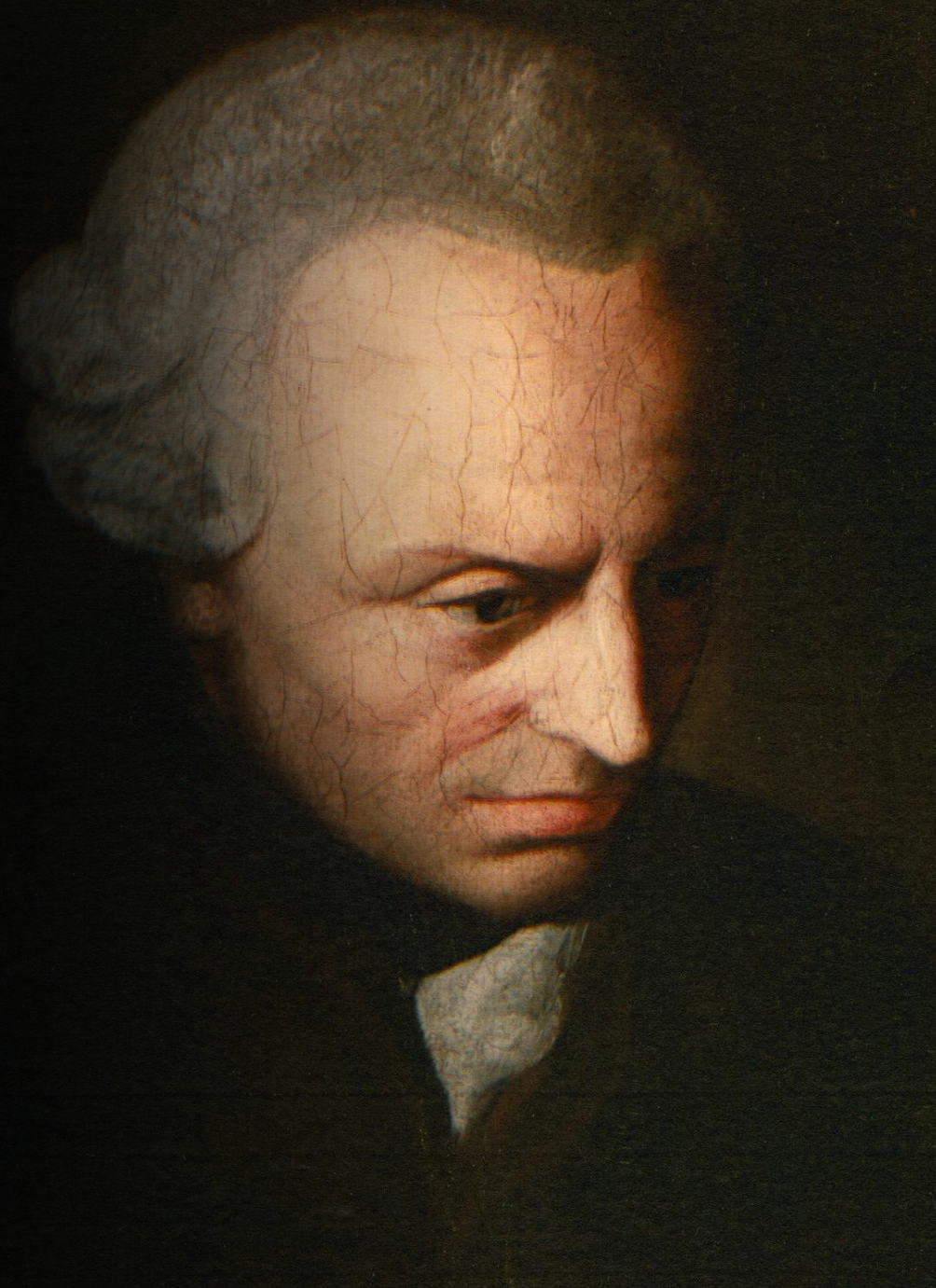


Remind your partner of the key features of Kantian ethics





Why does Kant argue that the good will is the highest good ?

There is no possibility of thinking of anything at all in the world, or even out of it, which can be regarded as good without qualification, except a *good will*. Intelligence, wit, judgment, and whatever talents of the mind one might want to name are doubtless in many respects good and desirable, as are such qualities of temperament as courage, resolution, perseverance. But they can also become extremely bad and harmful if the will, which is to make use of these gifts of nature and which in its special constitution is called character, is not good. The same holds with gifts of fortune; power, riches, honor, even health, and that complete well-being and contentment with one's condition which is called happiness make for pride and often hereby even arrogance, unless there is a good will to correct their influence on the mind and herewith also to rectify the whole principle of action and make it universally conformable to its end. The sight of a being who is not graced by any touch of a pure and good will but who yet enjoys an uninterrupted prosperity can never delight a rational and impartial spectator. Thus a good will seems to constitute the indispensable condition of being even worthy of happiness.

Some qualities are even conducive to this good will itself and can facilitate its work. Nevertheless, they have no intrinsic unconditional worth; but they always presuppose, rather, a good will, which restricts the high esteem in which they are otherwise rightly held, and does not permit them to be regarded as absolutely good. Moderation in emotions and passions, self-control, and calm deliberation are not only good in many respects but even seem to constitute part of the intrinsic worth of a person. But they are far from being rightly called good without qualification (however unconditionally they were commended by the ancients). For without the principles of a good will, they can become extremely bad; the coolness of a villain makes him not only much more dangerous but also immediately more abominable in our eyes than he would have been regarded by us without it.

A good will is good not because of what it effects or accomplishes, nor because of its fitness to attain some proposed end; it is good only through its willing, i.e., it is good in itself. When it is considered in itself, then it is to be esteemed very much higher than anything which it might ever bring about merely in order to favor some inclination, or even the sum total of all inclinations. Even if, by some especially unfortunate fate or by the nig-

gardly provision of stepmotherly nature, this will should be wholly lacking in the power to accomplish its purpose; if with the greatest effort it should yet achieve nothing, and only the good will should remain (not, to be sure, as a mere wish but as the summoning of all the means in our power), yet would it, like a jewel, still shine by its own light as something which has its full value in itself. Its usefulness or fruitlessness can neither augment nor diminish this value. Its usefulness would be, as it were, only the setting to enable us to handle it in ordinary dealings or to attract to it the attention of those who are not yet experts, but not to recommend it to real experts or to determine its value.

Read the first two paragraphs of the **Groundwork** (Kant, 1785) excerpt.

Write a 2/3 sentence summary

There is no possibility of thinking of anything at all in the world, or even out of it, which can be regarded as good without qualification, except a good will.

Highlight it.

Memorise it.

~ Kant, 1785, §393

For Kant, a **gute Wille** is good
irrespective of the outcome.

Explain to your
partner Gordon
Graham's
(2004)
example of a
good will with a
bad outcome

1. Write it out,
concisely

2. What if the **good
will** was a **weak** one?

Highlight and annotate the quotation(s) in Para. 3 that means

a *gute Wille*, to be genuinely good,
must muster all of its power,
summon up all of its strength

The genuine good will

Highlight it.

Explain it.

Memorise it.

“...yet would it, like a jewel, still shine by its own light as something which has full value in itself. Its usefulness or fruitlessness can neither augment nor diminish this value.” (Kant, 1785, 394)

Create!

- Devise your own example of the inverse: a (strong) malicious will plus a good outcome
- Devise your own metaphor (opposite of Kant's jewel simile)



Immanuel Kant

**What makes a
a good will
good?**

The good will

**What do you think
makes an intention a
good one, as opposed to
a non-moral/amoral one,
or an immoral one?**

What does Kant argue
makes a will a good
one?

Clue 1: His Pietest
background

Clue 2: **Deontology**

Two things fill the mind
with ever-increasing
wonder and awe...the starry
heavens above me and the
moral law within me

~ (Kant, 1788)