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Immanuel Kant ~ What is Freedom
[11]
0001
      Now we turn, to the hardest
0002
      philosopher that we're going to read in this course
0003
      today we turn to Immanuel Kant
0004
      who offers a different account
0005
      of why we have a categorical duty
0006
      to respect the dignity of persons
0007
      and not to be use
0008
      people
0009
      as means
0010
      merely
0011
      even for good ends.
0012
      Kant excelled at the university of Königsberg
0013
      at the age of sixteen
0014
      at the age of thirty one he got his first job
0015
      as an unsalaried lecturer
0016
      paid on commission
0017
      based on the number of students who showed up at his lectures
0018
      this is a sensible system that Harvard would do well to consider
0019
      luckily for Kant
0020
      he was a popular lecturer and also an industrious one and so he eked out a meager living
0021
      it wasn't until
0022
      he was fifty seven that he published his first
0023
      major work
0024
      but it was worth the wait
0025
      the book was the critique of pure reason
0026
      perhaps the most important work in all of modern philosophy
0027
      and a few years later
0028
      Kant wrote
0029
      the groundwork for the metaphysics of morals which we read in this course
      I want to acknowledge even before we start
0030
      that Kant is a difficult thinker
0031
      but it's important to try to figure out
0032
0033
     what he's saying
0034
      because what this book is about
0035 is well, it's about what the supreme principle of morality this
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0036
      number one, and
      it's also
0037
      it gives us an account
0038
      one of the most powerful accounts we have
0039
      of what freedom really is
0040
0041
      so
0042
      let me start today.
      Kant rejects utilitarianism
0043
0044
      he thinks
0045
      that
0046
     the individual
0047
      person
0048
      all human beings
0049
      have a certain dignity
0050
      that commands our respect
0051
      the reason the individual is sacred or the bearer of rights according to Kant,
0052
      doesn't stem from the idea that we own ourselves,
0053
      but instead from the idea
0054
      that we are all rational beings
      we're all rational beings which simply means
0055
      that we are beings who are capable
0056
0057
      of reason.
0058
     we're also
0059
      autonomous beings
0060
     which is to say
0061
      that we are beings capable of acting and choosing
0062
      freely
0063
      now, this capacity for reason and freedom
0064
      isn't the only capacity we have.
0065
      we also have the capacity for pain and pleasure
0066
      for suffering and satisfaction
0067
      Kant admits the
0068
      utilitarians were half a right
0069
     of course
0070
     we seek to avoid pain
0071
     and we like pleasure
0072 Kant doesn't deny this
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0073
      what he does deny
0074
      is Bentham's claim that
      pain in pleasure
0075
0076
      are our sovereign masters
      he thinks that's wrong.
0077
      Kant thinks
0078
0079
      that it's are national capacity
0080
      that makes us distinctive, that makes us special that sets us
0081
      apart from and above mere animal
0082
      existence.
0083
      it makes us something more than just physical
0084
      creatures with appetites. Now
0085
      we often think
0086
      of freedom
0087
      as simply consisting
0088
      in doing what we want
0089
      or in the absence of obstacles to getting what we want
      that's one way of thinking about freedom.
0090
      but this isn't Kant's
0091
      idea of freedom
0092
      Kant has a more stringent
0093
0094
      demanding notion
0095
      of what it means to be free
0096
      and though stringent and demanding, if you think it through
0097
      it's actually pretty persuasive
0098
      Kant's reason is as follows
0099
      when we,
0100
      like animals
0101
      seek after pleasure
0102
      or the satisfaction of our desires of the avoidance pain
0103
      when we do that we aren't really acting freely.
0104
     why not?
0105
     we're really acting
0106
     as the slaves
0107
     of those appetites
     and impulses
0108
0109 I didn't choose this particular hunger or that particular appetite,
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```
and so when I act to satisfy it
0110
      I'm just acting according to natural
0111
0112
      necessity
0113
      and for Kant,
      freedom is the opposite
0114
      of necessity
0115
     there was an advertising slogan
0116
      for the
0117
0118
      soft drink Sprite
0119
      a few years ago
0120
     the slogan was
0121
      obey your thirst
0122
     there
0123
      there's a Kantian insight
0124
      buried in that
0125
      Sprite advertising slogan
0126
     that in a way is Kant's point
0127
      when you go for Sprite,
0128
      or Pepsi
0129
     you're really
      you might think that you're choosing freely sprite versus Pepsi
0130
      but you're actually
0131
0132
      obeying
      something, a thirst, or maybe a desire manufactured or massaged by advertising
0133
0134
     you're obeying a prompting
0135
     that you yourself
0136
      haven't chosen
0137
      or created
0138
      and here
0139
      it's worth
0140
      noticing
0141
      Kant's specially demanding
0142
      idea
0143
      of freedom
0144
     what way
     of acting, how can my will be determined if not by
0145
0146 the prompting sub nature or my hunger or my appetite, or my desires?
```

```
Kant's answer:
0147
0148
     to act freely
     is to act
0149
0150
      autonomously
0151
      and to act autonomously
      is to act according to a law that I give myself
0152
0153
      not according
     to the physical laws of nature
0154
0155
      or to the laws of cause and effect
0156
     which include my desire,
     to eat or to drink
0157
     or to choose this
0158
0159
     food in a restaurant over that
0160
      now what is the opposite
0161
     what is the opposite
      of autonomy
0162
     for Kant he invest a special term
0163
     to describe
0164
      the opposite of autonomy
0165
0166
      heteronomy
      is the opposite of autonomy
0167
0168
     when I act
0169
      heteronomously
0170
     I'm acting
0171
      according to an inclination
0172
     or a desire
0173
     that I haven't chosen for myself
0174
     so freedom is autonomy
0175
      is this specially stringent
0176
      idea
0177
      that Kant insists on.
0178
      now why is autonomy
0179
      the opposite of the acting heteronomously or according to the dictates of nature
0180
      Kant's point is that
0181
      nature is governed by laws
     laws of cause and effect for example
0182
0183 suppose you drop a billiard ball
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0184
      it falls to the ground
0185
      we wouldn't say the billiard ball is acting freely
      why not?
0186
      it's acting according to the law of nature
0187
      according to the laws
0188
      of cause and effect
0189
     the law of gravity
0190
0191
      and just as he has an unusually
0192
      demanding and stringent
0193
      conception of freedom,
0194
      freedom as autonomy,
0195
      he also
0196
      has a demanding conception
0197
      of morality
0198
     to act freely
0199
      is not to choose the best means to a given end
      it's to choose the end itself for its own sake
0200
      and that's something
0201
      that human beings can do
0202
      and that billiard balls can't
0203
0204
      insofar as we act on
0205
      inclination or pursue pleasure
0206
      we fact as means
0207
      to the realization of ends
0208
      given outside us
0209
     we are instruments
0210
      rather than authors
0211
     of the purposes
0212
     we pursue
0213
      that's
0214
      the heteronomous determination of the will
0215
      on the other hand
0216
      insofar as we act autonomously
0217
      according to law we give ourselves
0218
     we do something for its own sake
     as an end in itself
0219
0220 when we act autonomously
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0221
      we cease to be instruments to purposes
0222
      given outside us
0223
      we become
      what we can come to think of ourselves
0224
      as ends in ourselves.
0225
0226
      this capacity to act freely
0227
      Kant tells us
0228
      is what gives human life its special
0229
      dignity.
0230
      respecting human dignity
      means regarding persons
0231
      not just as means
0232
0233
      but also as ends in them
      and this is why
0234
      it's wrong to use people
0235
      for the sake of other people's
0236
      well being or happiness
0237
0238
      this is the real reason Kant says
0239
      that utilitarianism goes wrong
0240
      this is the reason it's important to respect the dignity of persons
0241
      and to uphold their rights.
0242
      so even if there are cases
0243
      remember John Stuart Mill said well in the long run if we uphold Justice and respect
0244
      the dignity of persons
0245
      we will maximize human happiness.
0246
      What would Kant's answer be to that?
0247
      what would his answer be?
0248
      even if that were true
0249
      even if the calculus worked out that way
0250
      even if you shouldn't throw the Christians to the lions because in the long run
0251
      fear will spread, the overall utility will decline, the utilitarian
0252
      would be upholding Justice and rights and respect for persons
0253
      for the wrong reason
0254
      for a purely contingent reason
0255
      for an instrumental reason
     it would still be using people even where the calculus works out
0256
0257 for the best in the long run, it would still using people
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0258
      as means
      rather than
0259
      respecting them as ends in themselves.
0260
      so that's Kant's idea of freedom as autonomy
0261
      and you can begin to see how it's connected
0262
      to his idea of morality
0263
0264
      but we still have to answer one more question
      what gives an act it's moral worth
0265
0266
      in the first place
      if it can't be directed
0267
0268
      at utility or satisfying wants or desires,
0269
      what do you think gives an action it's moral worth?
      this leads us from Kant's
0270
      demanding idea of freedom
0271
      to his demanding idea
0272
      of morality.
0273
     What does Kant say?
0274
      what makes and action
0275
      morally worthy
0276
      consists not in the consequences or in the results that flow from it
0277
0278
      what makes an action morally worthy has to do with
0279
      the motive
      with the quality of the will
0280
0281
      with the intention
0282
      for which the act is down
0283
     what matters
0284
      is the motive
0285
      and the motive must be of a certain kind.
0286
      so the moral worth of an action depends on the motive for which it's done
0287
      and the important thing
0288
      is that
0289
      the person do the right thing
0290
      for the right reason
0291
      a goodwill isn't good
0292
      because of what it affects or accomplishes, Kant writes,
     it's good in itself
0293
0294
     even if by its utmost effort to goodwill accomplishes nothing
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0295
      it would still shine like a jewel for its own sake
0296
      as something which has its full value in itself
      and so for any action
0297
      to be morally good
0298
      it's not enough that it should
0299
0300
      conform
0301
      to the moral law
      it must also be done for the sake of the moral law.
0302
0303
      the idea is
      that the motive confers
0304
0305
      the moral worth
0306
      on an action
0307
      and the only kind of motive
0308
      that can confirm moral
0309
      worth on an action
      is the motive of duty
0310
      well what's the opposite
0311
      of doing something out of a sense of duty because it's right,
0312
      well for Kant the opposite
0313
      would be all of those motives having to do with our inclinations
0314
      and inclinations
0315
      refer to all of our
0316
      desires, all of our contingently given
0317
0318
      wants
0319
      preferences
0320
      impulses
0321
      and the like
0322
      only actions done for the sake of the moral law
0323
      for the sake of duty
0324
      only these actions have moral worth
0325
      now I want to
0326
      see what you think about this idea
0327
      but first let's consider a few examples
0328
      Kant begins with an example
0329
     of a shopkeeper
      he wants to bring out the intuition
0330
0331 and make plausible the idea
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0332
      that what confers moral worth on an action is that it be done because it's right
      he says suppose there's a shopkeeper
0333
0334
      and an inexperienced customer comes in
0335
      the shopkeeper knows
      that he could give the customer the wrong change could shortchange the customer
0336
0337
      and get away with it
0338
      at least that customer wouldn't know
0339
      but the shopkeeper nonetheless says well if I shortchange this customer
0340
      word may get out
      my reputation would be damaged and I would lose business
0341
      so I won't shortchange this customer
0342
      the shop keeper
0343
      does nothing wrong he gives a correct change
0344
0345
      but does this action have moral worth?
0346
      Kant says no.
      it doesn't have moral worth
0347
      because the shopkeeper only did the right thing
0348
0349
      for the wrong reason
      out of self-interest
0350
0351
      that's a pretty straightforward
0352
      case. then he takes another case
0353
      the case of suicide.
0354
      he says we have a duty to preserve ourselves
0355
      now, for most people
0356
      who love life,
0357
      we have multiple reasons
0358
      for not taking our own lives
0359
      so the only way we can really tell
0360
      the only way we can isolate the operative motive
0361
      for someone who doesn't take his or her life
0362
      is to think
0363
      to imagine someone who's miserable
0364
      and
0365
     who despite
      having an absolutely miserable life
0366
      nonetheless
0367
     recognizes the duty to preserve one's self
0368
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0369
     and so
0370
      does not commit suicide.
     the force of the example
0371
      is to bring out
0372
     the motive that matters
0373
      and the motive that matters for morality is doing the right thing
0374
     for the sake of duty.
0375
     let me just
0376
0377
      give you
0378
      a couple of other examples
0379
     the better business bureau
0380
     what's their slogan, the slogan of
     the better business bureau?
0381
      honesty is the best policy
0382
      it's also the most profitable. this is the better business bureaus
0383
      full page ad in
0384
      the new York times
0385
0386
      honesty
      it's as important as any other asset
0387
      because a business the deals in truth, openness and fair value
0388
0389
      cannot help
      but do well
0390
0391
      come join us
0392
      and profit from it
0393
     What would Kant say
0394
      about the moral worth
0395
      of the honest dealings that members of the
0396
      better business bureau. What he says
0397
      that here's a perfect example
0398
      that if this is the reason
0399
      that these companies deal honestly with their customers
0400
      their action lacks moral worth
0401
     this is Kant's point
0402
      or couple of years ago at the university of Maryland there was a problem with cheating
0403
     and so they
0404
     initiated
0405 an honor system
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0406
      and they created a program with local merchants
0407
      that if you signed the honor pledge not to cheat
      you would get discounts often to twenty five percent of local shops
0408
      now what would you think of someone motivated
0409
      to uphold an honor code
0410
      with all the discounts
0411
      it's the same as
0412
      Kant's shopkeeper
0413
0414
      the point is
      what matters is the quality of the will the character of the motive
0415
0416
      and the relevant motive to morality
0417
      can only be
0418
      the motive of duty
0419
      not the motive of inclination.
0420
      and when I act out of duty
      and when I resist
0421
      as my motive for acting inclinations or self-interest
0422
      even sympathy and altruism,
0423
      only then
0424
0425
      am I acting
0426
     freely.
0427
      only then and I acting
0428
      autonomously, only then is my will not
0429
      determined
0430
      or governed
0431
      by external considerations.
0432
     that's the link
0433
      between Kant's idea of freedom
0434
      and of morality. now I want to pause here
0435
     the see
0436
     if all of this is clear
0437
     or if you have some questions
0438
     or puzzles
0439
      they can be questions of clarification
0440
      or
     they can be challenges
0441
0442 if you want to challenge this idea
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0443
     that only
      the motive of duty confers moral worth on the action action
0444
      what do you think
0445
      I actually have two questions of clarification
0446
      the first is there seems to be an aspect of this that makes it sort of
0447
0448
      self-defeating in that
0449
      once you're conscious of
0450
      what morality is you can sort of alter your motive to achieve that end of morality
0451
      give me an example
0452
      what do you have in mind
0453
      the shopkeeper example
      if he
0454
0455
      decides that he wants to give the person of money is to do the right thing
      and he decides that's his motive to do so
0456
      because he was the moral then isn't that sort of defeating
0457
0458
      trying to
      isn't that sort of defeating the purity of his action if
0459
      morality is determined by his motive
0460
      is his motive is to act morally
0461
0462
      so you're imagining a case
0463
      not of the purely selfish calculating shopkeeper
0464
      but of one who says
0465
      well he may consider
0466
      shortchanging the customer
0467
      but then he says
0468
      not, while my reputation might suffer if word gets out,
0469
      but instead he says
0470
      actually I would like to be the kind of
0471
      honest person
0472
      who gives the right change to customers
0473
      simply because it's the right thing to do
0474
      or simply because I want to be moral
0475
      because I want to be moral
0476
      I want to be a good person
0477
      and so I'm going to conform all of my actions to what morality requires
     it's a subtle point, it's a good question
0478
0479 Kant does acknowledge
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0480
      you're pressing Kant on an important
0481
      point here,
      Kant does say there has to be some
0482
      incentive
0483
      to obey the moral law
0484
      it can't be a self-interested incentive
0485
      that would defeat it
0486
      by definition
0487
0488
      so he speaks of
0489
      a different kind of incentive from an inclination he speaks of reverence for the moral law
0490
      so if that shopkeeper says
0491
      I want to develop a
      reverence for the moral law
0492
      and so I'm going to act, so I'm going to do the right thing
0493
      then I think he's there, he's there as far as Kant's
0494
      concerned
0495
      because he's formed his motive
0496
0497
      his will
      is conforming to
0498
0499
      the moral law
0500
      once he sees the importance of it
0501
      so it would count
0502
      it would count
0503
      and secondly very quickly
0504
      what stops morality from becoming completely objective in this point?
0505
      what stops morality from becoming completely
0506
      subjective, yea, like
0507
      how can
0508
      if there's, if morality is completely determined by your morals then how can
0509
     you apply this or how can it be enforced?
0510
      that's also a great question, what's your name?
0511
     my name's Ahmady. Ahmady?
0512
      all right
0513
     if acting morally means
0514
     acting according
     to a moral law out of duty
0515
0516 and if it's also
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0517
      to act freely in the sense of autonomously
0518
      it must mean
      that I'm acting according to a law that I give myself that's what it means to act autonomously
0519
      Ahmady is right about that
0520
      but that does raise a really interesting question
0521
0522
      if acting autonomously means acting according to a law I give myself
0523
      that's how I escape
0524
      the chain of cause and effect and the laws of nature
0525
      what's to guarantee
0526
      that the law I give myself
0527
      when I'm acting out of duty is the same
0528
      as the law that Ahmady is giving himself
0529
      and that each of you
0530
      gives yourselves
0531
      well here's the question
0532
      how many moral laws
      from Kant's point of view are there in this room
0533
      are there a thousands or is there one
0534
      he thinks there's one
0535
      which in a way does go back to this question all right what is the moral law, what does it
0536
0537
      tell us
      so what guarantees, it sounds like it
0538
0539
      to act autonomously is to act according to one's conscience according to a law
0540
      one gives oneself
0541
      but what guarantees
0542
      that we, if we all exercise our reason we will come up with one and the same moral law?
0543
      that's what Ahmady wants to know.
0544
      here's Kant's answer,
0545
      the reason that leads us
0546
      to the law we give ourselves
0547
      as autonomous beings
0548
      is a reason
0549
      it's a kind of practical reason
0550
     that we share as human beings
0551
     it's not
     idiosyncratic
0552
0553 the reason we need to respect
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0554
      the dignity of persons is that we're all rational beings we all have the capacity for reason
0555
      and it's the exercise of that capacity for a reason
      which exist
0556
      undifferentiated
0557
      in all of us
0558
      that makes us worthy of dignity, all of us
0559
0560
      and
0561
      since it's the same capacity for reason
0562
      unqualified by particular
0563
      autobiographies and circumstances it's the same universal capacity for reason
0564
      that delivers the moral law
0565
      it turns out that to act autonomously
0566
      is to act according to a law
      we give ourselves exercising our reason
0567
0568
      but it's the reason we share with everyone
0569
      as rational beings
      not the particular reason we have given our upbringing, our particular values our
0570
      particular interests
0571
0572
      it's pure practical reason in Kant's terms
0573
      which legislates apriori
0574
      regardless of any particular
0575
      contingent
0576
      or empirical ends. Well
0577
      what moral law would that kind of reason
0578
      deliver?
0579
      what is its content?
0580
      to answer that question
0581
      you have to read the groundwork
0582
      and we'll continue with that question next time.
0583
      For Kant,
0584
      morally speaking suicide is on a par with murder
0585
      it's on a par with murder because what we violate
0586
      when we take a life
0587
      when we take someone's life, our's or somebody else's,
0588
     we use
0589
     that person
0590 we use a rational being
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0591
      we use humanity as a means
0592
      and so we fail to respect humanity
      as an end
0593
      today we turn back to Kant, but before we do
0594
      remember this is the week
0595
      by the end of which
0596
      all of you
0597
      will basically get Kant, figure out what he's up to
0598
0599
     you're laughing
0600
      no, it will happen
0601
      Kant's groundwork
0602
      is about two big questions,
0603
      first what is the supreme principle of morality
0604
      second
      how is freedom
0605
      possible?
0606
      two big questions
0607
0608
      now, one way
0609
      of making your way through
0610
      this dense philosophical book
0611
      is to bear in mind
      a set of opposition or contrasts or dualisms
0612
0613
      that are related.
      today I'd like to talk about them
0614
0615
      today we're going to answer the question, what according to Kant,
0616
      is the supreme principle of morality
0617
      and in answering that question in working our way up to Kant's answer to that question,
0618
      it will help to bear in mind
0619
      three contrasts or dualisms
0620
      that Kant sets out
0621
      the first you remember
0622
      had to do
0623
     with the motive
0624
      according to which we act
0625
      and according to Kant,
0626
     only one kind of motive
0627 is consistent with morality
```

```
0628
      the motive of duty
0629
      doing the right thing for the right reason
      what other kinds of motives are there
0630
      Kant sums them up
0631
      in the category inclination
0632
0633
      every time
0634
     the motive
     for what we do
0635
0636
      is to
0637
      satisfy a desire
0638
      or a preference that we may have, to pursue some interest
0639
      we're acting out of inclination
0640
      now let me pause to see if
0641
      if in thinking about
      the question of the motive of duty of good will
0642
      see if any of you has a question
0643
      about that much of Kant's claim.
0644
      or is everybody happy with this distinction
0645
      what do you think? go ahead.
0646
      when you make that distinction between duty and inclination is there ever any moral action ever?
0647
      I mean you could always kind of probably find some kind of
0648
      some selfish motive, can't you?
0649
0650
      maybe very often people do have self-interested motives
0651
      when they act
0652
      Kant wouldn't dispute that
0653
      but what Kant is saying
0654
0655
      that in so far as we act
0656
      morally that is in so far as our actions have moral worth
0657
      what confers moral worth
0658
      is precisely
0659
      our capacity to rise above self-interest and prudence and inclination and
0660
     to act out of duty
0661
      some years ago I read about
0662
      a spelling bee
0663
      and
0664 there was a young man
```

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0665
      who was declared the winner
0666
      of the spelling bee
      a kid named Andrew, thirteen years old
0667
      the winning word, the word that he was able to spell
0668
0669
      was echolalia
0670
      does anyone know what echolalia is?
0671
      it's not some type of flower no,
      it is the tendency to repeat as an echo, to repeat what you've heard
0672
0673
      anyhow, he misspelled it actually
0674
      but the judges misheard him they thought it spelled it correctly and awarded him the
0675
      championship of the national
0676
      spelling bee
0677
      and
0678
      he
      went to the judges
0679
      afterward
0680
      and said
0681
0682
      actually
0683
      I misspelled it
0684
      I don't deserve the prize
0685
      and he was regarded as a moral hero
0686
      and he was
0687
      written up in the new York times
0688
      misspeller
0689
      is the spelling bee hero
0690
      there's Andrew
0691
      with is proud mother
0692
      and but when he was interviewed afterwards
0693
      listen to this, when he was interviewed afterwards
0694
      he said quote
0695
      the judges said I had a lot of integrity
0696
      but then he added
0697
      that part of his motive was quote
0698
      I didn't want to feel like a slime
0699
      all right what would Kant say?
      I guess it would depend on whether or not
0700
0701 that was a marginal reason or the predominant reason in whether not and why he decided
```

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0702
      to confess that he didn't actually spell the word correctly
0703
      good and what's your name. Vasco.
      that's very interesting is there anyone else
0704
      who has a view about this?
0705
      does this show that Kant's
0706
      principle is too stringent too demanding
0707
0708
      what would Kant say
0709
      about this? yes
0710
      I think that Kant actually says that
0711
      it is the pure motivation that comes out of duty that gives the action moral worth, so it's like
0712
      for example in this case
0713
      he might have more than one motive, he might have a motive of not feeling like a slime
0714
      and he might have to move of
0715
      doing the right thing
      in and of itself out of duty and so while there's more than one motivation going on there
0716
      does not mean that action is devoid of moral worth just because he has one other motive
0717
0718 so because the motive which involves duty is what gives it moral worth. goo, and what's your name?
Judith
0719
     well Judith I think that your account actually is true to Kant
0720
      it's fine to have sentiments and feelings
0721
      that support doing the right thing
0722
      provided
0723
      they don't provide
0724
      the reason for acting
0725
      so I think Judith has actually a pretty good defense of Kant
0726
      on this question
0727
      of the motive of duty, thank you
0728
0729
      let's go back to the
0730
      three contrasts
0731
      it's clear at least what Kant means when he says
0732
      that
0733
      for an action to have moral worth it must be done for the sake of duty
0734
      not out of inclination
0735
      but as we began to see last time
      there's a connection
0736
0737
      between
```

```
0738
      Kant's stringent notion of morality
0739
      and especially demanding understanding
      of freedom
0740
      and that leads us to the second contrast
0741
     the link between
0742
0743
      morality
      and freedom
0744
      a second contrast describes
0745
0746
     two different
0747
      ways that my will can be determined
0748
      autonomously
0749
      and heteronomously
0750
      according to Kant
0751
      I'm only free
0752
      when my will is determined
0753
      autonomously
0754
      which means what?
0755
      according to a law that I give myself
0756
      we must be capable, if we're capable of freedom as autonomously, we must be capable of acting
0757
      accordingly 0:37:26.0laws that's given or imposed on us
      but according to a law we give ourselves
0758
0759
      but where could such a law
      come from?
0760
0761
      a law that we give ourselves?
0762
      reason, if reason
0763
      determines my will
0764
0765
      the real becomes to power to choose
0766
      independent
0767
      of the dictates
0768
      of nature or inclination
0769
      or circumstance
0770
0771
      connected with Kant's
0772
      demanding notions of morality and freedom
0773
      is especially demanding notion
0774
     of reason
```

```
0776
      determine the
0777
     will
      there are two ways and this leads to the third contracts
0778
      Kant says
0779
      there are two different commands of reason
0780
0781
      in a command of reason
0782
      Kant calls an imperative
0783
      an imperative is simply an ought
0784
      one kind of imperative, perhaps the most familiar kind, is a hypothetical imperative.
0785
      hypothetical imperatives
0786
      use instrumental reason
      if you
0787
0788
      want x then do y
0789
      it's means ends reason.
0790
      if you want a good business reputation
0791
      then
0792
      don't shortchange your customers
0793
      word may get out. that's
      a hypothetical imperative.
0794
0795
      if the action would be good
      solely as a means to something else Kant writes, the imperative is hypothetical
0796
0797
      if the action is represented as good in itself
0798
      and therefore as necessary
      for a will which of itself accords with reason
0799
0800
      then the imperative
0801
      categorical.
0802
      that's the difference
0803
      between
0804
      a categorical imperative and a hypothetical one
0805
      a categorical imperative commands
0806
      categorically
0807
      which just means without reference to or dependents on
0808
      any further purpose
0809
      and so you see the connection
0810
      among these three parallel
0811
      contrasts
```

0775

well how can reason

```
0812
     to be free in the sense of autonomous
0813
      requires
     that I act
0814
0815
      not out of a hypothetical
0816
      imperative
      but out of the categorical
0817
0818
      imperative
0819
      so you see by these three contrasts Kant
0820
      reasons his way
0821
      brings us up to you
      he's derivation
0822
0823
      of the categorical imperative
      well this leaves us
0824
0825
      one big question
0826
      what is the categorical imperative?
0827
      what is the supreme principle of morality
0828
      what does it command of us?
0829
      Kant gives three versions
0830
      three formulations
0831
      of the categorical imperative.
      I want to mention two
0832
0833
      and then see what you think of them.
      the first
0834
      version the first formula
0835
0836
      he calls the formula
0837
      of the universal law
0838
      act only on that maxim
0839
      whereby you can at the same time will that it should become
0840
      a universal
0841
      law and by maxim
0842
      what does Kant mean?
0843
      he means
0844
      a rule that explains
0845
      the reason for what you're doing
0846
      a principle
0847
      for example
0848
      promise keeping
```

```
suppose I need money, I hundred dollars
0849
0850
      desperately
0851
      and I know I can't pay it back anytime soon
      I come to you
0852
      and make you a promise, a false promise, one I know I can't keep
0853
0854
      please give me a hundred dollars today
      lend me the money I will repay you next week
0855
0856
      is that consistent
      with the categorical imperative, that false promise Kant says no
0857
0858
      and the test
0859
      the way we can
0860
      determine
      that the false promise is at odds with categorical
0861
0862
      imperative is
0863
      try to universalize it.
0864
      universalize the maxim upon which you're about to act
0865
      if everybody made false promises when they needed money
0866
      then nobody would believe those promises there would be no such thing
0867
      as a promise
      and so there would be a contradiction
0868
0869
      the maxim universalized would undermine itself
0870
      that's the test
0871
      that's how we can know
0872
      that the false promise is wrong
0873
      well what about
0874
      the formula of the universal law
0875
      you find it persuasive?
0876
      what do you think?
0877
      I have a question about the difference between categoricalism and a hypothesis
0878
0879
      if you're going to act.. Between categorical in hypothetical
0880
      imperatives? right.
0881
      if you're going to act
0882
      with a categorical imperative
0883
      so that the maxim doesn't undermine itself
0884
      it sounds like I am going to do X because I want y
0885
      I'm going to
```

```
not lie in dire need
0886
0887
      because I want the world to function in such a way that
      promises kept. I don't want to liquidate the practice of promises. Right.
0888
      it sounds like justifying
0889
0890
      a means by an ends
0891
      it seems like an instance of consequentialist reasoning you're saying.
0892
      and what's your name? Tim.
      well Tim
0893
0894
      John Stuart Mill agreed with you
0895
      he made this criticism
      of Kant
0896
      he said if
0897
      I universalize the maximum and find
0898
      that the whole practice of promise keeping would be destroyed if universalized
0899
0900
      I must be appealing
0901
      somehow to consequences
0902
      if that's the reason
      not to tell a false promise
0903
0904
0905
      John Stuart Mill agreed with that criticism against Kant
0906
      but John Stuart Mill was wrong
0907
      you're in good company though
0908
      you're in good company, Tim
0909
      Kant is often read
0910
      as Tim
0911
      just read him
0912
      as appealing to consequences
0913
      the world would be worse off
0914
      if everybody lied because then nobody could rely on anybody else's word
0915
      therefore you shouldn't lie
0916
      that's not what Kant is saying exactly
0917
      although it's easy
0918
      to interpret him as saying that
0919
      I think what he's saying
0920
      is that this is the test
0921
      this is the test of whether the maxim
0922
      corresponds with the categorical imperative
```

```
it isn't exactly the reason
0923
      it's not the reason
0924
     the reason you should universalize
0925
      to test your maxim
0926
0927
      is to see whether
0928
      you are privileging
      your particular needs and desires
0929
0930
      over everybody else's
0931
      it's a way of pointing to this feature to this
0932
      this feature to this demand of the categorical imperative
0933
      that the reasons for your actions shouldn't
0934
      depend
0935
      or their justification
0936
      on your interests, your needs, your special circumstances
0937
      being more important
0938
      than somebody else's
0939
      that I think is the moral intuition lying behind the universalization
0940
      test
0941
      so let me spell out the second
      Kant's second version of the categorical imperative
0942
0943
      perhaps
0944
      in a way that's more intuitively accessible
      than the formula of universal law
0945
      it's the formula
0946
0947
      of humanity
0948
      as an end
0949
      Kant introduces
0950
      the second version of the categorical imperative
0951
      with the following line of argument
0952
      we can't base the categorical imperative
0953
      on any particular interests, purposes, or ends
0954
      because then it would be
0955
      only relative to the person whose ends they were
0956
      but suppose
0957
      there was something
0958
     whose existence
0959
      has in itself
```

```
and absolute value
0960
      an end in itself
0961
     then in it
0962
      and in it alone
0963
      would there be the ground of a possible a categorical imperative
0964
      well, what is there
0965
      that we can think of as having it's end in itself
0966
      Kant's answer is this
0967
0968
      I say that man
0969
      and in general every rational being
0970
      exists as an end in himself
0971
      not nearly as a means for arbitrary use
0972
      by this or that will
0973
      and here Kant distinguishes
0974
      between persons on the one hand
0975
      and things
0976
      on the other
      rational beings are persons
0977
0978
      the don't just have a relative value
0979
      for us
      but if anything has they have an absolute value
0980
0981
      an intrinsic value
0982
      that is
0983
      rational beings have dignity
0984
      they're worthy of reverence and respect
0985
      this line of reasoning
0986
      leads Kant to the second formulation of the categorical imperative which is this
0987
      act in such a way
0988
      that you always treated humanity
0989
      whether in your own person
0990
      or in the person of any other
0991
      never simply as a means
0992
      but always
0993
      at the same time
0994
      as an end
0995
      so that's the formula of humanity
0996
      as an end
```

```
0997
     the idea that human beings as rational beings
0998
      are ends in themselves
      not open to use
0999
1000
      merely as a means
      when I make a false promise to you
1001
1002
      I mean using you as a means
1003
      to my ends
1004
      to my desire for the hundred dollars
1005
      and so I'm failing to respect
1006
      you, I'm failing to respect your dignity
1007
      I'm manipulating you
1008
      now consider the example
1009
      of the duty of against
1010
      suicide
1011
      murder
      and suicide
1012
      are at odds with the categorical imperative why?
1013
      if I murdered someone
1014
      I'm taking their life for some
1015
      purpose. either because
1016
      I'm a hired killer
1017
1018
      or I'm in the throws of some great anger or passion
1019
      well I have some interest or purpose
1020
      that is particular
1021
      for the sake of which I'm using them
1022
      as a means
1023
      murder violates
1024
      the categorical imperative
1025
      for Kant, morally speaking
1026
      suicide is on a par with murder
1027
      it's on a par with murder because what we violate
1028
      when we take a life
1029
      when we take someone's life our's or somebody else's
1030
     we use that person
1031
     we use a rational being
     we use humanity as a means
1032
1033
      and so we fail to respect humanity
```

```
1034
     as an end
      and that capacity for reasons
1035
1036
     that humanity
     that commands respect
1037
     that is to ground of dignity
1038
      that humanity
1039
1040
      that capacity for a reason
      resides undifferentiated
1041
1042
      in all of us
1043
      and so I violate that dignity
      in my own person if I commit suicide
1044
      and in murder
1045
      if I take somebody else's life from a moral point of view
1046
1047
      they're the same
1048
      and the reason they're the same
      has to do
1049
1050
      with the universal character
      and ground
1051
      of the moral law
1052
1053
      the reason that we have to respect
      the dignity of other people
1054
1055
      has not to do
1056
      with anything
1057
      in particular about them
1058
      and so respect, Kantian respect is unlike love in this way
1059
      it's unlike sympathy
1060
      it's unlike solidarity or fellow feeling for altruism
1061
      because love and those other particular virtues are reasons for caring about other people
1062
      have to do with who they are in particular
1063
      but respect for Kant
1064
      respect
1065
      is respect for
1066
      humanity which is universal
1067
      for a rational capacity which is universal
1068
      and that's why violating it
1069
      in my own case
1070
      is as objectionable
```

```
1071
      as violating it
      in the case of any other
1072
      questions or rejections?
1073
      I guess I'm somewhat worried about
1074
1075
      Kant's
1076
      statement that you cannot use a person as a means because every person is an end
      in and of themselves
1077
      because it seems that
1078
1079
      that everyday in order to get something accomplished for that day
1080
      I must use myself as a means to some end
1081
      and I must use the people around me as a means to some ends as well
      for instance suppose
1082
1083
      that
1084
      I want to do well in a class and I have to write a paper
1085
      I have to use myself as a means to write the paper
1086
      suppose I want to buy something, food.
      I must go to the store, use the person
1087
1088
      working behind the counters as a means for me to purchase my food.
      You're right, that's true
1089
      what's your name? Patrick
1090
1091
      Patrick you're not doing anything wrong
1092
      you're not violating the categorical imperative
1093
      when you use other people as a means
1094
      that's not objectionable provided
1095
      when we deal with other people for the sake of advancing our projects and purposes and
1096
      interests,
1097
      which we all do,
1098
      provided
1099
      we treat them
1100
      in a way
1101
      that is consistent
1102
      with respect for their
1103
      dignity
1104
      and what it means to respect them
1105
      is given by
      the categorical imperative.
1106
1107
      are you persuaded?
```

1108	do you think that Kant has given
1109	a compelling account a persuasive account
1110	of the supreme principle of morality?
1111	re-read the groundwork
1112	and we'll try to answer that question next time.
1113	don't miss the chance to interact online with other viewers of Justice
1114	join the conversation, take a pop quiz
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