

# Immanuel Kant

- ❖ What is freedom? How can we act freely?
- ❖ What is the supreme principle of morality?

# Immanuel Kant: Contrasts

*Morality*

Motives

Duties vs inclinations

*Freedom*

Determination of will

Autonomous vs heteronomous

*Reason*

Imperatives

Categorical vs Hypothetical

# Immanuel Kant: Contrasts

*Morality*

Motives

Duties

*Freedom*

Determination of will

Autonomous

*Reason*

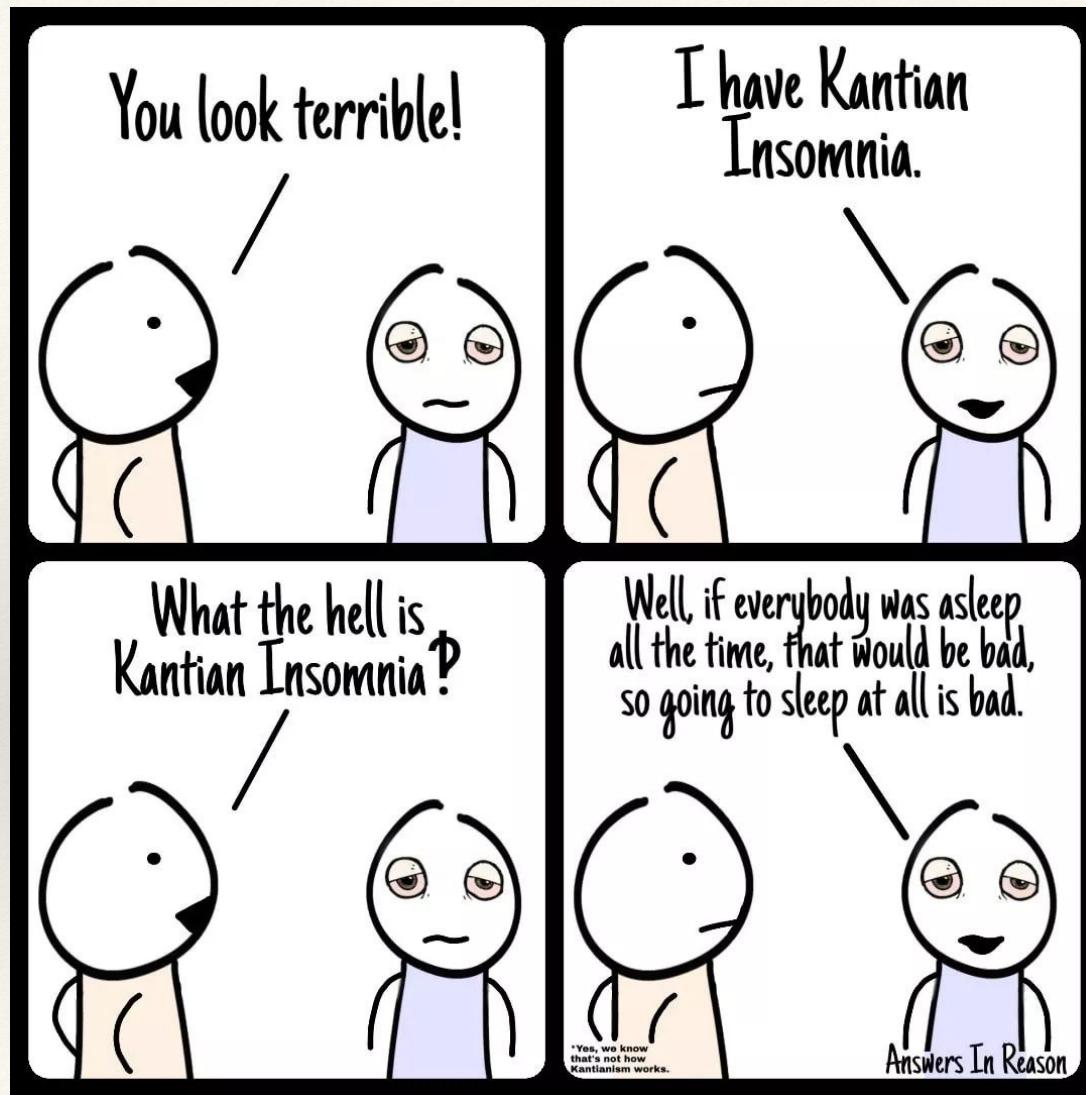
Imperatives

Categorical

# Categorical Imperatives

*The formula of universal law:*

“Act only on that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law”



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“Act only on that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law”

*This is the test for your action, not the reason for acting.*

# Categorical Imperatives

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“I say that man, and in general every rational being, exists as an end in himself, not merely as a means for arbitrary use by this or that will.”

# Categorical Imperatives

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“Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time, as an end”

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*It is OK to use someone (even ourselves) as a means, AS LONG AS we treat in a way that is consistent with respect to their dignity*

# Perfect and Imperfect Duties

*A perfect duty is one which one must always do and an imperfect duty is a duty which one must not ignore*

## **Four classes of duty:**

- ❖ **Perfect duties** to oneself, such as the prohibition of suicide;
- ❖ **Perfect duties** to others, such as the prohibition of deceitful promises;
  
- ❖ **Imperfect duties** to oneself, such as the prescription to cultivate one's talents;
- ❖ **Imperfect duties** to others, such as the prescription of benevolence

WHY SHOULD I GO TO  
SCHOOL?! WHY CAN'T I  
STAY HOME?



WHY DO I HAVE TO LEARN?  
WHY CAN'T I STAY THE WAY  
I AM? WHAT'S THE POINT  
OF THIS? WHY DO THINGS  
HAVE TO BE THIS WAY? WHY  
CAN'T THINGS BE DIFFERENT?



LIFE IS FULL OF  
MYSTERIES, ISN'T  
IT? SEE YOU  
THIS AFTERNOON.

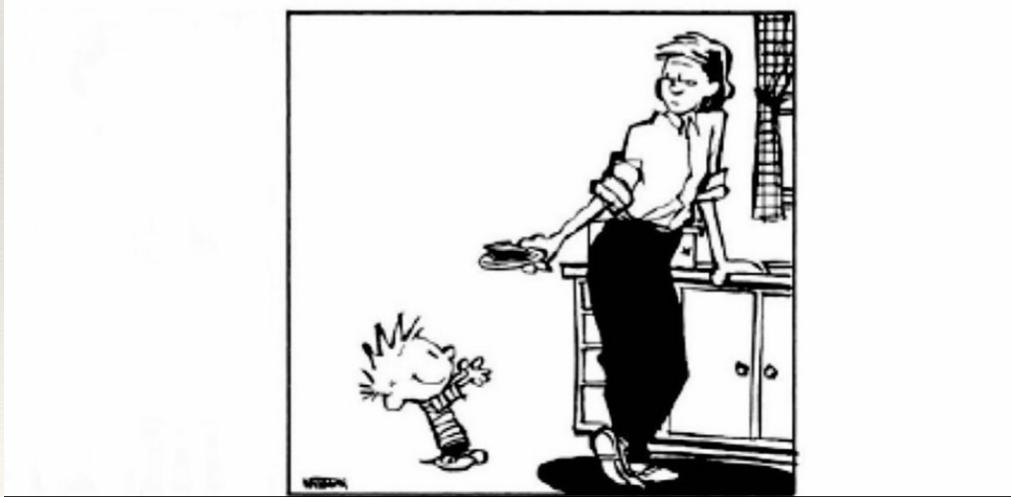


AT 7:00 AM, MOM'S NOT  
VERY PHILOSOPHICAL.



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*“Above all, don't lie to yourself. The man who lies to himself and listens to his own lie comes to a point that he cannot distinguish the truth within him, or around him, and so loses all respect for himself and for others. And having no respect he ceases to love.”*

*Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov (1879)*

# Immanuel Kant: Questions

1. *How can we reconcile duty and autonomy?*

Acting out of duty is to follow a moral law that you impose on yourself

2. *How many moral laws are there?*

The moral law I choose is based on the same reason than someone else's moral law

3. *How is a categorical imperative possible?*

The idea of freedom makes me a member of an intelligible world

# Immanuel Kant

*Is Kant's definition of morality too stringent?*

It is fine to have emotions and inclinations when thinking about an action,  
as long as they do not provide the reasons for acting.