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to an online talk on

The Free Subject: Autonomy, and Moral Agency in Kant

by

Prof. C. A. Tomy

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Join us on

Friday, 27 March 2026

3:30 PM to 5:30 PM IST

<https://meet.google.com/gss-hgbf-syv>

Abstract

The paper examines Kant's account of the subject and freedom in order to clarify how moral agency is possible within a world governed by natural necessity. It first distinguishes three senses of the subject in Kant: the empirical subject as appearance in the inner sense, the transcendental subject as the unity of apperception, and the intelligible or practical subject as a rational agent belonging to the world of understanding. The paper then distinguishes Kant's two concepts of freedom—transcendental and practical—and explains their systematic relation. It argues that freedom cannot be attributed to the empirical or transcendental subject but only to the intelligible subject as self-active and spontaneous. On this basis, the paper shows how Kant's doctrine of autonomy grounds the universal principle of morality: laws that reason legislates for itself must be universal, unconditional, and binding on all rational beings. Finally, the paper explains how Kant's two-standpoints framework allows a single subject to be both naturally determined and morally free, thereby grounding the concepts of duty and moral responsibility.

Speaker Bio

C. A. Tomy is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Hyderabad. He has previously held academic positions at the Indian Institutes of Technology in Delhi and Kanpur, as well as at Goa University. He joined the Department of Philosophy at the University of Hyderabad in 2018. His primary areas of research and teaching include the philosophy of mind, cognition, and the philosophy of language.