

March, 19

Deontology in ethics:

Deontology: whether an act is morally good depends on its internal qualities (intention, purpose, compatibility with duty and obligation, compatibility with values)

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (1785), *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), and *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797).

Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: **“It is impossible to conceive of anything in the world, or indeed out of it, which can be called good without qualification save only a good will.”**

THERE IS ONLY ONE AND THE SAME REASON BUT IT APPEARS IN TWO different FUNCTIONS. That is why one can talk about theoretical and practical reason.

theoretical reason is directed towards knowledge; practical reason is directed towards

choice in accordance with moral law and to the implementation of choice in action (Copleston, History of philosophy, vol. 6)

practical reason = pure (rational) will

Ethics should be:

- **Rational** – every moral statement is to be justified rationally (it is not enough “to feel”; for example it is not enough to feel compassion; we must know that there is no contradictions in our moral statements;
- **Universal** - moral duties (oughts) are the same for all people; one must universalize individual moral rules and check whether there is no contradiction in them
- **Formal** – in order to defend it against relativism
- Based on the categorical imperative
- Based on **intentions** (not on consequences)
- Based on **sense of duty** (not on inclinations or instincts)

Kant makes a distinction between actions which are in accordance with duty and acts which are done for the sake of duty. Only those actions which are performed for the sake of duty have moral worth.

Categorical and hypothetical imperatives

The first formulation of the **categorical imperative**: “Always act so that you may also wish that the maxim of your action become a universal law.”

The second formulation of the categorical imperative: “Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a Universal Law of Nature .”

The third formulation: “Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always at the same time as an end and never merely as a means. ”

Hypothetical imperative says: if you want to achieve something you are to act in this concrete way. For example: if you want to be respected by others tell only the truth; if you want to become a famous celebrity with thousands of fans start to work in television.

“Imperatives themselves, however, when they are conditional (i.e., do not determine the will simply as will, but only in respect to a desired effect, that is, when they are hypothetical imperatives), are practical precepts but not laws. Laws must be sufficient to determine the will as will, even before I ask whether I have power sufficient for a desired effect, or the means necessary to produce it.”
Critique of practical reason

Legality of action is not identical with morality of action!

Legality = an action which is in (**external**) accordance with the categorical imperative

Morality = an action which is made for the sake of the categorical imperative

Immorality = an action which is not in accordance with the categorical imperative

You act legally if your activity is externally consistent with the moral law; only external consequence is important in this case

You act morally if your action is internally consistent with the moral law; you must have a good will or intention.

What is typical of Kant’s Ethics: Your moral acts cannot contain any emotional motivation (sympathy, love).

Three postulates of the practical reason: freedom, immortality and God

“In order not to be too abstract, we will answer this question at once in its application to the present case. In order to extend a pure cognition practically, there must be an a priori purpose given, that is, an end as object (of the will), which independently of all theological principle is presented as practically necessary by an imperative which determines the will directly (a categorical imperative), and in this case that is the summum bonum. This, however, is not possible without presupposing three theoretical conceptions (for which, because they are mere conceptions of pure reason, no corresponding intuition can be found, nor consequently by the path of theory any objective reality); namely, freedom, immortality, and God.” *Critique of practical reason*

“The question, therefore, how a categorical imperative is possible, can be answered to this extent, that one can assign the only presupposition on which it is possible, namely the idea of freedom; and one can also discern the necessity of this presupposition, which is sufficient for the *practical use* of reason, that is, for the conviction of the *validity of this imperative*, and hence of the moral law. But no human reason can ever discern how this presupposition is possible. However, on the presupposition that the will of an intelligence is free its *autonomy*, as the essential formal condition of its determination, is a necessary consequence.” *Critique of practical reason*