

Ethics Without Principles

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Abstract

Traditionally, the distinction between morality and prudence is traditionally drawn by contrasting unconditional and categorical obligations with conditional and hypothetical ones. While Dewey suggests we reconstruct the distinction between prudence and morality in terms of the distinction between conventional and non-conventional social relationships, his suggestion is not accepted by Kantians. According to Kant, morality is a special function of mankind's "reason". Kant viewed morality as universal, unconditional and intrinsic. Dewey and Annette Baier state in their work that morality doesn't include basic universal truth and is instead related to group consciousness, such as making use of the group to define oneself and being seen as a member of that group. The development of individual morality and the promotion of group morality are for the purpose of re-inventing the human self and broadening the diversity of human relationships. Pragmatists of the Dewey school consider that morality is a matter of sentiment and that moral progress comes from an increase in Human imaginative power, not from Kant's so-called "reason".