

Kant's concept of the moral imperative

Experience, Human Nature



Inserts His/her Inserts Inserts Grade Inserts Here (Day, Month, Year) Kant's concept of the Moral Imperative. Is this a good approach to solving ethical issues? Concept: Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) argued that moral requirements are based on a standard of rationality, he termed them as the “Categorical Imperative”. Immorality thus involves contradicting the rules of the Categorical Imperative and is thereby irrational. Kant agreed with earlier philosophers that an evaluation of practical reason will reveal only the prerequisite that a rational person must conform to instrumental principles. The fundamental principle of morality is none other than the law of an autonomous will. Thus, at the basis of Kant's moral philosophy is a rational that humans are not the slaves of their desires. Kant considered the presence of these self-governing reason decisive grounds for viewing one's actions. To put in simpler words, Categorical Imperative is the universal law that applies on all people who can rationally think and make a morally correct decision that is not based upon their own incentives and that does not cause any harm to other another person. Kant's theory has two rules: (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy) 1. Moral rules must be universalisable The first one emphasizes the need for moral rules to be universalisable. Always act in such a way that you would be willing for it to become a general law that everyone else should do the same in the same situation. (Shandon L. Guthrie) 2. Moral rules must respect human beings It means that people should always be treated as valuable and worthy - as an end in themselves - and should not just be used in order to attain something else. They should not be tricked, manipulated or forced into doing things. Kant's approach and ethical decisions: What is right, and what is wrong? This is a question that we

usually ask ourselves from time to time. This question can be answered by using Kant's concept. (Isaac M. McPhee) According to Kant, in order to determine whether a decision is ethical or not, we must: 1. Act in such a way that our act could become a universal law. 2. Act in such a way that you never treat humanity as a means to an end. (BBC) As seen in alternate ethical systems, things as pleasure and happiness are the basic motives of our moral action. By adhering to the Kant's concept we are capable to make ethical decisions and avoid linking moral intuition to natural proclivities such as pleasure and happiness. To summarize, Kant's theory can an effective tool while confronted with an ethical dilemma. References " Kant's Moral Philosophy", Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Online, 2004, Web, 2011. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-moral/> Guthrie, S. L. Immanuel Kant and the Categorical Imperative, Web, 2011. <http://sguthrie.net/kant.htm> McPhee, I. M. Kant's Categorical Imperative; The Key to Telling Right from Wrong, Suite 101, Suite 101 Online, 2008, Web, 2011. <http://www.suite101.com/content/kants-categorical-imperative-a44798> " Duty-based Ethics", BBC Ethics Guide, BBC Ethics Guide Online, Web, 2011. http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/introduction/duty_1.shtml