

Kant's System of Ends

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Both Kant's system of moral principles and his system of duties have been subjects of intense scholarly attention. By comparison, few scholars have tried to work out how the various ends of Kant's moral philosophy fit together in a system. To be sure, there are discussions of what humanity is and of what Kant means when he says that it is an end in itself, how and why the good will is good without qualification, what moral worth is, why we ought to seek natural and moral perfection and what these consist in, what the ideals of virtue and autonomy are and how these are related, what the highest good is, and why it is the object of practical reason (- and what this means), what the differences between ultimate, supreme, and final ends are, what these ends are, and how they are related. But to the best of my knowledge, no-one has tried to provide an interpretation of how all of these ends and values are internally connected in a system and are not merely a collection of ends and values affirmed by Kant for a variety of disconnected reasons.

I argue that the various ends of Kant's moral philosophy are systematically ordered by the underlying idea of freedom as moral self-determination and that the different ends and values of Kant's moral philosophy must be understood in light of the different modalities of freedom as moral self-determination.