

September 14th

Ethical Hedonism

- Psychological Hedonism

- Views in empirical psychology involving claims about ways we are motivated

- ↳ We are motivated by the pursuit of pleasure or avoidance of pain

- ↳ Explains what makes us pursue things

- Ethical Hedonism

- Views in philosophy involving claims about what things in the world are valuable

- ↳ the only things in the world that are valuable is the experience of pleasure and avoidance of pain

- Explain what we should be pursuing

- The 'correctness/rightness' of an action can be judged by its consequences

- ↳ Egoism: Focuses on the minimization of pain, and happiness is measured by the individual; quantitative

- ★ Epicurus

↳ Utilitarianism : focuses on the greatest amount of pleasure over pain ; happiness is measured overall → how many people benefit from the action

* Bentham : quantitative

* Mill : qualitative (both how much good, and how 'good' the good is)

- The good is utility, overall happiness (total amount of pleasure in the world, minus the pain)
- Offers an independent account of moral truths → do not depend on opinions or social majorities
- Regard moral claims as empirically testable and offer a determinate method for testing moral judgements
- Agent-neutral / impartial account of the moral good → each person's happiness is equal (non-elitist)

IMMANUEL Kant

Most moral theories define basic moral terms and 'good' as happiness (eudaimonia or utility), but Kant does not think good has any conception of happiness

• Kant's theory, "The good will"

↳ Moral status of an action

- **Permissible** (okay to perform) → an act consistent with duty/obligation (impermissible → opposite)
- **Correctness** (should perform) → an act in conformity with duty (incorrect → contrary to duty)
- **of moral worth** (of value) → an action performed 'from duty'

• Groundwork for the metaphysics of morals: examine the nature of moral obligation or duty and search for the **supreme principle of morality**

- common rational moral cognition → philosophical moral cognition → the metaphysics of morals → Critique of pure practical reason

• The Good concerns our faculty

- Logical use: reasoning about the form of understanding
- Theoretical use: reasoning about material objects → the natural world (physics), the cosmos (astrology), ourselves (physiology)
- Practical use: reasoning about what to do, choices + actions

• The will: a practical use of our reasoning faculty to determine our choices

- means-ends reasoning: how to get what you want
- Practical laws: requirements regardless of what you want

• Heteronomy: the dual, rational + animal nature of humans

- Animal nature: Inclination (physical states to be satisfied), Instinct (drives to satisfy inclinations)

↳ We use reason to pursue animal ends → incentives/motives

- Total satisfaction of the incentives of basic animal nature → contentment
- ↳ as sophisticated beings, we develop more complex needs
- Total satisfaction of complex incentives is welfare / happiness
- Rational nature
 - ↳ the will has its own use and end → purpose of practical reasoning faculty is to produce a good will (one that acts on its own practical laws, acts from the incentives of reason)

October 5th

- The good is a good will → pure practical reason issues rational laws for itself
 - humans don't have pure practical reason, but a "discursive" one (mix of rational and animal reason) → laws of practical reason take form of imperatives (what we ought to do b/c we can act contrary to them), and we must be constrained (necessitated) to follow rational laws
 - instrumental imperatives: pragmatic norms
 - moral imperatives: duties / obligations → categorical imperatives
- Duties are not supposed to be contingent → why pleasure (utility) cannot be the grounds for duty
- Moral goodness is not supposed to be contingent → pleasure cannot be the moral good
 - ↳ moral goodness doesn't lie in the consequences or results of an action
- A good will is 1) good w/out limitation because it has 2) unconditioned worth (doesn't depend on anything else
 - ↳ w/ both features, a good will is "absolutely good"
- Moral goodness of an action is guaranteed by a good will

↳ only when an action is performed by a good will does a morally correct action have moral worth by way of the motive of duty

• What is a rational action?

↳ determination of a choice on the basis of a maxim (your rule of action -
1) an act 2) the intended results 3) some general aim/goal 4) a motive)

• Duty

1) an action has moral worth only if it is done from a motive of duty

2) an action has moral worth not in the aim, but the maxim in accordance w/ it

3) Duty is the necessity of an action from respect to a law

↳ Motive of duty: pure respect from the practical law + representation of the law

Practical law: an objective of principle for all rational beings

maxim: subjective principle of volition (own rule of action)

October 8th

• Bring in mom's groceries (act) to help mom with her struggle (aim) to get them in the kitchen (result)

↳ if you do it for... (motive) The moral status of your action/volition (deed) is...

- self-interest (to see yourself as a good child) ... it is correct/in conformity w/ the law, but there is no worth

- Sympathy/love for your mom... correct/in conformity, but no worth

- Duty/ from respect for duty or the law ... correct/in conformity, absolute worth

• to charge a child a fair price for a candy bar (act) means to deal fairly w/ all customers (aim) and the child receives a fair deal (result)

↳ if you do it for... (motive) The moral status of your action/volition (deed) is...

- self-interest (in not having a bad reputation → correct, but no worth

- sympathy (in being kind to others) → correct, but no worth

- duty → correct + absolute worth

• To steal a purse (act) to make mom feel happy (aim) so she finally has nice thing (result)

↳ if you do it for... (motive) The moral status of your action/volition (deed) is...

- self-interest (to not feel guilty for not providing) → wrong (contrary to) + no worth

- sympathy (to make mom more happy) → incorrect/wrong + no worth

- Duty → contradiction w/ duty + impossible

• Formulations of Categorical Imperative

- Formula of humanity (FOH): it's wrong to use someone else as a means

- Formula of autonomy: only perform actions that are in accordance w/ the maxim → that could be a universal law

- Formula of universal law: Formulate maxim, imagine world where maxim is universal law, can you simultaneously act on the maxim in that world (if no, then there's a contradiction of conception → maxim is permissible), would you be rationally willing to act on maxim in that world? (if no → contradiction in the will, maxim is permissible)

• Susan Wolf

→ What is it to be a moral saint?

• The loving saint: happiness of the moral saint lies in the happiness of others

• The rational saint: happiness of others is more important than their own

↳ Wolf believes one can be 'too good' → excludes other nonmoral virtues (necessary to healthy well-rounded character → cooking, music, athletics)

• ideal characters are morally good, but not **just** morally good

• morality can dominate one's life → erases individuality

• Is sainthood required by normal theories?

1) a moral theory saint's decisions are directed at the aim of pursuing moral goals

2) we can't accept moral theory unless you only strive to fulfill the theory's goals

3) if we make decisions only to fulfill the theory, then we can't live a life we can wholeheartedly endorse

4) we want to live a life we can wholeheartedly endorse

5) Thus, we can't fulfill that moral theory's goal

6) Thus, we can't accept the moral theory

→ a utilitarian would object to premise 1: best way to promote overall happiness would be to promote your own happiness

→ Kant would object to premise 3: b/c we can wholeheartedly endorse a life where decisions are constrained by theory (duty)

→ Wolf objects to premise 2: b/c her whole point is to reject that assumption

• Human perfection + personality

- Wolf adopts Aristotelian point of view: moral theory is not comprehensive in guiding our conduct, moral personality (+ ideal of sainthood) is not all there is to our self

- moral theories are important in personal development + character, but there is much more in a good life in which ideals are nonmoral in character

