

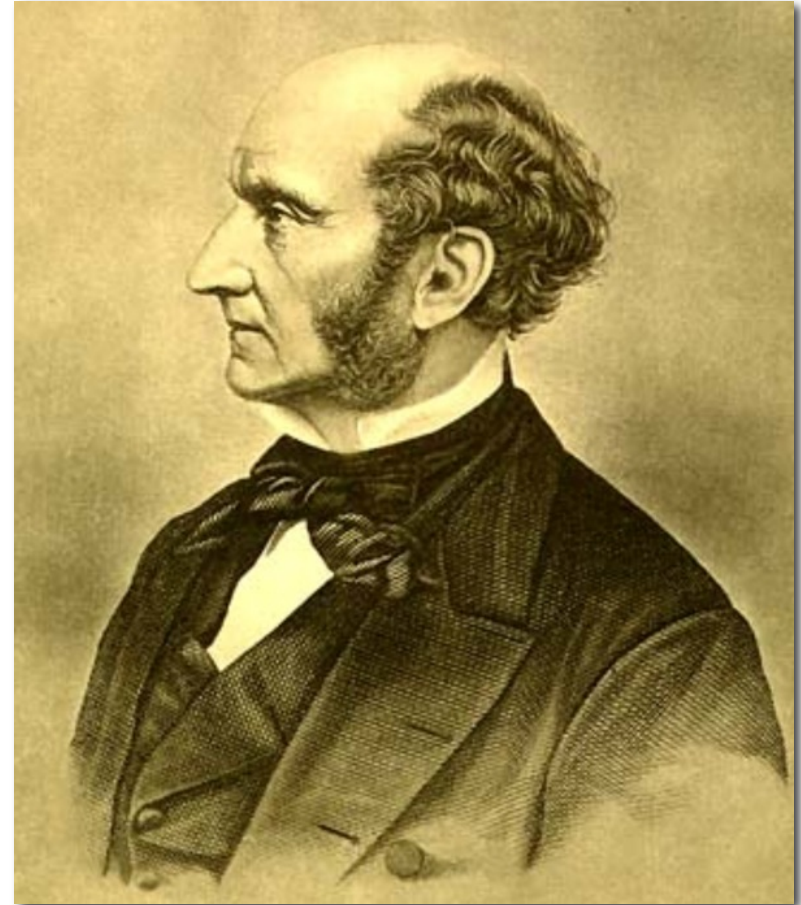
Normative Ethics

Mill's Utilitarian Theory

John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*

“The Greatest Happiness Principle holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure.”

[*Utilitarianism*, Ch. 2 (1863)]



(1806-1873)

Utilitarianism: Basics (1 of 2)

Consequentialism: any moral theory in which the rightness of an action depends upon its consequences.

Greatest Happiness Principle (GHP): the right action among the alternatives open to us is that action that will result in the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. [Mill's Theory of the Right]

Hedonism: the good is pleasure. [Mill's Theory of the Good]

Social Hedonism: pleasure has the same value wherever it occurs. [Impartiality principle]

Long Term: we are to maximize pleasures over the long run (roughly: as far out as we can reasonably predict).

Utilitarianism: Basics (2 of 2)

Act Utilitarianism: the **action** is the unit of moral evaluation.

Contemplated action: Deciding which of two patients to give an available kidney.

The GHP says: Give the kidney to A.

	A's 😊	B's 😊	Total
Give to A	+200	+5	+205
Give to B	+5	+150	+155

Rule Utilitarianism: the **rule** is the unit of moral evaluation.

Contemplated rule: Seek informed consent from your patients for any major medical procedure.

The GHP: Follow the rule.

	Pleasure	Pain
Case 1	+15	-5
Case 2	+20	-1
Case 3	+5	-20
Total	+40	-26

Kant's Deontological Theory

Immanuel Kant, *Deontologism*

“Nothing in the world —
indeed nothing even
beyond the world — can
possibly be conceived
which could be called
good without
qualification except a
good will.”

[*Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785)]



(1724-1804)

Immanuel Kant, *Deontology*

“Nothing is good without it.”

Kant's Central Ideas

- (1) The person is the **source of value**.
- (2) This value rests in my ability to **act freely**.
- (3) My **actions have value** based on my reasons for acting (and *not* on the consequences of the action).

[Fou

(1724-1804)

Kant's Deontological Ethics

Five Questions (and answers)

- (1) What is morally good without qualification? (A: The good will.)
- (2) What does it mean to have a good will? (A: To act from duty rather than from inclination.)
- (3) What does it mean to act from duty? (A: To act from respect for the law — to view the law as objectively necessary.)
- (4) What is the law according to which I am to act? (A: Any law generated by the Categorical Imperative, viz.: “act only on that maxim that I can consistently will to become a universal law.”)
- (5) And why should I act from respect for this law? (Why is it so binding on me?) (A: Because I made the law myself.)

Kant's Deontological Ethics

Five Questions (and answers)

- (1) What is morally good without qualification?**
- (2) What does it mean to have a good will?
- (3) What does it mean to act from duty?
- (4) What is the law according to which I am to act?
- (5) And why should I act from respect for this law? (Why is it so binding on me?)

Kant's Deontological Ethics

Five Questions (and answers)

(1) What is morally good without qualification **The Good Will**

How we value X:

- final (to value X for its own sake)
- instrumental (to value X for the sake of something else)

The source of X's value:

- intrinsic (X's value comes from within)
- extrinsic (X's value comes from something else)

Kant's Deontological Ethics

Questions (and answers)

But what is the will?

Good without qualification **The Good Will**

(How we value X:

(Final (to value X for its own sake)

(Instrumental (to value X for the sake of something else)

Source of X's value:

Intrinsic (X's value comes from within)

Extrinsic (X's value comes from something else)



Metaphysical Foundations of Morals: Ontological Ethics

Questions (and answers)

But what is the will?

Good without qualification The Good Will

(1) Final value X:
(2) Instrumental (to value)

Everything in nature works according to law.
Only a rational being has the capacity of acting according to the concept of laws, that is, according to principles.
This capacity is the **will**.

(3) (use)

(4) Use of X's
(5) (use)
(6) (use)



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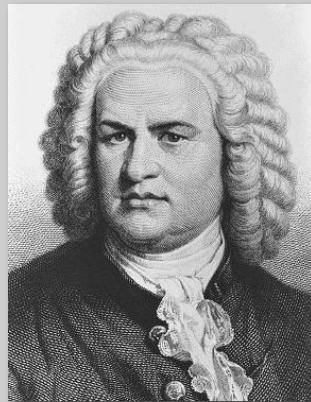
In this way does my neighbor differ from my cow.

(1) What is the good without qualification **The Good Will**

(How we value

- final (to value X for its own sake)
- instrumental (to value X for the sake of something else)

of X's value:
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In this way does my neighbor differ from my cow

(1) W

The cow simply follows its **inclinations**; that's all it **can** do.

Good Will

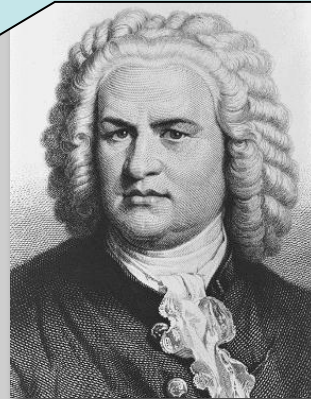
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My neighbor might follow his inclinations, but he also has the ability to act contrary to his inclinations by following a self-imposed **principle** or **law**.

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Kant's Deontological Ethics

Five Questions (and answers)

- (1) What is morally good without qualification?
- (2) What does it mean to have a good will?**
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- (4) What is the law according to which I am to act?
- (5) And why should I act from respect for this law? (Why is it so binding on me?)

Kant's Deontological Ethics

Five Questions (and answers)

(1) What is morally good without qualification?

(2) What does it mean to have a good will?

To act from duty rather than from inclination.

Motivations for doing A:

(1) Inclination: (following the appetites)

(a) indirect: **desiring a consequence of A.**

(b) direct: **desiring A for its own sake.**

(2) Duty (following reason)

My actions must ...

... conform with duty (“Doing the right thing...”)

... *and* be motivated by duty (“...for the right reason”)

y is

Conforming with / Motivated by

Actions ...

... in conformity with duty *but* motivated by indirect inclination.

Being honest because you like the consequences.

... in conformity with duty *but* motivated by direct inclination.

Being honest because you like being honest (it makes you feel good, etc.).

... in conformity with duty *and* motivated by duty.

Being honest because you see that it is your duty to be honest.

Kant's Deontological Ethics

Five Questions (and answers)

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Kant's Deontological Ethics

Five Questions (and answers)

- (1) What is morally good without qualification?
- (2) What does it mean to have a good will?

(3) What does it mean to act from duty?

To act from respect for the law as objectively necessary.

Imperatives:

- (1) Hypothetical: "If you want P, then do A!"
- (2) Categorical: "Do A!"

Categorical imperatives bind our moral conduct in the same fashion that **physical laws** control our physical conduct, i.e., as objectively necessary.

Kant's Deontological Ethics

Five Questions (and answers)

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- (4) What is the law according to which I am to act?**
- (5) And why should I act from respect for this law? (Why is it so binding on me?)

Kant's Deontological Ethics

There is one **Categorical Imperative**, with three formulations:

- (1) **Universal Law**: Act only on that maxim that you can consistently will to become a universal law.
- (2) **End-in-Itself**: Treat persons always as ends, never merely as means.
- (3) **Autonomy**: Act so that the will may regard itself as laying down its own universal laws.

(4) What is the law according to which I am to act?

(5) And why should I act from respect (is it so binding on me?)

Any law generated by
the Categorical
Imperative.

Kant's Deontological Ethics

Five Questions (and answers)

- (1) What is morally good without qualification?
- (2) What does it mean to have a good will?
- (3) What does it mean to act from duty?
- (4) What is the law according to which I am to act?
- (5) And why should I act from respect for this law?
(Why is it so binding on me?)**

Kant's Deontological Ethics

Five Questions (and answers)

This marks Kant's emphasis on the **autonomy** of both **reason** and the **individual** human being — the two great foundations of the Enlightenment and the rise of western liberal democracies.

**(5) And why should I act from respect for this law?
(Why is it so binding on me?)**

Because I made the law
myself.