

or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question."<sup>16</sup> Each law should aim to maximize the utility of the community, which is defined as the simple arithmetic sum of the expected utilities of each member. Bentham then systematized the parameters needed to calculate utility, including the intensity, duration, and certainty of "hedons" (pleasures) and "dolors" (pains). He offered an algorithm, the "felicific calculus," for summing the hedons and dolors to reach a moral verdict on any action, for any person, in any country.

Bentham's philosophy showed an extraordinary degree of systemizing, and as Baron-Cohen says, systemizing is a strength. Problems arise, however, when systemizing occurs in the absence of empathizing. In an article titled "Asperger's Syndrome and the Eccentricity and Genius of Jeremy Bentham," Philip Lucas and Anne Sheeran collect accounts of Bentham's personal life and compare them to the diagnostic criteria for Asperger's syndrome.<sup>17</sup> They find a close match on the main diagnostic criteria, including those involving low empathy and poor social relationships. Bentham had few friends as a child, and he left a string of angry ex-friends as an adult. He never married, referred to himself as a hermit, and seemed to care little about other people. One contemporary said of him: "He regards the people about him no more than the flies of a summer."<sup>18</sup>

A related criterion is an impaired imaginative capacity, particularly with respect to the inner lives of other people. In his philosophy as in his personal behavior, Bentham offended many of his contemporaries by his inability to perceive variety and subtlety in human motives. John Stuart Mill—a decidedly non-autistic utilitarian—came to despise Bentham. He wrote that Bentham's personality disqualified him as a philosopher because of the "incompleteness" of his mind:

In many of the most natural and strongest feelings of human nature he had no sympathy; from many of its graver experiences he was altogether cut off; and the faculty by which one mind understands a mind different from itself, and throws itself into the feelings of that other mind, was denied him by his deficiency of Imagination.<sup>19</sup>

Lucas and Sheeran conclude that had Bentham been alive today, "it is likely he would have received the diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome."<sup>20</sup>

#### KANT AND THE DEONTOLOGICAL DINER

Immanuel Kant was born in Prussia in 1724. He was well acquainted with Hume's work and was favorably disposed toward sentimentalist theories early in his career, particularly when he wrote about aesthetics and the sublime. But although he granted that sentiments such as sympathy are crucial for a description of why people *in fact* behave morally, he was disturbed by the subjectivity that such an account implied for ethics. If one person has different moral sentiments from another, does she have different moral obligations? And what if people in one culture have different sentiments from people in another?

Kant, like Plato, wanted to discover the timeless, changeless form of the Good. He believed that morality had to be the same for all rational creatures, regardless of their cultural or individual proclivities. To discover this timeless form, it simply would not do to use observational methods—to look around the world and see what virtues people happened to pursue. Rather, he said that moral law could only be established by the process of a priori (prior to experience) philosophizing. It had to consist of principles that are inherent in and revealed through the operation of reason.<sup>21</sup> And Kant found