

Kantian Ethics: Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals

{ Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

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Utilitarianism

- ⌘ Utilitarianism claims that the morality of an act stems from the consequences of it
- ⌘ Accounts for factors, such as consequences that are not in our control, as aspects of whether or not an act is moral or not.
- ⌘ Greater good of the public

Kant vs. Utilitarianism

- ⌘ Kantian Deontology: Morality is separate from consequences
- ⌘ *A good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes - because of its fitness for attaining some proposed end: it is good through its willing alone - that is, good in itself (Kant 537a).*
- ⌘ The intention of the decision is the aspect to be judged

Kant's Ethical Theory

⌘ Four ways in which duty and inclination can meet:

⌘ Acting contrary to duty

⌘ Acting consistently with duty and with inclination

⌘ Acting with duty, but not with immediate inclination

⌘ Acting consistently with duty, but not inclination

⌘ We have inclinations, or desires

⌘ Acting in accordance to our duty AND against our inclination → act with moral worth

Categorical Imperatives

- ⌘ *What makes an act ethical?*
- ⌘ Acts must be independent of our inclinations
- ⌘ Categorical imperative (CI) is a single moral law in which we must abide by
- ⌘ CI is described by Kant in 3 different forms:
 - ⌘ The formula of universal law
 - ⌘ The formula of the end in itself
 - ⌘ The formula of the kingdom of ends

Universal Law

- ⌘ Maxim → generalized reasoning behind one's actions
 - ⌘ I will lie to get out of trouble
- ⌘ Apply the maxim to everyone.
- ⌘ Does this work? Does it make sense? Is it sensible?
 - ⌘ If so, then the act is moral.
 - ⌘ If not, then the act is immoral.

End in itself

- ⌘ *Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end (Kant 545b).*
- ⌘ Humans, as individual beings, have intrinsic value and worth.
- ⌘ We should never treat our self or others as a means, or object, to obtain some sort of ends or value .
- ⌘ Rather, we should treat each other with respect and as an end in itself.

Kingdom of Ends

- ⌘ We as individuals have goals and desires.
- ⌘ These desires should coincide with the goals and desires of all other rational beings.
- ⌘ This varies from the first two versions of CI
- ⌘ **More of a ideal kind of world in which everything has intrinsic value and worth**
- ⌘ People are creators of laws through reasoning as well as the subjects of the law.

Criticisms of Kant

- ⌘ *Truthfulness in statements that cannot be avoided is the formal duty of man to everyone, however great the disadvantage that may arise therefrom for him or for any others.. [By telling a lie] I do wrong to duty in general in a most essential point. (Kant, "On a Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philanthropic Concerns," Academy edition 426).*
- ⌘ At some point, we may feel the need or desire to lie.
- ⌘ Kant believes that lying is not a moral act.
- ⌘ Example of lying to location of a loved one to a murderer.
- ⌘ Choosing not to answer is moral, though.

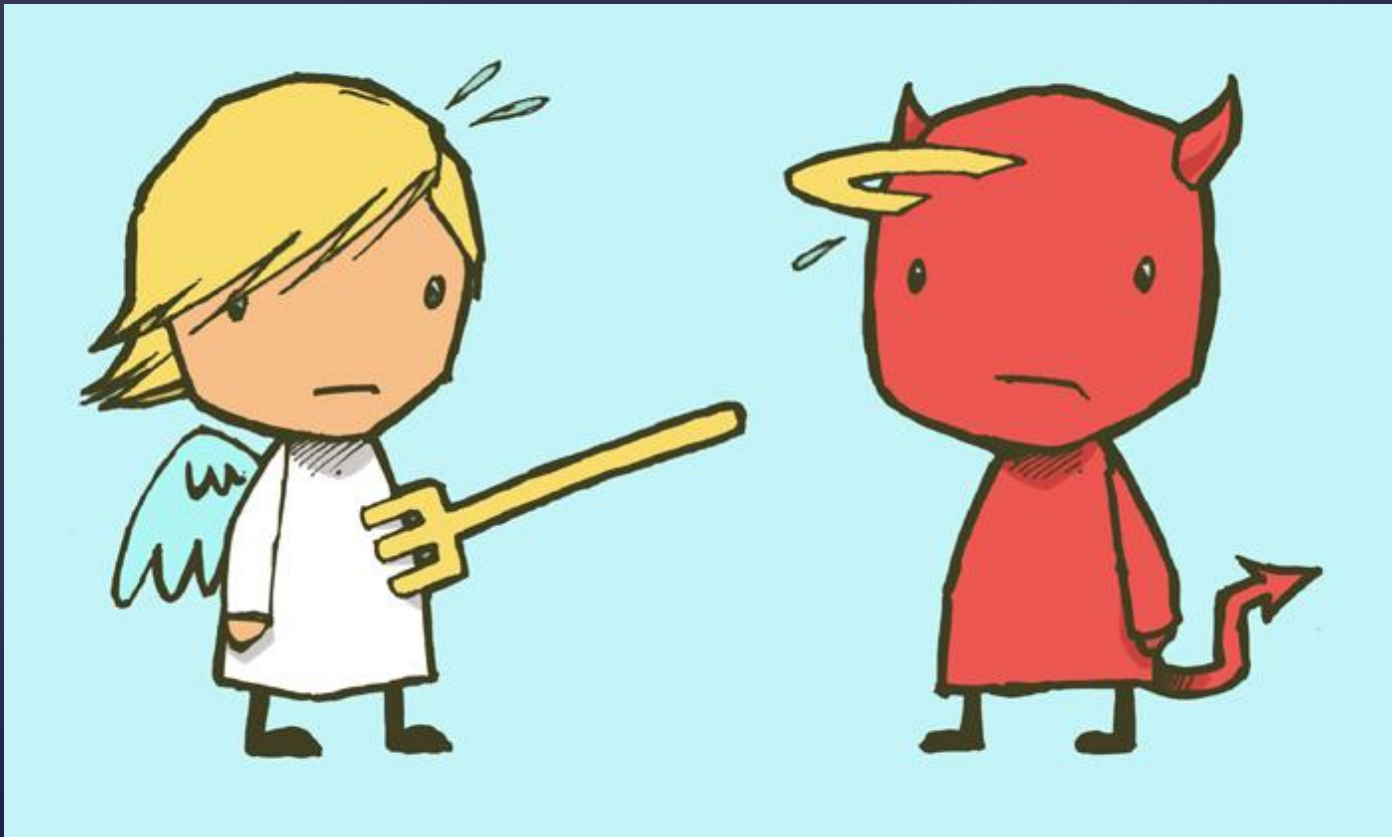
Kant or Utilitarianism???



Is Murder ethical or unethical?

Big Picture:

What distinguishes good act from a bad act?



Sources

- ⌘ http://solodialogue.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/good_versus_evil_by_curua.jpg
- ⌘ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/562751/pakistani-charged-with-us-pastor-murder-in-malaysia-report/>
- ⌘ Meeting with Jackson
- ⌘ Professor Marcus' notes