

0001 today we turn back to Kant, but before we do  
0002 remember this is the week  
0003 by the end of which  
0004 all of you  
0005 will basically get Kant, figure out what he's up to  
0006 you're laughing  
0007 no, it will happen  
0008 Kant's groundwork  
0009 is about two big questions,  
0010 first what is the supreme principle of morality  
0011 second  
0012 how is freedom  
0013 possible?  
0014 two big questions  
0015 now, one way  
0016 of making your way through  
0017 this dense philosophical book  
0018 is to bear in mind  
0019 a set of opposition or contrasts or dualisms  
0020 that are related.  
0021 today I'd like to talk about them  
0022 today we're going to answer the question, what according to Kant,  
0023 is the supreme principle of morality  
0024 and in answering that question in working our way up to Kant's answer to that question,  
0025 it will help to bear in mind  
0026 three contrasts or dualisms  
0027 that Kant sets out  
0028 the first you remember  
0029 had to do  
0030 with the motive  
0031 according to which we act  
0032 and according to Kant,  
0033 only one kind of motive  
0034 is consistent with morality  
0035 the motive of duty

0036 doing the right thing for the right reason  
0037 what other kinds of motives are there  
0038 Kant sums them up  
0039 in the category inclination  
0040 every time  
0041 the motive  
0042 for what we do  
0043 is to  
0044 satisfy a desire  
0045 or a preference that we may have, to pursue some interest  
0046 we're acting out of inclination  
0047 now let me pause to see if  
0048 if in thinking about  
0049 the question of the motive of duty of good will  
0050 see if any of you has a question  
0051 about that much of Kant's claim.  
0052 or is everybody happy with this distinction  
0053 what do you think? go ahead.  
0054 when you make that distinction between duty and inclination is there ever any moral action ever?  
0055 I mean you could always kind of probably find some kind of  
0056 some selfish motive, can't you?  
0057 maybe very often people do have self-interested motives  
0058 when they act  
0059 Kant wouldn't dispute that  
0060 but what Kant is saying  
0061 is  
0062 that in so far as we act  
0063 morally that is in so far as our actions have moral worth  
0064 what confers moral worth  
0065 is precisely  
0066 our capacity to rise above self-interest and prudence and inclination and  
0067 to act out of duty  
0068 some years ago I read about  
0069 a spelling bee  
0070 and  
0071 there was a young man  
0072 who was declared the winner

0073 of the spelling bee

0074 a kid named Andrew, thirteen years old

0075 the winning word, the word that he was able to spell

0076 was echolalia

0077 does anyone know what echolalia is?

0078 it's not some type of flower no,

0079 it is the tendency to repeat as an echo, to repeat what you've heard

0080 anyhow, he misspelled it actually

0081 but the judges misheard him they thought it spelled it correctly and awarded him the

0082 championship of the national

0083 spelling bee

0084 and

0085 he

0086 went to the judges

0087 afterward

0088 and said

0089 actually

0090 I misspelled it

0091 I don't deserve the prize

0092 and he was regarded as a moral hero

0093 and he was

0094 written up in the new York times

0095 misspeller

0096 is the spelling bee hero

0097 there's Andrew

0098 with is proud mother

0099 and but when he was interviewed afterwards

0100 listen to this, when he was interviewed afterwards

0101 he said quote

0102 the judges said I had a lot of integrity

0103 but then he added

0104 that part of his motive was quote

0105 I didn't want to feel like a slime

0106 all right what would Kant say?

0107 I guess it would depend on whether or not

0108 that was a marginal reason or the predominant reason in whether not and why he decided

0109 to confess that he didn't actually spell the word correctly

0110 good and what's your name. Vasco.

0111 that's very interesting is there anyone else

0112 who has a view about this?

0113 does this show that Kant's

0114 principle is too stringent too demanding

0115 what would Kant say

0116 about this? yes

0117 I think that Kant actually says that

0118 it is the pure motivation that comes out of duty that gives the action moral worth, so it's like

0119 for example in this case

0120 he might have more than one motive, he might have a motive of not feeling like a slime

0121 and he might have to move of

0122 doing the right thing

0123 in and of itself out of duty and so while there's more than one motivation going on there

0124 does not mean that action is devoid of moral worth just because he has one other motive

0125 so because the motive which involves duty is what gives it moral worth. goo, and what's your name?  
Judith

0126 well Judith I think that your account actually is true to Kant

0127 it's fine to have sentiments and feelings

0128 that support doing the right thing

0129 provided

0130 they don't provide

0131 the reason for acting

0132 so I think Judith has actually a pretty good defense of Kant

0133 on this question

0134 of the motive of duty, thank you

0135 now

0136 let's go back to the

0137 three contrasts

0138 it's clear at least what Kant means when he says

0139 that

0140 for an action to have moral worth it must be done for the sake of duty

0141 not out of inclination

0142 but as we began to see last time

0143 there's a connection

0144 between

0145 Kant's stringent notion of morality

0146 and especially demanding understanding  
0147 of freedom  
0148 and that leads us to the second contrast  
0149 the link between  
0150 morality  
0151 and freedom  
0152 a second contrast describes  
0153 two different  
0154 ways that my will can be determined  
0155 autonomously  
0156 and heteronomously  
0157 according to Kant  
0158 I'm only free  
0159 when my will is determined  
0160 autonomously  
0161 which means what?  
0162 according to a law that I give myself  
0163 we must be capable, if we're capable of freedom as autonomously, we must be capable of acting  
0164 accordingly 0:37:26.0 laws that's given or imposed on us  
0165 but according to a law we give ourselves  
0166 but where could such a law  
0167 come from?  
0168 a law that we give ourselves?  
0169 reason, if reason  
0170 determines my will  
0171 then  
0172 the real becomes to power to choose  
0173 independent  
0174 of the dictates  
0175 of nature or inclination  
0176 or circumstance  
0177 so  
0178 connected with Kant's  
0179 demanding notions of morality and freedom  
0180 is especially demanding notion  
0181 of reason  
0182 well how can reason

0183 determine the  
0184 will  
0185 there are two ways and this leads to the third contracts  
0186 Kant says  
0187 there are two different commands of reason  
0188 in a command of reason  
0189 Kant calls an imperative  
0190 an imperative is simply an ought  
0191 one kind of imperative, perhaps the most familiar kind, is a hypothetical imperative.  
0192 hypothetical imperatives  
0193 use instrumental reason  
0194 if you  
0195 want x then do y  
0196 it's means ends reason.  
0197 if you want a good business reputation  
0198 then  
0199 don't shortchange your customers  
0200 word may get out. that's  
0201 a hypothetical imperative.  
0202 if the action would be good  
0203 solely as a means to something else Kant writes, the imperative is hypothetical  
0204 if the action is represented as good in itself  
0205 and therefore as necessary  
0206 for a will which of itself accords with reason  
0207 then the imperative  
0208 categorical.  
0209 that's the difference  
0210 between  
0211 a categorical imperative and a hypothetical one  
0212 a categorical imperative commands  
0213 categorically  
0214 which just means without reference to or dependents on  
0215 any further purpose  
0216 and so you see the connection  
0217 among these three parallel  
0218 contrasts  
0219 to be free in the sense of autonomous

0220 requires  
0221 that I act  
0222 not out of a hypothetical  
0223 imperative  
0224 but out of the categorical  
0225 imperative  
0226 so you see by these three contrasts Kant  
0227 reasons his way  
0228 brings us up to you  
0229 he's derivation  
0230 of the categorical imperative  
0231 well this leaves us  
0232 one big question  
0233 what is the categorical imperative?  
0234 what is the supreme principle of morality  
0235 what does it command of us?  
0236 Kant gives three versions  
0237 three formulations  
0238 of the categorical imperative.  
0239 I want to mention two  
0240 and then see what you think of them.  
0241 the first  
0242 version the first formula  
0243 he calls the formula  
0244 of the universal law  
0245 act only on that maxim  
0246 whereby you can at the same time will that it should become  
0247 a universal  
0248 law and by maxim  
0249 what does Kant mean?  
0250 he means  
0251 a rule that explains  
0252 the reason for what you're doing  
0253 a principle  
0254 for example  
0255 promise keeping  
0256 suppose I need money, I hundred dollars

0257 desperately

0258 and I know I can't pay it back anytime soon

0259 I come to you

0260 and make you a promise, a false promise, one I know I can't keep

0261 please give me a hundred dollars today

0262 lend me the money I will repay you next week

0263 is that consistent

0264 with the categorical imperative, that false promise Kant says no

0265 and the test

0266 the way we can

0267 determine

0268 that the false promise is at odds with categorical

0269 imperative is

0270 try to universalize it.

0271 universalize the maxim upon which you're about to act

0272 if everybody made false promises when they needed money

0273 then nobody would believe those promises there would be no such thing

0274 as a promise

0275 and so there would be a contradiction

0276 the maxim universalized would undermine itself

0277 that's the test

0278 that's how we can know

0279 that the false promise is wrong

0280 well what about

0281 the formula of the universal law

0282 you find it persuasive?

0283 what do you think?

0284 I have a question about the difference between categoricalism and a hypothesis

0285 that

0286 if you're going to act.. Between categorical in hypothetical

0287 imperatives? right.

0288 if you're going to act

0289 with a categorical imperative

0290 so that the maxim doesn't undermine itself

0291 it sounds like I am going to do X because I want y

0292 I'm going to

0293 not lie indire need



0294 because I want the world to function in such a way that  
0295 promises kept. I don't want to liquidate the practice of promises. Right.  
0296 it sounds like justifying  
0297 a means by an ends  
0298 it seems like an instance of consequentialist reasoning you're saying.  
0299 and what's your name? Tim.  
0300 well Tim  
0301 John Stuart Mill agreed with you  
0302 he made this criticism  
0303 of Kant  
0304 he said if  
0305 I universalize the maximum and find  
0306 that the whole practice of promise keeping would be destroyed if universalized  
0307 I must be appealing  
0308 somehow to consequences  
0309 if that's the reason  
0310 not to tell a false promise  
0311 so  
0312 John Stuart Mill agreed with that criticism against Kant  
0313 but John Stuart Mill was wrong  
0314 you're in good company though  
0315 you're in good company, Tim  
0316 Kant is often read  
0317 as Tim  
0318 just read him  
0319 as appealing to consequences  
0320 the world would be worse off  
0321 if everybody lied because then nobody could rely on anybody else's word  
0322 therefore you shouldn't lie  
0323 that's not what Kant is saying exactly  
0324 although it's easy  
0325 to interpret him as saying that  
0326 I think what he's saying  
0327 is that this is the test  
0328 this is the test of whether the maxim  
0329 corresponds with the categorical imperative  
0330 it isn't exactly the reason

0331 it's not the reason  
0332 the reason you should universalize  
0333 to test your maxim  
0334 is to see whether  
0335 you are privileging  
0336 your particular needs and desires  
0337 over everybody else's  
0338 it's a way of pointing to this feature to this  
0339 this feature to this demand of the categorical imperative  
0340 that the reasons for your actions shouldn't  
0341 depend  
0342 on their justification  
0343 on your interests, your needs, your special circumstances  
0344 being more important  
0345 than somebody else's  
0346 that I think is the moral intuition lying behind the universalization  
0347 test  
0348 so let me spell out the second  
0349 Kant's second version of the categorical imperative  
0350 perhaps  
0351 in a way that's more intuitively accessible  
0352 than the formula of universal law  
0353 it's the formula  
0354 of humanity  
0355 as an end  
0356 Kant introduces  
0357 the second version of the categorical imperative  
0358 with the following line of argument  
0359 we can't base the categorical imperative  
0360 on any particular interests, purposes, or ends  
0361 because then it would be  
0362 only relative to the person whose ends they were  
0363 but suppose  
0364 there was something  
0365 whose existence  
0366 has in itself  
0367 and absolute value

0368 an end in itself  
0369 then in it  
0370 and in it alone  
0371 would there be the ground of a possible a categorical imperative  
0372 well, what is there  
0373 that we can think of as having it's end in itself  
0374 Kant's answer is this  
0375 I say that man  
0376 and in general every rational being  
0377 exists as an end in himself  
0378 not nearly as a means for arbitrary use  
0379 by this or that will  
0380 and here Kant distinguishes  
0381 between persons on the one hand  
0382 and things  
0383 on the other  
0384 rational beings are persons  
0385 the don't just have a relative value  
0386 for us  
0387 but if anything has they have an absolute value  
0388 an intrinsic value  
0389 that is  
0390 rational beings have dignity  
0391 they're worthy of reverence and respect  
0392 this line of reasoning  
0393 leads Kant to the second formulation of the categorical imperative which is this  
0394 act in such a way  
0395 that you always treated humanity  
0396 whether in your own person  
0397 or in the person of any other  
0398 never simply as a means  
0399 but always  
0400 at the same time  
0401 as an end  
0402 so that's the formula of humanity  
0403 as an end  
0404 the idea that human beings as rational beings

0405 are ends in themselves  
0406 not open to use  
0407 merely as a means  
0408 when I make a false promise to you  
0409 I mean using you as a means  
0410 to my ends  
0411 to my desire for the hundred dollars  
0412 and so I'm failing to respect  
0413 you, I'm failing to respect your dignity  
0414 I'm manipulating you  
0415 now consider the example  
0416 of the duty of against  
0417 suicide  
0418 murder  
0419 and suicide  
0420 are at odds with the categorical imperative why?  
0421 if I murdered someone  
0422 I'm taking their life for some  
0423 purpose. either because  
0424 I'm a hired killer  
0425 or I'm in the throws of some great anger or passion  
0426 well I have some interest or purpose  
0427 that is particular  
0428 for the sake of which I'm using them  
0429 as a means  
0430 murder violates  
0431 the categorical imperative  
0432 for Kant, morally speaking  
0433 suicide is on a par with murder  
0434 it's on a par with murder because what we violate  
0435 when we take a life  
0436 when we take someone's life our's or somebody else's  
0437 we use that person  
0438 we use a rational being  
0439 we use humanity as a means  
0440 and so we fail to respect humanity  
0441 as an end

0442 and that capacity for reasons  
0443 that humanity  
0444 that commands respect  
0445 that is to ground of dignity  
0446 that humanity  
0447 that capacity for a reason  
0448 resides undifferentiated  
0449 in all of us  
0450 and so I violate that dignity  
0451 in my own person if I commit suicide  
0452 and in murder  
0453 if I take somebody else's life from a moral point of view  
0454 they're the same  
0455 and the reason they're the same  
0456 has to do  
0457 with the universal character  
0458 and ground  
0459 of the moral law  
0460 the reason that we have to respect  
0461 the dignity of other people  
0462 has not to do  
0463 with anything  
0464 in particular about them  
0465 and so respect, Kantian respect is unlike love in this way  
0466 it's unlike sympathy  
0467 it's unlike solidarity or fellow feeling for altruism  
0468 because love and those other particular virtues are reasons for caring about other people  
0469 have to do with who they are in particular  
0470 but respect for Kant  
0471 respect  
0472 is respect for  
0473 humanity which is universal  
0474 for a rational capacity which is universal  
0475 and that's why violating it  
0476 in my own case  
0477 is as objectionable  
0478 as violating it

0479 in the case of any other  
0480 questions or rejections?  
0481 I guess I'm somewhat worried about  
0482 Kant's  
0483 statement that you cannot use a person as a means because every person is an end  
0484 in and of themselves  
0485 because it seems that  
0486 that everyday in order to get something accomplished for that day  
0487 I must use myself as a means to some end  
0488 and I must use the people around me as a means to some ends as well  
0489 for instance suppose  
0490 that  
0491 I want to do well in a class and I have to write a paper  
0492 I have to use myself as a means to write the paper  
0493 suppose I want to buy something, food.  
0494 I must go to the store, use the person  
0495 working behind the counters as a means for me to purchase my food.  
0496 You're right, that's true  
0497 what's your name? Patrick  
0498 Patrick you're not doing anything wrong  
0499 you're not violating the categorical imperative  
0500 when you use other people as a means  
0501 that's not objectionable provided  
0502 when we deal with other people for the sake of advancing our projects and purposes and  
0503 interests,  
0504 which we all do,  
0505 provided  
0506 we treat them  
0507 in a way  
0508 that is consistent  
0509 with respect for their  
0510 dignity  
0511 and what it means to respect them  
0512 is given by  
0513 the categorical imperative.  
0514 are you persuaded?  
0515 do you think that Kant has given

0516 | a compelling account a persuasive account  
0517 | of the supreme principle of morality?  
0518 | re-read the groundwork  
0519 | and we'll try to answer that question next time.

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