

Selections from Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, James W. Ellington, trans., 3rd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1993; o.p. 1785).

“...morality (together with its principle) follows by merely analyzing the concept of freedom.” (p. 49)

Aren't Our Actions Casually Determined by the Laws of Physics, Biology, Etc.?

“All men think of themselves as free as far as their will is concerned. ...it is just as impossible for the most subtle philosophy as for the most ordinary human reason to argue away freedom.” (p. 56)

What Is Freedom?

“What else, then, can freedom of the will be but autonomy, i.e., the property that the will has of being a law to itself?” (p. 49)

What Kind Obligations Is a Free Person Subject To?

“...man is subject only to his own, yet universal, legislation and ... he is bound only to act in accordance with his own will, which is, however, a will purposed by nature to legislate universal laws.” (p. 39)

How Is a Moral *Ought* Different from a Non-Moral *Ought*?

“Now all imperatives command either hypothetically or categorically. The former represent the practical necessity of a possible action as a means for attaining something else that one wants (or may possibly want). The categorical

imperative would be one which represented an action as objectively necessary in itself, without reference to another end.” (p. 25)

Why Should One Obey a Hypothetical Imperative?

“Whoever wills the end, wills (so far as reason has decisive influence on his actions) also the means that are indispensably necessary to his actions and that lie in his power.” (27)

What Does the Categorical Imperative State?

Formula of Universal Law: “Hence there is only one categorical imperative and it is this: Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.” (p. 30)

Formula of the Law of Nature: “Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature.” (p. 30)

Formula of the End in Itself: “Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end and never simply as a means.” (p. 36)

Why Can't I “Legislate” for Myself an Immoral Rule?

“If we now attend to ourselves in any transgression of a duty, we find that we actually do not will that our maxim should become a universal law – because this is impossible for us – but rather that the opposite of this maxim should remain a law universally. We only take the liberty of making an exception to the law for ourselves (or just for this one time) to the advantage of our inclination. Consequently, ...we would find a contradiction in our own will....” (pp. 32-33)