

A Critical Analysis of Immanuel Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals

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ABSTRACT

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), a German philosopher, is considered as the father of modern ethics and one of the great philosophers in the history of philosophy. He wanted to establish firm foundation for moral philosophy. He contributed something new to modern ethics which was not attempted by earlier ethicists. He wanted to show by using reason that morality is based on a single supreme universal principle, which is binding to all rational beings. Precisely, Kant wanted to establish the first principle of morality which neglects all consideration of self-interest and even particular human problems. In the Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, Kant claimed that his intention is to seek out and establish the supreme principle of morality, and that supreme principle is the categorical imperative. He puts the supreme principle of morality or the categorical imperative in at least five ways. These are formula of universal law (FUL), formula of universal law (FLN), formula of humanity (FH), formula of humanity (FA), and formula of realm of ends (FRE). However, Kant affirms that there is one canonical and general formulation of the categorical imperative and it is the FUL. For him, the other formulas are not distinct ethical principles; rather they are the reformulations or variant formulations of the single categorical imperative. Kant put this position in his works, The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals. So, in this paper, I will mainly concentrate on the fundamental doctrine of the Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals. As I have tried to make clear before, Kant's aim in the Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals is to search for and establish the supreme principle of morality (i.e., categorical imperative). He attempted to do this at the end of the Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals. But, to me, the way he attempted to justify the categorical imperative is problematic. Thus, in this paper, I argue that Kant did not put the categorical imperative or morality on a solid ground.

Keywords: Categorical Imperative; formula of universal law (FUL); Groundwork of Metaphysics of Morals; Immanuel Kant; Morality; Supreme Principle of Morality.

INTRODUCTION

According to Paton, ^[1] Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher, is considered as the father of modern ethics. He wanted to lay unshakable foundation for moral philosophy. His contribution to ethics is totally new. He wanted to show, by using reason, that ethics and morality is based on a single supreme universal principle, which is binding to all rational beings. In precise words, Kant wanted to establish the first principle of morality which neglects all

consideration of self-interest and even particular human problems.

We can find Kant's most influential position in his works, The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (we call it Groundwork hereafter) and developed his views in his later works. In this paper, I will mainly focus on the foundational doctrine of the Groundwork. I will also consider some of his other books in case situations impel me.

In the Preface of the Groundwork, Kant's intention is to seek out and establish the supreme principle of morality, and that supreme principle is the categorical imperative. This is, Kant argues, one and only one supreme principle for all fields of morals. [2]

However, as Ellington reminds us, Kant does not insist that he discovered categorical imperative. Because Kant thinks that this supreme principle is a working criterion used by any rational agent to make their choice and judgment although they do not explicitly formulate it. [3] In other words, as discussed by Allison, [4] Kant aimed at exposing the moral principle which is implicitly used by the pre-philosophical understanding of morality. He insists that although in pre-philosophical understanding of morality any ordinary good man used this moral principle to judge moral actions, he was unable to make it clear for themselves. Thus, in section one of the Groundwork, Kant starts from the analysis of our ordinary moral views to determine the supreme principle behind it. As a result, he argues that the only thing good without qualification is a good will. The good will is good through its willing; that is, only a good will and actions that express this will have unrestricted or unconditional value.

According to Korsgaard, to ascribe unconditional value to an action, for Kant, we have to know the motivation on the basis of which a person acts. Thus, what makes us attribute unconditional value to a morally good action is the motivation behind it. This suggests that if we know how actions with unconditional value are willed, we can know what makes them morally good. If we know what makes actions morally good, we can determine which one is morally good and what the moral law tells us to do. To determine what the moral law tells us to do, Kant attempts to find out the principle on which a person of a good will acts. [5]

For Kant, a person of a good will performs from the motive of duty. Consequently, if we analyze the concept of duty we can show what the principle of a

good will is. For Kant, the defining feature of an action performed from duty is that the agent performs the action because he considers that it is the right thing to do. This defining feature of actions done from duty lies in the maxim upon which it is done. Kant holds that an agent who acts from duty or from good will considers his maxim as having the form of a law. The principle of a good will is, thus, to perform only actions whose maxim can be conceived as having the form of a law. [2]

In section two of the Groundwork, Kant arrives at the same conclusion but through different way. He chooses a philosophical starting point that leads him to a more complete and precise formulation of the moral principle. He analyses the concept of unconditional necessary action to uncover a principle similar to section one. Unconditionally necessary actions are moral actions. If an action is unconditionally necessary, the agent considers that doing the action is something required of him regardless of other things. Thus, the maxim upon which it is done should be conceived as a law. But, since the action is unconditional, the will cannot be bound to a particular law. As a result, it is the idea of law that is universal that binds the will. This takes us to Kant's first formulation of categorical imperative, formula of universal law (FUL). [4] Korsgaard in her book entitled *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* reminds us, for Kant, to determine whether one wills his maxim to be a universal law, he can consistently will it as a law of nature. [6]

According to Paton, analysis of the concept of moral obligation shows that the FUL is its principle. But, it is impossible to show how it is binding on the will through mere analysis of the concept of moral obligation. Kant postpones this job to section three of the Groundwork. In preparation to resolve this problem, Kant has to show the kind of motivation that an agent who acts from categorical imperative has. He insists that since every action has an end, morality become possible if there exists an objectively necessary end. Kant

introduces humanity as the only end which is an end in itself. This enables him to formulate another version of the categorical imperative, namely the formula of humanity (FH).^[7]

As discussed by Timmermann, Kant comes up with another formula of the categorical imperative by combining the previous two formulas (FUL and FH). He takes the idea of legislation from FUL and the idea of self-determination from the FH to establish autonomous legislation in the realm of ends. For Kant, one might be motivated to obey the law either heteronomously or autonomously. Since a person who acts heteronomously is motivated to respect the law by some interest, the imperative from which his maxim is drawn is hypothetical. However, the moral imperative is categorical. A person who is motivated by it, acts autonomously. This implies that the laws of morality must be laws that a person imposes on himself. Kant suggests that any autonomous action must be governed by moral laws. The moral law just tells a person not to act on a principle that he does not will to be a law. It restricts a person to act in accordance with his autonomy. As a result, Kant suggests that the categorical imperative is the law of autonomy.^[8]

According to Paton in section one and two of the Groundwork, Kant only tells us, through analysis, what morality is if it really exists. He does not tell us that morality really exists. Kant shows us this in section three of the Groundwork. To do so, he uses a synthetic argument. Kant insists that, as rational beings, we must consider ourselves as possessing a free will. We cannot consider our actions as causally determined by outside forces. This is a negative conception of freedom. Thus, it is uninformative. However, this negative concept of freedom is important to know the positive one. Kant leads to the positive concept of freedom in such a way that a lawless free will is self-contradictory. Thus, a free will would act under laws, but these laws could not be one imposed upon it other

than itself. Because if so, they would be just laws of natural necessity. If the laws under which free will act are not other imposed, they must be self-imposed. But, this is what does mean by autonomy. Since, for Kant, autonomy is the principle of morality, a free will is under moral laws. Therefore, morality follows from the concept of free will.^[7]

Since morality is valid for all rational beings, it is impossible to base our notion of morality on the concept of free will if it is impossible to prove that all rational beings have free will. It is impossible to prove this issue from experience. However, it is possible to assume that a being is really free if it thinks of itself as free when it acts. This is because a being with reason and a will must think of itself as free.^[2]

However, Kant cannot be satisfied by this argument because it is circular. He attempts to avoid this problem by establishing an independent ground to consider the will as free. The distinction between the noumenal and phenomenal world enables him to establish this independent ground. He insists that the will is part of both the noumenal and the phenomenal world. He says it is only in the phenomenal world that human being is causally determined. But, as parts of the noumenal world, the will is free.^[2]

As I have tried to make clear before, Kant's aim in the Groundwork is to search for and establish the supreme principle of morality. He attempted to do this in section three of the Groundwork in which he affirmed that the noumenal world makes freedom possible since the idea of freedom makes any moral agent to be responsible for his act; moral obligation is real. But, to me, the way he attempted to justify a categorical imperative is problematic. Thus, in this paper, I argue that Kant does not put the categorical imperative or morality on a solid ground.

This paper is composed of three parts each of which deals with a specific part of the paper. In the first part, I will

briefly discuss and analyze how Kant, in the Groundwork, arrives at the first formulation of the supreme principle of morality by analyzing ordinary moral beliefs. In the second part, I will analyze how Kant reaches the various formulation of the categorical imperative by taking more philosophical stand point. In the third, I will analyze how Kant attempted to establish the notion of categorical imperative in the Groundwork and I will also show how his attempt is unsuccessful. Finally, in conclusion part, I will briefly show how the reason he used to establish the validity of the categorical imperative, in the Groundwork, is insufficient.

THE GOOD WILL AND THE SUPREME PRINCIPLE OF MORALITY

THE GOOD WILL

In section one of the Groundwork, Kant's project is "to proceed analytically from common moral cognition to the determination of its supreme principle." [2] Korsgaard tells us that Kant starts from our ordinary ways of thinking about morality and moves into discovering the principle behind it. Although Kant, in this section, is analyzing ordinary moral view, he is not justifying that human beings have moral obligation. He is rather merely identifying what is essential to prove that moral obligation is real. [5]

"The common cognition from which Kant starts his argument is that morally good actions have a special kind of value. A person who does the right thing for the right reason evinces what Kant calls a good will." [2] Thus, Kant's analysis of ordinary views of morality begins with the thought that "It is not possible to think of anything in the world, or indeed out of it, that can be held to be good without limitation except a good will." [2]

Here, the objective is to identify the principle that ordinary good man is supposed to use in judging his action although he does not explicitly formulate it. Kant's intention is to derive it by analyzing of the concept of a good will. Thus, to

explicitly state this principle, we have to know more about "a good will" and "good without qualification". [1]

By "good without limitation", Kant means that it is only a good will which is good in any context. That is, its goodness does not change along with the change of contexts, desires and ends. Thus, Kant concludes that good will is an absolute and unconditioned good. It is also the only thing which is good in itself and independently of other things [4]

Kant does not mean that a good will is the only good. Rather, he divides all goods into two: "gifts of nature" and "gifts of fortune". Although Kant does not deny that all "gifts of nature" and "gifts of fortune" are good in many respects, he does not confirm that they are good without limitation. He claims that, on the contrary, they can be extremely bad or evil when they are used with a bad will. This implies that they are good within certain conditions. Thus, they are conditioned good and are not absolutely good. [7]

Moreover, Kant believes that the goodness of the good will is not derived from the good result it produces. But, it just attaches a distinct, conditioned and qualified good that does not have any influence on its inner nature. Sometimes, a good will might be combined with defects of the mind or bad qualities of temperament. In this case, it may fail to achieve good results. But, a good will continues to have its inner absolute value although it fails to achieve the result it aims to achieve. [9]

A GOOD WILL AND DUTY

Kant discusses the concept of duty to further clarify the concept of a good will. His main claim is that the concept of duty "contains that of the concept of a good will though under subjective limitation and hindrances, which far from concealing it and make it unrecognizable, bring out by contrast and make it shine forth all the more brightly". [2] This passage, as Paton tells us, is incorrectly interpreted by many readers of the Groundwork, but Kant's intention in this passage is that a will which acts for the sake

of duty is a good will. However, Paton suggests, it should not follow from this that a good will is necessarily one that acts for the sake of duty. To understand this, we have to make clear the concept of duty. The very idea of duty involves the overcoming of desires and inclinations. On the other hand, a completely good will or "holy" will can manifest itself without overcoming natural inclinations. So, a good will as such would not act for the sake of duty since it includes a holy will that manifests itself without being constrained by duty. However, man's will is not holy since in finite creatures such as man, there are certain "subjective limitations" or obstacles. Thus, a will that acts for the sake of duty is a good will under human conditions. This also implies that the concept of a good will as such is broader than the concept of a will that acts for the sake of duty. Thus, a will which acts for the sake of duty is a special form of a good will that overcomes subjective limitations and hindrances. It manifests itself in duty under adverse situations. ^[1] According to Wood, Kant takes us to this special form of a good will, because the good will's unlimited worth is shown more brightly to common rational cognition in this conditions and it is under this condition that a good will is different from other conditional goods, and then its higher value becomes clear. ^[9]

According to Paton, Kant elucidates the concept of duty by three propositions of which he explicitly states only the second and the third propositions. But, his suggestion that the third proposition is the consequence of the last two propositions impels commentators to search for the first proposition. The most appropriate candidate of the first proposition, although he does not explicitly state it, seems like: an action has moral worth or value only when it is done from duty ^[7] and then Kant compares it with actions that conform to duty. An action is said to conform to duty if it complies with what duty requires regardless of the motivation for doing it. Kant ascribes true "moral worth" or "moral content" only to

actions done from duty. ^[2] The term "moral worth", "do not refer to just any sort of value morality might attach to actions, but designate only that special degree of worth that most conspicuously elicits esteem from common rational cognition". ^[9] However, if an action lacks moral worth in this sense, it does not follow that it is worthless from moral point of view. In fact, all actions that conform to duty have value from moral point of view, but they do not just have a special degree of value that goes beyond such mere moral approval and elicits esteem from common rational cognition. ^[9]

Kant's second proposition about duty is that: "an action from duty has its moral worth not in the purpose to be attained by it but in the maxim in accordance with which it is decided upon, and therefore does not depend upon the realization of the object of the action but merely upon the principle of volition in accordance with which the action is done without regard for any object of the faculty of desire." ^[2] In the first proposition, we have seen that an action has moral value only if it is done from duty. The above proposition adds that the moral value of such an action does not stem from the result that the action produces or seeks to produce. ^[2] If the moral worth of the action cannot be derived from any inclination of achieving something, then it cannot be derived from the result it is sought or produced. ^[1]

The idea so far has been negative; the source of moral worth is not the result that the action in fact produces or aims to produce. So, it is uninformative. It is necessary to make this doctrine more positive. If an action from duty does not derive its distinct value from the result it achieves or seeks to achieve, it must more specifically be from the motive of duty. ^[1] Kant expresses it in such a way that an action done from duty gains its moral worth from a maxim, and the maxim is not a maxim of producing results. ^[2]

Paton remind us that, for Kant, a maxim is a particular principle (in a loose sense) that one follows to perform a certain

action. It is considered as a purely personal principle to the agent. It is subjective, because it is a principle that a rational agent follows to accomplish a certain action. Subjective principles are valid only for an agent who chooses to act upon it. [1]

Thus, Kant's technical term for this subjective principle is a "maxim". It is different from an objective principle since it is not valid for all rational agents. It is also not the same as a motive, because it is more general than a motive, and that is why it is called a principle. So, maxim includes both the action and its motive. It is not, however, considered as valid for everyone else, like objective principle, and it can be good or bad. [1]

Kant identifies two kinds of maxims: material maxim and formal maxim. Any moral action does not have its moral worth from a material maxim. It rather has its moral worth from a formal maxim or principle of performing one's duty whatever that duty might be. [2]

The third proposition of Kant about duty is that "duty is the necessity to act out of reverence for the law". [2] Paton discussed that, for Kant, the maxim of a morally good action is formal maxim. If so, it must be a maxim of acting on a law which is valid for all rational beings irrespective of their particular interests. It is true that human beings are fallible. As a result, this law must be presented in the form of duty that orders us to be obedient. Since this law is considered as an imposed one on us, it must arouse a feeling which is akin to fear. On the other hand, having realized that this law is imposed on us by our own self, it must arouse a feeling akin to inclination. By inclination, it is to mean a delight that results from the awareness of the imposition comes from our own free and rational will. It is this kind of feeling that Kant calls reverence. This feeling does not arise from any kind of sense stimulation. It is rather from being conscious that the will is subordinated to a universal law which is free from sensuous impact. From this, one can understand that as long as a morally

good action is motivated out of this kind of unique feeling, it is convincing to say that a morally good action is performed out of reverence for the law. [7]

Having discussed a good will under human condition as one which acts for the sake of duty, and duty as "the necessity of actions from respect for the law", the next possible question would be the nature of this law by which a good will has its unique and absolute value. Thus, according to Timmermann, [8] Kant's analysis is yet to be completed since we do not still know the law that inspires reverence and motivates morally good actions.

According to Timmermann, in describing the nature of the law by which a person of a good will performs his action, Kant presents us with the first version of the supreme principle of morality which is officially, for the first time, called categorical imperative in section two of the Groundwork in the following way: to realize a specific end, we have to follow a certain command that enables us to use specific laws. However, morally good actions are not actions done for the sake of some end that one wants to fulfill. If so, all laws used to realize a particular end cannot be candidates of moral law. That is, these laws cannot inspire reverence and motivate morally good actions. Thus, if these specific laws are discarded, the only possible candidates of the moral law must be law abidingness or "the universal conformity to law as such". [8] Kant argues that if there is something by the name moral obligation, then we have to recognize that our wills are directed by this principle: "I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law". [2] "The necessity of an action from reverence for this law is duty, the condition of a human will that is essentially good beyond everything else. Thus, the concept of the good will is connected with that of the law through the concept of duty." [2]

Kant claims that his analysis fully agrees with ordinary human reason. That is,

although the ordinary good man does not establish the above principle in abstraction, he really uses it in evaluating particular moral matters. [2]

THE BACKGROUND OF CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE RATIONAL AGENCY AND IMPERATIVES

According to Allison in section two of the Groundwork, Kant continues to the exposition of the supreme principle of morality to show that this principle has the characteristics of absolute necessity. Because it is impossible to show this by claiming that it is implicitly found in common human reason. He accomplishes this by analyzing the concept of rational agent as such particularly finite rational beings. [4]

Allison also tells us that Kant makes, however, the situation more complicated by deriving additional formulas to what he names a single categorical imperative to fully construct the concept of categorical imperative. [4]

Kant begins his analysis of rational agent with the following passage: "Everything in nature works according to laws. Only a rational being has the capacity to act according to the representation of laws, that is, according to a principle, or a will. Since reason is required for the derivation of actions from laws, the will is nothing other than practical reason." [2]

The above passage gives rise to different interpretations. The first question is about the nature of laws according to the representation of which rational agents act. According to Allison's reading, the context within which Kant's analysis is undertaken obliges us to take objective practical principles as the most genuine candidate of "laws" according to the representation of which rational agents act. [4] Timmermann [8] and Willaschek [10] also affirm this reading. By objective, Kant means that they are valid for all rational agents as such. [2] Since these principles are valid for all rational beings, they can be applied both to perfectly rational agents and imperfect rational

beings. The only difference is that for holy rational beings they appear as descriptive laws, whereas they appear as prescriptive laws for imperfect rational beings. [4]

For Kant, to act according to one's representation of laws means acting according to recognized norms which is taken by Kant as equivalent to "acting on principles". [4]

In the above passage, Kant also claims that if one is governed by this sense of law, he is said to have a will. He defines will "as the capacity to act according to the representation of laws". In this case, he identifies will as practical reason. Allison maintains that Kant applies this identification to rational agents in general that includes both perfect and imperfect rational agents. However, Kant also holds that reason determines the will. [2] For Allison, when Kant claims that practical reason determines or fails to determine the will, he is talking about only in relation to imperfect rational agents. In order to make this point clear, Kant provides us with two ways in which reason determines the will. The first kind of will is the holy or perfectly rational will which is infallibly determined by reason. In this kind of will, there is no any competing force that dictates it to go out of the right track. We can find this kind of will in perfectly rational agents. [4]

According to Kant, these beings necessarily act according to laws of reason. For them, actions which are recognized as objectively necessary are also subjectively necessary. But, in the second case, we can find a will such as human will in which reason fails to invariably determine it because it is subject to subjective inclinations. As a result, for this will, actions which are identified as objectively necessary are not subjectively necessary, rather they are subjectively contingent. Consequently, this kind of will is necessitated by the objective laws of reason. [2]

Since the human will and every other finite will are categorized under the second group, they are subject to

necessitation. This takes us to the idea of imperatives. According to Kant, ^[2] all imperatives are expressed by the word "ought". "Ought" indicates the necessitation that holds between an objective principle and imperfectly rational beings.

Perfectly rational beings necessarily act on objective principles which are imperative for imperfectly rational beings. They manifest the same kind of goodness manifested when imperfectly rational beings act based on imperatives. Thus, these objective principles are necessary but they are not imperatives for them. ^[2]

After discussing the nature of imperatives, Kant discusses the distinction between hypothetical and categorical imperatives. The distinction between them is made by the way they command. ^[4] To command hypothetically is to command under certain condition. By contrast, to command categorically is to command unconditionally independent of any calculated end. For Kant, it is only categorical imperative which is considered as imperatives of morality. ^[2]

After discussing the different kinds of imperatives, Kant raises the question: "How are these imperatives possible?" ^[2] In this question, Kant wants to consider how to understand the necessitation imposed upon the will by imperatives and also how it is possible for finite rational beings to be motivated upon them as rational commands of their will. ^[4]

To understand the argument that Kant uses to answer the above question, we must understand the distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions. The predicate of any analytic proposition is contained in the subject concept of it and it can be derived by mere analysis of the subject concept. Thus, to justify any analytic proposition, it is not necessary to go beyond the subject concept. By contrast, in any synthetic proposition, the predicate is not contained in the subject concept and hence it is impossible to derive it by mere analysis of the subject concept. Thus, to justify a synthetic proposition it is a must to go

beyond the subject concept and search for a third term that enables us to attribute the predicate to the subject concept. ^[7]

For Kant the possibility of hypothetical imperatives does not need any special explanation because all of them are analytic propositions. That means, they are grounded in "Whoever wills the end also wills (in so far as reason has decisive influence on his actions) the indispensably necessary means to it that are within his power". ^[2] Kant seems to assume that, as Paton suggests, the end is always a result, and for an end, it has one means which is considered as some possible action of the agent. If so, we can say that in the concept of willing an end, there is contained the concept of willing the action which is the means to the end. Thus, the proposition that "to will the end is to will the means is a theoretical analytic proposition". ^[1]

Now the issue is how this theoretical analytic proposition becomes practical analytic proposition and hypothetical imperatives. According to Paton, to fill this gap, we have to remember the above objective principle of practical reason. Although this proposition is still analytic, it appears imperative for us since reason does not have a decisive influence although it exists in us. Thus, it can be given the form "if any rational agent wills the end, he ought to will the means". ^[1]

Kant notes that to know the means of the proposed end, we have to use synthetic propositions. We are required to know the cause of a certain desired effect and it is impossible to know what the cause of a certain effect through mere analysis of the effect itself. These synthetic propositions are theoretical. However, the imperative is still analytic as far as willing is concerned. ^[2]

The above kind of justification is not applicable to categorical imperative. Categorical imperative is unconditional and does not refer to an end that the agent seeks to attain. ^[2] To justify a categorical imperative, one has to show that "a fully rational agent would necessarily act in a

certain way, not if he happens to want something else, but simply and solely as a rational agent".^[1] This proposition is not analytic because its predicate is not contained in the subject concept 'rational agent' and it cannot be derived by mere analysis of the subject concept. Thus, this proposition is synthetic. Moreover, it is an assertion of what any rational agent ought to do. As a result, it cannot be justified by appealing to experience. Hence, the categorical imperative is not only synthetic but also a priori. And it is very difficult to justify it.^[1] Kant postpones this task to section III of the Groundwork.

THE FORMULATION OF THE CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

As noted earlier, Kant announces that he postpone the question of the possibility of categorical imperative to section III of the Groundwork. However, although the justification of this standard as the objective principle of rational agents cannot be derived from its very concept, it is possible to derive its content or what it enjoins from its concept.^[8]

We said that categorical imperative is unconditional. The constraint imposed upon the will is independent of any end presupposed by the agent. Otherwise expressed, it just commands us to act (to adopt maxims) in conformity with objective principle. Laws are equally valid for all rational agents as such and they are universally and unconditionally valid constraints on action. Thus, the conformity of maxims to universal law as such follows from the mere concept of categorical imperative.^[2] However, the maxim of finite rational beings can conform to universal laws only if such agents can also will them as universal laws. What is important is the compatibility between the material maxim and the thought of the same maxim as universal laws. From this idea, one can understand that a categorical imperative requires that an agent adopts only the maxim that he can at the same time wills as a universal law. This can be expressed in the formula: "Act only according to that maxim

through which you can at the same time will that it becomes a universal law".^[2]

According to Timmermann's discussion, Kant holds that the above formulation is the one canonical and general formulation of the categorical imperative: there is only a single categorical imperative and it is the above principle (FUL). Other unconditional imperatives are either variants of this principle or individual 'categorical imperatives', i.e., particular applications of this principle. The formula of laws of nature, which immediately follows the present formulation, is the first of three variants.^[8]

The above test, however, is abstract and Kant thinks that it may be difficult to apply it. He realizes that it is easier to apply the test to a maxim if we consider it not as a normative law but as a law of nature, a universal rule against which it is causally impossible for everyone to act.^[9]

In the Groundwork, a few lines after stating FUL, Kant suggests that "Since the universality of law in accordance with which effects take place constitutes what is properly called nature in the most general sense (as regards its form) - that is, the existence of things in so far as it is determined in accordance with universal laws - the universal imperative of duty can also go as follows: act as if the maxim of your action were to become by your will a universal law of nature."^[2]

According to Allison, Kant in the Critique of Pure Reason conceives of nature formally and materially. When nature is conceived formally, it is the existence of things according to universal laws. Kant implicitly wants to claim that this concept of nature is used to show the conformity to universal law assumed in the categorical imperative. He makes the transition from FUL to formula of law of nature (FLN). According to Allison, this immediately gives rise to the question: "How can the idea of conformity to laws of nature represent the idea of conformity to laws of a completely different type, specifically, law of freedom?"^[4]

Paton tried to address this question in the following way. In FUL, Kant informs us that the maxims on which we act ought to conform to universal law as such. He then continues to tell us that in nature, every event takes place according to universal law, particularly the law of cause and effect. From this, we can understand that nature and moral action have the same form although the law of freedom and the law of nature are not the same. This indicates that there is analogy between universal law of freedom and universal laws of nature. It is through this analogy that Kant assumes that the universal law imposed by the categorical imperative is represented by the law of nature and goes from FUL to FLN. ^[1]

In Critique of Practical Reason, Kant affirms that since FLN contains the key idea of universality, it is characterized as a “typic” of FUL. By this, he means a model or a symbolic representation by which we apply FUL to a particular maxim in moral deliberation. ^[11]

To use FLN, Kant tells us to imagine ourselves as a creator of a world to which we are a part. The most important point to be clarified here is, whether the proposed course of action is taken as a law of nature in which the agent is a member. The idea of being the law of nature expresses the idea of universality required by the categorical imperative. ^[4]

However, as Allison suggests, there is ambiguity with regard to the precise function assigned to the FLN by Kant. Some of Kant's claims suggest that it is intended to function as a self-standing source of duties while suggests that the function of FLN is to rule out maxims that violate each of the four types of duties. ^[4]

Allison notes that Kant moves to the FH by enriching his previous idea of rational agency. As noted before, he holds that rational agents are beings with the capacity to act according to their representation of laws. He equalizes this capacity with the possession of a will or practical reason. ^[4] Kant re-expresses this idea in slightly different words by saying:

“The will is thought as a capacity to determine itself to acting in conformity with the representation of certain laws. . . . Now, what serves the will as the objective ground of its self-determination is an end...”. The latter sentence brings about the second fundamental feature of all actions. That means, any rational action, in addition to having a principle, sets an end before itself. ^[2]

According to Kant, ends might be either subjective or objective. Subjective ends are based on desire or inclination. Since different agents have different inclinations, these ends are not based on reasons which are valid for all rational agents. They have a relative value and conditioned. So, these ends are only ground for hypothetical imperatives. ^[2]

But, objective ends are, unlike subjective ends, based on reasons that are valid for all rational agents. They have also unconditional and absolute value. This implies that these ends cannot result from mere human action since ends that result from mere human action do not have unconditional worth; instead they have to be an already existent end or ends in themselves. Thus, these ends could be the ground of categorical imperative. ^[2]

After having made clear the nature of ends that grounds the categorical imperative, Kant suggests that it is only rational beings or persons that can be ends in themselves. Since only persons have unconditional value, it is not right to use them merely as means to an end its value is only relative. If there is no such end, there would be no unconditioned good, categorical imperative for human beings. Thus, the peculiar end which is required for the categorical imperative to be possible is persons or rational beings. ^[2] To derive the FH, Kant uses the idea that rational agents are ends in themselves. Thus, the FH looks like this: “So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means.” ^[2] The term

“humanity” refers to the rational capacities of human beings. [8]

The other formula is the formula of autonomy (FA). It is formulated based on the idea that a rational will makes itself the law that it obeys. [1] The formula is expressed as follows: “So act that your will can regard itself at the same time as making universal law through its maxim.” [2] This formula is the most important formulation of the supreme principle of morality because it leads to the idea of freedom. [1]

Kant tries to arrive at the FA in many ways that he does not clearly differentiate one another. Among others, one way that shows how Kant formulates the FA is that he derives it from the essence of categorical imperative. We said that the moral imperative is categorical and unconditional. Thus, it avoids any interest. The preceding formulas implicitly show this. Now, the FA explicitly avoids any interest. In suggesting that a moral will makes the law that it obeys, it is already suggesting that it is not determined by any interest since a will determined by interest is heteronomous. If will were determined by interest, it would be subject to the law that it does not make, and ultimately to natural law. For Kant, all philosophers that determine moral obligation by any kind of interest make the categorical imperative inconceivable and dismiss morality altogether. These philosophers advocate the doctrine of heteronomy rather than the doctrine of autonomy. Thus, this kind of theory does not give rise to categorical imperative, rather it gives rise to hypothetical. [2] From this we conclude, “If there is a categorical imperative, the moral will which obeys it must not be determined by interest, and therefore must itself make the universal laws which it is unconditionally bound to obey.” [1]

Kant's notion of autonomy further leads to another closely connected world, i.e., the realm of ends. He considers the realm of ends as an idea by which one can construct for himself the conception of autonomous agency. Otherwise expressed,

when one considers himself as an autonomous agent, he is at the same time think of himself as a law-giving member of the realm of ends. To understand this idea more properly, it is essential to know what Kant means by “a realm of ends”. [4] Kant defines realm as “a systematic union of different rational beings under common laws”. [2] The term “systematic” indicates that the various members live harmoniously and also support one another. When we apply this conception to ends, the realm of ends is one in which the members are ends in themselves. [4]

Having discussed the realm of ends, let me proceed to spell out the formula of the realm of ends (FRE). This formula, along with the FA, is the most vital formulation of Kant's categorical imperative. It can be expressed as: “Act in accordance with the maxims of a member giving universal laws for a merely possible realm of ends.” [2] Kant introduces this formula in combination with the FA and, in some passages, Kant even seems to consider FRE as expressions of FA. [2] Moreover, FRE can be derived by combining the ideas of previously mentioned formulas of categorical imperative. Thus, this enables the mentioned formula to be more adequate in expressing the spirit of the supreme principles of morality. [9]

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE FORMULAS OF CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

Kant says that: “The aforementioned three ways of representing the principle of morality are at bottom only so many formulas of the very same law, and one of them of itself unites the other two in it.” [2] Although this sentence is single, it contains two claims that require a separate treatment. The first claim is that these formulas are the expressions of the same law. As Allison suggests, the law represented by the three formulas (FLN, FH and FA/FRE) are the single categorical imperative that first stated and till now has been referred as FUL. We saw before that Kant characterized categorical imperative as single. Thus, the

above sentence strengthens Kant's claim that there is only one fundamental principle of morality. [4] Kant warns his readers not to take the various formulas as distinct ethical principles, rather they are the reformulations or variant formulations of the single categorical imperative. [8]

The second claim contained in the single sentence mentioned above is that one of the three reformulations unites the other two in itself. It is in this context that Kant talks about the mutual relation between the various formulas of the categorical imperative. In order to show which formula contains within itself the other two, and thereby to explain the mutual relation between them, Kant claims that every maxim has a form, a matter (end) and a complete determination. He suggests that every maxim has the form of generality in the sense that it is a general principle by which it is done. From this, Kant concludes that "in this respect the formula for moral imperative is expressed thus: that maxims must be chosen as if they were to hold as universal laws of nature". By the law of nature, he equates it with FLN which specifies the formal condition that a maxim must fulfill that in turn enables to conform to the moral principle. In the same way, he argues that every maxim has a matter to which the action is done. [2] From this, he derives the FH in such a way that "a rational being, as an end by its nature and hence as an end in itself, must in every maxim serve as the limiting condition of all merely relative and arbitrary ends". [2] Thus, FH identifies the moral principle by objective end and this end is the existent end of humanity as an end in itself. This end serves as a motive for a will that follows a categorical imperative. However, "complete determination" does not apply to an individual maxim; rather it is a necessary condition of an entire system of moral legislation that governs the conduct of a rational agent. [9] The FA formulates the moral law in terms of this system. This becomes obvious when FA is expressed in the guise of FRE, because this formula

explains that the law must unite all rational beings as ends in themselves into a harmonious organic system. In this way, FA/FRE not only goes beyond FLN and FH, considered individually, but also unites them. This also implies the interdependence and collective completeness of the three formulas. [2]

Kant indicates that there is a progression from one formula to another and the three formulas complement one another in their practical application. [2]

The three formulas refer to complementary ways when moral principle applied to maxims. FLN refers to the universal validity of each maxim; FH directs us to the many rational beings that must be treated as ends in themselves; and FA in the guise of FRE presents these ends as a harmonious commonwealth. [9]

There is a progression from FLN to FH and then to FA/FRE. The FLN, as the legislative form of a maxim, leads to the search for the objective end which represents this legislative form. This end is found in rational beings as ends in themselves. Thus, FLN progresses to FH. The combination of FLN and FH provides FA/FRE in the sense that the worth of rational nature which grounds FH and conceived as the idea of a rational will is considered as the author of laws presupposed in FLN. [9]

Finally, as Timmermann reminds us, Kant recommends the strict method of FUL in practical purpose or for moral appraisal, but the three formulas (FLN, FH and FA/FRE) come to secure acceptance for the moral law or to bring the FUL to intuition through analogy. [8]

As we have seen so far, in the first two sections of the Groundwork, Kant describes the procedure he used as analytic. [4] In section one of the Groundwork, Kant starts from analysis of ordinary moral beliefs and arrived at a version of the categorical imperative. He then argued that the condition for moral action, at least for finite rational beings, is obedience to a categorical imperative. In section two of the

Groundwork, he formulates the categorical imperative in at least three ways and he completed the first of the two tasks that he wanted to accomplish in the Groundwork, i.e., to search for and formulate the supreme principle of morality as it is found in common human reason. [1]

Section three of the Groundwork is devoted to the second task that Kant wanted to accomplish; that is, to establish the objective validity of the supreme principle of morality through deduction. This requires to demonstrate its unconditional bindingness for all finite rational beings. [4] So, let me discuss section three of the Groundwork in detail.

THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE THE CONCEPT OF FREEDOM AND AUTONOMY OF THE WILL

We have a clear concept of autonomy, a defining property of moral will, in the last section of the Groundwork. Section three of the Groundwork is concerned with justification that human beings have a will that has this property. Kant claims that the concept of freedom provides the key for this endeavor. [2] This is because freedom is a necessary condition for its possibility. Freedom is not merely a necessary but also a sufficient condition for autonomy and thus of morality. [8]

Let me go to the detail of Kant's argument. Kant begins section three of the Groundwork with a new definition of a will. Initially, he defined will as "the power of a rational being to act in accordance with its conception of laws, i.e., in accordance with principles". [2] But, he now considers it as "a kind of causality of living beings in so far as they are rational". [2] Will is considered as a kind of causality, because it is the power of a rational being to produce effects in the world experience. However, "If we conceive the will to be free, we must mean in the first place that the will is a power to produce effects without being determined or caused to do so by anything other than itself." [1] Freedom is a quality attributed to a special kind of causality. As such, it is

opposed to natural necessity, a causality attributed to non-rational beings. [2] Non-rational beings can act causally only so long as they are caused to do so by something else other than themselves. [1]

"If the will of a rational agent is conceived as free, this must mean that we regard his causal actions, or more precisely his volitions, as not determined by causes external or alien to himself." [1]

Kant holds that since his initial characterization freedom as a complete independence of natural determination is merely negative, it is not informative into its nature. However, if this negative concept of freedom is rejected, it would be impossible to justify the positive concept of freedom. In fact, the positive concept of freedom follows from the negative one. [2]

To show freedom is equivalent to autonomy, Kant needs to move from the negative concept of freedom to the positive one. Having defined will as a kind of free causality, he attempts to do this by the concept of causality. Kant asserts that the concept of causality implies the concept of laws in accordance with which through something which we call 'cause' something else namely, the effect must be posited. Thus, a causality characterized not by natural necessity but by freedom cannot be lawless, but must accord with unchanging laws of a special kind. Otherwise a free will would be a logical absurdity. [2] However, as Paton shows, the ground for this assertion is inadequate. Because, the law to which Kant talks about appears to be a law that connects causes and effects. Thus, we can apply this only to natural necessity. It is difficult to pass from this to a law of freedom. Because the law of freedom is a law of causal action considered in it self. [1]

According to Paton there is a more strong force in the assertion that a lawless free will is an absurdity. However, this view is not derived from any necessary connection between causality and law. It rather comes into being from the fact that a lawless free will would be governed by

chance so that it cannot be regarded as free.^[1]

As Paton says, if Kant's doctrine is based on the argument that presupposes the necessary connection between laws and causality, it is fallacious. Paton holds that the argument is "as superfluous as it is weak". It is because there is no need to make a connection between free will and law on the basis of the concept of causality.

^[1] Kant holds that the very definition of will, as given before, is "the power of a rational being to act in accordance with its conception of laws, i.e. in accordance with principles". If so, a lawless free will is a self-contradiction; it cannot be a will at all.

As Paton discussed, Kant at this stage, is not attempting to justify that a will is free. But, he is just showing how a free will, if there is such a thing, would be conceived.^[1] It is obvious that a will governed by laws of natural necessity is not free. Because, in nature, the law governing causal action is not self-imposed but imposed by something else. This is what is called heteronomy. Thus, if a free will is not lawless, its laws must be special kinds of laws which differ from laws of natural necessity. The only way to distinguish laws of freedom from laws of nature is to suppose that laws of freedom are self-imposed. Thus, the causal action of free will is conducted by self-imposed law. But, this is what does mean by autonomy. A free will must be autonomous will. Moral law is the law of autonomous will. Thus, a free will must be conceived as acting under the moral law. Kant concludes that a free will and a will under moral law are one and the same thing. Thus, Kant holds that if we could presuppose the concept of freedom, the concept of autonomy and thus morality follows, through mere analysis, from the concept of freedom.^[2]

FREEDOM AS A NECESSARY PRESUPPOSITION

According to Kant, if freedom could be established in the way described before, the concept of autonomy and thereby the supreme principle of morality would follow

by a mere analysis of the concept of freedom. However, to justify the moral principle, only describing the characteristics of freedom which must be present in a will if it is to be considered as free is not enough. Rather, we have to show that every rational being with a will is, and indeed must be, free in the way explained before. This is because "in as much as morality serves as a law for us only in so far as we are rational beings, it must also be valid for all rational beings. And since morality must be derived solely from the property of freedom, one must also show that freedom is the property of the will of all rational beings".^[2]

It is useless to appeal to the experience of human action to show that the will of every rational being is necessarily free. This is because experience of freedom, if it were possible (indeed impossible), gives only a fact rather than a necessary connection between the will of every rational beings and freedom.^[2]

As Paton discussed it, Kant argues that we can show that a rational agent as such can act on the presupposition that he is free (Under the Idea of freedom). That means, so long as we are rational beings, we necessarily act under the idea of freedom. The justification of this necessary presupposition would be enough to justify the moral law. If a rational agent must act on the presupposition that he is free, he must act on the presupposition that he is under moral law.^[1]

To justify the presupposition of freedom, Kant begins with theoretical reason than just practical reason. He claims that "We cannot possibly conceive of a reason as being consciously directed from outside in regard to its judgements." If a rational being were conscious of any such external influence, he would consider his judgement as determined, not by reason, but rather by impulse. Reason must, if it is to be reason at all, consider itself as the author of its own principles and capable of functioning in accordance with these principles independently of external influences.^[2]

Kant holds that the above argument which is valid for theoretical reason must equally be valid for practical reason (i.e., as a rational will or as reason exercising causality).^[2] That means, a rational agent as such must, in action, presuppose his rational will to be the source of its own principles of action and to be capable of functioning in accordance with these principles. To say this is tantamount to that a rational being must act only on the presupposition that he is free. Only then can a rational being consider his will as his own. This is the doctrine that Kant wants to establish and from which the principle of morality follows analytically. Paton argues that, for Kant, freedom is a necessary presupposition for both all actions and thinking. This means that a rational being can act, just as he can think, merely on the presupposition of freedom. A rational being implicitly presupposes freedom both in his action and thinking. If not, there is no anything as action and there is no such thing as will.^[1]

THE VICIOUS CIRCLE

Kant's argument seems complete. But, he worries that his argument for human autonomy might contain a vicious circle. Morality was 'traced back' to the idea of freedom at the first subsection of section three of the Groundwork, and in the next subsection it was argued that freedom needs to be necessarily presupposed if we are to think of ourselves, as rational agents, bound by moral laws. Thus, we have not yet been presented with an independent ground of the idea of freedom. As a way out of the vicious circle, Kant introduces us to the doctrine of the two standpoints.^[2]

THE TWO STANDPOINTS

According to Kant, all the ideas which are provided to our senses come to us without our own volition. We assume that these ideas come to us from objects. By means of these ideas, we can know objects only as they affect us. However, we do not know what these objects are in themselves. This leads to the division between things as they appear to us (appearance) and things as they are in themselves (things in

themselves). We know only appearances. However, we have to assume that behind appearances, there are things in themselves even if we do not know these things in themselves, but as they affect us. This gives rise to a rough distinction between a sensible world and an intelligible world. The world of sense is given through sense and varies in accordance with the difference of sensibility in various observers. On the other hand, the intelligible world can be conceived but never known since knowledge requires sensing and conceiving and it remains always the same.^[2]

Kant also argues that this distinction applies to man's knowledge of himself. Man can know himself only as he appears by means of inner sense or through introspection. However, behind this appearance, he must assume, there is an Ego as it is in itself. In so far as he is known through introspection, and in so far as he is capable of receiving sensations passively, he must consider himself as members of the sensible world. On the other hand, in so far as he is capable of pure activities without the influence of sense, he must consider himself as members of the intelligible world. But, Kant suggests that we know nothing about this world.^[2]

Kant claims that man really finds in himself a pure activity which is free from the influence of sense (a faculty of reason) affected by objects.^[2] Here, as Paton noted, Kant appeals to theoretical reason, as he did before. But, he now uses it in his own critical sense.^[7] According to Kant, we have a spontaneous faculty of understanding. The power of understanding along with other factors produces from itself concepts or categories and it uses these categories to bring the ideas of sense under rules. Therefore, although the faculty of understanding is genuinely spontaneous, it is still bound up with sense. Without the use of sensibility, it does not do anything at all. On the other hand, reason is a power of ideas. That means, it produces unconditioned concepts that goes far beyond what sensibility can offer. Reason, unlike

understanding, can show a pure spontaneity which is totally independent of sense. [2]

In virtue of this spontaneity, Kant argues that man must conceive himself, quaintelligence, as members of the intelligible world and regards himself as subject to laws that are grounded merely in reason. On the other hand, as long as man is sensuous and known to himself through inner sense, he must regard himself as belong to the world of sense and regard himself as subject to laws that have their grounds in nature alone. According to Kant, these are the two equally legitimate standpoints from which man (a finite rational being) must regard himself. [2]

For Kant, the above doctrine of theoretical reason is equally applicable to pure practical reason. That means, since man, as a finite rational being, from one standpoint, can regard himself as belonging to the intelligible world, he can regard his will as free from the determination of sensuous causes and as obedient to laws grounded merely in reason. [2] This is tantamount to saying "As a rational being, and thus as a being belonging to the intelligible world, human being can never think of the causality of his own will otherwise than under the idea of freedom; for, independence from the determining causes of the world of sense (which reason must always ascribe to itself) is freedom". [2] From this, there follows the principle of morality (the moral law) and the categorical imperative. [2] As we understand from the above argument, Kant's argument proceeds from being member of the intelligible world to the idea of freedom.

The suspicion of the vicious circle, according to Kant, is now avoided. Because "we now see that when we think of ourselves as free we transfer ourselves into the intelligible world as members and cognize autonomy of the will along with its consequence, morality". [2] But, when man regards himself as members of both the intelligible and the sensible world, he can recognize the moral law as a categorical imperative. [2] Kant, here, argues from

freedom to the intelligible world, which is directly opposed to the previous argument.

As we have seen so far, in the Groundwork, Kant does not clearly show whether he infers from the concept of freedom to the intelligible world or from being member of the intelligible world to the concept of freedom, or whether he is establishing a reciprocal connection between being members of the intelligible world and the concept of freedom. For sure, if Kant uses the last option, he does not reject the vicious circle.

HOW IS A CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE POSSIBLE?

To answer this question, Kant begins again by maintaining that a rational being must regard himself as belonging to the intelligible world. From this, Kant infers that a rational being considers himself as exercising causality and manifesting a free will. According to Kant, man, as a finite rational being, must also regard himself from the standpoint of the sensible world. In connection to this, Kant argues that if I were solely a member of the intelligible world, all my actions would necessarily conform to the principle of autonomy; if I were solely a member of the world of sense, they would necessarily be exclusively subject to the law of nature. [2] At this point, as Paton properly mentions it, Kant inserts a strange argument and at the same time confused in expression and difficult to interpret: [7] "The intelligible world contains the ground of the sensible world and therefore also the ground of its laws; consequently, the intelligible world is (and must be thought of as) directly legislative for my will (which belongs wholly to the intelligible world)." [2] From this premise which is itself problematic in the sense that it needs a considerable expansion, Kant infers that the law governing my will as a member of the intelligible world (from one standpoint) ought to govern my will although I am also, from another standpoint, a member of the world of sense; [2] "I must regard the laws of the intelligible world as imperative for me and the laws conforming to this principle as

duties.” [2] As we understand from his word, Kant here introduces a metaphysical argument from the superior reality of the intelligible world and the rational will.

Kant concludes his argument by saying that “categorical imperatives are possible because the idea of freedom makes me a member of an intelligible world. Now if I were a member of only that world, all my actions would always accord with autonomy of the will.” [2] But, because I am also a member of the world of sense, I experience the moral law as an imperative or my actions ought to accord to it. This categorical “ought”, Kant tells us, presents a synthetic a priori proposition. Thus, to connect this ought with my finite will and by extension the will of any other rational being like me, a third term is needed. In other words, to establish the thesis that the will of every finite rational being ought always to act in accordance with the moral law, it is needed to combine the following two separate concepts: (i) the human will which is affected by sensuous desires and inclinations and (ii) the principle morality. The third term that connects these two different concepts is the same will but viewed as a pure will belonging to the intelligible world. Consequently, the laws of the intelligible world (i.e., autonomy) must be the condition of actions of human will which is affected by sensuous desires. [2]

However, the deduction that Kant, in section three of the Groundwork, assumes to be successful is problematic. To show the deduction or the justification of a categorical imperative is unsuccessful, it is crucial to consider at least three problems mentioned by Timmermann. I shall return to this issue later.

CONCLUSION IN CRITIQUE FORM

In the Groundwork, the aim of Kant is to search for and establish the supreme principle of morality. Categorical imperative is the supreme principle of morality in its imperative mood. However, Kant does not insist that he discovered the categorical imperative. This is because the

supreme principle of morality has implicitly been used by any rational agents in order to make their choice and judgment. Thus, he aimed at exposing the moral principle which has been implicitly used by the pre-philosophical understanding of morality. Although in the pre-philosophical understanding of morality, any ordinary good men used this principle to judge moral actions, they were unable to make this principle clear for themselves.

Accordingly, in section one of the Groundwork, Kant begins with ordinary ways of thinking about morality and moves into exposing the principle that ordinary good man is supposed to implicitly use in judging his action. Kant's intention is to derive it through the analysis of the concept of a good will. This is because any person who does the right thing for the right reason evinces a good will. Thus, through analysis of the concept of a good will, Kant reaches a version of the categorical imperative as the principle in which a good will under human condition would act.

Kant holds that his analysis fully agrees with ordinary human reason. Although the ordinary good man does not establish this moral principle in abstraction, he really uses it in evaluating particular moral matters. Even in practical matters, ordinary human reason is more important than philosophy.

But, common moral cognition is pre-philosophical in its origin and it is a species of innocence in its unreflective form. Thus, it is incapable of protecting itself against evil. It will be easily seduced. Therefore, it is subject not only to philosophical explication, but also to rigorous philosophical criticism, correction, and rejection.

In section two of the Groundwork, Kant continues to expose the supreme principle of morality but now through different way. He explores it from a philosophical stand point. Kant continues to expose the supreme principle of morality in section two of the Groundwork, in order to show that this principle has the

characteristics of absolute necessity. This cannot be shown by claiming that it is implicitly found in common human reason. Because this may imply that this principle is grounded in human nature which in turn prevents it from possessing the characteristics of absolute necessity.

In section two of Groundwork, Kant begins his new argument with some analysis of rational beings. All things in nature act in accordance with laws, but only rational beings act according to the conception of a law. The laws according to its representation finite rational beings act bring the concept of imperatives that constrain the will.

Kant suggests all imperatives command either hypothetically or categorically. To command hypothetically is to command something under certain condition. By contrast, to command categorically is to command unconditionally.

For Kant, since the moral law, if it exists, must apply universally and necessarily, it cannot be based on hypothetical imperatives. The imperative related to the moral law must be a categorical. Since the categorical imperative applies to all rational beings regardless of the various ends a person would have, it could be the basis of the moral law. As we know, a categorical imperative could not be based on a particular end. Thus, Kant holds that the categorical imperative must be based on the notion of a law itself. Laws by definition, apply universally. From this, Kant derives the content of the categorical imperative that requires moral agents act only in a way that the maxim of their action can be a universal law. And he calls it formula of universal law (FUL). The categorical imperative is Kant's general expression of the supreme principle of morality in its imperative mood, but Kant continues to provide three different formulas of this general formulation. These additional formulas refer to different stages that in turn enable him to fully construct the concept of the categorical imperative.

The first formula of the categorical imperative is the formula of law of nature (FLN). This formulation states that an action is only morally permissible if every moral agent can adopt the same maxim of action in a world in which he is a member without contradiction.

The second formulation of the categorical imperative is the Formula of Humanity (FH). Kant reaches this formula by considering the motivating ground of the categorical imperative. Since the moral law is necessary and universal, its motivating ground must have absolute worth. If we find something with an end in itself, it would be the only possible ground of a categorical imperative. Kant asserts that every rational being exists as an end in itself.

The third formulation of the categorical imperative is the formula of autonomy. This formula is formulated on the basis of the idea that a rational will makes itself the law that it obeys. It takes important elements from both the mentioned two formulas. The first Formula (FLN) specifies the universality of laws, while the second formula (FH) is more subjective and focuses on how you treat the person with whom you are interacting. Thus, by combining the objective and subjective aspect of the two formulas, Kant leads to the idea that every rational being is involved in making universal laws.

Kant suggests that the notion of autonomy further leads to another closely connected world, namely the realm of ends. When one considers himself as an autonomous agent, he at the same time thinks of himself as a law-giving member of the realm of ends.

In relation to the realm of ends, Kant formulates the formula of autonomy in the shape of formula of realm of ends (FRE): act in such a way that your maxim could be a law in the realm of ends.^[5] Since FRE can be derived by combining the ideas of previously mentioned formulas of the categorical imperative, it could be more adequate in expressing the spirit of the supreme principles of morality.

Kant asserts that FLN, FH and FA/FRE are not independent ethical theories. They are rather reformulations or variants of the single categorical imperative. The single categorical imperative represented by these formulas is the FUL. Thus, in saying this, Kant accomplishes the first of the second task that he aims to fulfill in the Groundwork, namely formulating the supreme principle of morality.

In section three of the Groundwork, Kant attempts to accomplish the second project that he aims to fulfill in the Groundwork, namely to establish the objective validity of the supreme principle of morality through transcendental deduction. In the last two sections of the Groundwork, Kant claims that he is not maintaining the truth of morality. What he has done is that he has determined the condition of accepted moral beliefs through analytic argument. If so, it is impossible to justify ordinary moral beliefs progressively from this ultimate precondition without a vicious circle. Thus, Kant has to establish these ultimate preconditions independently through transcendental deduction. That is, it is required a transcendental deduction of the supreme principle of morality. Its function is to establish the possibility that moral judgements are valid. At present, Kant insists that it is an open question whether morality and its condition on which it is founded are not merely phantom of the brain.

To show that this worry is groundless, in section three of the Groundwork, Kant begins with a new definition of a will. He considers will as a causality of rational beings. Will is considered as a kind of causality, because it is the power of a rational being to produce effects in the world experience. But, if the will were determined by laws of nature, it would not be free. Thus, a free will must be conceived as one free from any external influence.

This is only negative concept of freedom. But, this negative concept of freedom is important to know the positive

one. The positive concept of freedom is autonomy. He leads to the positive concept of freedom through the concept of causality. Kant asserts that a causality characterized by natural necessity is governed by laws. Thus, a causality characterized not by natural necessity but by freedom cannot be lawless because a lawless free will would be a logical absurdity. Thus, a free will must act under laws. However, the way he asserts this is inadequate. Because the law to which Kant talks about is a law that connects causes and effects. Since we can apply this only to natural necessity, it is difficult to pass from this to a law of freedom. Because the law of freedom is a law of causal action considered in itself. From this problematic premise, he argues that the laws of free will could not be one imposed upon it by others. If it is not other imposed, it must be self-imposed. But, this is what does mean by autonomy. Thus, a free will is equivalent to autonomous will. Since moral law is the law of autonomous will, a free will must be conceived as acting under the moral law. Kant concludes that a free will and a will under moral law are one and the same thing. Thus, Kant holds that if we could presuppose the concept of freedom, the concept of autonomy and thus morality follows, through mere analysis, from the concept of freedom.

However, if Kant's doctrine is based on the argument that presupposes the necessary connection between law and causality, it has to be rejected as fallacious. As a result, Kant fails to connect autonomous will and free will which is one of two connections he wants to fulfill in the Groundwork.

According to Kant, since morality is valid for all rational beings, justification of morality depends on the connection between freedom and the will of every rational being. Although it is impossible to show this through experience, it is possible to show that a rational agent as such can act on the presupposition that he is free. That means, so long as we are rational beings, we necessarily act under the idea of freedom. The justification of this necessary

presupposition would be enough to justify the moral law.

Kant's argument seems complete. But, he worries that his argument presented so far might contain a vicious circle. As a way out this vicious circle, Kant introduces the doctrine of the two standpoints. In the Critique of Pure Reason, he suggests that all ideas which are provided to our senses come to us from objects. Through these ideas, we know objects only as they affect us, but not in themselves. This leads to the division between appearance and things in themselves. This in turn leads to the distinction between a sensible world and an intelligible world. The world of sense is given through sense. But, the intelligible world can be conceived but never known.

Kant applies this distinction to man's knowledge of himself. Man can know himself only as he appears through introspection. But, behind this appearance, he must assume, there is an Ego as it is in itself. In so far as he is known through introspection, he must consider himself as members of the sensible world. On the other hand, so far as he is capable of pure activities without the influence of sense, he must consider himself as members of the intelligible world.

Kant claims that man really finds in himself a faculty of reason which is pure activity and free from the influence of sense. Kant here is talking about theoretical reason and applies this to practical reason. Thus, through the faculty of reason, man must conceive himself as members of the intelligible world and regards himself as subject to laws that are grounded merely in reason. On the other hand, so far as man is sensuous and known to himself through inner sense, he must regard himself as members of the sensible world and as subject to laws grounded merely in nature. These are the two equally legitimate standpoints from which man must regard himself. The doctrine of theoretical reason is equally applicable to pure practical reason. Thus, since a finite rational being, from one standpoint, can regard himself as

members of the intelligible world, he can regard his will as free from any sensuous determination and as obedient to laws grounded merely in reason. From this, there follows the principle of morality and the categorical imperative. Here, Kant argues from membership of the intelligible world to the idea of freedom although he rejects it in the next argument.

To show that the suspicion of the vicious circle is avoided, Kant argues from freedom to the intelligible world, which is directly opposed to the previous argument and that shows his inconsistency and hesitation in the Groundwork. He says, more specifically, that "when we think of ourselves as free we transfer ourselves into the intelligible world as members and cognize autonomy of the will along with its consequence, morality".

[2] But, when man regards himself as members of both the intelligible and the sensible world, he can recognize the moral law as a categorical imperative.

Thus, as it has been shown above, in the Groundwork, Kant does not clearly show whether he infers from the concept of freedom to the membership of the intelligible world or from being member of the intelligible world to the concept of freedom, or whether he is establishing a reciprocal connection between being members of the intelligible world and the concept of freedom. For sure, if Kant uses the last option, he does not reject the vicious circle. Kant also repeats this inconsistency or hesitation when he attempts to answer the question "how is a categorical imperative possible?" as it is shown below.

To answer the question "how is a categorical imperative possible?", he begins by maintaining that "a rational being must regard himself as belonging to the intelligible world, only then a rational being considers himself as exercising causality and manifesting a free will". [2] A finite rational being must also regard himself from the standpoint of the sensible world. At this point, Kant inserts a strange argument and at the same time confused in expression and difficult to interpret: "The intelligible world

contains the ground of the sensible world and therefore also the ground of its laws; consequently, the intelligible world is (and must be thought of as) directly legislative for my will (which belongs wholly to the intelligible world).”^[2] From this problematic premise, he infers that the law governing my will as a member of the intelligible world ought to govern my will although I am also, from another standpoint, a member of the world of sense. In this problematic argument, Kant seems to introduce a metaphysical argument from the superior reality of the intelligible world and the rational will. If he really uses a metaphysical doctrines to establish the principle of morality, indeed he does, Kant commits a fundamental error since it is impossible to deduce moral obligation from metaphysical considerations which has nothing to do with morality. In fact, Kant himself seems to be aware of his mistake. The reason is that, at the preface of the Groundwork, Kant holds that he has a plan to publish a book entitled *Metaphysics of Morals*. The Groundwork serves merely as a preliminary to *Metaphysics of Morals*. But, he first publishes *Critique of Practical Reason* rather than *Metaphysics of Morals*, and some of arguments in the *Critique of Practical Reason* are different from the Groundwork. This implies that Kant himself seems to be aware of that in the Groundwork he has no sufficient reason to establish the categorical imperative.

As we have seen above, to answer the question “how is a categorical imperative possible?” he argues from membership of the intelligible world to freedom. But, when he concludes his argument in asserting the possibility of the categorical imperative, he argues from freedom to membership of the intelligible world in such a way that “categorical imperatives are possible because the idea of freedom makes me a member of an intelligible world. Now if I were a member of only that world, all my actions would always accord with autonomy of the will.”^[2] But, because I am also a member of the

world of sense, I experience the moral law as an imperative or my actions ought to accord to it. This categorical “ought” presents a synthetic a priori proposition. Thus, to connect this ought with every finite will, or to establish the thesis that the will of every finite rational being ought always to act in accordance with the principle of morality, it is needed to combine the following two separate concepts: the human will or finite will and the principle morality. The third term that connects these two different concepts is the same will but viewed as a pure will belonging to the intelligible world. Consequently, the laws of the intelligible world must be the condition of actions of human will which is affected by sensuous desires.

In addition to problems mentioned before, there is another fundamental error that shows the deduction that Kant, in section three of the Groundwork, assumes to be successful is failed.

That means, as I mentioned before, Kant, in the Groundwork, attempts to justify the bindingness of the categorical imperative for finite will through deduction more specifically through transcendental deduction. He ends this project in the way presented so far. But, it is unsuccessful. To show this, it is important to state at least three problems mentioned by Jens Timmermann.^[8] First, Kant claims that the two concepts which are supposed to be connected in a synthetic judgement must be connected by a third element that contains both of them. But, in the above case, the idea of a pure will located in the intelligible world may contain the laws of autonomy (the moral law), but it is not obvious that it contains the idea of itself as a finite will or a human will. Secondly, Kant, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, thinks that the minimum condition for the objective validity of synthetic judgment is time. That means, a synthetic judgement cannot be objectively valid if the ‘third something’ is not provided in intuition of time. In light of this, the deduction or the justification of the categorical imperative in the Groundwork is

unsuccessful, since a pure will is not provided in intuition of time. Thirdly, some interest in moral behavior is needed to conduct the connection in practice: reverence for the moral law. But, the possibility of explaining this interest lies beyond the boundaries of practical philosophy as Kant himself admits.

In general, arguments that Kant uses, in the Groundwork, to justify the binding character of the categorical imperative for finite rational beings are problematic, obscure and inconsistent. As we have seen so far, some of the arguments in the Groundwork contradict with each other and others contradict with arguments in the Critique of Pure Reason. Thus, the existence of these problems implies that Kant, in the Groundwork, does not have a sufficient reason to establish the categorical imperative. In other words, Kant, in the Groundwork, does not put the categorical imperative or morality on a solid ground.

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