

### KDR 3/28 Kant's Grounding

What makes an imperative categorical, hypothetical?

A typical statement: An imperative is categorical if it applies to us unconditionally, or simply because we have rational wills, [without any reference to] any ends that we might or might not have. An imperative is hypothetical if it requires us to act in a certain way [given that we have adopted] a certain end.

Need to replace the bracketed bits with more specific conditions of instrumentality.

Why the presence or absence of an "if" clause doesn't decide the matter.

Kant and Hume on Reason, instrumentality, and ultimate ends – first page of Darwall's handout

Here's a good account of how the Formula of the Universal Law of Nature of CI is supposed to work (taken from the SEP article on "Kant's Moral Philosophy"):

Kant's first formulation of the CI states that you are to "act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law" (G 4:421). O'Neill (1975, 1989) and Rawls (1980, 1989), among others, take this formulation in effect to summarize a decision procedure for moral reasoning, and we will follow their basic outline: First, formulate a maxim that enshrines your proposed plan of action. Second, recast that maxim as a universal law of nature governing all rational agents, and so as holding that all must, by natural law, act as you yourself propose to act in these circumstances. Third, consider whether your maxim is even conceivable in a world governed by this new law of nature. If it is, then, fourth, ask yourself whether you would, or could, rationally will to act on your maxim in such a world. If you could, then your action is morally permissible.