
Kantian Ethics (A Transcanada Episode)

In the realm of any profession, there is going to be situations that conflict with your moral obligations to yourself, and to the world. When these ethical situations arise, there is often little time to think about how to make a decision. The best you can do is analyze if the overall decision was moral or not. Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher, suggested that “an act is right if and only if it is performed with good intentions.

Kantian ethics focuses on how morality can be based on the ideas of human will, sense of duty, and how they can be universalized. There are many cases which can be studied and analyzed from different philosophical standpoints, but two great arguments are those from a Kantian perspective and utilitarianist views. The TransCanada whistleblower case can be analyzed by both methods to come to an ethical conclusion on Evan Vokes decisions.

Kant’s moral theory consist of four separate ideas, which are will, duty, maxim, and categorical imperative. Kant’s view on will is the inclination or inner motivation of an individual to act. In Kantian ethics morality can be based on the purity of the will, and not involving the consequences of the performing those actions. Kant’s definition of duty can be described as: “something we recognize as being required of us irrespective of what we desire to do”. His description of maxim can be interpreted as a “personal ought statement”, something that is subjective. The next idea is categorical imperatives, which can be interpreted as ways to test a maxim. The idea of categorical imperatives is to imagine if your personal, or subjective maxim can be applied universally, and what changes to life are made. This process is also known as the universalization test, which helps us determine what can be deemed as a good will/intention. The universalization test has tApplying Kant’s theoryWhile Kantian ethics is a great perspective, sometimes another angle is needed, a more utilitarian approach can be thought about.