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On Hegel's Critique of Kant's Ethics
Beyond the Empty Formalism Objection

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In the current literature on Hegel and Kant, an uneasy truce seems to have broken out in the trench warfare between Hegelians and Kantians over Kant's ethics. On the one hand, at least some commentators on Kant have started to take seriously the critical fire directed by Hegel at Kant's treatment of the Formula of Universal Law as the "supreme principle of morality," and so to that extent have accepted the force of Hegel's so-called "empty formalism" objection.[1] On the other hand, the Kantians' response has been to beat a tactical retreat on this issue, and to press forward on a new front, by arguing that the Formula of Universal Law (henceforth FUL) was never *meant* to stand alone as the supreme principle of morality, and that once it is put together with Kant's other formulae (particularly the Formula of Humanity (FH)), this can resolve the formalism problem, so that Hegel's point regarding the FUL can safely be conceded, while Kant's position *as a whole* can be saved. One attraction of this more concessive approach,[2] it may seem, is that both sides can then go away happy: Hegelians can be content that, rather than simply being dismissed, Hegel's objections to Kant have been taken seriously and to some extent accepted as valid, while Kantians can be pleased that the damage caused by Hegel can nonetheless be shown to be limited and only narrowly focused, and that overall Kant's ethics with its several related formulae remains intact.

In this paper I want to consider whether the questions at issue between Kant and Hegel can really be satisfactorily resolved in this manner. I will suggest that in fact Hegel's concerns go deeper than this concessive response to the empty formalism objection allows, and that these deeper concerns

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have still not been dealt with by the Kantians who adopt this less resolute approach – where, put briefly, those concerns resemble those of the particularistic intuitionist, and so will extend to *any* attempt to uncover a "supreme principle of morality," whether this is the FUL *or* the FH. However, I will also suggest that hopes for peace between the two camps should not be abandoned entirely: for, I will argue, on a certain understanding of what Kant was up to in seeking to identify the "supreme principle of morality," his position may be made more compatible with the sort of particularistic intuitionism which I claim is favored by Hegel, so that a truce of sorts may be viable after all – albeit one that requires further concessions on the Kantian side, but where these concessions are ones (I will argue) that Kant himself may well have been happy to make.

I will begin by briefly recapping the history of the hostilities as they have been conducted in the recent literature thus far, and say more about the strategy adopted by the more concessive Kantians (section 1). I will then show why Hegel would not be satisfied by their position (section 2), and explore whether a further rethinking of Kant's approach might give rise to a more lasting peace (sections 3 and 4).

1 Hegel's Empty Formalism Objection and the Concessive Kantian Response

In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant sets out to identify and establish "the *supreme principle of morality*" (*GMM* 47/*Ak* 4: 392), which he initially claims to be the following: "*act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law*" (*GMM* 73/*Ak* 4: 421; all emphases original).[3] It is this that has come to be called Kant's Formula of Universal Law.[4]

In picking out the FUL as the supreme principle of morality, Kant stresses that, unlike other candidates for this role that have been put forward by previous philosophers,[5] the FUL is a *formal* principle, not a material one. This, Kant claims, must be the case if the principle is really going to reflect the categorical nature of dutiful moral action, of the sort that common sense morality takes for granted as an essential part of moral life, for such action must not involve any expectation that performing it will help the agent to realize some non-moral end. It therefore follows, Kant argues, that what determines the will must be the formal properties of the maxim on which the agent acts, namely whether or not some sort of *contradiction* would be

involved in acting in this way, where Kant locates the contradiction in the idea that if others adopted this maxim as their own too, acting on it would somehow become impossible, so that as a maxim for action it would undermine itself in this way.

Now, put at its simplest, Hegel's empty formalism objection is that precisely because Kant is operating here in purely formal terms, by trying to determine what is right and wrong by testing to see whether a maxim does or does not lead to a contradiction when universalized in this way, the FUL cannot in fact plausibly be used to give any *content* to morality, and so cannot really constitute the supreme principle of morality at all.[6] In order to demonstrate the FUL's uselessness in this respect, Hegel and Hegelians have introduced a series of puzzle cases, where the FUL seems to deliver either no result at all or one that is clearly mistaken, which Hegel and Hegelians take to show that the FUL is too flimsy to bear any normative weight, and so is in practice empty and always in need of further "content" or supplementation. Thus, as Hegel puts it in the *Phenomenology*, "The criterion of law which Reason possesses within itself fits every case equally well, and is thus in fact no criterion at all."[7] In order to bring out the problem, Hegel gives various examples, where the FUL seems either to yield conflicting results and so is indeterminate, or to yield so-called "false negatives,"[8] in seeming to rule out actions that we would ordinarily accept as perfectly morally legitimate.

To illustrate the indeterminacy claim, Hegel refers to Kant's own "deposit" case, where Kant considers someone who has had someone else's money entrusted to him, and who avariciously desires to keep it or is also in great need.[9] Hegel argues that the FUL cannot be used to determine one's duty in this case, for it cannot determine whether or not property or a social system without property is a morally good thing, as the contradictoriness of both options can be argued either way.[10] And to illustrate the false negatives claim, Hegel mentions the examples of fighting for your country, and of helping the poor, neither of which (he claims) can be universalized:[11] for if everyone defended their own country, no one would attack other people's countries, so that there would be no defending to be done, while if everyone helped the poor, no one would be in poverty, so that acts of benevolence would be prevented if universalized, seeming to suggest (absurdly) that maxims like "help the poor" are immoral insofar as they would fail the FUL test.

It is perhaps not surprising, however, that the response of some readers of Kant to these Hegelian objections has been rather dismissive.[12] For, in relation to the deposit case, Hegel may seem to have simply misunderstood how the FUL is meant to function, which is in relation to the *maxim* on

which a person proposes to act, and whether or not so acting, if universalized, would lead to an undermining of the kind of trust required to keep the institution of property going on which they themselves rely: it therefore seems irrelevant that the FUL is indeterminate when it comes to deciding whether or not the institution of property *itself* is contradictory in some way – indeed, the Kantian may well agree with Hegel that it is hard to know what this could even mean. Now, to this, perhaps, the Hegelian might respond that surely if I am trying to decide whether to keep some property, I need first to know whether property is a good or bad thing. However, again the Kantian might reasonably deny this, arguing that it is sufficient to know that keeping the property is wrong if I can see that in keeping it, I would be free-riding or exploiting the good will of others – so that again, the contradictoriness or otherwise of property *itself* is irrelevant here.

And, when it comes to Hegel's supposed "false negatives," Kantians have responded by arguing that Hegel has misunderstood the maxims that would realistically be involved, and failed to show that these would genuinely fail the FUL test. For, it is pointed out, in order to count as a maxim, something like "help the poor" must have some specified end in view, and when this is spelt out in the morally admirable case (e.g., "help the poor in order to abolish poverty"), then there is no difficulty in the fact that, by everyone helping the poor, the end of so doing would be achieved – quite the contrary, in fact.

However, notwithstanding the plausibility of these Kantian responses, and the further ingenuity that has been used to deal with related complexities, there remains a feeling to which the more concessive Kantians are also sensitive, that Hegel was still on to something in raising his concerns, however much he may be convicted of somewhat misrepresenting and oversimplifying the way in which Kant presents the FUL as working. For, it can be argued on Hegel's behalf, that in an important sense he can use these Kantian responses to his own advantage. Thus, in relation to the property case, it may indeed be right to say that the FUL is not designed by Kant to adjudicate on the question of whether it is right or wrong for people to possess private property:[13] but isn't this *itself* a limitation? Surely anything purporting to be a "supreme principle of morality" *should* be able to adjudicate on such an issue, which has clear moral as well as political implications? Isn't it precisely a fault of the FUL that it is too narrow in this respect, and silent on this sort of question, which can plausibly be regarded as just one instance of many such cases concerning institutions? (For example: Is democracy more morally legitimate than any other political

system? Is monogamy a better system of marriage from the moral point of view than polygamy? Is there any moral significance to marriage at all?) And second, in relation to the "help the poor" case, the Kantian response may also be said to highlight a deeper difficulty for their position, which is the notoriously problematic issue of determining how exactly maxims are to be framed and determined, where an agent might find she can come up with a different outcome for the FUL test by adjusting the maxim by which she proposes to act in ways that do not really alter the moral situation – for example, by making her maxim more specific in various ways, it might then become universalizable, but where what is still fundamentally a morally wrong action is being licensed, so that the problem of false results for the test re-emerges.

In addition to these ways in which Hegel's empty formalism objection may continue to be pressed, it can also be argued that there is a yet deeper worry underlying it, which is that the FUL is inadequate as the supreme principle of morality taken on its own, because something more substantive is required if we are to understand *why* there is any moral significance in acting on maxims that are universalizable – why this *matters* from a moral point of view. The problem might be put as a dilemma for the Kantian: on the one hand, he could answer this question by relating the FUL to considerations such as equality, fairness, or free-riding,[14] but then it is not clear why "treat others fairly" is not the supreme moral principle and the FUL merely a test for whether or not in acting a certain way one would be doing so; or he could treat the FUL as somehow prior in itself, but then make its moral relevance mysterious.

Now, while some commentators on Kant have continued the tradition of remaining unimpressed by these sorts of Hegelian considerations, others have accepted their force, and have given up the attempt to defend the FUL as a candidate for the supreme principle of morality in its own right. However, rather than then abandoning Kant's project in the *Groundwork* and elsewhere altogether, they have instead insisted that Hegel was being myopic in concentrating on *just* the FUL in the first place, and that the more significant ethical principles for Kant are given in the other moral formulae, particularly perhaps the so-called Formula of Humanity: "*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*" (*GMM* 80/*Ak* 4: 429). The suggestion is that once the FH is made central in this way, Kant has a candidate for the supreme moral principle that can be said to overcome the difficulties faced by the FUL, in being more determinate; in recommending

actions that better fit our intuitive moral judgments; and in making a clear connection to the sorts of values (such as our rational nature as agents) that make the moral basis for the principle readily apparent.[15]

And, on their side, commentators on Hegel have been generally prepared to accept this kind of Kantian approach, where in exchange for Kantian concessions regarding Hegel's critique of the FUL, they have been willing to allow that this critique is indeed rather narrow and that, using his other formulae, Kant may be able to escape the charge of empty formalism made against the FUL on its own.[16] In this way, therefore, a kind of stable consensus between both sides has emerged, with some ground being conceded on both sides.[17]

I now want to argue, however, that this consensus is premature,[18] and that Hegel's concerns do not *just* apply to the FUL and its peculiarities, but to *any* attempt to propose a "supreme principle of morality," *even* the less "formal" FH. Once the full extent of these concerns are considered, therefore, I will argue that if we are still searching for some consensus between Kant and Hegel, it must involve more than just this move from the FUL to the FH, or any other of Kant's proposed formulae.

2 Hegel's Intuitionism: Against a "Supreme Principle of Morality"

On the view of Hegel I want to put forward in this section, Hegel's objection to Kant may be compared with a form of intuitionism, where this is to be understood not primarily as an epistemological doctrine ("we know moral truths or propositions by intuition"), but as a doctrine that rejects the idea that morality has any single highest principle, and thus the view that there might be any "supreme principle of morality" at all, whether that is the FUL, the FH, or any other principle of a Kantian or non-Kantian kind (such as the utilitarian principle of maximizing happiness or well-being).[19] As generally conceived, intuitionism of this sort stands between those theories that think there is *one* highest moral principle that underpins all others, and those theories that say there are no moral principles *at all*, not even the many prima facie principles that the intuitionist allows, where this latter position is a form of strong particularism.[20]

A broad sympathy with the ideas behind an intuitionism of this sort is reflected in many aspects of Hegel's work. At the highest and most abstract structural level, Hegel is deeply preoccupied with the categories of

universality, particularity, and individuality, where he argues throughout that any position that becomes too general and abstract will become empty, while any that focuses too much on the specificity of the individual case will lose sight of what is common between individuals, where the inadequacies of each of these sides will then cause us to oscillate to the extreme of the other. What is needed, therefore, across all philosophical positions (so, for example, in metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of nature, philosophy of religion, philosophy of art, as well as ethics and political philosophy) is a standpoint that enables us to move between these extremes, and thus a theory that combines elements of generality with a sensitivity to the particularities of the situation. It is therefore scarcely surprising, then, that while Hegel opposes those who reject all talk of duties and rules as too abstract and general in favor of an inarticulable moral "feeling," he equally opposes attempts to reduce the complexity of the details of the moral situation to a simple principle to be applied to all cases, where one has thereby abstracted too much away from any differences between them. In his ethical writings, Hegel therefore makes no attempt to offer any "supreme principle of morality," as if particular duties were to be derived from or grounded in such a principle: it is these particular duties that must be treated as fundamental, as the higher principle is too abstract to serve plausibly as their foundation or basis – only if we "already had determinate principles concerning how to act" (Hegel, *PR*, §135A, p. 163/*HW* VII: 253–254), could we know how to operate with such a principle, rendering its claims to supremacy highly dubious.

Hegel's most extended discussion of the issues raised here can be found in the *Phenomenology*, in his analysis of a rationalistic approach to ethics that forms part of the "Reason" chapter as a whole, in the subsections on "Reason as lawgiver" and "Reason as testing laws."[21] In the first of these subsections, Hegel attacks a rationalism that lays down certain particular principles as *absolute* rather than as provisional, and thus tries to treat them as exceptionless and simple to apply, rather than as guidelines that require sensitivity to where they can go wrong. He thus considers the examples "Everyone ought to speak the truth" and "Love thy neighbor as thyself." In the former case, Hegel argues, this principle is plausible only if we are conscious of our own fallibility in knowing the truth, so that rather than being a principle we can use straightforwardly to determine our behavior, it in fact requires us to take our epistemic condition into account in a way that can be far from easy. Likewise, when it comes to the principle "Love thy neighbor as thyself," Hegel argues that we must exercise judgment in deciding what is genuinely in the best interest of the individual we are

dealing with, where simply giving him what he wants or what would make him happy is not what is required: "I have to distinguish what is bad for him, what is the appropriate good to counter this evil, and what in general is good for him: i.e. I must love him *intelligently*. Unintelligent love will perhaps do him more harm than hatred" (*PS* 255/*HW* III: 314). But, Hegel claims, this may mean that in some situations it might be best if I did nothing to aid the individual, so that "this acting for the good of others which is said to be *necessary*, is of such kind that it may, or may not, exist; is such that, if by chance the occasion offers, the action is perhaps a 'work' and is good, but also perhaps not" (*PS* 256/*HW* III: 315).

Now, for the sort of rationalism that Hegel is considering at this stage of the *Phenomenology*, this is a frustrating outcome, as it cannot see how such provisional rules that require such complex judgments to apply can really count as genuine moral laws: "This law [of loving thy neighbor as thyself], therefore, as little has a universal content as the one we first considered [i.e., of telling the truth], and does not express, as an absolute ethical law should, something that is valid in and for itself" (*PS* 256/*HW* III: 315). Frustrated by this outcome, reason then adopts another strategy of trying to find a more absolute position in ethics, by moving from particular moral principles, to some general moral principle that perhaps stands above them, on which all lower-level principles are to be grounded and against which they are to be tested: "[Consciousness] takes up their *content* simply as it is, without concerning itself, as we did, with the particularity and contingency inherent in its reality; it is concerned with the commandment simply as a commandment, and its attitude towards it is just as uncomplicated as is its being a criterion for testing it" (*PS* 257/*HW* III: 317). However, Hegel argues, by attempting to base these particular principles on a single principle that is supposedly more fundamental than they are, we in fact invert the true order of priority, for the latter is no more than an abstraction from the former. Consciousness acknowledges this by the end of the subsection, in returning to a position that accepts (for example) that we "hit moral bedrock"[22] by recognizing that stealing someone's property is wrong because it belongs to them and so should not be appropriated, where seeking for some more general moral and genuinely "absolute" principle to underlie it can lead only to a distortion in our moral attitudes.[23]

Of course, given the complex dialectical structure of the *Phenomenology*, Hegel should not be simply taken as stating his final position here, or straightforwardly expressing his *own* view at all, as he is just laying out the next phase in the development of consciousness as it moves through the

stages on its "highway of despair"; and consciousness will certainly need to move beyond the pre-modern view of the ethical that it returns to at this point, which treats morality as involving "the unwritten and infallible law of the gods" (*PS* 261/*HW* III: 322). Nonetheless, I would claim, this basic critique of abstract rationalism is preserved within Hegel's final position, and is reflected in the structure of the *Philosophy of Right*, where as I have noted, there is no attempt to offer anything equivalent to a "supreme principle of morality."

Moreover, Hegel's commitment to an intuitionist position of this sort is indirectly confirmed when it is seen that he is sensitive to a worry that one might therefore have about the *Philosophy of Right*, which is often said to arise for intuitionism more generally: namely, that it must end up treating the normative realm as nothing but a "heap of unconnected duties."[24] Now, for some philosophers this may not be a matter of concern; but Hegel, of course, is a systematic philosopher par excellence, and his conception of philosophy as a science is tied directly to the idea that it can find a rational structure in what otherwise may appear to be a random set of phenomena.[25] Indeed, in the early *Natural Law Essay* of 1802–1803, this is precisely the issue that he thinks drives us from an empiricist approach that is happy to treat laws and principles as a "heap" in this manner, to an a prioristic approach like Kant's, which then tries to reduce the "many" to a "one."[26] However, Hegel makes plain here that he thinks this approach is itself distorted and cannot succeed; instead, he suggests (in a way that then points to his procedure in the *Philosophy of Right* itself) that we must achieve a systematic and structured account of our various duties and moral principles in a *different* way, that can do without any such supreme principle to guide it.[27] Thus, like other intuitionists, Hegel suggests that there are way of finding necessary interrelations between the various duties in an organic manner that makes them amenable to rational and philosophical treatment, but *without* being committed to the search for a single "master" principle in order to do so – where this is precisely the project that is carried out (I would argue) in the *Philosophy of Right*, through Hegel's consideration of freedom and the will. Hegel thereby produces an account of the normative realm that is certainly more than a "heap of unconnected duties," but which also avoids the need to present any single principle of morality as somehow "absolute" or "supreme" as the method by which this is achieved.

Thus, interpreted in this way, while in these and related discussions, it is certainly the FUL as the "supreme moral principle" that Hegel criticizes, there is no reason to think that his criticisms apply *only* to that in particular:

in fact, his critique seems general enough to apply to *all* attempts to come up with such a principle, whether that is the FUL, or the FN, or some other Kantian or non-Kantian candidate.[28] And if this is right, then the move by those concessive Kantians from the FUL to the FH cannot really be taken to address Hegel's fundamental concerns; to do this properly, a more radical view of Kant's position will need to be adopted.[29] It is that which I will now attempt to offer and defend.

3 Kant on the Supreme Principle of Morality: Socratic or Pythagorean?

In order to do so, I will now appeal to a helpful distinction drawn by J. B. Schneewind, between conceptions of moral theory that are *Socratic* and those that are *Pythagorean*.[30]

What Schneewind means by the Socratic picture is the idea that, while people have always had moral opinions and beliefs, what is still required is for philosophers to find an undeniable foundation to those beliefs which will make them indubitable, where without this ordinary moral thinking will always remain insufficiently secure and warranted. By contrast, the Pythagorean[31] picture holds that the truths of morality have already been discovered and known as a result of divine revelation, so that ordinary moral thinking has no need of philosophy to play any such systematizing and grounding role. Rather, the task for philosophy is a different one, which is to help frail human beings keep to the moral path:

> Belief that the Noachite revelation was the origin of moral knowledge itself would make it natural to ask why we have moral philosophy anyway . . . The answer to [this] question lies in human sinfulness. Our nature was damaged by the Fall. It not only dimmed our faculties, lessening our ability to understand God's commands and accept them. It also unleashed the passions. Evildoers, driven by their lusts, seek to avoid the pangs of conscience, so they blind themselves to its clear dictates. They also strive to veil and confuse the moral thoughts of those whom they wish to entangle in their wicked schemes. Bad reasoning is one of their basic tools. Now reason is one of God's gifts to humanity. Among other things it enables us to hold on to at least some of the moral knowledge we need, once revelation has ceased. If reason makes moral philosophy possible, pride leads men to try to outdo one another in inventing schemes and systems of morality, and morality itself gets lost in their struggles. Since the causes of the misuse of reason and of bad philosophy

> are now ingrained in our nature, there will be no final triumph of good philosophy until after the last judgment. But the battle must be kept up. Moral philosophy is to be understood as one more arena for the struggle between sin and virtue. (Schneewind 1998: 537)

As Schneewind notes, even when God played less of a role within the Pythagorean story in the more modern period, it was still accepted by some that "the basic truths of morality are readily accessible to human reason" (1998: 541), so that the task of philosophy was still conceived as correcting for our tendency to stray from the moral path, rather than to give our ordinary moral thinking a grounding it needs and would otherwise lack.

Now, within the Socratic approach, there is a clear pressure toward the view that in order for philosophy to play its role properly, it needs to come up with a "supreme principle of morality," as this is precisely the way in which our messy and insufficiently reflective ordinary ways of thinking about moral issues can be made properly systematic and given a stable grounding. This pressure was clearly felt strongly by J. S. Mill, who puts forward his case for the principle of utility in precisely these terms:

> there ought either to be some one fundamental principle or law, at the root of all morality, or if there be several, there should be a determinate order of precedence among them; and the one principle, or the rule for deciding between the various principles when they conflict, ought to be self-evident.
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> To inquire how far the bad effects of this deficiency [of failing to have identified this principle] have been mitigated in practice, or to what extent the moral beliefs of mankind have been vitiated or made uncertain by the absence of any distinct recognition of an ultimate standard, would imply a complete survey and criticism of past and present ethical doctrine. It would, however, be easy to show that whatever steadiness or consistency these moral beliefs have attained, has been mainly due to the tacit influence of a standard not recognized. Although the non-existence of an acknowledged first principle has made ethics not so much a guide as a consecration of men's actual sentiments, still, as men's sentiments, both of favour and of aversion, are greatly influenced by what they supposed to be the effects of things on their happiness, the principle of utility, or as Bentham latterly called it, the greatest happiness principle, has had a large share in forming the moral doctrines even of those who most scornfully reject its authority. Nor is there any school of thought which refuses to admit that the influence of actions on happiness is a most material and even predominant consideration in many of the details of morals, however unwilling to acknowledge it as the fundamental principle of morality, and the source of moral obligation. (Mill 1972: 3)

Mill then immediately goes on to mention Kant, assuming without question that Kant too was looking for the "one fundamental principle or law" that is needed here, but criticizing the FUL for its failure to fulfill this role adequately, which is why something more like the principle of utility is needed (see Mill 1972: 3–4).[32] By placing Kant alongside himself within the Socratic tradition, Mill therefore has no difficulty in making Kant's outlook seem as at odds with any form of intuitionism as his own self-consciously sets out to be, making any possible reconciliation with Hegel seem irredeemably bleak.[33]

However, as Schneewind notes, there are perhaps good grounds for criticizing Mill's assumption here, and for in fact thinking of Kant not as operating with Mill's Socratic picture, but rather as working with something more like the Pythagorean one.[34] For, when Kant comes to explain why his attempt to come up with the "supreme principle of morality" is needed, he does not express any sense that without it ordinary morality is in jeopardy, in failing otherwise to have a proper systematic structure or rationale; on the contrary, he seems to think that ordinary moral thought is in perfectly good order just as it is. Where the supreme principle is needed, rather, is in the Pythagorean fight between good and evil within the human breast, as a way of helping us avoid the kind of bad faith and self-deception that can so easily allow us to become corrupted in our actions, where at one level we know perfectly well what we should do, based on the various principles imparted to us through our ordinary moral education which come prior to any philosophizing.

Kant's position here can be seen most clearly, perhaps, in the *Groundwork*, particularly in sections I and II, which is where Kant sets about identifying the FUL (and related formulae) as the "supreme principle of morality." In those sections, Kant presents himself as proceeding *analytically*, starting from our commonly shared moral conceptions. In these sections, therefore, Kant seems more than happy to accept that we have a good grasp of morality without any need for philosophy, where he does not expect us to find the Formula of Universal Law to be revisionary of that grasp in any way – indeed, if it were, he would allow that it would be an objection to his claim that it constitutes the supreme principle that he is looking for here. Kant therefore does not see himself as adding to our ordinary moral understanding, or to be offering some sort of philosophical perspective from which he can address those who lack it. Thus, Kant willingly accepts that in arriving at the Formula of Universal law, he is not teaching "the moral cognition of common reason" anything new, but

simply making it "attentive to its own principles": "there is, accordingly, no need of science and philosophy to know what one has to do in order to be honest and good, and even wise and virtuous" (Kant, *GMM* 58/*Ak* 4: 404).[35] Kant therefore seems to take for granted that our moral practices are in good order and in no need of defense or justification, and that philosophy can proceed by simply reflecting on them, to bring out the fundamental moral principle on which they rely.

Nonetheless, it might be said, nothing in this shows that Kant was not proceeding in the Socratic manner.[36] For, one might consistently think that the only way to find the supreme principle of morality is to start from our ordinary moral beliefs and opinions, while still holding that unless and until some principle can be uncovered in this manner, those beliefs and opinions remain inadequate and limited, much as Mill claims, in arguing that "whatever steadiness or consistency these moral beliefs have attained, has been mainly due to the tacit influence of a standard not recognized," which it is then the philosopher's role to make explicit. Thus, one might hold that as far as it goes, the philosopher should certainly take ordinary moral thinking seriously and not seek to come up with anything too revisionary of that thinking; nonetheless, that thinking requires the services of philosophy and the principle it arrives at, if it is not to struggle with conflicts between lower-level principles; difficult moral cases where our ordinary moral convictions give out; and an unanswerable skeptical challenge to articulate what the basis is for our convictions on moral matters.

Now, of course, intuitionists have been doubtful that any proposed supreme moral principle will really bring the advertised benefits promised on these issues. But what is notable about Kant in this context is that, rather than making these sorts of claims for the value of identifying a supreme principle of morality, his focus lies elsewhere. For, the value Kant emphasizes most in arriving at the supreme principle of morality is that we can then be led to be better moral agents, as rendering such a principle explicit will make it harder for us to deceive ourselves on moral matters, and so will help to keep us more securely on the moral path. Kant's approach in this respect therefore seems to be closer to the Pythagorean tradition than the Socratic one.

So, in the Preface, Kant claims that lying behind a "metaphysics of morals" is no mere "motive to speculation" (*GMM* 45/*Ak* 4: 389; see also p. 60 (4: 405)), but a more pressing practical need, "because morals themselves remain subject to all sorts of corruption as long as we are without that clue and supreme norm by which to appraise them correctly"

(*GMM* 45/*Ak* 4: 389). Kant clearly hopes, therefore, that by identifying the supreme principle of morality, he will be able to prevent the "corruption" of our moral lives by making our conformity to morality less "contingent and precarious" (*GMM* 45/*Ak* 4: 390), as we can then combat our inclinations more effectively by giving pure practical reason a clearer voice: for, without this, "the human being is affected by so many inclinations that, though capable of the idea of a practical pure reason, he is not so easily able to make it effective *in concreto* in the conduct of his life" (*GMM* 45/*Ak* 4: 389). Similarly, in the first section of the *Groundwork*, having identified the principle of universalizability in a preliminary way as the "supreme principle of morality" (*GMM* 56–57/*Ak* 4: 402), but having admitted that this principle is already implicit in our moral thinking (*GMM* 58/*Ak* 4: 403), Kant argues that nonetheless this philosophical exercise is valuable in making it harder for our inclinations to distort our view of what is right and wrong by twisting it to fit our interests (for example, as when I convince myself that it is somehow right for me to keep the money I have been mistakenly refunded by the bank because I need it more than they do, so that this will lead to more good overall and so is justified thereby, where the application of the Formula of Universal Law and related formulae would make it clear to me that what I am presenting to myself as the justification for the action does not carry any moral weight, and in fact merely masks a desire to further my interests that is lurking beneath the moralistic facade):

> Would it not therefore be more advisable in moral matters to leave the judgment of common reason as it is . . . [and] not to lead common human understanding, even in practical matters, away from its fortunate simplicity and to put it, by means of philosophy, on a new path of investigation and instruction?
>
> There is something splendid about innocence; but what is bad about it, in turn, is that it cannot protect itself very well and is easily seduced. Because of this, even wisdom – which otherwise consists more in conduct than in knowledge – still needs science, not in order to learn from it but in order to provide access and durability for its precepts. The human being feels within himself a powerful counterweight to all the commands of duty, which reason represents to him as so deserving of the highest respect – the counterweight of his needs and inclinations, the entire satisfaction of which he sums up under the name of happiness. Now reason issues its precepts unremittingly, without thereby promising anything to the inclinations, and so, as it were, with disregard and contempt for those claims, which are so impetuous and besides so apparently equitable (and refuse to be neutralized by any command).

> But from this there arises a *natural dialectic*; that is, a propensity to rationalize against those strict laws of duty and to cast doubt upon their validity, or at least upon their purity and strictness, and, where possible, to make them better suited to our wishes and inclinations, that is, to corrupt them at their basis and to destroy all their dignity – something that even common practical reason cannot, in the end, call good. (*GMM* 59–60/*Ak* 4: 404–405)[37]

Thus, as Henrich puts it, Kant sees a problem for us in the fact that "man subtly refines the moral law until it fits his inclination and his convenience, whether to free himself from it or to use the good for the justification of his own importance" (Henrich 1994: 66).[38] Kant hopes that his identification of the supreme principle of morality as involving universalizability can play a significant role in helping us overcome this natural dialectic of practical reason,[39] where one significant criticism he has of other candidates for this supreme principle is that they will make this dialectic harder to resolve, by introducing hedonistic elements into morality itself, in such a way as to make moral self-deception easier for us to achieve.[40]

Thus, Kant's position seems Pythagorean, in that he clearly recognizes how our self-interested motivations can be powerful enough to lead us to view our actions in a spurious moral light, and believes his project in the *Groundwork* will make this harder. He is therefore addressing us as frail and easily corrupted moral agents, rather than dealing with the sort of Socratic questions raised by Mill. The value Kant claims for the FUL or his other formulae as candidates for the "supreme principle of morality" is the role they can play in helping us to unmask our bad faith on this issue, thereby making it harder to dodge the right course of action which our ordinary moral thinking has already made clear; and the advantage he claims for the FUL and his other formulae over other candidates is that, because they are not related to the happiness of the agent or based on merely empirical considerations, his formulae will serve this role better than those other candidates, which can make it too easy for us to stray or remain undecided. (For example, if keeping the money from the bank would make me *much* happier than the unhappiness caused by not returning it, perhaps I *ought* to keep it? Or, at least, perhaps the moral considerations could be argued either way?)

Seen in this light, therefore, the real significance of the formulae Kant offers is in a sense heuristic, where deploying them will make it very difficult for a moral agent to use spurious moral considerations as a smoke-screen for what are really his own interests, for all these formulae force us to consider the situation in a more objective manner in different but complementary

respects, by abstracting from those interests and so take into account the perspective of all the others affected.[41] Considered in a Pythagorean light, therefore, we can give significance to Kant's search for a supreme principle of morality, while allowing us to think of that search in a way that is free of any ambition to reduce the plurality of prima facie duties that make up ordinary moral thinking to any single, underlying, formula in a Socratic manner, and so in a way that would bring it into conflict with a more intuitionistic approach.

4 Kant and Hegel: A Reconciliation?

Taken in this way, therefore, Kant's preoccupation with identifying a supreme principle of morality in the *Groundwork* need not set him at odds with Hegel's apparent resistance to anything resembling the Socratic project, and thus with Hegel's underlying intuitionism. Thus, whereas the move from the FUL to the FH was perhaps not sufficient in itself to settle their differences, this more Pythagorean treatment of Kant's position might be. However, just as some Kantians have resisted the former as too concessive, and have instead sought to defend the FUL, so one might expect some Kantians to resist the latter move from a Socratic to a Pythagorean picture of Kant as being too conciliatory as well. Nonetheless, I hope to have done enough here to at least suggest that such a reading of Kant can be made plausible; and to suggest, moreover, that when Kant's ethics are viewed in this manner, the Hegelian can find more common ground with them than has generally been supposed. Of course, the Hegelian can (and probably will) still quarrel with Kant's Pythagorean account of how it is that we get led astray in moral matters, and what role moral philosophy and moral theory can realistically play in keeping us on track; but these disagreements, even if they persist, are not those usually associated with the Kant–Hegel debate in this area. In this way, therefore, I hope to have shed new light on an old controversy, while perhaps also bringing it to a conclusion that will be satisfying to both sides.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. See, e.g., Wood 1999, esp. pp. 97–110; Lo 1981; Galvin 2009.
2. Needless to say, not *all* commentators on Kant have adopted this concessive approach to Hegel's criticism: some remain resolute, and have stuck to the more traditional response of defending the Formula of Universal Law itself against the formalism objection. For examples of this more resolute approach, see, e.g., O'Neill 1989a; Schnoor 1989; and Korsgaard 1996. Of course, resoluteness with respect to the FUL does not preclude these commentators from also taking the other formulae very seriously too, and relating all the formulae together in various ways.
3. See also *GMM* 57/*Ak* 4: 402.
4. The FUL is sometimes then immediately grouped together with the next formula Kant offers, which is known as the Formula of the Law of Nature (FLN): "*act as if the maxim of your action were to become by your will a universal law of nature*" (*GMM* 73/*Ak* 4: 421). The two formulae together are then sometimes called the Universal Law formulas. This in itself then immediately introduces a complexity into the debate with Hegel, as on the one hand Hegel himself mainly just concentrates on FUL rather than FLN or any combination of the two, which may seem to put Kant at an immediate disadvantage in an unfair way; on the other hand, it is not clear whether Kant's move from FUL to FLN is already a concession to worries about the formalism of FUL itself and thus a stepping back from the latter, while in practice most Kantians who adopt the concessive approach to Hegel's objections are prepared to admit that they apply to *both* FUL *and* FLN, where it is only really when Kant gets to the FH that they are dealt with properly. So, in order to avoid complicating my discussion too much at this stage, I will focus mainly on the problems with FUL, and assume for the sake of this discussion that moving just to the FLN would not really be enough to help on its own, though I do not attempt to argue this here.
5. Kant discusses those alternatives at two main places in his published writings: at *GMM* 90–92/*Ak* 4: 441–444, and *CPrR* 172–175/*Ak* 5: 39–41. They are also discussed at some length in Kant's lectures on ethics (translated in *LE*), e.g. Collins Lectures, *LE* 65–68/*Ak* 27: 274–278; Mrongovius Lectures, *LE* 239–246/*Ak* 29: 620–629; Vigilantius Lectures, *LE* 280–282/*Ak* 27: 517–519. For a thorough discussion of Kant's position on the issue, see Kerstein 2002: 139–159.
6. Hegel's critique of Kant's FUL occurs in four main places: *NL*/*HW* II: 434–532; *PS* 256–262/*HW* III: 316–323; *PR* §§133–136, pp. 161–164/*HW* VII: 250–254; and Hegel *LHP* III: 458–461/*HW* XX: 366–369. It also occurs more briefly in *EL* §§53–54, 100–102/*HW* VIII: 138–139.

7. *PS* 259/*HW* III: 319. See also *PR* §135, p. 162/*HW* VII: 252–253: "there is no criterion within that principle [of absence of contradiction] for deciding whether or not [some action] is a duty. On the contrary, it is possible to justify any wrong or immoral mode of action by this means."
8. Hegel himself does not give any examples of "false positives" on their own, i.e. cases where the FUL would license what are intuitively wrong acts (although, in the context of the indeterminacy objection, the fact that the FUL might be used to justify the abolition of property would perhaps count as such a false positive for Hegel, given his views on property). However, others have offered such examples, e.g. Brentano 1969: 50, where Brentano argues that the maxim of not accepting bribes is ununiversalizable and so should be rejected by Kant. For a response to Brentano, see Patzig 1959.
9. See Kant, *CPrR* 161/*Ak* 5: 27 and *OCS* 287–288/*Ak* 8: 286–287.
10. *NL* 125–126/*HW* II: 462–463; *PS* 257–259/*HW* III: 317–318; *PR* §135, pp. 162–163/*HW* VII: 252–253; *LHP* III: 460–461/*HW* XX: 368–369.
11. *NL* 127–128/*HW* II: 465–466; *LHP* III: 460/*HW* XX: 368.
12. Marcus Singer's reaction is perhaps typical, where he calls Hegel's objection "almost incredibly simple-minded" (1963: 251).
13. As David Couzens Hoy has pointed out, however, in his *Rechtslehre*, Kant does seem to claim that the absence of property is contradictory: see Hoy 1989: 218, where he refers to Kant, *MM* 404–406/*Ak* 6: 246–247.
14. These considerations are the ones usually put forward by proponents of the FUL as the basis for its moral significance: see e.g. O'Neill 1989b: 156: "In restricting our maxims to those that meet the test of the Categorical Imperative we refuse to base our lives on maxims that necessarily make of our case an exception. The reason why a universalizability criterion is morally significant is that it makes of our own case no special exception"; and Korsgaard 1996: 92: "What the test shows to be forbidden are just those actions whose efficacy in achieving their purposes depends upon their being exceptional." One further difficulty here is whether exceptional actions of this kind are always wrong (see Wood 1999: 108); another more exegetical worry is that while Kant himself mentions this as a central issue (see *GMM* 75–76/*Ak* 4: 424), it is hard to see how this can be made into the moral issue underlying some of his examples (e.g. suicide).
15. See Riley 1983: 38–50, where Riley speaks of the other formulae as adding "a bit of nonheteronomous teleological flesh to the bare bones of universality" (p. 49); Wood 1990: "it is a mistake for Hegel and other critics to fasten so exclusively on the FUL in their attempts to prove that Kantian ethics is empty of content . . . Hegel and other critics will have not shown Kantian ethics to be empty of content until they have demonstrated the emptiness of [the] other formulas along with that of FUL" (p. 156); Lo 1981: "Those philosophers who keep charging Kantian ethics with '*empty* formalism' only pay attention to [the FUL] and brush aside

[the other formulae] as though they were unworthy of consideration. This is completely un-Kantian because [the FH] is straightforwardly formulated in the *Groundwork* and is carefully applied in *The Doctrine of Virtue*. It seems clear to me that [the FH] is a practicable criterion for determining moral rightness or wrongness, and is by no means barren" (pp. 197–198).

16. See Smith 1989: 73–74, where Smith allows that it is probably correct "that Hegel's view of Kant derives from an undue attention to the first formulation of the Categorical Imperative, which emphasizes the universality of its form, and not enough from the second, which commands respect for persons or treating others as 'ends in themselves.' Had he done so, he might well have found in Kant a set of objective ends that he criticizes him for not having. Kant's moral theory may well be formal, but it need not be empty." See also O'Hagan 1987: 142: "The radical Kantian can escape the Hegelian ["emptiness"] charge only if he moves on to the [FH] formulation of the categorical imperative"; and Geiger 2007: 11, where Geiger accepts that on the traditional view of Hegel's critique of Kant, that critique is unfair in that "it focuses exclusively on the universal law formula of the categorical imperative and ignores its other formulations," and so he argues that battle must be properly joined elsewhere.
17. Another approach is to accuse Hegel (and other similar critics) of overlooking not the other formulations of the supreme principle of morality, but the "impure" aspects of Kant's ethics, and its incorporation of more empirical elements: see e.g. Louden 2000, esp. pp. 167–170. This approach, too, has the effect of the reducing the "gap" between the Kantian and Hegelian positions, though in ways that cannot be fully explored here. For further discussion see Westphal 2003.
18. Another way to challenge this consensus might be to argue that the Hegelian should not allow the Kantian to move beyond the FUL in this way, as to do so is inconsistent with the basis of Kant's position, such as his view of autonomy. Though I don't think Hegel ever says as much, I think this is perhaps why Hegel nowhere really discusses the other formulae in any detail, and only really focuses on the FUL: see e.g. *LHP* III: 260/*HW* XX: 367–368: "this freedom is at first only the negative of everything else; no bonds, nothing external, lays me under an obligation. It is to this extent indeterminate; it is the identity of the will with itself, its at-homeness with itself. But what is the content of the law? Here we at once come back to the lack of content." For a contemporary discussion of the difficulties involved in moving from the FUL to FH, given a certain understanding of what Kant means by autonomy, see Johnson 2007.
19. See Urmson 1975, who characterizes Prichard's brand of intuitionism as "attacking ... the view that there was some supreme moral principle from which all others could be derived" (p. 112); see Prichard 2002: 14; and also McNaughton 2002.

20. The relations between intuitionism (of the sort favored by W. D. Ross) and strong particularism (of the sort favored by Jonathan Dancy) are complex, as intuitionism certainly contains some particularistic elements, while nonetheless seeing more scope for moral principles in our ethical thinking than the strong particularist will allow. For a helpful discussion of the relation between intuitionism and particularism, see Hooker 2000.
21. Hegel's position here is prefigured in some of his earlier writings, e.g. *SC* 246/*HW* I: 361–362: "A living bond of the virtues, a living unity, is quite different from the unity of the concept; it does not set up a determinate virtue for determinate circumstances, but appears, even in the most variegated mixture of relations, untorn and unitary. Its external shape may be modified in infinite ways; it will never have the same shape twice. Its expression will never be able to afford a rule, since it never has the force of a universal opposed to a particular."
22. I take this phrase from Philip Stratton-Lake's very helpful characterization of the intuitionist's position:

> If asked why we think lying is wrong, we might point to the fact that in lying we betray the trust the other person has placed in us to tell the truth, or that we harm the other person in some way. If someone then went on to ask us what is wrong with harming, or betraying the trust of others, most would find it difficult to find something further to say. To many it will seem as though we have already hit moral bedrock with considerations of fidelity and non-maleficience.
>
> It might be argued that betraying the trust of others is wrong because in doing this we are acting on a principle that could not be willed as a universal law, or because a society in which trust is respected will be a happier society than one in which it is betrayed. But such Kantian and consequentialist support will strike us as both irrelevant and unnecessary. Pre-theoretically we do not think that considerations of fidelity are morally salient for the reasons Kantians and consequentialists claim, but treat them as salient on their own account. (Stratton-Lake 2002a: 25–26)

   See Kant, *GMM* 57/*Ak* 4: 403, where I think Stratton-Lake would want to argue that once we know that an act would involve breaking a promise, this in itself carries all the normative information we need, and that the appeal to universalizability considerations is therefore superfluous and unconvincing.
23. See Hegel, *PS* 262/*HW* III: 322: "Ethical disposition consists just in sticking steadfastly to what is right, and abstaining from all attempts to move or shake it, or derive it. Suppose something has been entrusted to me; it *is* the property of someone else and I acknowledge this *because* it *is so*, and I keep myself

unfalteringly in this relationship ... It is not, therefore, because I find something is not self-contradictory that it is right; on the contrary, it is right because it is what is right. That something *is* the property of another, that is fundamental; I have not to argue about it, or hunt around for or entertain thoughts, connections, aspects, of various kinds; I have to think neither of making laws nor of testing them."

24. See McNaughton 2002, esp. pp. 77–85. See also Stratton-Lake 2002b: xxxvi–xxxviii.
25. See *PR* 20–21/*HW* VII: 25: "For what matters is to recognize in the semblance of the temporal and transient the substance which is immanent and the eternal which is present. For since the rational, which is synonymous with the Idea, becomes actual by entering into external existence [*Existenz*], it emerges in an infinite wealth of forms, appearances, and shapes and surrounds its core with a brightly coloured covering in which consciousness at first resides, but which only the concept can penetrate in order to find the inner pulse, and detect its continued beat even within the external shapes."
26. See *NL* 108/*HW* II: 442: "But since this empirical science finds itself [immersed] in a multiplicity of such principles, laws, ends, duties, and rights, none of which is absolute, it must also have before it the image of, and need for, [both] the absolute unity of all these unconnected determinacies and an original simple necessity; and we shall consider how it will satisfy this demand, which is derived from reason, or how the absolute Idea of reason will be presented in its [different] moments [while] under the domination of the one and the many which this empirical knowledge cannot overcome."
27. See *NL* 175/*HW* II: 524: "It is this individuality of the whole, and the specific character of a nation [*Volk*], which also enable us to recognize the whole system into which the absolute totality is organized. We can thereby recognize how all the parts of the constitution and legislation and all determinations of ethical relations are completely determined by the whole, and form a structure in which no link or ornament was a priori present in its own right [*für sich*], but all came about through the whole to which they are subject."
28. David Couzens Hoy has recently noted this aspect of Hegel's position: "[Hegel's] criticisms are intended to show the limitations of the Kantian approach to moral experience that turns it into a deduction of principles. Hegel's strategy is not to offer an alternative set of principles, and, more importantly, it is not to offer an alternative 'grounding' of these principles in one meta-principle like the categorical imperative or the utility principle. In our more contemporary parlance, I am suggesting that Hegel is not offering an alternative 'foundational' account to Kant's (like the utility principle)" (Hoy 2009: 167–168). I think similar considerations apply to Bradley's position, which also takes an intuitionist line in criticizing the Kantian view, stressing the priority of particular duties over any single general formula: see Bradley 1927:

156–159 and 193–199. A different view has been taken by Tony Burns, who sees Hegel as holding a "natural law theory [which] incorporates a definite hierarchy of moral principles," where "at the top of this hierarchy there is a primary principle of morality or justice," which "is a version of what is probably best described as the principle of equity and reciprocity" (Burns 1996: 60). While I would agree, as mentioned above, that Hegel's position is certainly *structured*, I would dispute that it is hierarchical in this manner, and that any such "primary principle" can be found in the textual references that Burns gives.

29. A more moderate response might be to say that Kant himself is a pluralist rather than a monist here, in offering several principles rather than one (not *just* the FUL, but also the FN and the Formula of Autonomy, and other sub-formulae). Whilst it is of course true, however, that Kant does offer a variety of principles in this way, he is quite explicit about them all amounting to "so many formulae of the very same law" (*GMM* 85/*Ak* 4: 436), and so always presents himself as seeking and finding *a* supreme principle of morality (no matter how difficult it has then been for commentators to unite the various formulae in the way that Kant seems to require).
30. Schneewind introduces this distinction in the final chapter of his 1998: 533–554. See also Schneewind 2010b. As he notes, a related distinction can be found in Griffin 1996: 131–132.
31. Schneewind calls this second picture "Pythagorean" because the early modern account of why ordinary moral thinking has already attained the truth about moral matters is that it is has been revealed to us by God; but this opens up the question of why Pythagoras, who was Greek, should have been credited by Aristotle and others as the first to think about virtue – where one ingenious solution to this problem was to claim that Pythagoras was Jewish or was at least incorporating Jewish ideas.
32. In an influential essay in which she offers a critique of moral theory, Annette Baier accepts this Millian picture of Kant's ambitions, as do many such critics: see Baier 1989, esp. p. 36.
33. See also Schneewind 2010a: 44, where he contrasts the position of the utilitarian and the intuitionist as follows: "for the utilitarian the paradigm moral problems are those in which we do not know what we ought to do, and in which the solution comes as soon as we do know; while for the intuitionist the central sort of problem is that in which the agent knows what he ought to do but finds it difficult to bring himself to do it. His problem is one of will or feeling."
34. See Schneewind 1998: 543–548; 2010b: 119–120. For a related discussion of Kant in terms of Schneewind's distinction, see Krasnoff 2004.
35. For similar remarks, see *GMM* 66/A*k* 4: 412, where Kant comments that "common moral appraisal" is "very worthy of respect"; and *CPrR* 153 n./*Ak* 5: 8: "who would even want to introduce a new principle of all morality and, as it

were, first invent it? Just as if, before him, the world had been ignorant of what duty is or in thoroughgoing error about it."

36. See Kant's own reference to Socrates at *GMM* 58/*Ak* 4: 404.
37. See also *CPrR* 143n./*Ak* 5: 8: "But whoever knows what a *formula* means to a mathematician, which determines quite precisely what is to be done to solve a problem and *does not let him go astray* [my emphasis], will not take a formula that does this with respect to all duty in general as something that is insignificant and can be dispensed with" (translation modified). And see *LE* 136–137/*Ak* 27: 359.
38. For further discussion of Kant's position here, see also Guyer 2000, and Shell 2009: 129–131, where she writes that "The goal of science is not to teach common moral understanding something new, but to enhance the force and staying power of the knowledge it already possesses" (p. 131). Rawls adopts a similar perspective in Rawls 2000: 148–149, as does Geiger 2010. More generally, see Nussbaum 2000, where Nussbaum sets out to defend moral theory, but does so in Pythagorean terms: "*Theory*, then, *can help our good judgements by giving us additional opposition to the bad influence of corrupt desires, judgements, and passions*" (p. 252; emphasis original).
39. Kant did not think that this would be enough on its own, however: the more metaphysical speculations of section III of the *Groundwork* are also required to complete the job, in order to answer questions that may arise concerning the status of the moral law, questions that may prevent frail human beings from keeping to the moral path.
40. See *GMM* 65/*Ak* 4: 411: "on the other hand a mixed doctrine of morals, put together from incentives of feeling and inclination and also of rational concepts, must make the mind waver between motives that cannot be brought under any principle, that can lead only contingently to what is good and can very often also lead to what is evil"; and also *MM* 370–371/*Ak* 6: 215–216: "If the doctrine of morals were merely the doctrine of happiness ... [a]ll apparently *a priori* reasoning about this [would come] down to nothing but experience raised by induction to generality, a generality ... still so tenuous that everyone must be allowed countless exceptions in order to adapt his choice of a way of life to his particular inclinations and his susceptibilities to satisfaction and still, in the end, to become prudent only from his own or others' misfortunes."
41. See *GMM* 75–76/*Ak* 4: 424: "If we now attend to ourselves in any transgression of a duty, we find that we do not really will that our maxim should become a universal law, since that is impossible for us, but that the opposite of our maxim should instead remain a universal law, only we take the liberty of making an *exception* to it for ourselves (or just for this once) to the advantage of our inclination. Consequently, if we weighed all cases from one and the same point of view, namely that of reason, we would find a contradiction in our own will, namely that a certain principle be objectively necessary as a universal law and yet subjectively not hold universally but allow exceptions."

Abbreviations

Works by Hegel

EL *The Encyclopaedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991.

HW *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, *Theorie-Werkausgabe*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1969–1971. (References are to volume number and page number.)

LHP *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, 3 vols. Originally published London: Kegan Paul, 1892–1896; repr. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.

NL *On the Scientific Ways of Treating Natural Law, on its Place in Practical Philosophy, and its Relation to the Positive Sciences of Right*, in *Political Writings*, ed. L. Dickey and H. B. Nisbet, trans. H. B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 102–180.

PR *The Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

PS *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

SC "The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate." In *Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971, pp. 182–301.

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Ak *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Royal Prussian (later German, more recently Berlin-Brandenberg) Academy of Sciences. Berlin: Georg Reimer; subsequently Walter de Gruyter, 1900–. (References are to volume and page numbers.)

CPrR *Critique of Practical Reason*, in *Practical Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 133–272.

GMM *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Practical Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 37–108.

LE *Lectures on Ethics*, ed. Peter Heath and J. B. Schneewind, trans. Peter Heath. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

MM *The Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Practical Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 353–604.

OCS *On the Common Saying: That may be Correct in Theory, but It is of No Use in Practice*, 8: 286–287. In *Practical Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 287–288.

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