

Immanuel Kant

- Rejects utilitarianism
 - All human beings have dignity that commands others' respect
 - Doesn't stem from the idea that we own ourselves, but from the idea that we are all rational (can reason) and autonomous (can choose freely) beings
 - Admits that utilitarianism is half-right
 - People avoid pain and like pleasure
 - But, he denies that pain and pleasure are the sovereign masters of humans
- Defines "freedom":
 - When people avoid pain and seek pleasure, they aren't acting freely (but as a slave of those appetites)
 - Freedom is the opposite of necessity
 - To act freely is to act by a law given to myself
 - Opposite: heteronomy - according to desire not chosen by self
 - Acting autonomously is choosing the end, not only the means
- Morality of an action depends on motive (do right thing for right reason)
 - Only actions done for the sake of duty (not inclination) are moral
- There is only one Supreme Principle of Morality
 - All humans are capable of being rational, so all will reach the same ultimate moral law
 - So when autonomous and rational beings choose an end, it will be in compliance with the one moral law
- Kant's 3 Contrasts:
 - Motives (Morality): duty vs inclination
 - Should act out of duty for our actions to be moral
 - Determination of Will (Freedom): autonomously vs heteronomously
 - If reason underlies the will, choices can be made independently of the law of nature
 - Imperatives (Reason): hypothetical (if you want these ends, use these means) vs categorical (reason to do something is good in and of themselves)
 - To be autonomous, you must have a categorical imperative
- What is the Supreme Principle of Morality (i.e. the categorical imperative)?
 - Formula of Universal Law
 - Only act on principles which could be universalized
 - Formula of Humanity as an End
 - Always treat humanity as an end
 - Never only as a means to one's own ends (this would fail to respect another's dignity and would be an example of manipulation)