

(a) Briefly explain the **historical** and **philosophical** context of Kant's philosophy. (5)

(b) Summarise the argument that Kant advances in his essay, **What is Enlightenment?** (1795) (5)

(c) Explain Kant's concept of a **good will**. (12)

(d) Explain Kant's distinction between **acting in accordance with the moral law** and **acting in reverence (Achtung)** for the moral law. Refer to Kant's examples in your answer. (12)



*Immanuel Kant*

What, for  
Kant, is the  
form of the  
moral law?

# Kant identifies 3 types of law

- physical laws
- logical laws
- moral laws

- govern the natural universe
- govern thought
- govern freedom

- e.g. Newton laws of motion
- e.g. Aristotle's laws of thought

# btw: Postulates

- **Theism** is presupposed by morality  
(summum bonum)
- **Freedom**, too, is presupposed...it cannot  
be proven

# Read the Laws sheet.

Physical

Logical

Are these laws  
universal? Or  
particular?

Are they  
subjective? Or  
objective?

# Universality

- Laws, qua laws, are universal in form (structure)
- Laws are thus established a priori
- The a posteriori, empirical → generalisations (Rule Utilitarianism)
- If it is a moral law, it applies to all rational beings, equally

Read **Leibniz (1704)**,  
a rationalist, on the  
same idea

## Quick Review

What three types of law does Kant identify, and what do these laws govern?

What is the link between law and universality?





2. What, for Kant, is the **content** of the moral law?

# Recall: moral laws

govern  
**freedom**

**autonomy**

# Autonomy, autonomous

- Etymology: Auto: **self** hetero: **other**
- Nomos: **law**
- Literally, **one who gives oneself one's own laws**
- Thus, rational beings are **legislators** of the moral law

Two things fill the mind  
with ever-increasing

Achtung the starry

heavens above me and the

moral law within me

~ (Kant, 1788)

Note it.

Explain it.

Memorise it.

Not imposed  
externally:  
not  
**heteronomous**

# Objective, not subjective

- The moral law is grounded in reason
- Reason, for Kant, itself is universal
- e.g. If  $2a=4$ , then  $a=?$ ...
- e.g. All girls are female; Jen is a girl; therefore...

# Synthetic, not analytic

- If moral laws were **analytic** (true by definition), then there could not be serious uncertainty about them.
- There is uncertainty about moral laws
- Therefore...

# Apodeictic: Modal Category

- 'Problematic' - possible
- 'Assertoric' - actual
- 'Apodeictic' - necessary

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From apodeictic necessity  
to moral absolutism

**principles**

**context**

**hold**

**consequences**

**subjective**



# Rational will

- Moral laws are therefore **binding** - we are **bound** by them
- They 'command' us, so to speak
- A gute Wille is therefore, ultimately, a rational will.
- But, because we are free and imperfectly rational...



"a rational will must be regarded as \_\_\_\_\_, or free in the sense of being the \_\_\_\_\_ of the law that \_\_\_\_\_ it."

Robert Johnson, 2008

- autonomous
- binds
- author

# Why are moral laws binding?

## Apodeictic: Modal Category

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[http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/uid=/tocnode?id=g9781405106795\\_chunk\\_g97814051067952\\_ss1-168](http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/uid=/tocnode?id=g9781405106795_chunk_g97814051067952_ss1-168) extra info about this distinction

# Problematic, assertoric, or apodeictic?

- $1+1=2$
- David Cameron
- Square triangles
- Aristotle's law of identity:  $A$  is  $A$
- Dodos
- A married bachelor

# Apodeictic necessity

- The apodeictic force of moral laws render them **binding** - we are **bound** by them
- They '**command**' or '**tug**' us, so to speak
- But we're **imperfectly rational**

From apodeictic necessity  
to moral absolutism

**principles**

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Explain why Kant  
thinks that the moral  
law is grounded in the  
two core  
Enlightenment values  
of human **autonomy**  
and **reason**.

# Key words

- **synthetic** (not analytic)
- **a priori** (not a posteriori)
- **universal** (not general)
- **absolute** (not relative or contingent)
- **apodeictic** (necessary so binding)
- **autonomous** (not heteronomous)
- **objective** (not subjective)
- **rational** (not empirical)



# Mini-Review 1

1. What did MacIntyre and Rachels assert about Kantianism?
2. What are the names of Kant's three chief works on ethics? German, English, year
3. What, for Kant, was metaphysics?
4. What is pure practical reason?

# Mini-Review 2

1. Recall Graham's example. What does it show?
2. Why is a weak gute Wille not a genuine one?
3. What's the quote with 'jewel' in it?
4. Explain the gute Wille using words: 'highest' 'primacy' 'sole' and 'complete'
5. What's the summum bonum?