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# The Matter and Form of Kant’s Moral Law

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## Abstract

There is an interpretative puzzle at the centre of Kant’s *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. The text presents the single principle of morality (G, 4: 392), but instead of providing a definitive statement of the principle, we find a three-step sequence of formulas. The puzzle concerns the formula relation: given the contrast between the moral law’s individuality and the plurality of formulas, how do the formulas relate to each other and the moral law? This paper takes the first step towards a new account by focusing on G, 4: 436, a passage in which Kant makes claims about the matter and form of the moral law. By understanding the hylomorphism entailed by these claims, it is possible to achieve new perspectives on common questions about Kant’s ethics, in particular, the role of the formulas in deriving or explaining duties and how the formulas are used in the argument of *Groundwork II* and its transition from popular moral philosophy to metaphysics of morals.

**Keywords:** Kant; morals; practical; *Groundwork*; hylomorphism

There is an interpretative puzzle at the centre of Kant’s *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. The text presents the single principle of morality (G, 4: 392), but instead of providing a definitive statement of the principle, Kant provides a three-step sequence of formulas.<sup>1</sup> In G II, the section in which he claims to have identified the principle of morality, Kant begins with the universality of moral law (421), moves to humanity as an end in itself (429), and then finishes with autonomy (431) and the kingdom of ends (433). Kant’s preferred method for introducing and explaining these concepts is to feature them in a formula, such as the Formula of Universal Law and Formula of Humanity, which, as the examples he considers indicate, can be used as decision procedures. The puzzle concerns what might be called the *formula relation*: given the contrast between the moral law’s individuality and the plurality of formulas, how do the formulas relate to each other and the moral law? The question, at bottom, is about identifying the moral law, Kant’s stated aim for the first two sections of the *Groundwork*. The question is thus essential to understanding the text.

I aim to take the first step towards a distinctive account of the formula relation. I focus on the first two formulas presented in G II and the concepts they contain. My

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approach centres around a relatively neglected passage at 4: 436. To highlight what I intend to accomplish and to justify my narrow focus, I begin by discussing how an approach centred around that passage situates within the literature on the formula relation.

### 1. The arc

My focus on 4: 436 is a result of the *Groundwork's* structure. In the Preface, Kant describes his method as an arc. He will proceed 'analytically from common cognition to the determination of its supreme principle and in turn synthetically from the examination of this principle and its sources back to common cognition, in which we find it used' (4: 392).<sup>2</sup> Following a tradition that stretches to the beginnings of philosophy, he starts with an ascent (*anabasis*) that sets up a descent (*katabasis*). There is a pinnacle of the book at which Kant gives a pivotal statement of the moral principle, phrased here as its 'determination' (*Bestimmung*).

With the methodological structure in mind, it is easy to identify the peak of the arc. There Kant describes the formula relation directly. He starts by saying:

The above three ways of representing the principle of morality are fundamentally only so many formulas of the selfsame law, one of which of itself unites the other two within it. However, there is yet a dissimilarity among them, which is indeed subjectively rather than objectively practical, namely to bring an idea of reason closer to intuition (according to a certain analogy) and thereby to feeling. (G, 4: 436)

The three ways of representing the principles are formulas that Kant provides in the second section of the *Groundwork*. There is a sense in which one unites the other two in itself. I will explore the sense of unity below. In the remainder of 4: 436, Kant gives two remarks<sup>3</sup> about the formula relation, both of which include references to the theoretical philosophy – a fact that might explain their relative absence in the literature on Kant's ethics.<sup>4</sup> The first remark is three numbered points:

For all maxims have

1. a *form*, which consists in universality, and then the formula of the moral imperative is expressed as follows: that maxims must be chosen as if they were to hold as universal laws of nature;
2. a *matter*, namely, an end, and then the formula says: that a rational being, as an end according to its nature, and hence as an end in itself, must serve for every maxim as the limiting condition of all merely relative and arbitrary ends;
3. a *complete determination* of all maxims by that formula, namely, that all maxims from one's own legislation ought to harmonise into a possible kingdom of ends as a kingdom of nature.

The second remark builds on the first:

Here the progression takes place as through the categories of the *unity* of the form of the will (its universality), the *plurality* of the matter (of objects, i.e. of ends), and the *allness* or totality of the system of these.

My hypothesis is that the remarks are key to understanding the formula relation. They are Kant's identification of the principle of morality. In addition, one can develop a reading of the *Groundwork* and Categorical Imperative by following the references to the theoretical philosophy implicit in these remarks.

This is a proposal for a substantial interpretative project – one that demands a far more detailed treatment than can be provided here.<sup>5</sup> I will narrow my focus to matter and form. While this limitation means that I cannot yet produce the full reading of the formula relation, my goal is to shed light on the Formulas of Universal Law and Humanity by reading them in the context of the remark and its references to Kant's hylomorphism. This perspective is crucial for addressing significant controversies surrounding their role in Kant's moral philosophy. To illustrate that substantial conclusions can be drawn from focusing solely on matter and form, I will begin by explaining how my approach differs from the current literature on the formula relation.

The literature can be sorted according to three themes. The first might be called *formula priority*: what is the status of the formulas relative to each other? Some take one formula to be the primary, full, or complete statement of the CI. The Formula of Universal Law usually receives pride of place (see Shalgi (1976), Rollin (1976), Kitcher (2004), Timmerman (2007: 76–7), Rohlf (2009), Flikschuh (2009)). In the middle of the 20th century, readers typically took the Formula of Universal Law to be the Categorical Imperative, while the other formulas were useful but ultimately inessential aids in articulating the moral law (e.g. see Aune (1980: ch. 4), Duncan (1957: ch. 11), Wolff (1973: ch. 4); Baker discusses this phase of the literature in (1988: 390)). What Kant does in *G II* after stating the Formula of Universal Law, or perhaps the Formula of Humanity at 4: 429, is a digression with limited philosophical significance.

While this view is still influential, many today treat the formulas as nonhierarchical.<sup>6</sup> Although the matter/form relation that Kant references in the remarks further supports the nonhierarchical view, the remarks also indicate that it is wise to deemphasise the formula priority issue. Instead, the formulas are better seen as steps along a progression towards the determination of the moral law, with each formula highlighting a component of the law. I will pursue this reading.

The line that precedes the remarks is the *locus classicus* for the debate around the most dominant theme in the literature on the formula relation: equivalence.<sup>7</sup> Some readers regard this as the most salient interpretative question about the *G II* argument; the question of the formula relation amounts to the question of whether or how the formulas are equivalent. On this reading, if the formulas are not equivalent, Kant has failed to accomplish his aim (e.g. Allison (2011: ch. 9), O'Neill (1989: ch. 7)). In my view, however, consideration of the remarks, and the matter/form relation specifically, suggests that resources are best directed towards other issues. The transition that underlies the progression among the formulas in *G II* accomplishes something more nuanced and multifaceted than establishing an equivalence among three formulas. Kant's use of hylomorphism in the formula relation is an opportunity to see what he is attempting to accomplish.

The third theme is the role of the remarks. Some people who attempt to explain the formula relation do so without mentioning the remarks (e.g. Baker (1988), Rescher (2000), Rohlf (2009), Rawls (2000), Rollin (1976), Nuyen (1993)). Others mention the

remarks only in passing (e.g. von Platz (2016), Guyer (2007), Shalgi (1976), Allison (2011), Geiger (2015)). In short, an organising theme in the literature on the formula relation is the neglect of the remarks.<sup>8</sup> The neglect is noteworthy because the 4: 436 passage about the formula relation (which includes the line taken to be Kant's statement of equivalence) also includes the remarks. In fact, the earlier lines are explicated by the remarks that follow. Readers often appear to assume that it is possible to explain priority among the formulas, make progress on the equivalence issue, or implicitly claim that these are the relevant questions for understanding G II, without reckoning in any substantive way with the remarks. In other words, it is thought, the formula relation can be framed, explored, and understood without the explanation of the relation that Kant himself provides.

A project that develops and prioritises a full treatment of the remarks represents a different approach to explaining the formula relation. If the topics of equivalence and formula priority are important, they are best framed through the remarks. I would note, however, that while I have depicted my methodology as stemming from the claim that the remarks explicate the formula relation – a claim that has strong textual support and does not require any tendentious interpretative moves – the view that the remarks explicate the formula relation, or that the remarks are central to the *Groundwork* overall, does not immediately entail a position on formula priority or equivalence.

To begin building a picture, I explore what the matter and form in the Categorical Imperative contribute to the formula relation. I start by outlining some pieces of Kant's hylomorphism. Next, I show how Kant's hylomorphism operates in the *Groundwork* and its implications for understanding of the relevant formulas. This produces a new perspective on common questions about Kant's ethics, such as the role of the formulas in deriving or explaining duties and how the formulas are used in the transition and argument of *Groundwork* II. I do not develop a full reading of autonomy and complete determination here. Nevertheless, I end with some comments about what the next steps towards understanding the formula relation would be.

## 2. Hylomorphism in the theoretical philosophy

The matter/form distinction is among the most enduring in the history of philosophy. In Kant's critical project (and even in the pre-critical period), the distinction serves as a multipurpose conceptual tool. It has a general abstract structure that manifests in specific points across his system. Many of his signature doctrines are framed or phrased in terms of matter and form. My goal is not to provide an exhaustive account of Kant's hylomorphism and its many historical antecedents. That would be a monumental task. Rather, to prepare the way for my discussion of the *Groundwork*, I make several points about Kant's use of the terms in the theoretical philosophy. What features of Kant's hylomorphism are important for understanding 4: 436?

Unlike Aristotle's use of hylomorphism, which is traditionally taken to explicate his ontology, Kant uses the form/matter distinction in the theoretical philosophy to advance a theory of *representation*. The subject of Kant's hylomorphism is primarily content of the mind, not objects in the world. Despite this difference, both share a fundamental similarity. A core feature of traditional ontological hylomorphism is its explanation of *individuation*.<sup>9</sup> An entity is individuated in virtue of being, in some

sense, a combination of matter and form. For an Aristotelian, no entity can lack matter or form; both are constitutive components of the entity as an individual. Kant's hylomorphism serves the same role in his system. Each instance of cognition is a representational 'unity'.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to 'unity', Kant often uses 'manifold', a complex plurality of parts structured in cognition. The material of the manifold is structured formally through a mental process of unification that produces an individual representation.

The representations in question are the following types of cognition: (1) intuition, (2) concept, (3) judgement, (4) inference, and (5) system.<sup>11</sup> Each has its characteristic forms. There is form of intuition, form of concept, and so forth.<sup>12</sup> The types of cognition are not discrete or disconnected but linked through hylomorphic relations. Each type of cognition is the matter for the subsequent type, giving Kant's overall picture of cognition a layered or nested structure that broadly resembles what is found in Aristotelianism:

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 5. | (matter) SYSTEM (form of system (B89))                     |
|    | ↑  |
| 4. | (matter) INFERENCE (forms of inference (A323/B379))        |
|    | ↑  |
| 3. | (matter) JUDGEMENT (form: functions of judgement (B95))    |
|    | ↑  |
| 2. | (matter) CONCEPT (form: universality ( <i>JL</i> , 9: 91)) |
|    | ↑  |
| 1. | (matter) INTUITION (form: space and time (A22-3/B37-8))    |
|    | ↑  |
| 0. | Sensation (A20/B34)  |

Each layer includes three items: (1) the matter, (2) the form, and (3) the cognition as a hylomorphic composite of the two. The matter of empirical intuition is sensation, which, to use Scholastic language, can be considered as a type of cognitive *prima materia*.<sup>13</sup> For those of us with discursive intellects, sensation combines with the forms of intuition in sensibility. Concepts are intuitions or other concepts under the form of universality; judgements are concepts or other judgements under the forms of judgement (as displayed in the table at A70/B95); and so forth.

How, more specifically, is Kant using form and matter? When discussing empirical intuition early in the first *Critique*, Kant defines form as 'that which allows the manifold of appearance to be ordered in certain relations' (A20/B34). An intuition has an order that specifies relations among the parts of the objects it represents. According to Kant, form accounts for these relations. It is the particular way that an intuition is structured and, to use Kant's terms, enables the plurality in the manifold to be a unity. In the case of empirical intuition, matter is 'that in an appearance which corresponds to sensation' (A20/B34). Sensations are the subjective states of the individual who is perceiving objects. They are an unorganised plurality and do not represent the world. Matter combines with the form of intuition to become cognition. The result is a unified intuition, an objective representation.

At bottom, Kant is making a point that occupies him from the first lines of the first *Critique*: although the two are always found together in any particular instance of intuition, it is essential to distinguish between sensations and the organising or

structuring contributions made by cognitive faculties. Kant's project, or at least its presentation in the text, proceeds on the basis of the matter/form distinction. His substantive doctrines involve him locating forms in the mind, like the form of universal law (A126), and, on his brand of idealism, giving them an objectifying and unifying function. His arguments utilise *transcendental* hylomorphism: a theory of matter and form that applies to cognition and its components, specifically the a priori aspects of the relation between cognition and objects (see Pollok 2015: ch. 5). In Kant's hylomorphic picture, the source of unification and objectivity is a mental act of *informing* matter. The important first step establishes the difference between matter and form in cognition.

There is another important term to introduce. Kant uses 'determination' in the *Groundwork* preface and at 4: 436. The first *Critique* reveals that he often (though not always) means the term in a hylomorphic sense. Among the more focused discussions of matter and form is the Amphiboly. There he describes the 'determinable/determination' relation (A261/B317, cf. *Metaphysics Mrongovius*, 29: 847). The determinable is *matter* while the determination is *form*. As he says, the two are inextricably tied in all reflection and uses of the understanding. He then provides several examples in quick succession.<sup>14</sup> For example, the hylomorphic relation is found in judgement: 'In every judgment one can call the given concepts logical matter (for judgment), their relation (by means of the copula) the form of the judgment' (A266/B322). As with intuition, form constitutes the relations among a given matter. An assortment of concepts combined in a particular way constitutes a judgement. The concepts body and divisible<sup>15</sup> can be formed into the judgement 'All bodies are divisible'. The constituent concepts by themselves are not judgements. Their relations are unspecified. The logical functions in judgements are forms that determine them. Thus, for any judgement, as for any other type of cognition, it is possible to identify both the formal and material components (cf. *JL* §18, 9: 101). The formal component is often called the 'determination' of the cognition. Through this form, there is a unified cognition.

A condensed version of these points about the matter/form distinction is found in *Metaphysics Pölitz/L<sub>2</sub>*. In addition to the shared language, the passage is in agreement with what is found in the first *Critique*. So there is reason to think the passage represents Kant's mature view.

*Matter* is the given <datum>, what is given, thus the *stuff*.—But *form* is how these givens <data> are posited, the manner in which the manifold stands in connection. We see matter and form in all parts. We find matter and form in our judging and effecting. . . . Matter in the *physical* sense is the substrate <stratum> of extended objects, the possibility of bodies. But in the *transcendental* sense every given <datum> is matter, but the form [is] the relation of the given <dati>. Transcendental matter is the thing that is determinable <determinabile>; but transcendental form the determination, or the act of determining <actus determinandi>. Transcendental matter is the reality or the given <datum> for all things. But the limitation of reality constitutes transcendental form. All realities of things lie as if in infinite matter, where one then separates some realities for a thing, which is the form. (28: 575)

The claims are familiar. Kant begins with abstract statements about the matter/form relation. There is a difference between *what* is given and *how* it is given (cf. A266/B322). He then distinguishes a physical and transcendental sense of hylomorphism. The former characterises the Aristotelian tradition. The latter is Kant's hylomorphism of theoretical cognition ('in judging'). He again makes the determinable/determination distinction. An 'act of determining' combines forms with matter. Finally, Kant implies that his hylomorphism extends to the practical (in 'effecting'). In my view, 4: 436 is further, and more convincing, evidence that it does.

### 3. Hylomorphism in the *Groundwork*

The identification and determination of the Categorical Imperative is the culmination of the analytic portion of the *Groundwork*. Analysing the concept of will leads him in the course of the G II transition to delineate various features of the single moral law. When Kant unifies the plurality of formulas at 4: 436, he invokes hylomorphism explicitly. Given the longstanding explanatory role of hylomorphism in both Kant and the Aristotelian tradition, the move should be unsurprising. The formula relation concerns how a variety of different formulas can represent a single law. Kant says in the preface that his goal is a 'determination' of the supreme principle. Determination suggests form and individuation. When Kant says that one unites the other two formulas in itself (*deren die eine die anderen zwey von selbst in sich vereinigt*), he is referencing the hylomorphic relation and its individuating function. The first remark makes this evident. It is not a collection of throwaway lines about coincidental architectonic connections. There are strong reasons to think that Kant's hylomorphism has a central role in the formula relation. The unification is hylomorphic.

What do matter and form say about the formula relation? My primary emphasis is on the individuation issue at the core of the G II transition, but I will also explore the perspective on the Formulas of Universal Law and Humanity that my view of the formula relation yields. Hylomorphic treatment reveals the place that the formulas have in the *Groundwork* argument.

#### 3.1 Constitutive components

The topline of the remark is that all maxims have a form and matter. Kant says in a footnote at the end of the first section, 'A *maxim* is the subjective principle of willing; the objective principle (i.e. the one that would also subjectively serve all rational beings as the practical principle if reason had complete control over the desiderative faculty) is the practical law' (G, 4: 400, cf. *CPrR* 5: 19). Maxims are subjective principles of acting.<sup>16</sup> Not all maxims are also objective principles or moral laws. The practical law is the type of principle of volition that can serve as a principle for all rational beings. Since at 4: 436 Kant is stating the supreme principle of morality as the practical law, the context indicates that he is interested in the features of objective principles. As a result, I will consider maxims that *are* moral laws – i.e. cases in which a person is acting from duty. At this stage, Kant is neither testing maxims nor providing a procedure for testing them. Kant might highlight the form or matter in a diagnosis of faulty subjective principles. Numerous passages indicate that he is interested in the

diagnostic project. However, I set merely subjective maxims aside to consider the structure of the moral law as revealed in the first remark.

The first point of the remark suggests a distinction between the law and its form. A moral law holds for everyone. For Kant, if a principle is to be a law, it must have the form of universality. Otherwise, it is not that it is a deficient or ill-formed law, but rather that it is not a law at all.

What does Kant mean by universality? And what is entailed by the claim that law, and the moral law specifically, has a form of universality? I will address these questions in turn. First, in the B Introduction to the first *Critique*, Kant distinguishes between comparative or empirical universality, which results from inductive generalisation, and what he calls 'strict universality'. Law has the form of strict universality: 'no exception at all is allowed to be possible' (B4). Strict universality indicates a priori judgement (B3-4). Since Kant takes the categorical imperative to be synthetic strictly universal law, we are interested in *synthetic* a priori judgement. In the discussion following the forms of judgement, Kant says of a universal judgement that the 'predicate therefore holds of that concept without exception' (A71/B96). Compare this with a line from the Jäsche *Logic*: 'In the universal judgement, the sphere of one concept is wholly enclosed within the sphere of another' (9: 102). Saying 'every event has a cause' is strictly universal because the predicate concept has a cause applies to the concept event without exception; the sphere of the concept event is entirely enclosed within that of the concept caused. Universality concerns the formal relations among the concepts that make up the judgement.

Second, for Kant, strict universality is the form of laws. There are different types of laws for Kant: namely, laws of nature and moral laws. Although Kant is considering theoretical cognition in the B introduction and the Jäsche *Logic*, the same account holds for practical cognition. Many passages indicate that the form of universality in theoretical and practical judgement is the same form – and there are no passages where Kant distinguishes the form of a natural law from the form of a moral law. Accordingly, I follow Eric Watkins in claiming that there is a generic and univocal concept of law under which both natural laws and moral laws fall. Watkins surveys many passages in support of this reading (Watkins 2019: ch. 1). If this reading is right, Kant's claim that the principle of morality is a law implies that the principle is universal. If the principle is a law, it must have the form of universality. If both natural laws and moral laws share the same form, there is a question of how they are distinguished. I will address this when I consider the other half of the hylomorphic pair. But at this point, we can recognise that the answer cannot be the form of the principle.

Kant's examples are meant to illustrate the universality of the moral law. A prohibition on lying is universal in the sense that it applies to all wills. Although the principle might include various components, it is in virtue of its form that the practical principle cannot allow exceptions. Objective principles are universal. Thus, when a liar attempts to make an exception for themselves, moral evaluation need only refer to the principle's form. The liar knows implicitly or by implication that the prohibition applies to *all* cases, and thus their own. The result is a conflict between the liar's subjective principle and the objective principle. When the liar universalises the subjective principle, the principle states that it is permissible to lie in a certain set of cases (e.g. when a person needs a loan they cannot repay). But the cases also fall



under the prohibition stated in the objective principle. After all, this is how the liar intends to get away with the lie. Hence, the liar attempts to will two conflicting objective principles.<sup>17</sup> The example illustrates that (a) universal form is constitutive of a moral principle and (b) it is in virtue of the form that the principle is objective. Kant makes this argument directly in the second *Critique* (5: 27–8).

A similar analysis is available for the second point of the remark. There is a distinction between the moral law and its matter. If a moral principle is a type of unity, and the account of unity is hylomorphic, the principle will have matter. Without it, the form is empty. The principle would not be about anything. So what does matter contribute?

As we saw, for Kant, universal judgement can be either theoretical or practical. The form of universality alone is unable to distinguish between laws of morality and laws of nature. Kant indicates this in numerous places. When he does, he also indicates what role the matter of law has. For example, he says in the *Lectures on Ethics*, 'Practical philosophy is practical not by form, but by the object, and this object is free acts and free behavior' (*L-Eth* Collins, 27: 243). On the practical/theoretical distinction he says:

Any formula which expresses the necessity of an action is called a law. So we can have natural laws, where the actions stand under a general rule, or also practical laws. Hence all laws are either physical or practical. Practical laws express the necessity of free actions, and are either subjective, so far as we actually abide by them, or objective, so far as we ought to do so. (*L-Eth* Collins, 27: 272)

The claim appears to be that, while the form of universality is shared between the types of laws, and therefore practical and natural laws are distinguished by something besides form, laws also invoke a modal concept, namely, necessity. The type of necessity has the role of setting the type of law. On Kant's hylomorphic analysis in the *Groundwork*, we can identify the type of necessity characteristic of a moral law by examining its matter.

What type of matter makes a law moral? What makes the necessity practical? In the passages from the *Lectures*, Kant mentions free actions. According to the remark, the answer is an *end*. Kant talks about ends in two senses, both of which appear in the remark (see Guyer (2005b: 148–9)). An end can be:

- (1) humanity or rational nature, or
- (2) the object that a rational being seeks to bring about through (free) action.

Humanity, and human action specifically, is characterised by the capacity for setting ends. An end in the first sense is identified through its capacity for setting ends in the second sense. In short, humans have wills (*MM*, 6: 387; *L-Eth* Vigilantius, 27: 671; *R*, 8: 26). Thus, the end of a moral or practical law implies, or ultimately is, a will.

Further, the remark says that a rational being as an end is the limiting condition on 'all merely relative and arbitrary ends'. So an end in sense (1) ought to respect the end in sense (2). Kant's invocation of hylomorphism at 4: 436 suggests that, whatever the end of the moral law, the matter is indeterminate, though determinable, when

considered on its own. An end alone cannot constitute a law, regardless of its nature. Recognising the irreplaceable dignity of persons, or even recognising that morality concerns the dignity of persons, is not by itself a principle, moral law, or categorical imperative. It is a manifold without unity.

Where does this leave us? On Kant's hylomorphic view, the form of universality and the matter of ends are both constitutive features of a moral law. While they can be distinguished in the abstract, any objective principle of acting includes them both. The first remark at 4: 436 does not lay this out in detail, but it does provide an impetus for seeing the thread of hylomorphism that runs through *G II*. It demonstrates Kant's underlying interest in the individuality of the moral law. If there is a *single* supreme principle, it is characteristic of Kant to employ his hylomorphism: the principle results from unifying a manifold, determining a determinable, informing a matter. In the practical context, the form makes the law objective, while the matter sets the type of the law as moral or practical. As I will explore in more detail below, however, there is a limit to how cleanly the two components of the law can be distinguished.

### 3.2 Formulas

I can develop the account further by considering the vehicles through which Kant identifies the hylomorphic features of the moral law. The references to the formulas in the first remark encourage the reader to see them as steps in the analytic transition to a determination of the principle of morality. Kant is signalling, as he frequently does, the methodological arc of the book. On the analytic method, the formulas and their use in examples identify specific features of the moral law. The first point says that the Formula of Universal Law and the Formula of Law of Nature highlight or make explicit the form. This is not to say that the formulas themselves have universal form (though they do). Rather, the two formulas include the concept of universality (or universal law) in their statements. The Formula of Universal Law says, 'act only according to that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law' (4: 421).<sup>18</sup> The formula might be used in explaining examples of duties, but it is also a formula about the form of the law. From the perspective of the overarching *G II* argument, the Formula of Universal Law shows that maxims that can be objective principles are universal. When the moral law is eventually identified in the metaphysics of morals, the end of the section's transition, it will be determined to have this formal feature.

The moral law will also have other features. The next formula along the arc is the Formula of Humanity: 'So act that you use humanity, in your own person as well as in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means' (4: 429). Here Kant states that the matter of the moral law is an end of a particular kind, namely, humanity. Why and how this is the matter is a complex issue that involves autonomy, but it is important first to situate the formula in the *G II* transition. Making good on the promises in the preface, the identification of the single principle of morality at 4: 436 says that the principle will be a hylomorphic composite. This enables Kant to claim that the principle is represented in multiple formulas, each of which highlights different features of the composite. Given that the first formula highlighted the form of the principle, the next one concerns the matter. The formula

includes in its statement the concept of humanity as an end in itself. When the moral law is eventually identified, it will be determined to have this material feature.

The examples provided alongside the two formulas show both hylomorphic features. Although Kant discusses contradictions that result from the universality of laws, concrete examples would be impossible if they did not also include, at least implicitly, some matter or other. By making the matter the ends of rational beings, Kant types the examples as moral. The cases he considers are about self-love and life, need and communication, comfort and natural talents, aid and sympathy (4: 420). Each instance of possible moral law concerns a rational will. All are or indicate the matter of the maxims that Kant is exploring, despite the fact that he is yet to have introduced the formula that highlights the matter. Further evidence is the incorporation of the concepts of maxim and will into the statement of the Formula of Universal Law. The point is more straightforward in the Formula of Humanity because, when he introduces it, he has already made explicit the universality feature of the law. To illustrate:

Form: *never* to treat a person merely as a means but *always* also as an end in themselves.

Matter: never to treat a *person* merely as a means but always also as *an end in themselves*.

Although there is a conceptual distinction between the roles of matter and form, the relation also includes their inseparability in any statement of the moral law, including in the formulas. The matter and form are found together in particular cases, even if the formulas are used to highlight one or the other as features of the single moral law. By beginning with the remarks and their place within the *Groundwork* arc, the reader sees the formulas as steps along a progression that takes place within the section's broader transition to the determination of the moral law. Kant is gradually making explicit features of the moral law that are implicit in, as he calls it, 'popular moral philosophy'. Only at the peak of the arc, stated explicitly in the remarks, does the reader see all of the features and how they constitute a single moral principle.

### 3.3 Separable and inseparable

The issue of inseparability is informative and foregrounds some upshots of my reading. Kant structures the *Groundwork* argument on the methodological assumption that matter and form can be distinguished in critical philosophy. There is a sense in which he separates the matter and form in the first remark and the argument preceding it. The Formulas of Universal Law and Humanity are discussed one at a time. But it is useful to explain how matter and form can be both separable and inseparable. In the theoretical philosophy, the answer relies on the distinction between the theoretical and transcendental. The practical requires a different distinction. The distinction will help explain why Kant presents the formulas in the order he does and what kind of philosophical illumination he intends the reader to have upon reaching the peak of the *Groundwork* arc.

Kant is interested in both the applied domain of moral philosophy and the abstract metaphysics that supports it. The distinction occurs frequently in the *Groundwork*. He gives a straightforward statement early in G II: 'Pure philosophy of morals (metaphysics) may be distinguished from the applied (viz. applied to human nature)' (4: 410, cf. *MM*, 6: 217). Kant is aware of the connection between the two sides of the project.<sup>19</sup> If ethics is to have any use, what he uncovers in the speculative or metaphysical side will translate to the other. Echoing ancient traditions, 'The object of practical philosophy should be *praxis*' (*L-Eth* Collins, 27: 245, cf. 4: 389). Kant occasionally signals the *praxis*, even in the thick of metaphysics. But his practical project, as he conceives it, has the two distinct sides.

The distinction between the applied and pure sides of ethics enables Kant to use his hylomorphism in metaphysical analysis while retaining the individuality of the moral law. In action, when we are concerned with the application of principles to cases, matter and form are inseparable. In metaphysics, when we are philosophising about the internal relations among the features of the moral law, they are separable. Both sides together comprise the practical project and explain the two superficially inconsistent claims.

The point, however, is deeper than an evasion of inconsistency. The dual interests are not merely mentioned but built into the *Groundwork* arc. Kant begins and ends with common knowledge and application but progresses through metaphysics in between. The references to subjective practicality and intuition/feeling before the remarks, and his claim about the usefulness of formulas after, are also references to the distinction. At 4: 436, where Kant has fully stepped into the metaphysics of morals, he emphasises the distinctive conceptual roles of matter and form, but he also reminds the reader that the Categorical Imperative is a principle meant to be applied. The fact that the parts of the *Groundwork* are steps along a progression often makes it difficult to tell on which side Kant is operating. Stating the formula relation requires him to (appear to) pull apart the relevant concepts in the moral law. But understanding the formula relation also means understanding the inseparable combination of the concepts. Kant's presentation is based on the awareness that sometimes one can only see inseparability, and see it in the right way, after taking the parts one at a time in a particular order. These types of considerations are pertinent to system thinking and in the conception of philosophy as *anabasis* and *katabasis*. Kant judges, rightly or wrongly, that he can more effectively aid the reader in identifying the moral law by beginning with universality and then making explicit the concept of a rational being that a practical moral law necessarily assumes. While the method involves distinguishing different aspects of the moral law for the purpose of showing their interdependence, by beginning and ending in practical application, Kant intends not to lose sight of the fact that even the most metaphysical treatment of morals aims at human action.

I can extend the point by considering the formulas again. Until now I have been mainly focusing on the Formulas of Universal Law and Humanity as representations of the moral law. The G II argument is carried out through the sequenced introduction of formulas, each of which highlights a particular constitutive feature and concept. But the issue is less about how the formulas relate to each other and more about how they relate to the Categorical Imperative. This point is already a significant contribution to the formula relation. It shifts the focus away from the formulas and

towards the conceptual composition of the single moral law. However, I should not be interpreted as diminishing the importance of the formulas. They are not a ladder to be thrown away. In the *Groundwork*, the pure/applied distinction is closely related to the formula/concept distinction. The formulas can be seen in two respects, corresponding to the two sides of Kant's practical project. First, as I have been emphasising, they should be read within the context of the *Groundwork* arc. The discussions of the formulas, and the order in which they are presented, are meant to drive the transition towards the identification of the supreme principle of morality. Speaking loosely, one might say that the formulas are a means to the end of highlighting features of the principle. At 4: 436, Kant reveals that the relation among the formulas themselves is, in one respect, less significant than the hylomorphic relation they express between universality and ends. This is because the formulas are a mechanism or vehicle for taking the argument further into the metaphysics of morals. The four examples of duties are the remnants of the starting point of the G II transition. The reader feels the intuitive relevance of universality to moral philosophy and is accordingly drawn into Kant's analysis. With the final formulas later in G II, Kant has fully abstracted away from concrete cases. What is left to show is the result of the combination of the features highlighted by the first two formulas. This is in part why the examples do not appear a third time. Kant has already illustrated that the formulas help to make sense of moral duties. In the metaphysics of morals, he now needs to consider the result of the combination of matter and form. This is not an issue of the application of a formula to cases and cannot be explained by using a new formula to explain duties. In fact, Kant repeatedly reminds the reader that examples have no place in the metaphysical stretch of the arc (e.g. 4: 408, 418, 432).<sup>20</sup> Matter and form are constitutive features of the law, as seen in the four cases, but their unity is not a separate third thing. It was the object of the preceding hylomorphic analysis.

Second, although the formulas are a means, they are not *merely* a means. Kant is still engaged in a practical project that includes a concrete applied side. It is difficult to read the *Groundwork* without the distinct impression that Kant believes the formulas to be useful in our lives. As he says, they can be regarded as a compass, helping us navigate what is good and evil (4: 403–4). Immediately after the two remarks, Kant gives the so-called 'universal formula':

But one does better if in moral judgment he follows the rigorous method and takes as his basis the universal formula of the categorical imperative: Act according to that maxim which can at the same time make itself a moral law. But if one wants also to secure acceptance for the moral law, it is very useful to bring one and the same action under the three aforementioned concepts. (4: 437)

Kant is promptly returning to *praxis*. He is aware that the formulas serve a second function. As metaphysics, the formulas are a means to the end of identifying or determining the supreme principle. But as applied moral philosophy, the formulas are, so to speak, ends in themselves. At Kant's behest, we should feel free to use them. At the same time, we must be vigilant not to collapse the two sides of his project. A formula is a single representation of the moral law that, when read as a piece of

practical advice, masks internal structural complexity. And it masks complexity in a strategic way when placed within the context of the G II transition to metaphysics. This role of the formula can be forgotten when we are seeking a principle that assists us in a concrete case of moral judgement. But at 4: 436, the role becomes Kant's central focus.

According to Kant, the two points about the role of the formulas are complementary. The usefulness of the Formulas of Universal Law or Humanity in daily life is owed to the success of the broader G II argument. At the applied level, the formulas are not meant to be used in a vacuum, divorced from the general understanding of the moral law that Kant believes we all possess. And the application of the formulas to examples (as follows the first two formulas) is meant to illustrate that Kant is highlighting genuine features of the moral law. My view is also consistent with the possibility (which Kant hints at in places) that certain situations might lend themselves more to one formula than another, or that people might differ with respect to the formula they find most helpful.

### 3.4 Controversies

To emphasise how my reading and approach can contribute to resolving significant controversies regarding the formulas of the categorical imperative and their relation, I will briefly discuss several examples. However, I wish to note that, because my primary contribution is that a new perspective on the formulas and *Groundwork* II argument shifts our interpretative priorities, expending more effort on the controversies as they are conventionally framed works against my aim.

First, a strength of my reading is that distinguishing the pure and applied functions of the formulas provides a blueprint for those who wish to defend Kant from objections. For instance, it is tempting and common to take the formulas as complete metaphysical statements of the moral law. We might then compare how they apply to cases and use inconsistencies to dispute Kant's metaphysical account. There is a sense in which the formulas *are* full representations of the moral law, but this risks ignoring how the pure/applied distinction should shape one's reading of the formulas. From the perspective of the metaphysical argument running through G II, the formulas have specific roles that culminate in determination of the moral law. This is separate from their use in cases of moral judgement. However, although the pure/applied distinction is crucial for understanding the *Groundwork*, it is also important to appreciate that Kant is often operating on both sides simultaneously. One and the same sentence, especially in G II, can have significance for both sides. Readers cannot hope to make sense of one side without making sense of the other. Excising the formulas without knowing what they are being excised from makes the project of using them in concrete cases less likely to be instructive. The formulas are indeed meant to be foregrounded, but there is a reason Kant does not hand them to the reader in a list. They are embedded in an argument, and not an argument *for* the formulas. When the metaphysical account is in place, we can return to the formulas as practical guides. They acquire their usefulness and reliability in virtue of the fact that they represent the moral law. We only fully discover this upon reaching the peak of the *Groundwork* arc, the conclusion of the transition through various formulas, where Kant explicitly identifies the moral law for the first time in its full complexity. From

the higher vantage point, we can look back at the formulas with a more sophisticated understanding of their role.

There is a parallel here to other traditions, like early Stoicism, that conceive of philosophy as an interdependent relation between theory and moral exercise. Stoics produce some logical, physical, and ethical theory, but they also provide the student with a range of instructions and directives for making it through challenging life situations. Ultimately, the student of Stoicism recognises that (a) the theory explains why the directives are what they are and why they are effective and (b) that the experience one has in a moral exercise supplies a type of confirmation of the claims made in the theory. I am not claiming that Kant has the same conception of philosophy as the Stoics, but I believe the parallel is instructive for thinking about how he balances the different aspects of his project.

Second, there is debate about the universal formula. Should it be read as (1) the Formula of Universal Law, (2) another known formula, or (3) a brand new formula? Timmermann takes the first option (Timmermann 2007: 112). Wood takes the second (Wood 1999: 188), arguing that it is the Formula of Autonomy (though he is less confident in (Wood 2017)). Allison takes the third (Allison 2011: 251–4). My reading suggests that the debate is misconceived. The placement of the universal formula directly following Kant's identification of the Categorical Imperative indicates that the formulas have, in one respect, fulfilled their purpose. The subsequent formulas now come more explicitly to include features from previous formulas. The universal formula is a harbinger of something ubiquitous in the synthetic portion of the *Groundwork* and in other of Kant's practical works: formulas that resemble but differ from those that precede 4: 436. After 4: 436, Kant is free to state formulas differently because they are not steps in the analytic G II argument. He can be less tied to the previous formulas because he takes the G II argument to be finished. Within the *Groundwork* itself, the formulas in the analytic portion are found in a different context from those in the synthetic portion.

Finally, there is a long tradition of reading Kant as deriving moral duties immediately after introducing the Formulas of Universal Law and Humanity.<sup>21</sup> The debate comes to concern the mechanics of universalisation tests and decision procedures. I believe this makes the *Groundwork* far less interesting and rich than it is or could be. My reading provides two distinctions. First, there is a difference between a derivation of duties and an exploration of how a formula elucidates a genuine feature of the moral law. With respect to the progression of formulas and argument in G II, Kant is primarily doing the latter. The concrete cases are features of the popular moral philosophy that Kant analyses to identify the principle of morality in the metaphysics of morals. When the reader sees that the formulas make sense of intuitive cases, together highlight constitutive components of the moral law, and, due to the relation among the components, represent one moral law, much of Kant's stated aim is accomplished. And that aim does not include deriving duties from formulas. The second distinction, as mentioned above, is between deriving duties and using the formulas as a compass. As I argued, although Kant has metaphysical ambitions in G II, the formulas can also be used as decision procedures in real cases. But in the context of the *Groundwork* arc, there is less expectation that they will always deliver simple and straightforward conclusions. They guide us best when we understand their role in identifying the single supreme moral principle.

#### 4. Next steps

My reading of the formula relation utilises numerous distinctions. Besides the matter/form distinction at the heart of my approach, I distinguished the formulas from the moral law, the formulas from the matter and form of the moral law, and the pure and applied sides of Kant's practical project. The pure/applied distinction enables Kant to separate matter and form in the metaphysics of morals and yet retain the hylomorphic explanation of the individuality of the moral law. It also yields a picture of the formulas according to which they are at the same time (1) steps along the transition to determination of the moral law and (2) principles to be used in life. In the end, as Kant says when he describes the formula relation at 4: 436, the formulas represent the single supreme principle of morality. They do so by making explicit several constitutive features of the principle. The first two features, as found in the Formula of Universal Law/Law of Nature and the Formula of Humanity, stand in hylomorphic relation: the law has universal form and concerns the ends of humanity as matter.

I will end with some comments about what the next steps towards a full account of the formula relation would be. I do not make arguments for the positions but indicate where I believe my methodology leads.

##### 4.1 Autonomy

The relation between the form of universality and rational nature has implications for autonomy. On my view, the hylomorphic inseparability of the matter and form of the moral law is a description of autonomy, the concept highlighted in the Formula of Autonomy. That is, to have a rational nature is to will universal laws. The act of willing universal laws brings with it the will's standing as an entity with unconditional worth. To will universal laws is to be an end in itself, and vice versa. The combination is *autonomy*. The autonomous will is hylomorphic. It gives laws to itself in the sense that, in its capacity for legislating laws with universal form, it is the matter of moral law. This is a meaning of Kant's claim that the first two formulas combine in the third.

And how does Kant conceive of a plurality of autonomous wills? The Formula of the Kingdom of Ends shows that Kant is interested in a system of wills. In the remarks, he uses complete determination to explain the system. On my view, system is crucial for understanding what the Categorical Imperative is.

##### 4.2 Complete determination

In the section of the *Critique of Pure Reason* titled 'On the Transcendental Ideal', found early in the Ideal of Pure Reason, Kant talks about the 'principle of determinability' and the 'principle of *thoroughgoing determination*'. The principle of determinability says that, with respect to what is not analytically contained in a concept, 'of **every two** contradictorily opposed predicates only one can apply to it'; the principle of thoroughgoing determination (*durchgängigen Bestimmung*) says, 'among **all possible** predicates of **things**, insofar as they are compared with their opposites, one must apply to it' (A571-2/B599-600).<sup>22</sup> The principles serve the role of individuation: the difference between a single entity and all that falls under a concept is that the former



is thoroughly determined. For a single entity, of all possible contradictory pairs of predicates, one in each pair applies. For example, the particular plant on my desk is determined with respect to the two predicates 'green' or 'not green'. It is green. However, not all plants are green. As a result, the concept plant is not thoroughly determined: it is not the case that for all contradictory pairs of predicates, one of the predicates in the pair belongs to the concept. The predicate green does not belong to all plants – and neither does not green. But when, for some entity, one of each pair of contradictory predicates belongs, the entity is an individual.

With the two principles, Kant is distinguishing concepts and things. Concepts can apply to numerous things because their extensions are indeterminate with respect to some predicate pairs. Things, however, are not general but thoroughly determined. Kant uses the above principles to introduce the idea of the totality of reality (*omnitudo realitatis*) – a transcendental substratum consisting of all possible affirmation (A575/B603). The *omnitudo realitatis* is an *idea*, in his technical sense of the term, which leads Kant to describe the *ideal* he calls the *ens realissimum*: 'the concept of an individual being, because of all possible opposed predicates, one, namely that which belongs absolutely to being, is encountered in its determination' (A576/B604). This *most real being* is what he calls the 'transcendental ideal'.

Kant takes the Kingdom of Ends to be completely determined, and it is completely determined with respect to all possible maxims or moral laws. This picture raises a number of questions. For example, is there any role for an *omnitudo realitatis* or transcendental ideal in practical philosophy? On my view, reading the remark in light of the theories of reason and system from the first *Critique's* Dialectic unites hylomorphism and individuation into the view that, for Kant, the moral law is necessarily systematic. The ultimate form of universal law is system. The single moral law Kant is seeking is a systematic whole. Further, there is a practical parallel to *ens realissimum* that provides all positive content of the moral law. That is, I believe that debates about moral knowledge that is presupposed in the Categorical Imperative can be resolved here. Kant's reference to the categories of quantity at the end of the 4: 436 remark further emphasises the crucial foundational role of the ideal of the kingdom of ends.

### 4.3 Categories of quantity

Kant uses the categories of quantity to describe the relation among the formulas of the Categorical Imperative as a 'progression', language that does not appear in the first remark. The key is in understanding how the categories hang together as a class. Kant briefly considers the topic in a passage that follows the first *Critique's* Metaphysical Deduction.<sup>23</sup> There are three categories in each class, and 'the third category always arises from the combination of the first two in its class [*die dritte Kategorie allenthalben aus der Verbindung der zweiten mit der ersten ihrer Classe entspringt*]' (B110, cf. P, 4: 325n.). This supplies a further look into how the combination relation works. Kant's position appears to be that the relation among the formulas of the Categorical Imperative, or the concepts they highlight, is the same, or has the same structure, as the relation among the three categories in a class. And the categories of

*quantity* specifically apply to or describe the progression of the formulas. Accordingly, the second remark provides two insights into the relation among the formulas.

First and more generally, Kant describes the internal structure of a class of categories as involving the combination of the first two. This point is familiar. Yet, when Kant discusses the relations among the categories in the first *Critique* and elsewhere, he gives the third category some type of foundational or grounding role. When plurality is considered as a unity, the category of totality arises. However, there would be no unity and plurality could not be combined without the totality. A part of the discovery of the third category is the further discovery that the third category, in some respect, underlies or makes possible the first two. These relations are a theme of the Transcendental Dialectic in the first *Critique*.

After mentioning a combination relation among categories, Kant attempts to forestall an objection or confusion. He says, 'But one should not think that the third category is therefore a merely derivative one and not an ancestral concept of pure understanding. For the combination of the first and second in order to bring forth the third concept requires a special act of the understanding, which is not identical with that act performed in the first and second' (B111; cf. *L-Met Vigilantius*, 29: 988, *Corr*, 10: 366-7). The two sentences present a contrast. He first says that the category relation does not make totality merely derivative (*bloß abgeleiteter*). The tone of the comment is that there are no second-class categories. Kant seems initially to affirm a *category egalitarianism*: there is no priority or hierarchy among the categories; all are ancestral concepts equally and to the same degree. In saying that the third category is not merely derivative, Kant only means that it is not a *predicable*, a pure concept that owes all of its content to categories (A82/B108, *L-Met Vigilantius*, 29: 984, 988). The third category in a class will have new content not found in the other two.<sup>24</sup> This poses the question of whether and how derivation has a part in the category relation.

In the contrasting second sentence, Kant says that, despite the egalitarianism, there is something distinctive about the third category. Its discovery requires '*einen besonderen Actus des Verstandes*'. Kant's reference to a special act of the understanding is vital to the category relation. Yet he says little about the act and how it is special. After mentioning it, he supplies examples. With respect to quantity, he says, 'the concept of a **number** (which belongs to the category of allness) is not always possible wherever the concepts of multiplicity and of unity are (e.g. in the representation of the infinite)' (B111). (Earlier in the paragraph, Kant indicates that he uses 'totality' and 'allness' interchangeably (B111, see also A322/B379).) The general point seems to be that the simple conjunction of the concepts plurality and unity is not enough to yield totality. This is because there are cases in which unity and plurality are applicable but totality is not. The special act combines the two concepts in a special way.

The special act of the understanding and internal relation among categories are little understood. Yet the same mereological or compositional relation, however it should be characterised, is meant to hold in the practical philosophy. Considering humans as rational natures willing universal laws leads to the idea of a whole community - a totality called a Kingdom of Ends. Yet, as with the categories of quantity, the willing takes place within the context of the totality of moral law. The kingdom of ends underlies or makes possible an act of willing universal law, just as the totality makes possible the combination of unity and plurality. A particular moral law

must fit within a systematic totality of moral law. The second remark can be seen as substantiation and, to an extent, expansion of the formula relation.

In light of the second remark, Kant's prior comment about the combination of formulas opens up into a more sophisticated picture. The combination relation is only one feature of the complex structure of the Categorical Imperative. The categories are all ancestral or root concepts (B111). The third is not *derived* from the first two through their combination (at least, not in the sense in which predicables are derived). So the progression is not one of standard logical inference. On my view, the same is true of the progression through the formulas of the Categorical Imperative. As I stated above, the main argument in G II is not an argument *for* formulas or the concepts they highlight. Instead, the formulas can be regarded as clues. The goal is the identification of the supreme principle of morality represented by the formulas.

Second, Kant specifically uses the categories of *quantity* in the remark. And he blends the first remark into the second. He says that there is the 'the *unity* of the form of the will (its universality), the *plurality* of the matter (of objects, i.e. of ends), and the *allness* or totality of the system of these'. Each point follows the same pattern:

[category] [corresponding point from first remark] [concept of corresponding formula]

The will has a unity in that it wills only universal law. The laws are about ends. And together, there is a system of ends, completely determined with respect to moral laws.

While autonomy, complete determination, and the role of the categories warrant more attention, in this last section I have highlighted some of the benefits of an interpretative hypothesis that emphasises the 4: 436 remarks and their place within the *Groundwork* arc. With my method, the task of understanding 4: 436 is *the same* as answering a classic question of Kant scholarship: what is the relation among the formulas of the Categorical Imperative? A full answer requires an exploration of many features of Kant's philosophy, but I hope to have shown that the first steps take us in a promising direction.

## Notes

1 All quotations of Kant, unless noted, are from the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (Kant 1998a, Kant 1998b, Kant 1992, Kant 1996, Kant 1998). I abbreviate the *Groundwork* as *G*, *Prolegomena* as *P*, and other materials in a manner that should be perspicuous. Except for the Hechsel logic lectures (citing marginal pagination in 1998b) and the *Critique of Pure Reason* (citing the first and second editions in standard A/B format), citations follow the usual method of referencing volume and page from the Akademie edition of Kant's writings.

2 He says that the first two sections, which *determine* the Categorical Imperative, utilise the analytic method. The third section is synthetic and *demonstrates* the application of the Categorical Imperative. Kant discusses the two methods at *P*, 4: 263, 274–5, 277n. The method should be distinguished from analytic and synthetic judgements. See Allison (2011: 33–4); Guyer (2007: 33–4); Sedgwick (2008: 43–4).

3 I refer to the two passages as 'remarks'. It is difficult to know what status they have, and the various candidate labels ('demonstrations', 'illustrations', 'analogies', 'examples', or 'allusions', to use Wood's term (Wood 1999: 185)) have loaded connotations. 'Remark' is meant to be as neutral as possible. Someone (perhaps even myself) might argue that there is truly only one remark. It is plausible to read

the reference to the categories of quantity as a short elaboration. However, the second remark is phrased as a progression – indicative of the transitional structure of each section of the *Groundwork*.

4 While Kant's hylomorphism is found throughout his work and career, matter and form receive the most explicit treatment in the first *Critique* and lectures on metaphysics and logic. 'Complete determination' is a more direct reference to discussion in the theoretical philosophy.

5 There has been no thorough treatment. Despite voicing some scepticism about the utility of the remarks, Wood provides a fairly detailed discussion (Wood 1999: 182–90). See also Guyer (2005b).

6 The view that there is no formula priority is more prominent now. Proponents include O'Neill (1989: ch. 7), Allison (2011: 246–9), Sedgwick (2008: ch. 4), Guyer (1995), and Geiger (2015).

7 There are a variety of equivalence views. One must settle what sort of equivalence is at play, whether all the formulas are equivalent or only some, and why equivalence is important to Kant's aim in the *Groundwork* (or the *G II* transition specifically). See von Platz (2016), Rawls (2000: 181), and Timmerman (2007: 110).

8 There is one substantive outlier: Wood (1999: 182–90). A partial exception is Guyer (2005b). Uleman has a similar view to Wood but the treatment is brief (Uleman 2010: 140–3).

9 Kant tends not to talk about individuation directly. See Radner (1994). My use of this term is intended to bring Kant into closer contact with the hylomorphic tradition and establish language for discussing longstanding puzzles surrounding Kant's claim that there is a single supreme principle of morality. I also take 'individual' to be preferable to 'singular' or 'particular' (which for Kant are logical forms of judgement) and 'unity' (a category that will feature in my treatment). Nevertheless, because talking about representations as individuals is nonstandard from a contemporary perspective, I largely avoid it.

10 Strictly and historically speaking, there is a difference between individuation and unification, and it is possible to give different hylomorphic accounts of them. How this works in Aristotle is disputed. (See Anscombe et al. (1953).) While I recognise the distinction, my claim is that Kant's hylomorphism explains both with respect to cognition.

11 See Pollok (2015: ch. 5) for an account of each type. That Kant conceives cognition as involving hylomorphic layers is evident from various lectures on logic. The Jäsche *Logic* (Ak. vol. 9) is arranged as a progression through the types. See also *Vienna Logic*, 24: 790, 904, 928, and continuing into the *Hechsel Logic*, 89, 94, 114. This arrangement was common in logic textbooks from the time. The structure also resembles the early Stoic logic (impression, presentation, conception, proposition, etc.), though the Stoics were not hylomorphists.

12 In addition to the difference between the form of intuition and intuition itself, Allison warns of a possible confusion between mental content (*intuition*), an object (*intuited*), and a mental act (*intuiting*) (Allison 2004: 82). Similar confusions loom for the other types of cognition.

13 Above I said that Kant adopts hylomorphism as an explanation of the unity of representation. Although it is not itself cognition, a sensation might still be a representational unity. If so, it is difficult to see how Kant would account for the unity. Either there is a form of subjective representation separate from the form of intuition, or hylomorphism explains only the individuality of objective representations.

14 For a discussion of the examples and the Amphiboly generally, see Longuenesse (1998: 147–63).

15 I underline names of concepts.

16 There is longstanding debate on what exactly maxims are and how they function in Kant's system. A useful treatment is McCarty (2006). Korsgaard's view is influential (Korsgaard 1996: 13–4). See also Kitchee (2004: 558–60) and Potter (1994). Another discussion of maxims is García, who mentions the relevance of the remarks (García 2013: 246). However, García seems not to notice the specific importance of *complete* determination, instead connecting 'determination' to the 'determining ground' of action (García 2013: 247).

17 This is a rough sketch. There is plentiful debate about the details of universalisation tests and the contradictions they involve. Kahn, for example, joins a long tradition of criticism (see (Kahn 2022b) and (Kahn 2022c)). Bojanowski cites other criticisms and defends Kant by considering putative counter-examples (Kant 2018). An influential reading is Kleingeld (2017). As will become evident below, if the goal is to understand Kant's argument in the *Groundwork*, I have doubts about the value of debating details of universalisation tests.

18 Though I will make some claims below, I am largely sidestepping debates about the status of the Universal Law of Nature. See Rivera-Castro (2014) and Kahn (2019). I believe the analogy with nature that

Kant is referencing in the lines preceding the remarks is best treated in a discussion of complete determination.

19 Although I will not discuss it, another aspect of practical philosophy is anthropology (see G, 4: 388, *L-Eth Collins*, 27: 244, *L-Eth Mrongovius*, 29: 599). Anthropology cannot be ‘used as a basis’ for a metaphysics of morals (A841/B870). The architectonic approach, however, means appreciating the systematic relations between the two sides of the practical project.

20 Deep in the metaphysics of G II, Kant appends a footnote to his discussion of the Formula of Kingdom of Ends: ‘I can be exempted from citing examples to illustrate this principle’ (4: 432). For better or worse, this makes the concept of autonomy irremediably abstract. Examples belong earlier in the arc. See also MM, 6: 355, 372.

21 The tradition may be waning. See Barbara Herman (2021: pt. 2). However, the project of reading Kant as attempting to derive duties with the formulas still lives. See Yudanin (2015) and Kahn (2022a). For a more optimistic reading within this project, see Duindam (2023).

22 It should be noted that, in the *Groundwork*, Kant says ‘complete determination’. The principle at the beginning of ‘On the Transcendental Ideal’ is about thoroughgoing determination, though he later mentions ‘the complete concept of a thing [vollständigen Begriff von einem Dinge]’ (A572/B601). Elsewhere I explain the difference between complete determination and thoroughgoing determination. Readers have tended to use the terms interchangeably.

23 There is dispute about where the Metaphysical Deduction begins and ends. My citations come from ‘On the Clue to the Discovery of all Pure Concepts of the Understanding’, the chapter that either is or contains the Metaphysical Deduction. Kant does not use the term ‘metaphysical deduction’ until late in the B edition Transcendental Deduction (B159).

24 Kant’s phrasing allows for the third category to be derivative partially or derivative in some other sense. Even if the category is not derivative of other concepts, it may be derivative of something else. Literature on the Metaphysical Deduction often phrases Kant’s argument as the *derivation* of the categories from their corresponding forms of judgement (see Reich (1992: 1); Allison (2004: 134); Longuenesse (2005: 17), though her phrasing is generally more careful in (Longuenesse 1998); and Santiago de Jesus Sanchez Borboa (2018)). While this issue is not my focus, it should be noted that Kant does not speak this way in the ‘Clue’.

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