

Short answer quiz Hume and Kant

30 points total:

1. According to Hume, moral judgments are based on sentiment or internal feeling rather than exclusively on reason, but he does say that reason or facts have a role to play. Explain what part reason and sentiment play in his empirical theory of ethics.

Hume's method of moral philosophy is experimental and empirical. Hume says that reason is properly a "slave to the passions", identifying such feelings as compassion and benevolence as proper moral motivations. Hume concluded that desire rather than reason governed human behavior. He also argued against the existence of innate ideas, concluding that humans have knowledge only of things they directly experience. He explains that inductive reasoning and directly, causality, cannot be justified rationally. He is best known for asserting the following theses: Reason alone cannot be a motive to the will, but rather is the "slave of the passions", Moral distinctions are not derived from reason, Moral distinctions are derived from the moral sentiments: feelings of approval (esteem, praise) and disapproval (blame) felt by spectators who contemplate a character trait or action, and While some virtues and vices are natural others, including justice, are artificial.

2. Based on Hume's view about the nature of morality, what do you think he would suggest is the reason(s) why people engage in immoral acts and based on this, how might he suggest we should prevent such acts from occurring either in ourselves or in others?

Hume has said that morality can be found within a person. But what really makes a bad moral judgement is based on 3 possibilities— 1) a person doesn't have all the facts about a situation, 2) a person doesn't have a proper perspective with respect to a situation (sociopath), and 3) a person has adopted the proper perspective, knows what the correct answer is, but has weakness based on their own thoughts and judgements (biased and ideal observer perspectives) When an immoral act is observed, if we think about ONLY the objects involved, we cannot discern any right or wrong. "Only when you turn your reflexion into your own breast, and find a sentiment of disapprobation". This is the only time one will find

3. The concept of autonomy plays a central role in Kant's moral view. What is autonomy? Choose at least two aspects of Kant's view that are informed or motivated by this concept and explain that connection. (hint: the concept of autonomy or freedom or being the source of your own behavior lies behind the first two principles of morality, the Kingdom of Ends, the tests of the categorical imperative, etc.)

From the Greek *auto* to mean "self" and of *nomos* to mean "law", autonomy is said to mean "one who gives oneself one's own law") and is a concept found in moral, political, and bioethical philosophy. In relation to autonomy and healthcare, nurses live by the mindset that each patient has the right to dignity and respect. Dignity is something that every person, young or old,

deserves and is a given right. Each person in this world demonstrates some sort of autonomous thinking and ideals and it is something that is also learned. With each mistake we make, we make the AUTONOMOUS decision to not make that decision again. Moreover, it plays a larger role in a person's identity and sense of self. The idea that when a person reaches the age of 16, they are able to make the decision of where to drive and how to drive safely and not text and drive; or when one turns 18, they are given the right to vote, smoke and gamble. Each decision, is based on ones ability to make their OWN decision, knowing what is right and wrong.

4. Based on Kant's view about the nature and source of morality, what do you think he would suggest is the reason(s) why people engage in immoral acts and based on this, how might he suggest we should prevent such acts from occurring either in ourselves or in others?

For Kant, the principle cause of morality is heteronomy. The act of immorality has a direct correlation with autonomy. But Kants Categorical Imperitive is a way of evaluating motivations for action. He states that humans hold a place in this imperative. It denotes an absolute, unconditional requirement that must be obeyed in all circumstances and is justified as an end in itself. He gives four formulations of the Categorical Imperative: the formulation of the universal law of nature, the humanity formula, the autonomy formula and the kingdom of ends formula. Kant says that no matter which formula is used, we should get the same result about what is morally permissible in a certain situation.

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David Hume

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

David Hume (/ˈhjuːm/; 7 May 1711 NS (26 April 1711 OS) - 25 August 1776) was a Scottish philosopher, historian, economist, and essayist known especially for his philosophical empiricism and scepticism. He was one of the most important figures in the Scottish Enlightenment, and in the history of Western philosophy.^[1] He is the philosopher who is "widely regarded as the greatest who has ever written in the English language."^[2] Hume is often grouped with John Locke, George Berkeley, and a handful of others as a British Empiricist.^[3]

Beginning with his *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), Hume strove to create a total naturalistic "science of man" that examined the psychological basis of human nature. In opposition to the rationalists who preceded him, most notably Descartes, he concluded that desire rather than reason governed human behaviour. He also argued against the existence of innate ideas, concluding that humans have knowledge only of things they directly experience. He argued that inductive reasoning and therefore causality cannot be justified rationally. Our assumptions in favour of these result from custom and constant conjunction rather than logic. He concluded that humans have no actual conception of the self, only of a bundle of sensations associated with the self.

Hume advocated a compatibilist theory of free will that proved extremely influential on subsequent moral philosophy. He was also a sentimentalist who held that ethics are based on feelings rather than abstract moral principles, and expounded the is-ought problem. He held notoriously ambiguous views of Christianity,^[4] and famously challenged the argument from design in his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1777).

Immanuel Kant credited Hume with waking him up from his "dogmatic slumbers" and Hume has proved extremely influential on subsequent philosophy, especially on utilitarianism, logical positivism, William James, philosophy of science, early analytic philosophy, cognitive philosophy, and other movements and thinkers. Also, the philosopher Jerry Fodor proclaimed Hume's *Treatise* "the founding document of cognitive science".^[5]

David Hume



Born	7 May NS [26 April OS] 1711 Edinburgh, Scotland, Kingdom of Great Britain
Died	25 August 1776 (aged 65) Edinburgh, Scotland
Nationality	Scottish
Alma mater	University of Edinburgh
Era	18th-century philosophy
Region	Western philosophy
School	Scottish Enlightenment Naturalism · Scepticism · Empiricism · Utilitarianism · Liberalism
Main interests	Epistemology · Metaphysics Ethics · Aesthetics Philosophy of mind Political philosophy Philosophy of religion Classical economics
Notable ideas	Problem of causation Induction · Bundle theory Association of ideas

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Categorical imperative

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **categorical imperative** (German: *kategorischer Imperativ*) is the central philosophical concept in the deontological moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Introduced in Kant's 1785 *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, it may be defined as a way of evaluating motivations for action.

According to Kant, human beings occupy a special place in creation, and morality can be summed up in an imperative, or ultimate commandment of reason, from which all duties and obligations derive. He defined an imperative as any proposition declaring a certain action (or inaction) to be necessary.

Hypothetical imperatives apply to someone who wishes to attain certain ends. For example:

- if I wish to quench my thirst, I must drink something;
- if I wish to acquire knowledge, I must learn.

A categorical imperative, on the other hand, denotes an absolute, unconditional requirement that must be obeyed in all circumstances and is justified as an end in itself. It is best known in its first formulation:

Act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law.^[1]

Kant expressed extreme dissatisfaction with the popular moral philosophy of his day, believing that it could never surpass the level of hypothetical imperatives: a utilitarian says that murder is wrong because it does not maximize good for those involved, but this is irrelevant to people who are concerned only with maximizing the positive outcome for themselves. Consequently, Kant argued, hypothetical moral systems cannot persuade moral action or be regarded as bases for moral judgments against others, because the imperatives on which they are based rely too heavily on subjective considerations. He presented a deontological moral system, based on the demands of the categorical imperative, as an alternative.

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