

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
0030 I want to acknowledge even before we start
0031 that Kant is a difficult thinker
0032 but it's important to try to figure out
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

0036 number one, and
0037 it's also
0038 it gives us an account
0039 one of the most powerful accounts we have
0040 of what freedom really is
0041 so
0042 let me start today.
0043 Kant rejects utilitarianism
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
0055 we're all rational beings which simply means
0056 that we are beings who are capable
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

0073 what he does deny
0074 is Bentham's claim that
0075 pain in pleasure
0076 are our sovereign masters
0077 he thinks that's wrong.
0078 Kant thinks
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
0090 that's one way of thinking about freedom.
0091 but this isn't Kant's
0092 idea of freedom
0093 Kant has a more stringent
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
0108 and impulses
0109 I didn't choose this particular hunger or that particular appetite,

0110 and so when I act to satisfy it
0111 I'm just acting according to natural
0112 necessity
0113 and for Kant,
0114 freedom is the opposite
0115 of necessity
0116 there was an advertising slogan
0117 for the
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
0130 you might think that you're choosing freely sprite versus Pepsi
0131 but you're actually
0132 obeying
0133 something, a thirst, or maybe a desire manufactured or massaged by advertising
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
0145 of acting, how can my will be determined if not by
0146 the prompting sub nature or my hunger or my appetite, or my desires?

0147 Kant's answer:
0148 to act freely
0149 is to act
0150 autonomously
0151 and to act autonomously
0152 is to act according to a law that I give myself
0153 not according
0154 to the physical laws of nature
0155 or to the laws of cause and effect
0156 which include my desire,
0157 to eat or to drink
0158 or to choose this
0159 food in a restaurant over that
0160 now what is the opposite
0161 what is the opposite
0162 of autonomy
0163 for Kant he invest a special term
0164 to describe
0165 the opposite of autonomy
0166 heteronomy
0167 is the opposite of autonomy
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
0182 laws of cause and effect for example
0183 suppose you drop a billiard ball

0184 it falls to the ground
0185 we wouldn't say the billiard ball is acting freely
0186 why not?
0187 it's acting according to the law of nature
0188 according to the laws
0189 of cause and effect
0190 the law of gravity
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
0200 it's to choose the end itself for its own sake
0201 and that's something
0202 that human beings can do
0203 and that billiard balls can't
0204 insofar as we act on
0205 inclination or pursue pleasure
0206 we act 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
0219 as an end in itself
0220 when we act autonomously

0221 we cease to be instruments to purposes
0222 given outside us
0223 we become
0224 what we can come to think of ourselves
0225 as ends in ourselves.
0226 this capacity to act freely
0227 Kant tells us
0228 is what gives human life its special
0229 dignity.
0230 respecting human dignity
0231 means regarding persons
0232 not just as means
0233 but also as ends in them
0234 and this is why
0235 it's wrong to use people
0236 for the sake of other people's
0237 well being or happiness
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
0256 it would still be using people even where the calculus works out
0257 for the best in the long run, it would still using people

0258 as means
0259 rather than
0260 respecting them as ends in themselves.
0261 so that's Kant's idea of freedom as autonomy
0262 and you can begin to see how it's connected
0263 to his idea of morality
0264 but we still have to answer one more question
0265 what gives an act it's moral worth
0266 in the first place
0267 if it can't be directed
0268 at utility or satisfying wants or desires,
0269 what do you think gives an action it's moral worth?
0270 this leads us from Kant's
0271 demanding idea of freedom
0272 to his demanding idea
0273 of morality.
0274 What does Kant say?
0275 what makes an action
0276 morally worthy
0277 consists not in the consequences or in the results that flow from it
0278 what makes an action morally worthy has to do with
0279 the motive
0280 with the quality of the will
0281 with the intention
0282 for which the act is done
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,
0293 it's good in itself
0294 even if by its utmost effort to goodwill accomplishes nothing

0295 it would still shine like a jewel for its own sake
0296 as something which has its full value in itself
0297 and so for any action
0298 to be morally good
0299 it's not enough that it should
0300 conform
0301 to the moral law
0302 it must also be done for the sake of the moral law.
0303 the idea is
0304 that the motive confers
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
0310 is the motive of duty
0311 well what's the opposite
0312 of doing something out of a sense of duty because it's right,
0313 well for Kant the opposite
0314 would be all of those motives having to do with our inclinations
0315 and inclinations
0316 refer to all of our
0317 desires, all of our contingently given
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
0330 he wants to bring out the intuition
0331 and make plausible the idea

0332 that what confers moral worth on an action is that it be done because it's right
0333 he says suppose there's a shopkeeper
0334 and an inexperienced customer comes in
0335 the shopkeeper knows
0336 that he could give the customer the wrong change could shortchange the customer
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
0341 my reputation would be damaged and I would lose business
0342 so I won't shortchange this customer
0343 the shop keeper
0344 does nothing wrong he gives a correct change
0345 but does this action have moral worth?
0346 Kant says no.
0347 it doesn't have moral worth
0348 because the shopkeeper only did the right thing
0349 for the wrong reason
0350 out of self-interest
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
0366 having an absolutely miserable life
0367 nonetheless
0368 recognizes the duty to preserve one's self

0369 and so
0370 does not commit suicide.
0371 the force of the example
0372 is to bring out
0373 the motive that matters
0374 and the motive that matters for morality is doing the right thing
0375 for the sake of duty.
0376 let me just
0377 give you
0378 a couple of other examples
0379 the better business bureau
0380 what's their slogan, the slogan of
0381 the better business bureau?
0382 honesty is the best policy
0383 it's also the most profitable. this is the better business bureaus
0384 full page ad in
0385 the new York times
0386 honesty
0387 it's as important as any other asset
0388 because a business the deals in truth, openness and fair value
0389 cannot help
0390 but do well
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

0406 and they created a program with local merchants
0407 that if you signed the honor pledge not to cheat
0408 you would get discounts often to twenty five percent of local shops
0409 now what would you think of someone motivated
0410 to uphold an honor code
0411 with all the discounts
0412 it's the same as
0413 Kant's shopkeeper
0414 the point is
0415 what matters is the quality of the will the character of the motive
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
0421 and when I resist
0422 as my motive for acting inclinations or self-interest
0423 even sympathy and altruism,
0424 only then
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
0441 they can be challenges
0442 if you want to challenge this idea

0443 that only

0444 the motive of duty confers moral worth on the action action

0445 what do you think

0446 I actually have two questions of clarification

0447 the first is there seems to be an aspect of this that makes it sort of

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

0454 if he

0455 decides that he wants to give the person of money is to do the right thing

0456 and he decides that's his motive to do so

0457 because he was the moral then isn't that sort of defeating

0458 trying to

0459 isn't that sort of defeating the purity of his action if

0460 morality is determined by his motive

0461 is his motive is to act morally

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

0478 it's a subtle point, it's a good question

0479 Kant does acknowledge

0480 you're pressing Kant on an important
0481 point here,
0482 Kant does say there has to be some
0483 incentive
0484 to obey the moral law
0485 it can't be a self-interested incentive
0486 that would defeat it
0487 by definition
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
0492 reverence for the moral law
0493 and so I'm going to act, so I'm going to do the right thing
0494 then I think he's there, he's there as far as Kant's
0495 concerned
0496 because he's formed his motive
0497 his will
0498 is conforming to
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
0515 to a moral law out of duty
0516 and if it's also

0517 to act freely in the sense of autonomously
0518 it must mean
0519 that I'm acting according to a law that I give myself that's what it means to act autonomously
0520 Ahmady is right about that
0521 but that does raise a really interesting question
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
0533 from Kant's point of view are there in this room
0534 are there a thousands or is there one
0535 he thinks there's one
0536 which in a way does go back to this question all right what is the moral law, what does it
0537 tell us
0538 so what guarantees, it sounds like it
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
0552 idiosyncratic
0553 the reason we need to respect

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
0556 which exist
0557 undifferentiated
0558 in all of us
0559 that makes us worthy of dignity, all of us
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
0567 we give ourselves exercising our reason
0568 but it's the reason we share with everyone
0569 as rational beings
0570 not the particular reason we have given our upbringing, our particular values our
0571 particular interests
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

0591 we use humanity as a means
0592 and so we fail to respect humanity
0593 as an end
0594 today we turn back to Kant, but before we do
0595 remember this is the week
0596 by the end of which
0597 all of you
0598 will basically get Kant, figure out what he's up to
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
0605 how is freedom
0606 possible?
0607 two big questions
0608 now, one way
0609 of making your way through
0610 this dense philosophical book
0611 is to bear in mind
0612 a set of opposition or contrasts or dualisms
0613 that are related.
0614 today I'd like to talk about them
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
0630 what other kinds of motives are there
0631 Kant sums them up
0632 in the category inclination
0633 every time
0634 the motive
0635 for what we do
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
0642 the question of the motive of duty of good will
0643 see if any of you has a question
0644 about that much of Kant's claim.
0645 or is everybody happy with this distinction
0646 what do you think? go ahead.
0647 when you make that distinction between duty and inclination is there ever any moral action ever?
0648 I mean you could always kind of probably find some kind of
0649 some selfish motive, can't you?
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 is
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

0665 who was declared the winner
0666 of the spelling bee
0667 a kid named Andrew, thirteen years old
0668 the winning word, the word that he was able to spell
0669 was echolalia
0670 does anyone know what echolalia is?
0671 it's not some type of flower no,
0672 it is the tendency to repeat as an echo, to repeat what you've heard
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
0679 went to the judges
0680 afterward
0681 and said
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?
0700 I guess it would depend on whether or not
0701 that was a marginal reason or the predominant reason in whether not and why he decided

0702 to confess that he didn't actually spell the word correctly
0703 good and what's your name. Vasco.
0704 that's very interesting is there anyone else
0705 who has a view about this?
0706 does this show that Kant's
0707 principle is too stringent too demanding
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
0716 in and of itself out of duty and so while there's more than one motivation going on there
0717 does not mean that action is devoid of moral worth just because he has one other motive
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 now
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
0736 there's a connection
0737 between

0738 Kant's stringent notion of morality
0739 and especially demanding understanding
0740 of freedom
0741 and that leads us to the second contrast
0742 the link between
0743 morality
0744 and freedom
0745 a second contrast describes
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 0:37:26.0 laws that's given or imposed on us
0758 but according to a law we give ourselves
0759 but where could such a law
0760 come from?
0761 a law that we give ourselves?
0762 reason, if reason
0763 determines my will
0764 then
0765 the real becomes to power to choose
0766 independent
0767 of the dictates
0768 of nature or inclination
0769 or circumstance
0770 so
0771 connected with Kant's
0772 demanding notions of morality and freedom
0773 is especially demanding notion
0774 of reason

0775 well how can reason
0776 determine the
0777 will
0778 there are two ways and this leads to the third contracts
0779 Kant says
0780 there are two different commands of reason
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
0787 if you
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
0794 a hypothetical imperative.
0795 if the action would be good
0796 solely as a means to something else Kant writes, the imperative is hypothetical
0797 if the action is represented as good in itself
0798 and therefore as necessary
0799 for a will which of itself accords with reason
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

0812 to be free in the sense of autonomous
0813 requires
0814 that I act
0815 not out of a hypothetical
0816 imperative
0817 but out of the categorical
0818 imperative
0819 so you see by these three contrasts Kant
0820 reasons his way
0821 brings us up to you
0822 he's derivation
0823 of the categorical imperative
0824 well this leaves us
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.
0832 I want to mention two
0833 and then see what you think of them.
0834 the first
0835 version the first formula
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

0849 suppose I need money, I hundred dollars
0850 desperately
0851 and I know I can't pay it back anytime soon
0852 I come to you
0853 and make you a promise, a false promise, one I know I can't keep
0854 please give me a hundred dollars today
0855 lend me the money I will repay you next week
0856 is that consistent
0857 with the categorical imperative, that false promise Kant says no
0858 and the test
0859 the way we can
0860 determine
0861 that the false promise is at odds with categorical
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
0868 and so there would be a contradiction
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 that
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

0886 not lie in dire need

0887 because I want the world to function in such a way that

0888 promises kept. I don't want to liquidate the practice of promises. Right.

0889 it sounds like justifying

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.

0893 well Tim

0894 John Stuart Mill agreed with you

0895 he made this criticism

0896 of Kant

0897 he said if

0898 I universalize the maximum and find

0899 that the whole practice of promise keeping would be destroyed if universalized

0900 I must be appealing

0901 somehow to consequences

0902 if that's the reason

0903 not to tell a false promise

0904 so

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

0923 it isn't exactly the reason
0924 it's not the reason
0925 the reason you should universalize
0926 to test your maxim
0927 is to see whether
0928 you are privileging
0929 your particular needs and desires
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 on 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
0942 Kant's second version of the categorical imperative
0943 perhaps
0944 in a way that's more intuitively accessible
0945 than the formula of universal law
0946 it's the formula
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

0960 and absolute value

0961 an end in itself

0962 then in it

0963 and in it alone

0964 would there be the ground of a possible a categorical imperative

0965 well, what is there

0966 that we can think of as having it's end in itself

0967 Kant's answer is this

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

0977 rational beings are persons

0978 the don't just have a relative value

0979 for us

0980 but if anything has they have an absolute value

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
0999 not open to use
1000 merely as a means
1001 when I make a false promise to you
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
1012 and suicide
1013 are at odds with the categorical imperative why?
1014 if I murdered someone
1015 I'm taking their life for some
1016 purpose. either because
1017 I'm a hired killer
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
1032 we use humanity as a means
1033 and so we fail to respect humanity

1034 as an end
1035 and that capacity for reasons
1036 that humanity
1037 that commands respect
1038 that is to ground of dignity
1039 that humanity
1040 that capacity for a reason
1041 resides undifferentiated
1042 in all of us
1043 and so I violate that dignity
1044 in my own person if I commit suicide
1045 and in murder
1046 if I take somebody else's life from a moral point of view
1047 they're the same
1048 and the reason they're the same
1049 has to do
1050 with the universal character
1051 and ground
1052 of the moral law
1053 the reason that we have to respect
1054 the dignity of other people
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
1072 in the case of any other
1073 questions or rejections?
1074 I guess I'm somewhat worried about
1075 Kant's
1076 statement that you cannot use a person as a means because every person is an end
1077 in and of themselves
1078 because it seems that
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
1082 for instance suppose
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.
1087 I must go to the store, use the person
1088 working behind the counters as a means for me to purchase my food.
1089 You're right, that's true
1090 what's your name? Patrick
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
1106 the categorical imperative.
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.
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