislator in the realm of ends and in the just state.

§ 11. SUMMARY

Let us pause and summarize the results of our argument, results anticipated in § 2 above, and relate it to some other concepts in Kant's ethics.

We have distinguished two meanings of will: *Wille* as practical reason, the legislative function, and *Willkür*, as the executive faculty of man.

The freedom of the former is autonomy; it gives a law to *Willkür*. This law is determined by the nature of *Wille* and not by anything else in the world, including human nature or the will of God. The moral law is a synthetic a priori statement of what a *Willkür* would necessarily do if it were exclusively rational; it is a law or imperative of duty for a *Willkür* which does not do by nature what the law

⁷⁸ John Dewey is not responsible for the extremes of this view, for he acknowledged Kant's "individualism" and held only that such "Prussianism" arose because "the two worlds of Kant were too far away from each other" and could be connected only through the remnants of the idealistic theory of history and the state (cf. *German Philosophy and Politics* [New York, 1915], p. 122, and the defense of Kant by Julius Ebbinghaus, "Interpretation and Misinterpretation of the Categorical Imperative," *Philosophical Quarterly*, IV [1954], 97-108. On the latter see also K. Kolenda, "Professor Ebbinghaus' Interpretation of the Categorical Imperative," *Philosophical Quarterly*, V [1955], 74-77).

⁷⁹ *Perpetual Peace*, VIII, 348 n. (Beck 11-12 n.): "With regard to the most sublime reason in the world that I can think of with the exception of God (say, the great Aeon), when I do my duty in my post as he does in his, there is no reason, under the law of equality, why obedience to duty should fall only to me and the right to command only to him." God is excepted only because of the inapplicability of the concept of duty to a holy will; but the same law applies both to man and to God.

requires. In addition to its real use in discovering or formulating the moral law, practical reason also has a merely logical use in the derivation of rules of actions either from the moral law or, in the case of prudence, from human desires and the laws of nature.

The freedom of the latter is spontaneity, the faculty of initiating a causal series in nature. It can exercise this (negative) freedom in one of two ways: (1) It can take the law of pure practical reason as the limiting condition on its maxims, out of respect for law or the rational personality that decrees it. It is then a good will, acting out of duty. If it did so without any internal obstacles, but by its own nature, it would be a holy will; struggling, as it does, against the sensuous impulses, it is at most a virtuous will. (2) It can take some other principle (maxim) posited or adopted by practical reason, in its logical use, as its formal principle. If it does this, there are two possibilities: (a) It may take a principle which is not opposed to the legislation of reason, and then it is a legal and sometimes a prudent will. (b) It may take a principle that is opposed to the law of pure practical reason, and then it is an evil will. In either case, it is a free will.

The *Willkür*, however, can fail to exercise its freedom or realize its potentiality of being free in a negative sense. Then it gives way to the importunities of sense and is a will in name only, really being an *arbitrium brutum*.⁸⁰ The pure practical reason, on the other hand, cannot fail to be free⁸¹ and autonomous, however little effective it may be in its control of *Willkür*. However depraved *Willkür* may be, it still hears the "heavenly voice" of pure practical reason, so that even the most hardened criminal trembles before its tribunal (35, 80 [124, 172]).

§ 12. MORAL EVIL

Consider the following dilemma which has embarrassed many defenders of Kant, who have accepted the conclusion that a good will is a free will. If there is evil, it must be a result of a failure to be free. Therefore, either there is no moral evil, all evil being natural and therefore not imputable to human responsibility, or goodness of will is not equivalent to moral freedom. It is therefore concluded that when Kant asserted the existence of radical evil in human nature, in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, he was diverging from his own critical doctrine. Depending upon the reader's standpoint, this

⁸⁰ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 534 = B 562.

⁸¹ *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 448 (67). Even theoretical reason is free in this sense, for "we cannot conceive of a reason which consciously responds to a bidding from the outside with respect to its judgments."

his later works.⁸⁶ The special problem of the *Critique* concerns the possibility of freedom in a world in which the realm of nature and the realm of grace are connected in the Leibnizian manner, a manner dangerously close to the Kantian. If freedom and God's omniscience are not compatible in Leibniz, then they would not seem to be compatible in Kant either. It is this, rather than the Calvinistic form of the puzzle, that occasions Kant's discussion here.

He argues that if God is the cause of men's actions through the original creation of man's substance, then only comparative freedom exists, and morality is impossible. But though Kant is willing to grant the premise of the creation of noumena, he denies that the inference is valid. It is invalid because the syllogism contains four terms, "causation" and "creation" not being equivalent. It would be valid only if things in themselves were temporal, and if they are temporal, then even an attempt like that of Mendelssohn⁸⁷ to make God non-temporal will not save freedom. For, whatever might be the nature of God, if things in themselves are in time, God's creation of them is a temporal act and restricted to the conditions of time, which conflicts both with God's theological and metaphysical predicates and with the initiation of a new causal series in time.

But since things in themselves and, a fortiori, God are not in space and time, the relation between God and things in themselves cannot be a causal relation, though we have to think of it by analogy with causation. The causal relation holds only among phenomena. If it were ontologically real and God's creation were itself causal, then "man would be a marionette or an automaton" and only Spinozism would remain.⁸⁸ But because Kant has, on other grounds, denied the temporality of things in themselves, the relation of God to them and, a fortiori, to their temporal appearances,⁸⁹ is not one of cause.

Kant's view may be summarized by saying not only that a syllogism whose major premise contains the term "creation" and whose minor

⁸⁶ E.g., *Critique of Practical Reason*, 100–103 (194–96); *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, VI, 144 (Greene and Hudson, 135); *Metaphysik der Sitten*, VI, 280 n.; *Perpetual Peace*, VIII, 361 n. (Beck, 24 n.); incidentally in *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 206 = B 251–52. The relation of historical determinism to freedom in history is discussed in *Idea for a Universal History* and in *Streit der Fakultäten*, VII, 41. The relation between the problem of freedom with respect to God's foresight and that of freedom in a Laplacean universe is briefly but suggestively handled in T. D. Weldon's *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (2d ed.; 1958), pp. 210–11.

⁸⁷ In his *Morgenstunden*; cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 101 (195).

⁸⁸ *Critique of Practical Reason*, 101–2 (196); on Spinozism in its relation to fanaticism, see *What Is Orientation in Thinking?* VIII, 143 (Beck, 302).

⁸⁹ Cf. *Perpetual Peace*, VIII, 361 n. (Beck, 24–25 n.).

contains "causation" is formally invalid but that if "X creates Y" and "The appearances of Y cause the appearances of Z," we can say nothing of the relation of X to the appearances of Z.

But I do not see how this meets the issue. For X is also the creator of Z. Since the appearances of Y and Z could not be different from what they are without a different noumenon underlying each⁹⁰ and since each is created by X, it is not easy to see how X can be let off so easily and exculpated for the appearances of Z.

Kant himself seems to have felt that his argument here is not entirely convincing and to have put it forward only *faute de mieux*. The last paragraph of this section (103 [197]) can be read only as evidence of such dissatisfaction.⁹¹ As a puzzle from theology and classical rationalism, I suspect that the problem did not interest Kant at this time as much as it had earlier. The relation of God to the world is not an object of theoretical knowledge but only one of practical belief. This particular aspect of the relation does not have positive moral consequences which make it necessary for Kant to take a stand on it, and such puzzles are dismissed in the *Strife of the Faculties*.

§ 14. FREEDOM AS A POSTULATE

Freedom is the only one of the Ideas of pure reason that we can know. It is proved by the apodictic law of practical reason. All other Ideas gain reality (i.e., are known to have objects) only through their connection with it.⁹² These Ideas are those of God and the immortality of the soul. They are called "postulates" because they are dependent upon the need of human reason to establish the possibility of the highest good; they are not directly necessary to morality or revealed in the fact of pure reason, and they cannot be theoretically justified.

It is a little surprising, therefore, to find Kant calling freedom in the positive sense also a postulate of pure practical reason.⁹³ This is to be explained in three ways. First, there is the wide latitude that Kant

⁹⁰ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 556 = B 584.

⁹¹ One of the first commentators on the *Critique* (Brastberger, *Untersuchungen über Kants Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, p. 156), who was almost sentimentally sympathetic to and uncritical in his acclaim of Kant's book on most points, rejects Kant's solution to this problem or, rather, confesses that he cannot find what Kant's solution is. Crusius, who in so many matters concerning freedom anticipated Kant, declared the problem to be insoluble.

⁹² *Critique of Practical Reason*, 4 (88). The postulates "give objective reality to the Ideas of speculative reason in general" (*ibid.*, 132 [229]). In this sense freedom may be, and is, considered a postulate.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 132 (229). Elsewhere he says that it is freedom in the negative sense which is a postulate (cf. *Zum ewigen Frieden in der Philosophie*, VIII, 418).

permitted himself in using the word "postulate." The variety of its meanings will be discussed below in chapter xiii.

Second, there is the specific relation of freedom to the *summum bonum* rather than to the moral law itself. With reference to the highest good as an object of a necessary human need, whatever it is necessary to assume in order to achieve it may be considered a postulate. Though the Analytic has given better reasons to assert freedom than that it is necessary to the highest good, when the highest good is the topic of discussion, whatever we have to assume in order to show its real possibility is to that extent a postulate. We cannot conclude that the doctrine of the Analytic is in any way abandoned or even modified because what was there "deduced" is here "postulated." The doctrine of freedom as a postulate is, in fact, earlier than the deduction of freedom. In the Dialectic of the second *Critique* we hear the last echo of a doctrine developed in the *Critique of Pure Reason* which put God, freedom, and immortality on exactly the same level.⁹⁴

Third, there is a difference in the meaning of freedom as a condition of the moral law and as a condition of the *summum bonum*. Freedom in the latter sense is an object of faith, not a *scibile*;⁹⁵ it is the faith (*Vertrauen*) in the achievability of the *summum bonum*, i.e., the belief in virtue (*Glaube an die Tugend*) as adequate to achieve the highest good. In this sense, freedom is not mere autonomy but "autarchy of will."⁹⁶

⁹⁴ *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 395 n. (not in A). Albert Schweitzer (*Die Religionsphilosophie Kants*, chap. ii and p. 134) argued that the original plan of the second *Critique* was that it would continue the doctrine of the cosmological Ideas of the first, and in the order of their derivation in the Dialectic but that Kant then discovered the special prerogative of the Idea of freedom. This caused him to take that Idea from the Dialectic as planned and put it into the Analytic.

⁹⁵ *Critique of Judgment*, § 91.

⁹⁶ *Fortschritte der Metaphysik*, XX, 295.

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