

# Immanuel kant's theories

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Kant's theories are in great contrast with other philosophers. He was a retributivist who believed that punishing wrongdoers though they are rational beings, is right, as long as the crime they did fits such penalty. Punishment without reasons or jailing someone for petty theft is unjust. He spoke about punishment on the critique of practical reasons which contrast with Jeremy Bentham a utilitarian theorist who considers punishment as evil and advocates for punishment to cause more positive impacts on the person punished. (Robert, 2000).

As Bentham supports rehabilitation efforts in prisons Kant found such efforts immoral as they acted against one's personal rational choices. Kant rejects manipulation of people even when the causes and reasons are just. People should be allowed to reason for themselves and their decisions should be respected. Kant criticized other theories on the grounds that they were only hypothetical and could not be applicable in the real world. Some theories argue that the greater good ought to be considered when acting but such would be irrelevant to someone whose interest is not on maintaining the common good.

Hypothetical moral systems should not be used to determine the moral action as they are very subjective while in the real sense people's interests vary. He rejected Hume's theory on the ideal theory of the mind. To Kant analytical methods should not be used to explain what is physically evident. To him, synthetic reasoning involves relating concepts that are not directly related to the subject concept. A priori knowledge can be used in the metaphysics study. (Bayne, 2000) Kant criticizes the utilitarian view that happiness is the highest goal.

He opposes this view as it created loopholes where people would be used simply as means to achieve or attain happiness. This would be disrespecting the fact that all human beings are rational and can choose or plan and anticipate their future. Kant portrays the categorical imperative approach where he sees all human beings as occupants of a special place in creation. People have different needs which ought to be satisfied using certain means. He uses the term maxim to refer to intentions or principle of action. Human beings should not act in a way that portrays other people simply as means to an end but as an end to itself.

In working to attain the maxim people should not use others simply as means to an end. People used should benefit from the arrangement and their consent should be sought. To him, duties should be beneficial to people used in the process of attaining the goals. I agree with Kant's theory as all people should be treated with equality and with respect. There are two types of imperatives. The hypothetical imperative tells of what we ought to do to achieve a goal. The categorical imperative leads to absoluteness since human beings are rational and can govern their actions. People should only act on maxims that can become universal law.

To Kant, there are universal moral laws that are logically necessary. People's actions should therefore be performed according to the acceptable universal laws of morality. Individuals should act according to the same general, future and moral laws. (Robert, 2000). All people should be treated with moral respect. Deception should not be considered even when being applied for wrongdoers. To Kant, duties can be perfect or imperfect. Imperfect duties

entail working to develop our talents since they are given to us for a purpose while perfect duties entail a duty to others.

Kant rejected the ethical force brought about by tradition and coined the modern idea of autonomy. He brought about the idea of centrality of rational thought. Each person can make free and autonomous choices and they are compelled by rationality and the categorical imperative in their decisions. Adherence to categorical imperative provides for autonomous ethical choice since people make their decisions rationally. In pursuit for various maxims all parties involved benefit from the arrangement. Autonomous means self legislating.

Autonomy of the will is the ability of the will to be a will in itself while the will refers to the means by which a maxim can become a universal law. Heteronomy means the capacity to follow law other than itself to produce a universal law of morality. (Collins, 2000) To Kant, objects do not have value but man gives them value through their rational goals and desires. Human beings have an intrinsic worth or dignity. They should therefore act in good will out of a sense of duty and use the categorical imperative. What we give to society comes back to us and we ought not to harm others but work in ensuring that they benefit from our actions.