

Kant, "Duty and Reason as the Ultimate Principle" - pp. 506-512

1. Explain why Kant thinks the only thing truly good "in itself" is a good will.

- A. Kant seems to believe that anything less than a good will makes anything we do morally questionable. He seems to believe that humans will use other humans as a means just to get what they want, not caring about the well-being of the person they will hurt from their action of using them as a stepping stone.

2. What does Kant mean by doing our actions "from the motive of duty"? How is this different from acting out of self-interest, or out of natural inclination, or even just in "conformity" with duty?

- A. The definition of 'duty' is, 'A moral or legal obligation; a responsibility.' Picture a courtroom, there is the defendant and the plaintiff. In most cases, a judge and jury need to come in and put together guilt or innocence and hear the case. They have a duty to come to a decision. Not out of self-interest, or out of natural inclination, or conformity, because everyone else chose it. No, they a responsibility to proceed without bias or prejudice, I believe that is what Kant means.

3. What does it mean for an action to have moral worth based on its principle, not based on the end it achieves?

- A. Moral with based on the principle not based on the end it achieves. I helped my family out with chores growing up. Sometimes I got an allowance and sometimes I did not. If I based my actions on the end of getting the allowance and didn't get it, I would no longer do the chores. I didn't really even consider getting money for it, I did it because of the principle, the fundamental truth that family helps one another. Take it a step even further beyond, humans should just help humans.

4. Explain in your own words Kant's two formulations of the Categorical Imperative, on 510 and 511-512:

a) I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law

- A. My truth, maxim, will always have a self-bent, as will everyone else's. There must be an equal, universal truth that run through for all people, one not brought on by anyone's opinion or selfish desires.

b) 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.

- A. Human life is precious, no matter what they look like, no matter what creed they subscribe to. No matter what, people matter. Act like it, don't use and abuse people.

Mill, "Happiness as the Foundation of Morality" pp. 512-517

1. Write out and explain Mill's "Greatest Happiness Principle".

- A. The 'Greatest Happiness Principle' states that happiness is key to defining what is moral and anything painful is immoral. Because what is right should cause us happiness and what is wrong should bring pain.

2. What does Mill mean when he writes, "Better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied"?

- A. To be 'A being of higher faculties' like Socrates needs more stimuli to be happy than fool. Better to be a better being and not be satisfied than to be a lesser being and satisfied.

3. How does Mill discuss quality and kinds of happiness in contrast to calculating the quantity of happiness?

- A. "... the ultimate end, with reference to and for the sake of which all other things are desirable (whether we are considering our own good or that of other people), is an existence exempt as far as possible from pain, and as rich as possible in enjoyments, both in point of quantity and quality..."

4. What role does all of previous human history and the experience of wise and competent people play in figuring out what will bring the most happiness in our actions?

- A. We learn from our experiences. You learn what to do and what not to do, you know what causes pain and happiness. I know from learning people's experiences that you receive pain from touching the stove. I know pain is not happiness, and anything not bringing happiness is not moral, according to Mill.