

Kantianism

proponent → Immanuel Kant.

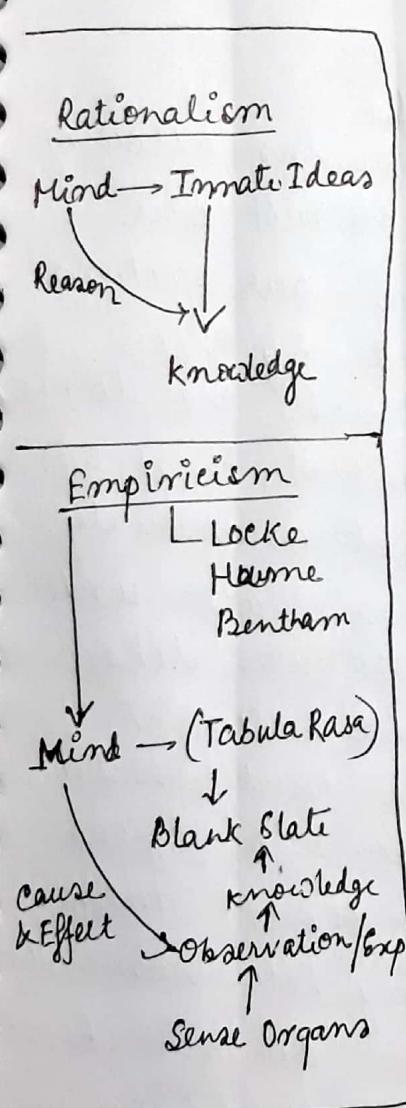
"The critique of Pure Reason"

"The groundwork"

"The critique of Practical Reason"

"The critique of judgement"

Books written by Kant



→ According to Kant, the only difference between the humans & Non-humans is our capacity / ability to reason.

→ Rationality. He also believed that there are some pri supreme principles of morality which are so fundamental that they hold for the whole of humanity at all the times. Our ratio It is our rationality that allows us to both identify as well as to follow these principles of morality

Kantian Ethics can be understood in terms of 3 basic concepts →

1) Freedom : Autonomy VS Heteronomy
(Free will vs determinism)

An act can be moral only & only when it is freely chosen by us.

• morality does not apply to the actions under Law of Nature

• Socio-economic factor such as Poverty inhibits "free choice"

So, actions out of socio-economic compulsions can't be judged morality morally.

• Biological Needs also inhibits free choice.

Determinism



- Divine
- Environmental
- Unconscious
- Evolutionary
- Biological
- Genetic

But Kantian idea of freedom is a very complex & demanding idea.

In terms of freedom, there can be two types of human actions →

a) Heteronomy

It means allowing the nature to control our actions. When our actions are determined by those factors on which we do not have any control then we are acting heteronomously.

Thus, when we act under a law of Nature like gravity or under some socio-economic condition like poverty or some biological condition like thirst, then we are acting heteronomously.

In these, we do not choose the "End" of our action.

A heteronomous act has no "Moral Value".

(b)

Autonomy

Kant defines freedom as Autonomy. Reason allows us to go beyond the laws of Nature & makes a law for our own action. This uniquely human ability to make a law for our own action which may even surpass the laws of Nature is called autonomy. In this we choose the "end of our actions" as well. Only an autonomous act can have an moral value.

What is Enlightenment?

Coming out of Infancy
Self Imposed
NOT because of lack of Reason but it is because of lack of courage to use Reason
To seek other's guidance to make moral decisions

The motto of Enlightenment
"Sapere Aude"

"Dare to think"

"Be your own lamp"
by Buddha

(a) Morality

Duty v/s Inclination (Amoral)

According to Kant, consequences do not determine morality.

Consequence

- uncertain
- No control
- unfair (unequal opportunity)
- Reduce the value of humanity.

According to Kant, what determines ethics is the motive with which an action is performed. So it

is not enough to do the right thing but the right thing must also be done with the "Right Motive" as well. It is the motive that gives the true moral value to an action.

Motive

- certain
- control
- Fair (Equal opportunity to all)
- Primacy to Humanity

There are two motives for Human Actions.

a) Inclination

Inclination means allowing the nature to become our motivation. We act from the motive of inclination when we do something which that we naturally want to do. Inclinations are our natural habits. Each animal has its own natural inclination. Some of the common human inclinations are — Preferences, Needs, wants, desires, appetites, love, sympathy, compassions, other emotions etc.

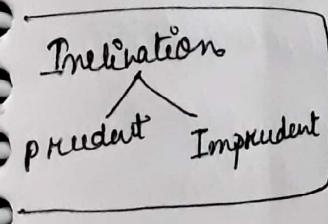
An action done with the motive of Inclination does not have a moral value.

(b) Duty

Reason gives us the ability to go beyond our inclinations, step aside & reflect. When our own rationality gives us the motivation to act then we do something just for the simple reason that it is the right thing to do. Kant called this acting from the motive of Duty. Thus, we act from Duty when we do something just because it is the right thing to do rather than because we like it or it is beneficial for us etc. It is this special motive that gives the true moral value to our actions.

It is only when we act from the motive of Duty that we enter unto that exalted domain of Decision Making where our action can be morally right.

e.g. D) Calculating Shopkeeper



A → Cost benefit (Inclination) → prudent shopkeeper analysis

B → Duty → moral

(Doing the right thing because it is right in itself, is moral)

ii) Moral Misanthrope

Compassionate action v/s duty guided action

↓
moral action

* Inclination
contaminates
our minds

Not moral
it is an
uninformed action
amoral act

3] Reason :- Categorical Imperative VS Hypothetical Imperative (Principles)

Reason can take 2 forms :-

a) Instrumental Reason:

In this Reason works as an instrument to achieve an end which is not determined by reason.

The command given by Instrumental Reason is called Hypothetical Imperative.

It is in the form,

"If we

"If you want 'X', then do 'Y'."

"If" is a conditional imperative.

④ Hypothetical Imperative can't be the imperative of Ethics.

(b) Pure Practical Reason:

In this Reason can work independently of any empirical fact. The command given by pure reason is called "Categorical Imperative". It is in the form "Do Y"

It is an absolute, unconditional, doubtless, exceptionless, categorical & universal command. Only a categorical Imperative can be the imperative of Ethics. Only a categorical imperative can be the imperative

Thus, only that action can be moral which can be is commanded by categorical Imperative, autonomously chosen by us & is done with the motive of Duty.