

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 or 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.
