

Why Should I be Moral? ——**Kant's Categorical Imperative**

Jau-hwa Chen

Abstract

Kant's understanding of moral demand as categorical imperative was criticized by many modern practical philosophers for its formal and vague interpretation of morality. This paper, addressing the critique of Kant's categorical imperative, which is initiated by G.M.E. Anscombe and carried out by P. Foot and B. Williams, tries to clarify why Kant formulates a categorical imperative for the conception of morality. For Kant, the justification of moral responsibility is grounded on nothing but the pure moral concept itself, which is not grounded again on other subjective interests and ends. The content of moral law may not be independent of its social context, but it does not mean that the latter justifies its validity. In making this argument, Kant distinguished the foundation of moral judgment from its social and cultural meaning.

Key Words: Kant, categorical imperative, objective reason, internalism, externalism, Philippa Foot, Bernard Williams