

Section I.

By investigating pure and genuine rational moral knowledge, Kant hopes to offer a metaphysical case for the supreme principle of morality, thus universally and necessarily binding objective morality upon all rational beings; morals are liable to corruption, contingency, and uncertainty without the "supreme canon" by which to estimate them correctly. (1).

A. Kant's Derivation of the Traditional Division of Philosophy:

1. Like Aristotle: 3 Divisions: Physics, Ethics, & Logic
2. Two distinctions between kinds of knowledge:
 - a. Empirical/rational &
 - b. formal/material.
 - (1) Empirical is experienced based knowledge-*a posteriori*
 - (2) Rational knowledge is pure, *a priori* knowledge, i.e., knowledge independent of experience
 - (2) Formal knowledge is not subject matter; Rather, it is about the general structure of thinking about any subject matter whatsoever.
4. Material is knowledge of a specific subject matter: either nature or freedom
3. Kant differentiates empirical, material knowledge (e.g., natural science). There is no formal, empirical knowledge.
4. Rational knowledge is divided into formal, rational (e.g. logic) & material, rational (knowledge whose justification is experience-independent (e.g., metaphysics: nature & morals).

B. The Place of Ethics (Moral Philosophy) in the Division of Philosophy:

1. Kant seeks to develop an *apriori* or pure philosophy of morals.
2. Metaphysics of nature is supposed to provide rational knowledge of laws of nature. These are not empirical laws but are more like universal principles of nature which any empirical physical would presuppose; no event in nature occurs without a natural cause.
3. Metaphysics of freedom is supposed to provide knowledge of the laws of freedom; these are universal laws which free agents devise to govern themselves.
4. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* was an investigation of the possibility of rational knowledge of nature
5. Kant's *Critique of Practical Wisdom* was an inquiry into the possibility of the practical application of wisdom.
6. Kant's *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* is an inquiry into the possibility of purely rational knowledge of morals.

C. The Need for A Grounding of the Metaphysics of Morals:

1. Method: Begin from a pre-theoretical or common understanding of moral duty and moral law (pg. 3).
Ex. Moral Rule: Thou Shalt Not Lie
2. If the moral law is valid it must be universal and necessary: Necessity means that the rule obligates/binds/applies to all rational beings regardless of the circumstances.
3. Therefore, the basis for obligation cannot be found in the human nature or her condition.
4. If moral laws are universal and necessary, then they must be derived from concepts of pure reason alone.
5. All beings who are rational are the recipients of morality.
6. If a moral law or law can be derived from reason alone, there must be a pure moral philosophy whose task is to provide such a derivation.
7. In this account, Kant seeks to present a case of establishing the supreme principle of morality.

First Section::

Transition from the common rational knowledge of morality to the philosophical;

Second Section:: Transition from popular moral philosophy to the metaphysics of morals;

Third Section: Final Step from the metaphysics of morals to the critique of the pure practical reason.