# INTRO TO ETHICS

DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL MORAL POWER

Robert D. Walsh, M.A., Ph.D.
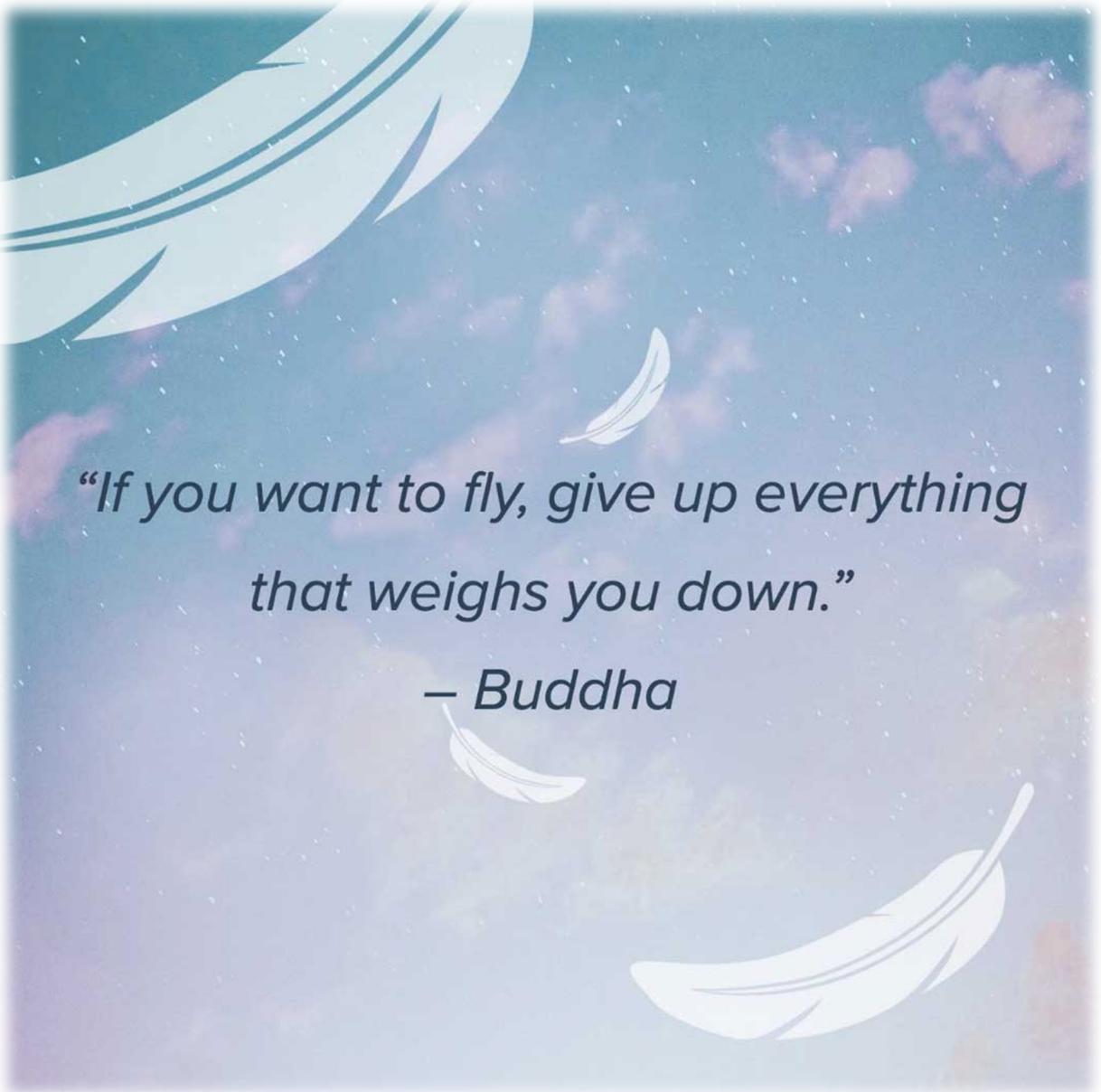
"If you want to fly, give up everything that weighs you down."
— Buddha

INTRO TO ETHICS

DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL MORAL POWER

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Moral Entrepreneurship

This Business Ethics textbook, *Intro to Ethics*, was formerly entitled *Entrepreneurial Ethics*. But it is not a book about applying ethics to entrepreneurship. It is a book in which the principles of entrepreneurship are applied to ethics. Let me try to explain what I mean.

Entrepreneurship is fundamentally about 'seeing'. It is about seeing (or "in-seeing") possibilities within a situation where others see only problems and dead ends. Many researchers

have tried to figure out how original entrepreneurial in-seeing or insight happens, how it can be taught and nurtured. Nobody knows for sure. But I believe that, in general, the development of practical insight and original in-seeing or insightfulness—the heart of entrepreneurship—is naturally developed by reflective, philosophical study accompanied by targeted, practical exercises that stimulate and challenge how you see things, both in business and in the making of moral judgments generally. Enhanced, enlightened seeing is the natural end of philosophical study. Thus, this present text aims to help you develop both your business acumen and your mastery of making sound, enlightened moral judgments. It might have been titled *On Becoming an Entrepreneurial Seer*.

Now, a "seer" is sometimes thought to be a person who has supernatural powers to see into the future. This idea is fanciful because there is no future 'out there' waiting to happen that can be 'seen into'. Rather, entrepreneurs with original insights *create* the future and, by envisioning or seeing it, make it present and real. When this kind of entrepreneurial in-seeing is directed at your personal, unique and dynamic moral value orientation, then this insightful reflecting and tinkering in the service of living the best possible life is what I think of as *moral entrepreneurship*.

The path to becoming a moral entrepreneur is the path of personal growth and development. This path leads sometimes to a disruption and reconfiguration of old moral values that were inculcated (reinforced, patterned) into your behavior during childhood. These moral values can become calcified and rigid and may not be the right fit for you anymore. They can become like old products which have served their purpose but now need to be replaced with something new and different that works more effectively. Your most trusted moral values will stay with you for a lifetime. Yet, the way in which you value your moral values and deploy them in your everyday life will shift and change with experience, knowledge, and circumstances.

This textbook, *Intro to Ethics*, has been developed on the classical philosophical model for in-seeing and insight creation. It will illuminate and allow you to critically evaluate and change old, sedimented and conventional moral values when you see that they are no longer as comfortable as they once were, no longer fit you just right, as if you have outgrown them. This will open-up the possibility for something new and different to happen: a renewed *you* ("you" understood as the locus of a unique moral value set*)* produced by your own entrepreneurial efforts.

Whereas the capitalist entrepreneur desires to start a new business, strategy, or product line, the moral entrepreneur desires to create or creatively re-configure a new moral self. To be successful with this, entrepreneurial ethics, like capitalist entrepreneurship or social entrepreneurship, requires concerted effort and a commitment on your part. Otherwise, it won't happen. *Intro to Ethics* presents an active, hands-on approach to moral value creation that requires you to be 'doing ethics' rather than merely talking about it or memorizing abstract formulations. You don't want to hear a carpenter talk-talk-talk about building your house; you want her to build it!

I learned this 'can-do' attitude from my good ol' dad, George F. Walsh. The son of Irish immigrants who grew up during the Great Depression, my dad was an intrepid entrepreneur. While studying advertising and marketing in night school, he worked his way—by dint of hard labor he would tell us, proudly—into the advertising department of Baldwin Locomotive Works in Philadelphia, PA. This hard-earned beginning would lead him to eventually create his own business, Walsh Advertising Agency. He worked with a variety of industrial clients, mainly in the specialty glass industry that grew up in South Jersey due to the abundance of silica thereabouts. He was a fervent proponent of free-market capitalism guided by Christian values.

My dad helped me to see the value of diligent work in pursuit of an original idea; the fundamental importance of straight-shooting honesty as the backbone of success; and the willingness to take calculated risks to achieve your heart's desire. "Success is never final," he would remind me, "and failure never fatal."

My mom, Dora L. Walsh, was the daughter of Italian immigrants. She was a social entrepreneur. She was a Registered Nurse and army veteran who worked in hospitals for years. She saw a need for personal health care to extend beyond the hospital, especially for the elderly. Never content with an inadequate status quo, she created a Home Health Care organization that brought together hundreds of volunteers and professionals to assist sick and elderly persons stuck at home. Her organization would become the model for all other counties in the state of New Jersey, influencing state-wide health care policy. She won numerous awards for her work, served on the boards of hospitals, and had a perpetual scholarship named in her honor. She was a tireless advocate for the vulnerable her entire life. My mom taught me to care.

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Because my parents thrived on entrepreneurial energy, I found myself at a young age being entrepreneurial before I knew what that meant. I started my first business with a premium shoe shine kit my dad gave me for Christmas when I was twelve, so I could shine his shoes properly. I soon became an expert shoe-shiner, and then I marketed my expertise. After school and during the summer, I would make the rounds of local businesses and shine the shoes of executives while they sat at their desks. My first introduction to the world of business turned a handsome ROI!

Using everything I learned from my parents and many teachers, the entrepreneurial approach to ethics that is reflected in the structure, purpose, design and function of this text is focused squarely on the creative development of your personal moral self through a process of insightful illumination that I believe will be of real, practical value to you for the rest of your life. Creating personal benefit for you is what entrepreneurial moral education is all about—producing morally driven, enlightened persons who have taken control of their moral value orientation and are intent on seeing how to configure it to achieve living the best possible life here and now in a world with others. All your other success in life will surely depend on your success with achieving that.

Welcome!

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INTRODUCTION

Living the Best Possible Life

The practice of philosophy has always been concerned with the achievement of excellence in living. Since it was first invented by ancient Greek sages like Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Pythagoras, Epictetus and many others, the practice of philosophy has been understood to involve a commitment to a certain *way of life* oriented to the successful achievement of practical life goals. The idea that philosophy is somehow detached from real life is a misunderstanding. Fact is, from the very start, philosophy was born out of an intense existential interest in how you should go about living *the best possible life*. That interest came to be called "Ethics."

Every rational person wants to live the best possible life. Don't you? Of course, that doesn't mean that I know what the best possible life is for you or for anyone. We each must figure that out for ourselves. But, for all of us, creating and living the best possible life certainly involves developing personal moral values. That is exactly what those first Greek philosophers spent a good bit of time trying to actualize in their lives. This textbook follows their lead.

The various discourses that arose among the ancient philosophical schools—reflections reaching out to every area of knowledge—were not pursued purely for their own sake (enjoyable as that might be), but for the sake of cultivating the moral growth and development of the students who engaged in those reflections and exercises. As Pierre Hadot (1922 - 2010), a renown French

philosopher, puts it in *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, the early Greek philosophers understood the study of philosophy as "the training of human beings, as the slow and difficult education of the character, as the harmonious development of the entire human person, and finally as a way of life, intended to 'ensure…a good life and thereby the 'salvation' of the soul." [1]

The ideas that were examined by philosophers were put into practice through various forms of 'exercises' that were intended to bring about moral value upgrades. These exercises formed steps along the path of living the best possible life. The reflective discourses clarified the practical exercises theoretically, while the practical exercises concretized the theoretical ideas in the immediate certitude of lived experience. These mental and practical exercises, along with reflective philosophical training, were thus meant to bring about an enlightenment of moral consciousness and create an increase in personal moral growth and development, an increase in personal moral power.

Personal moral power

Personal moral power is your ability to achieve living the best possible life. Moral values guide our actions, and actions, in the final analysis, are what morality is all about. Talking about ethics won't produce moral power any more than talking about sit-ups will produce flat abs. It is the hands-on practice of philosophical exercises that is necessary to develop the musculature of moral power.   In the ancient Greek schools, these exercises constituted a way of life that had the goal of creating a well-rounded person of excellence in every regard, ready to face moral challenges in your private and professional life.

Talking about ethics won't produce moral power any more than talking about sit-ups will produce flat abs.

Because of the personal development orientation of *Intro to Ethics*, the subject matter presented in this text is less important than the practice of working with what is revealed by that subject matter, along with the exercises that are designed to lead to an expansion or deepening of your moral consciousness in relation to it. Abstract ideas are of no practical value until they are embodied in your everyday engagements. As Aristotle said, "What good is the study of ethics if you don't put it into practice?" Everyday life is the only place where morality happens. Yet, despite the ever-present nature of morality in everyday life, there is often a curious lack of awareness about how moral values guide our actions.

Morality is mostly invisible in everyday life. We act morally without realizing fully how we are doing so. This invisibility is because your morality was learned, starting from when you were a young child, in much the same way as your native language and basic social skills were learned. Your cognitive, social, and moral development overlap and all share the same functional invisibility.

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[1] Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (Cambridge: Harvard, 2002) 65.

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Think about it. We learn to speak our native language without first learning grammar or syntax. For example, most of us are readily capable of using the subjunctive mood and we may do so many times a day. Yet, we do this without knowing what the subjunctive mood is or the rules for when and where it should be used. This is because we all learn our native language imitatively, and then use it intuitively, by a kind of subjective 'feel' in a situation that will convey what we mean effectively to others. This intuitive use of language is then socially structured into meaningful speech through the recognition of what we say by others.

Such intuitively driven, social use of language is different than learning a rule for the use of the subjunctive mood and then consciously trying to apply the rule in appropriate circumstances, as beginners often do when learning a second language. Morality works similarly.

Most people make many moral judgments every day without knowing exactly what a moral judgment is or how it might be distinguished from an aesthetic judgment, say, or a judgment of taste. In fact, if you ask most people on the street what a moral judgment is you will undoubtedly get the same quizzical response you would get if you asked them to explain the use and abuse of the subjunctive. Just as you can use language effectively without knowing the rules, you can also act morally without reflectively knowing how you are doing so.

Morality remains mostly invisible for most adults. It stays in the background of their mostly moral actions until moral value conflicts bring it to the foreground. Generally, this invisibility of morality is not a problem. Social reinforcement generally keeps people's actions within conventionally accepted standards. Ignorance of syntax won't necessarily be fatal to a sales pitch. But the potential problem with conventional morality is that it allows of no way to think critically about itself. It has no perspective from which to see its own moral value orientation clearly. Conventional morality remains stuck in conventional thinking. And that will make growth and development of your moral power difficult if not impossible.

Conventional morality effectively reduces you to the position of being a slave to the moral value orientation that was programmed into you as a child and which continues to be reinforced

by conventional culture. This may not be all bad, of course, especially if your moral values were programmed into you by benevolent sources. But, even so, conventional morality is too often narrow and limiting, and can become rigid, brittle, and ineffective. It is surely insufficient for a more enlightened, fluid consciousness aiming at excellence and success in life. This would be a person who aspires toward living the best possible life rather than merely going along with the conventional morality of the crowd.

The practical purpose of this text

From the perspective of personal moral growth and development, then, the purpose of this text is to provide you with numerous moral ideas, principles, conceptual frameworks and exercises that will expand your moral consciousness and thereby put you fully in charge of your moral value orientation. Since it is your moral value orientation that structures your entanglements in the world, it will be much to your benefit to be in the moral driver's seat rather than to be driven along by unseen conventional moral forces.

The purpose of this text is not to make you be more moral. No text and nobody can do that for you. Your morality is *entirely* up to you. The purpose of this text is to make you more reflectively conscious of how it is that you already are making moral judgments so that you can then decide whether you want to upgrade your moral value orientation or not, according to how *you* see fit from *your* study of the moral theories, principles and perspectives presented in this text. It will then be fully up to you to decide how much and in what ways you might want to tinker with and make changes to your moral value orientation.

The chief purpose of this text is to put you fully in charge of your personal moral value 'database'. This is easier said than done. It is not a task that can be completed by merely reading a book or taking a course in ethics. Rather, it requires a personal commitment on your part to achieving excellence as a way of life. This is a commitment that you should adopt *for life*, starting right now—if you haven't already. Here is why I think you should do that. Your morality is the way that you configure the values that construct your sense of self. These moral values configure your whole life and all your personal and professional engagements in the world. In this way, moral values are geared to living the best possible life. I think that it is best not to leave your desire for success in life to blind allegiance to half-conscious moral values.

Moral development

Current states of consciousness are raised by being challenged and disrupted. You may find that you have some resistance to engage such challenges to your moral values. Resistance to change is normal, even when it is you changing yourself. Disrupting your own moral status quo can be uncomfortable because your moral status quo is your comfort place, the old rocking chair on the front porch of your moral psyche. But the potential moral power that can be created from challenging and disrupting your comfortable moral status quo now will be justified by a large margin down the road.

I guarantee you that there will be a practical payoff in personal growth and development for you from your effort of engagement with this text—proportionate to your investment, of course. The study of ethics will enhance your life. This is your chance for an upgrade to your moral value orientation. But a passive download won't work. Knowing what justice is doesn't guarantee that justice will appear in your everyday life. Moral ideas must be brought to life through practice. Seeds must be planted to grow.

The structure of the text

The nine chapters of *Intro to Ethics* present the basic tools that you will need for the investigation of your moral value world. These tools will open-up your ethical understanding of how morality works in practice. They are meant to help you make possible your determination of what you want your personal moral value orientation to look like.

The tools presented in these nine chapters are both conceptual and practical tools. Conceptual tools are the various moral theories, the ideas underlying them, and the principles and perspectives derived from the theories that the chapters investigate. There are also practical tools in the form of strategic ideas and concrete perspectives that can be deployed pragmatically to reconfigure and refine your moral value orientation toward the achievement of the greatest possible success in life. The Stoic principle of action presented in Chapter 6, for example, is just such a tool.

At the end of each chapter there is a section focused on putting the ideas presented in the chapter into practice. The Practice section includes a list of terms you should know how to explain to an intelligent friend; a set of study questions to help you secure your understanding of the ideas and concepts presented in the chapter; reflection questions intended to take your thinking beyond the ideas presented in the chapter; and, finally, scenario exercises designed to target the development of empathy and moral response as you determine what you would do if you were in the scenario.

Chapter summaries

Chapter 1 reviews some of the basic ideas from the history of moral philosophy in the Western tradition that are pertinent to the overall goals of the text. The basic idea is to show how ethics, understood as the reflective study of morality aimed at living the best possible life, first emerged and was developed within a practical philosophical context, and how this context has informed the approach to ethics that is reflected in *Intro to Ethics*. The distinction between ethics

and morality is investigated. Challenges to a purely rational ethics are considered; a "relational relativism" is proposed; and moral pluralism is described.

Chapter 2 focuses on contributions to Ethics from the field of Moral Psychology. Again, the intent of this chapter is focused practically. Moral Psychology is shown to be particularly helpful in demonstrating how non-rational aspects of human functioning can impact moral consciousness and moral actions. Social Psychology research has shown that cognitive and perceptual biases, situational factors, emotions, and emotional intelligence all play a crucial role in your moral life and influence your moral judgments.

Bringing the insights from Chapters 1 and 2 together, Chapter 3 opens a mini reflection on human nature understood as *subjectivity*. It investigates the moral subjectivity that is necessarily presumed in any ethical consideration and addresses the question of whether this moral subjectivity can be cultivated and developed. The developmental moral stage theory of psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg is presented as representative of the rationality-focused *Ethics of Justice*, while a counterpoint to this liberal, modernist orientation is presented by Carol Gilligan from a feminist point of view in the context of an affectively-focused *Ethics of Care*. The Ethics of Justice and the Ethics of Care are broad, and, therefore, not precisely defined, moral value delineations or perspectives. These two moral outlooks will weave their way through the entire extent of *Intro to Ethics*. Sometimes they will be sharply defined across a moral chasm, with justice in conflict with care; and sometimes they will be deeply entwined and mutually reinforcing, as is the case with volunteerism and strategic philanthropy.

Continuing the investigation into the existential situation of the moral subject, Chapter 4 looks at various theoretical orientations and perspectives from within the general context of the Ethics of Care. These moral theories and perspectives are specifically geared to your personal moral growth and development. They are naturally oriented toward putting you in charge of your morality.   Virtue Ethics, Self-actualization theory, Phenomenology, and Existentialism are presented collectively as both a general approach or 'method' for actually "doing philosophy" (rather than merely talking about it) and as a justification of that 'method' as well. This chapter is all about the everyday process of creating your moral self; how to do it and why you should.

Whereas Chapter 4 looks at moral theories that inform a personal growth and development approach to Ethics, Chapter 5 approaches morality from the perspective of the theoretical orientations that inform an exclusively rational moral decision-making approach, along with its own justification. Deontological theory or duty ethics is contrasted with the teleological theory of Utilitarianism. How these two theoretical perspectives are deployed in practice is explained and demonstrated. These rational theories are naturally oriented to an Ethics of Justice. Since these moral frameworks are so embedded in Western culture, you will undoubtedly find them to be intuitively familiar. Yet they can be tricky to manage in practice in several ways, especially because of how emotion will inevitably figure into the process. The impact of emotion on your deontological and teleological moral value judgments will be investigated using the Runaway Trolley 'thought experiment' to reveal where you stand.

Chapter 6 returns directly to the question of your personal moral power. This question is taken up within the context of the philosophy of Stoicism and the psychotherapeutic treatment program that was somewhat derived from it called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Stoicism, it is argued, is well-suited for dealing with moral life and business in the twenty-first century. In fact, Stoic moral values are very much alive and well today, as you will see. This

chapter presents a concrete, practical Stoic program for moral self-development that is geared toward your achieving the best possible life in the world, both in your personal life and your professional business career. How we can lose our personal moral power, how we can unconsciously give it away and the consequences of this is contrasted with how we can 'take back' our personal moral power—although this may be challenging to accomplish. The benefits of this practice, however, are shown to be clearly connected to success in both business and life generally.

Yet, there are limits to our personal moral power. Various social science experiments, such as Milgram's obedience study, Darley & Batson's Good Samaritan studies and the Stanford prison experiment-gone-bad seem to suggest that our process of moral deliberation, judgment and action is impacted, influenced and limited by unconscious situational factors. We supposedly control our moral life, but to what extent? Should we be held morally responsible for decisions we make that were not completely under our control? To what extent are you or are you not in control of your moral life? These questions will be investigated in Chapter 7 through a reflection on whether moral character—if it exists at all—is capable of withstanding the situational influences of

corporate culture, or whether we are, morally speaking, "victims of circumstances." Sam Sommers, author of *Situations Matter,* will help to decide this question from the perspective of what he calls the "flexible self."

The first seven chapters of the text focus on your individual personal moral value orientation, cultivation and development. But we are not merely isolated, separate individuals functioning autonomously from one another. We are also thoroughly social beings. In fact, we may be more essentially social than individual, despite appearances. Chapter 8 looks at the relation of the individual to the social world from a rational Ethics of Justice perspective reflected in Social

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Contract and Distributive Justice theories and the question of the relation between morality and legality.

Chapter 9 continues to investigate the social dimension of your everyday, existential moral situation in the world, but more from the perspective of an Ethics of Care and the question of your personal moral growth and development in relation to others. The theory of Moral Egoism is presented from both positive and critical perspectives and is contrasted with the idea of altruism. It is shown how the egoism/altruism continuum is reflected in both the theory of Moral Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights theory—moral perspectives linking the individual to the social world. Consideration of egoism and altruism also raises the important question of strategic philanthropy. Your personal stance in regard to these moral perspectives can be determined from a reflection upon philosopher Peter Singer's classic thought experiment about the Drowning Child presented in this final chapter of *Intro to Ethics*.

Let's get started!
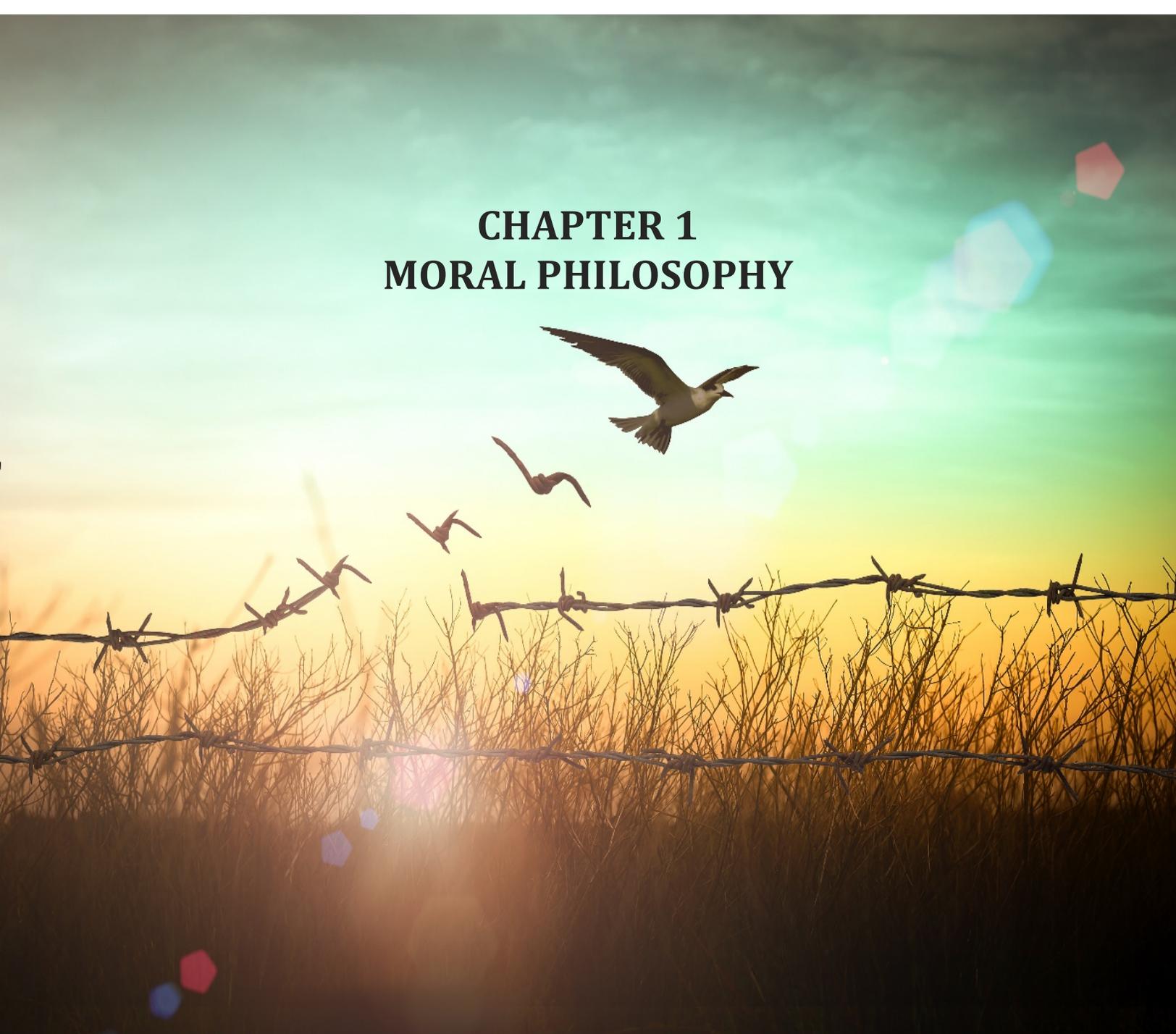
CHAPTER 1
MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Introduction

In this chapter of *Intro to Ethics,* we will investigate the way in which ethics (understood as a reflective, rational practice aimed at your personal moral growth and development) emerged out of ancient Greek philosophical schools and then influenced the development of Western culture and morality down to our present day. Ethics is a field of study that is continuing to grow and develop. This chapter will highlight some of the key aspects of ethical theory and practice from the history of that development.

Of course, it will be impossible to survey the entire field of ethics in this chapter. And such an aspiration would be inconsistent with the more practical goal of this textbook, which is to provide tools and exercises aimed at your personal moral growth and development. Therefore, instead of attempting to provide a comprehensive account of the history of ethics, this textbook will focus on what you need to engage in ethics practice effectively in your everyday ordinary life.

Philosophy: the birthplace of Ethics

Philosophy, as the well-known literal definition of the term suggests, is the love (*philo*) of wisdom (*sophia*). But how that practice of loving wisdom works in everyday practice, and what, exactly, is meant by both the terms "love" and "wisdom" as the goal of that practice, is not immediately clear from the literal definition of the term "philosophy." However, the idea that philosophy is the love of wisdom does open the door to the phenomenon of moral philosophy and

Rightly defined philosophy is simply the love of wisdom.

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO
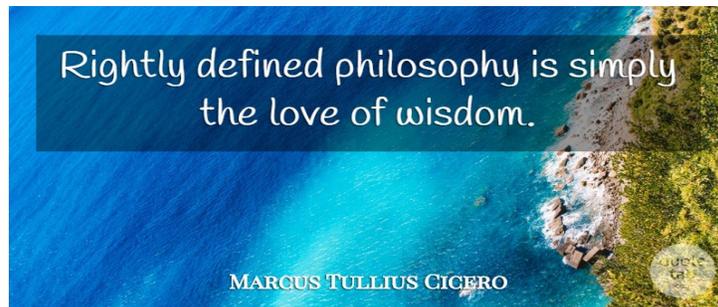
gets us going in the right direction. But what is wisdom? And how and why should we love it? We will have to take a roundabout course to get to answers to those questions.

Let's try another approach. From a practical perspective, we could say that philosophy uses reason to understand reality and answer fundamental questions about knowledge, life, morality and human nature. Note the emphasis on the *practice* of using reason and logic in doing philosophical 'research'. It will be helpful to look more closely at what we mean by reason or reasoning, and, more generally, rationality. Are reason and rationality sufficient in the realm of morality for determining correct moral action? We will need to question this idea. Social Psychology, for example, will show us that non-rational, bodily aspects of experience, and unconscious, situational nudges of all kinds, influence how we act and what we decide – even though we might feel we are acting autonomously and rationally. So, we will need to look beyond the merely rational to understand what ethics is all about.

For example, the relatively new field of Embodied Cognition argues that our subjective, bodily experiences are crucial to the process of cognitive reasoning. Check out the brief video below. (8:19)
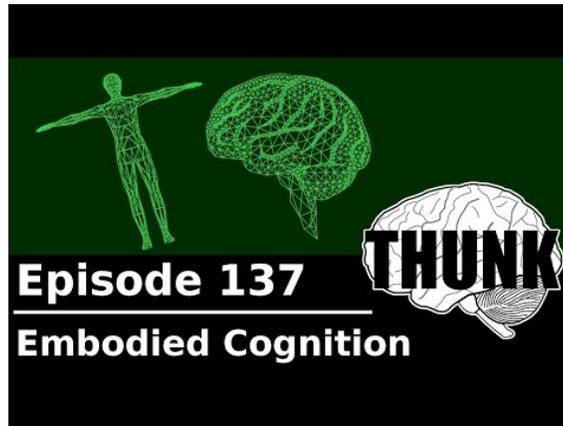
Sometimes it is said that philosophy seeks to know the essential nature of things. To seek the essence of a thing means being able to see what is happening with that particular thing as it is, free from bias and prejudice. It means allowing the phenomenon (whatever we are considering) to appear as it is rather than as we want it to be. Easier said than done.

Right now, for example, as we are trying to see *what philosophy is*, it would be easy to come up with an arbitrary, abstract definition from the dictionary and then impose that definition on the idea of philosophy and announce: Okay, here is what philosophy "is" essentially. But, such an authoritarian approach to getting at the "essence" of philosophy (or anything else) might miss it altogether.

Rather, the phenomenological approach used in this text (which will be explained in detail later in the course) will look at things such as "philosophy" from various *perspectives*, as we are doing right now, without conceding that any one perspective is the absolutely right or only correct perspective. We will have to see how this *perspectival approach* to Ethics avoids falling into moral relativism (the idea that any one perspective is the absolutely right perspective).

Let me just add here that for me, personally, philosophy is *a way of life* that involves putting into practice every day the moral ideas, beliefs and values that result from conscious reflection and deliberation and always oriented toward living the best possible life. What I like about this definition is the way that philosophical practice is understood to be a creative part of my active, engaged, everyday life in the world with other people and not merely some abstract bunch of ideas floating in the clouds somewhere.

The study and practice of philosophy should produce something of real, practical value for you in your everyday life. Otherwise, why bother?

Why Should you Study Ethics?

Debra Satz, a professor of Ethics in Society at Stanford University, and Rob Reich, the program's director, underline the benefits of studying ethics. (1:48)

Should Reason Lead the Way?

Broadening the ethical horizon of students for practical success in the world was certainly the purpose of rational discourse for the early Greek philosophers. But, unlike the idea of Embodied Reasoning presented above, moral decision making was understood to be guided by the *Logos*, meaning reason or logic. The passions, emotions, and desires were thought to be a hindrance to reasoning.

This pre-eminence of rationality for the Greeks is reflected in Plato's image of the human soul depicted as a chariot pulled by two cantankerous horses. The two horses represent the non-rational aspects of human beings, passion, emotion, desire, etc. The charioteer represents Reason whose job is to tame and control the non-rational horses and make them amenable to control.
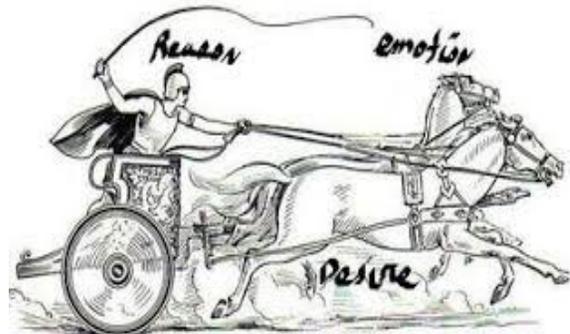
Modern Social Psychology, however, has repeatedly demonstrated that our moral value orientation and the moral action that flows from it are often greatly influenced by unconscious situational factors, a study we will take up directly in Chapter 2. This will lead us to an idea of *bounded rationality*, as opposed to strict or pure rationality, which is more consistent with the kind of moral deliberation in which we normally engage every day.

> **The idea of *bounded rationality* is that our reasoning at any point and time is influenced or "bounded" by non-rational elements such as setting, situation, emotion, social conditioning, previous knowledge, nudges, other people, etc.** (Cf. with 'embodied cognition' above)

Ethics and Morality

Ethics

Surely you have noticed that in the English language the terms "ethics" and "morality" are often conflated and used interchangeably, as if they were synonyms, which they are not, at least from a philosophical perspective. Yet, neither are they defined consistently by philosophers.

The terms "ethics" and "morality" are frequently thrown about in conversations and philosophical arguments vaguely and imprecisely.

In order to avoid such confusion in our studies, let me suggest that we agree to a conventional distinction between the terms "ethics" and "morality" in order to facilitate our investigations.

"Ethics" is a rational, reflective practice aimed at achieving theoretical clarification and understanding of how we should act morally to live the best possible life. In short…

Ethics is the study of morality

We will need to look more carefully at the nature, structure, and practice of ethical thinking, but, generally, ethics can be understood as a practice of reflective thinking about morality. What, then, is morality?

(My) Morality

The reason I like to sometimes include the parenthesized term "(My)" when talking about morality is to keep in mind that **morality, from an existential perspective, is a built-in 'dimension' or 'aspect' of the whole person** and not some kind of free-floating, depersonalized, abstract object of thought floating around inner space somewhere. *Morality is always embodied human responsiveness occurring in a specific place, at a specific time, about a definite something, for a particular person.*

Morality is all of your ideas, beliefs, values, feelings, emotions, norms, principles, conventions … all of your experiences and conditioned responses from early childhood until now, your whole personal history, including rational rules and emotional paradigms by which you deliberate and make moral evaluations and judgments every day as you strive to live the best possible life.

Morality is the way in which you make moral judgments and take moral action

Your moral value orientation, although generally stable across situations, is thoroughly fluid, dynamic and constantly being reconfigured by new ideas, situations, experiences, life challenges, etc.

Morality is influenced at every moment by non-rational experiences. Thus, morality involves **moral sensitivity**, **moral awareness**, **moral courage or fear, moral will** or conviction, **moral strength**, **moral confidence**, **moral flexibility, moral firmness or rigidity, moral openness to new ideas, moral daring, moral limits, and other such attitudinal, unconscious, and affective characteristics of persons.**
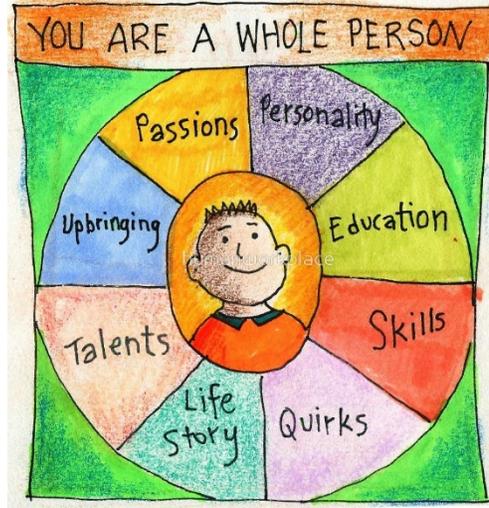
In short, your morality is essentially the whole of who you are. You and I are moral through and through and not only a moral being occasionally or partially.

Thus, contrary to the behaviorist perspective, morality cannot be reduced entirely to conditioned behavior. Neither is morality an instrument or a tool that a value-neutral "I" merely uses. Morality itself is not a coat that can be put on or taken off. From this dynamic perspective, **the basic characteristics of morality must be understood as action-oriented predilections that are essential dispositions connected to your historical embodiment in the world and which apply to you as a whole person.** Let's take a closer look at some of the more important 'components' of your morality.

Moral Ideas include things like equality, freedom, morality, ethics, character, justice, fairness, caring, right, wrong, good, bad, excellent, etc.

Moral beliefs include commitments to orientations that will be used to guide how you act. "All people are morally equal," is a moral belief. So are "All people are not morally equal;" "The world was created by God / or not created by God;" "There is a reason for everything that happens;" "Life is absurd and meaningless;" "People are basically selfish / or basically loving." These are all moral beliefs. Where you stand regarding such beliefs will make a difference as to how you act in different situations.

M*oral values* can be understood to be ideas, beliefs, feeling states, or commitment orientations that are integrated into your real-life judgments of preference for what is emotionally, intellectually, and materially desirable or not desirable to you for living the best possible life.

Your morality is unique and *constantly adapting* to new experiences within your interpersonal, social framework, while also staying somewhat stable across situations. Your moral values guide your practical moral judgments in action. Your value commitments or value configuration collectively makes you who you are as a person—dynamic and changing, and yet, ambiguously, somehow staying the same person through those changes. From this perspective, it makes sense to say that 'I am my morality'. And you should keep in mind that your moral values can sometimes come into conflict with one another.

Moral judgments are decisions about what you should or should not do, believe, consider acceptable, etc. We often make moral judgments unconsciously because the moral values, beliefs, ideas, and principles upon which those judgments are based are often employed unconsciously or half-consciously, as was mentioned above. They are unconscious because they were reinforced and learned when you were a child, so that now they are a part of the tacit moral knowledge you engage, embody, and enact intuitively and immediately within the interpersonal, existential practices you participate in every day, including right now.

Immediate lived experience

We all form our basic judgments about ourselves and the world from the impressions of *immediate lived experience*. Immediate lived experience consists of intuited 'sense impressions' prior to full consciousness and reflection, before they have become "this" or "that;" that is, before linguistic/conceptual representation. You can learn to make lived experience more conscious.

In this brief video (2:42), Leah Harris, MA, a suicide attempt survivor and trainer with the National Center for Trauma-Informed Care, provides a brief explanation of "lived experience". What she says here from a therapeutic perspective is also completely applicable to how we go about making moral judgments. Our "lived experience" is what informs our moral judgments just as much as our rational reflection.

Immediate lived experience is not yet at the level of reflection or rational judgment since it is pre-rational and pre-conceptual (like tacit knowledge, hunches, gut-feelings, intuition, passion, and, for the most part, emotion—before we have become aware of it as such), but there could be no judgment possible if we had not experienced *something* prior to our judgment about what that something *is*. Philosophical study should help you become more conscious of lived experience.

Intuited sense impressions become experience only after we have judged them to be "this particular thing" or "that particular thing," which we do mostly unconsciously as part of our linguistically structured experience of the world. We are doing this all the time.

Human beings are judging beings *par excellence*. Our entire experience of ourselves and our world results from judgments we have made and are making. Making reasonable judgments both requires rationality and is at the very heart of what it means to be a rational human being. Yet, you can also make judgments non-rationally. Doing what you feel like doing is an obvious example. This can be risky, morally speaking. One simple test: You know your moral judgment is rational when you can give meaningful reasons to support it, that is, reasons that would make sense to a reasonable person. You know your judgments and actions are non-rational when you can't give meaningful reasons for them.

Moral Absolutism and Moral Relativism

Moral Absolutism

Moral Absolutism (sometimes referred to as "moral realism") is the belief that there is an absolute moral standard against which moral questions can be judged with complete certitude. From this perspective, actions can be judged to be right or wrong regardless of the context, consequences, or situation. From an absolutist perspective, actions are inherently moral or immoral regardless of the beliefs and goals of the individual, society, historical period, or culture that engages in the actions. If something is wrong, it is always wrong, at all times and in all places.

Thus, an absolutist might hold, for example, that morals are inherent in the laws of the universe because they have been put there by an absolute creative energy, force or deity. These absolute laws, then, are also thought to be reflected in the nature of human beings since humans are also a part of the natural order. To act morally from this **natural law perspective**, then, is to conform your human will to the absolute will of the laws of the cosmos, understood usually as reflecting the will of God or some other fundamental source of absolute certitude, such as "Nature." (As we will see later in the course, both deontology and teleological theories are absolutist.)

Moral Relativism

Moral relativism asserts that there are no absolute standards. Rather, moral judgments are true or false relative to some particular standpoint, such as a culture or a historical period, as in *cultural relativism*; or that of a particular person, as in *subjective relativism* or *subjectivism*. Also, from a relativist perspective no standpoint is uniquely privileged over any others since there is no absolute standard by which to judge such privilege.

One common interpretation of subjective relativism asserts that you must determine what is right for yourself, and whatever you determine to be right will be right for you. The same action that is morally correct for you may not be morally correct for another person. Moral judgment would be relative to each situation and each person. From this relativist perspective, there would be no way to determine which judgment is correct in an absolute, rational, objective, situation-independent way.

> **SITUATED RELATIVISM … It is difficult to deny that relativism does, to a certain degree, represent the existential situation of the moral person, despite absolutist attempts to show otherwise. However, everyday relativism is not the relativism of an isolated, sovereign and autonomous human being, detached from situational influences and making moral decisions in a vacuum of separateness from others and the human world in which we all co-exist. Rather, the relativist moral subject is always situated in a human context and immersed in a rich web of moral influences, contexts, interactions, practices, happenings and relationships which have a more or less conscious impact on moral sensitivity and awareness, moral responsiveness, moral courage, and willingness to act, and my whole sense of who I am from a moral perspective.**

The moral subject is always situated in a human context and immersed in a rich web of moral influences, contexts, interactions, practices, happenings and relationships…

Thus, contrary to subjective relativism, the assertion that the lack of an *absolute* foundation means that we are condemned to a relativism where anything goes, is incorrect in my view. There is an alternative to a pure subjective relativism that presents itself out of our everyday natural immersion in a rich web of situated, unique, interpersonal moral relationships and practices with others, a contextual, social framework apart from which morality could not exist.

Intersubjective relativism

A relativist moral position can have an existential, intersubjective moral foundation. This would be a kind of **"relational or intersubjective relativity"** or relational ethics grounded in the thoroughgoing human-interdependence of the social world in which we live. I am irrevocably linked to other persons for my sense of self and my relation to the world. This essential connectedness with other people is an important context for my own unique moral value orientation.

We must come to our own subjective moral decisions, yes, but we always do so within the horizon of our intuited perception of the permitted or proscribed actions within any given social orientation in which we participate, such as family, a hometown community, school, church or

business organization. We do this mostly in an unconscious way, adapting our responsiveness to our perception of expectations communicated tacitly within the various social connections that structure our daily life.

Thus, holding a relativist moral position does not necessarily foreclose on the need for continual formation, re-formation and articulation of our fundamental moral value orientation in connection to the value terms of the many complex practices in which we interact with others every day.

The argument will be presented throughout this text that human persons are grounded morally in and through our relationships with others. Being morally grounded in our basic connectedness to other people happens mostly in a pre-conscious 'relation' of responsiveness to others that is essential to our own unique moral self-formation. This perspective will be investigated in more detail in later chapters.

Moral Pluralism: a perspectival approach to morality

Moral pluralism is a general framework for arriving at sound moral judgments. The moral pluralist argues that because moral issues, problems and dilemmas can be highly complex, we likewise need a complex set of tools with which to manage complicated moral choices.

The moral pluralist urges that, when confronted with the need for a reasoned moral decision, you should consider and apply as many ethical concepts, principles, perspectives and theories as are appropriate to see, evaluate and resolve the moral issue.

A failure to engage in a plurality of considerations and applications may result in an inadequate and ineffective moral analysis and moral judgment.

There is an app that can be downloaded to your smartphone that helps you make moral decisions. It was rolled out by the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University in conjunction with Apple a while back. This app can help with moral decisions, but it can't make a moral decision for you. It does encourage a pluralist approach by guiding users to evaluate moral decisions from different perspectives.

Generally, the moral pluralist resists quick fixes to moral questions. This is the case because the pluralist understands that the realities of life are such that no single formula can embrace all of the many unique and complex moral issues, problems and dilemmas that you will be faced with. **So, the moral pluralist holds that a more comprehensive application of the concepts, principles and theories that comprise the history of ethics is a necessary part of good moral decision-making.**

There are no easy answers to many of the moral challenges that confront us in our everyday life, and moral complexity can lead to moral perplexity. This is especially likely to happen when one is locked into a single, rigid moral perspective within a mostly unconscious conventional framework driven by emotion. No single approach to moral deliberation is right for all moral problems in all situations. Seeing things from different sides can expand your horizon of possibility and thereby lead to making better moral judgments. And that should improve your chances of achieving the best possible life.

A Brief Overview of Chapter 1

Two ideas from the Introduction to *Intro to Ethics* that you should be familiar with are **"the best possible life"** and **"personal moral power."**

All rational beings desire to live the best possible life since it would be irrational not to desire this, even when what we think is the best thing to do turns out not to be such a good thing after all. Robbing a bank might seem like it would be a good thing to do because you will get a lot of money, but when you get caught and sent to prison you might think otherwise.

It is up to you to determine what the best possible life is for you (the best possible thing to do in any given situation). This is a project that is presented in the text as a *way of life* since it is never finished. What do you think is the best possible life for you?

Personal moral power is your ability to achieve what you think is the best possible life. Personal moral power mostly involves making good judgments, but making good moral judgments also involves other things like moral sensitivity, moral assertiveness and moral courage.

From your reading of Chapter 1 you should be clear about the difference between **ethics** and **morality**. Ethics is a reflection on morality. Morality involves

all of what goes into your making of moral judgments that are in harmony with your natural, rational desire to live the best possible life.

You should be able to explain the difference between ethics and morality, focusing mostly on morality. Morality is how we go about making moral judgments in the world every day. In the final analysis, I argue that morality involves the "whole person" since we do not make moral judgments with only a "part" of ourselves but with our whole self.

The section on the challenges to a strictly rational approach to ethics is important and will come up again repeatedly in the rest of the text. **The text argues that the most complete approach to ethics would involve both rational and non-rational dimensions of the person since both of these domains contribute to ethical decision making.**

The section on absolutism and relativism is particularly important. Absolutism is the idea that there is a moral standard that can be used to always make correct moral judgments. From a more personal perspective, **moral absolutism** is reflected in the attitude of the person who thinks they always know what the absolutely correct moral decision is in any situation. I will argue that we rarely, if ever, know what is morally correct with absolute certitude. Thus, we seem to be left with **moral relativism**, which asserts that there is no absolute moral standard, so moral judgments are always relative to something else, like how we feel or what is required by circumstances or a culture.

In response to moral relativism, I argue that there is an interpersonal moral standard, even though it is not an absolute standard in the traditional sense. There are **situational moral standards** that arise from our everyday associations and relations with social institutions and other people that we engage with every day. Our own moral value configuration is attuned to these situational factors. We adjust our moral value orientation as we move in and out of these various domains. Thus, these situational factors along with our own personal moral value reflections, create a relative or situational standard for our moral evaluations and action. We 'pick up' the situational cues for these moral value orientations intuitively and, often, unconsciously.

Finally, the section on **Moral Pluralism** is important because Pluralism is the recommended approach to doing ethics that is promoted throughout the text. You should be familiar with the requirements of this approach to moral reflection and deliberation and the justification for it. You should also be able to engage this

approach to doing ethics in practice. Try it out when you are working with the scenario exercises that are presented at the end of each chapter.

PRACTICE

TERMS TO KNOW

- Moral Philosophy
- Ethics
- Morality
- Business Ethics
- Virtue Ethics
- Deontological
- Teleological
- Utilitarianism
- Moral Absolutism
- Moral Relativism
- Moral Pluralism

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE TERMS

Exercise hint: If you really want to test your understanding of these terms, try this with a friend: First, explain to your willing friend one or more of the terms from the list above. Then, ask your friend to repeat your explanation back to you. Finally, see how close your friend's restatement matches your own understanding. Discuss and bring your understandings into sync. Repeat the exercise. Anyway, you should be able to give brief explanations of these key terms.

TRY ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. Imagine you are explaining to an intelligent friend why it is beneficial to study philosophy as a preparation for a business career. What would you say?

2. What is ethics?

3. What is morality?

4. What is the importance of your ideas, beliefs, values, and principles for making successful moral judgments?

5. Think of a decision you made recently. What ideas, beliefs, values, and principles guided your decision-making?

6. What is the value of moral theories? Why do we need them?

7. Which type of moral theory (deontology or teleology) would be more likely to support the following statement? "It is totally wrong to intentionally harm an innocent human being against their will, even if that harm would result in the cure for all cancer." Explain your answer.

8. What is moral absolutism?

9. What is moral relativism?

10. How can situations and other people provide a kind of non-absolute foundation for our moral value configuration and moral action?

11. What is moral pluralism?

REFLECTION EXERCISES

1) One way to find out about your own moral value orientation is to notice what you agree with and disagree with about what other people are doing or saying, especially about others' actions. For example, say you notice an adult talking very harshly to a child in a public place, a store, for instance. You think the adult is belittling the child and this is not right. Reflecting on this, you will see that your response suggests that you have certain values about how children should be treated in public. What are those values? Try to give them specific names, if you can. What are your moral principles that support those values? Try using what you approve of and disapprove of in others to learn more about yourself. How do you feel about what you find out?

2) Think of a situation in your life where you believe that you see the whole picture and have a good idea of what is going on. Now try to see that situation from the perspectives of other specific people who are involved. How would they be likely to see what is going on? How would they describe it? How might they feel about it?

3) Check out the ancient Indian parable called "The Blind Men and the Elephant" (numerous versions on YouTube). How does this ancient parable illustrate the central idea of Moral Pluralism?

4) Here is a phenomenology exercise. Okay, you read Chapter 1. Thus, you had an experience of reading Chapter 1. In 300 words, describe the features of your experience of reading Chapter 1. You might begin by writing something like "When I first started reading Chapter 1, I thought… (I felt…, I wondered…, I hoped…, I just knew…, I remembered…, I feared…, I imagined…, etc., or whatever verb you choose) but after I had finished reading it I thought, felt, wondered, etc. Don't think too much about it, just reflect

on your experience and describe whatever comes into your mind about that experience. Let your description of your experience flow out without critical concern. You can always come back later and sort it all out, edit it, etc.

SCENARIO EXERCISE

General note on engaging the scenario exercises in this text: "The Terroist Bomber" scenario below is a moral thought experiment meant to highlight an actual, real-life moral dilemma in which you might or could possibly find yourself involved. Imagine yourself as the official in the scenario who has decide whether to use torture or not. For it to be most effective, you should engage the scenario from your total moral orientation, both how you think and how you feel. Try to imagine the scenario as being real, not pretend or merely made-up. Empathize with the official (and the terrorist) as best you can. What would you *really do? Of course, it is not merely an abstract, rational moral dilemma that the official is dealing with. There are also emotional, relational, and situational factors for him or her. Is it right to inflict harm on any person intentionally? What about the official's responsibility to the innocent people who might get hurt? What about the civil rights of the bomber? What does it feel like to be in such a bind? How do you think* you *would deal with it? Most importantly, how would you* justify *how you dealt with it?*

The Terrorist Bomber

A home-grown terrorist who has threatened to explode several bombs in crowded areas has been apprehended. Unfortunately, it is positively known that he has already planted the bombs and it is clearly established that they will go off in a short time. It is possible that hundreds, perhaps thousands of people may die and many more will be maimed and injured.

The authorities cannot make him divulge the location of the bombs by conventional methods. He refuses to say anything. He requests a lawyer to protect his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination since he is a U.S. citizen.

In exasperation, a high-level official suggests the use of torture. This would be illegal, of course (and it is illegal because it is thought to be immoral), but the official thinks that it is nevertheless the right thing to do in this desperate situation.

Do you agree or disagree? Why? If you agree, would you also agree that it would be morally justifiable to torture the terrorist's innocent wife if that is the *only* way to make him talk? If not, why not?

Case Study: Cultural Relativism and Honor Killing

CULTURAL RELATIVISM – IS HONOR KILLING IN PAKISTAN MORALLY ACCEPTABLE?

August 22, 2019 11:00PM

Pakistan Should Not Again Fail 'Honor Killing' Victim

End Impunity of Family Murders of Women

Members of civil society protest against a recent "honor" killing in Islamabad, Pakistan on May 29, 2014. © 2014 Reuters

In July 2016, 26-year-old Qandeel Baloch was strangled to death by her brother, who said he killed her because she "brought dishonor" to their family and tribe through her flamboyant online videos and statements.

Qandeel's case received broad attention because of her celebrity. But Pakistani rights activists estimate that there are about 1,000 "honor killings" in Pakistan every year.

Convictions are rare for many reasons, yet critical is a loophole that allowed the legal heirs of the victim to pardon those responsible – who are usually also a relative.

Qandeel's killing prompted a widespread outcry in Pakistan, leading to legislative action and the promise of prompt prosecution. Parliament passed a law imposing harsher punishments for "honor killings" and partially eliminated the pardon loophole.

This raised hopes that the case would be a turning point for the Pakistani government, which has tolerated violence against – and even the murder of – women on "honor" grounds.

State prosecutors took the unusual step of charging Qandeel's three brothers, including the one who confessed to killing her, with a crime against the state. But the trial has dragged on. On August 21, Qandeel's parents asked the court to "forgive" her brothers, their lawyers arguing that since the anti-honor killing law was passed after Qandeel's death, it does not apply in her case. The next day, the court rejected the parents' pardon request.

Still, "honor killings" and pressure to pardon perpetrators seem to have continued unabated since the adoption of the law. There are no credible official figures on "honor killings" because they often go unreported or are passed off as suicide or natural deaths by family members. But as an indication, in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, at least 94 women were murdered by close family members in 2017.

Justice for Pakistani women requires a broader government effort, including more state prosecutions of "honor killings," reformed criminal laws, and greater access for women and girls to safe emergency shelters and other services when they report risks from their family.

Murdered social media star Qandeel Baloch posted images of herself that few Pakistani women would dare to – but her traditional village background caught up with her. (8:08)

The government should end a system in which a woman's life is considered worthless and family members can kill with impunity.

Pakistan should not fail Qandeel again.
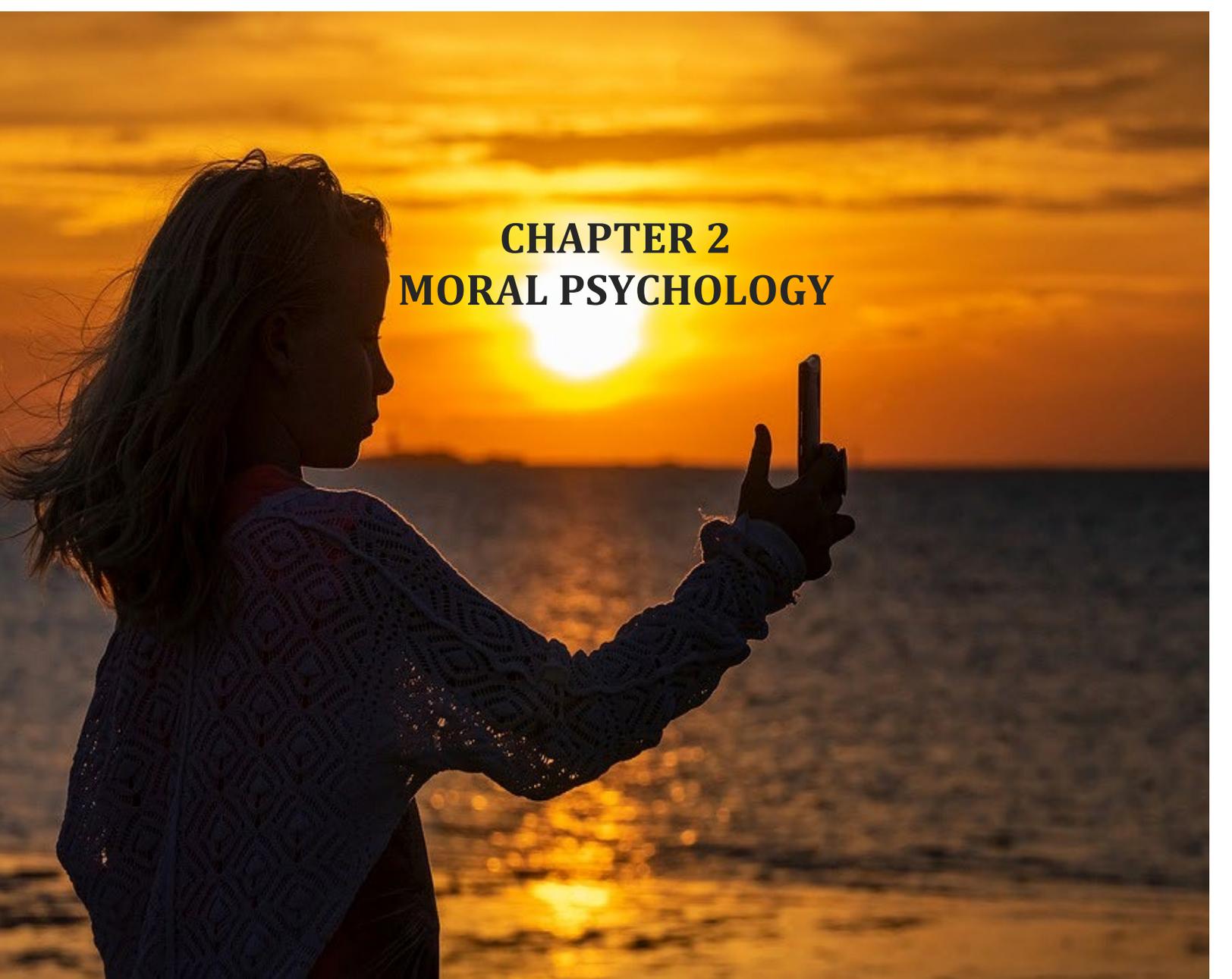
CHAPTER 2
MORAL PSYCHOLOGY

Introduction

I n the previous chapter, we looked at contributions to the practice of ethics from the history of philosophy. One of the things that stands out in this overview is that most philosophy has approached ethics as a rational, theoretical, reflective process, while asserting that non-rational human experiences like impulses, gut-responses, urges, passions, desires, feelings and emotions should be kept out of the moral decision-making process. What about that?

This restrained attitude toward non-rational human processes is perhaps because non-rational human responses are rooted in the movements of the sensuous body. Dependency on these non-rational, bodily impulses was thought to lead to moral confusion and error. The rational intellect, on the other hand, was thought to be more reliable for making good moral judgments. Therefore, it has long been taught that we should lead our life according to what is the most rational and reasonable thing to do.

But human beings often don't act rationally. We like to do what we feel like doing. We frequently make moral judgments based on emotions, feelings and inclinations.

Modern social psychological research has provided something of a needed corrective to the traditional philosophical dualism of mind and body, where the rational mind is idealized and the emotional passions are sent into moral exile.

By bringing to light through empirical research the way in which cognitive bias, unconscious situational factors, selective perceptual awareness, and the emotions impact the moral judgments we make every day, social psychological research has advanced the discussion and practice of personal, normative ethics.

In our everyday engagement with our social world, situated as we are in multiple, interlaced practices with other people, we respond with our whole self as a single moral entity, and not in a piecemeal, dualistic, calculative fashion with the moral mind trying to control the immoral body.

Existentially speaking, your whole body is suffused with mind and morality, immersed in it, as was reflected in the idea of *embodied cognition* in the previous chapter. In our pre-conscious responsiveness to other people we are moral before we know it. And even the deepest reflection never fully catches up with who we already are.

This chapter does not aspire to survey the whole field of moral psychology. Rather, our focus will concentrate on those contributions from moral psychological research that are particularly helpful for accomplishing the practical goals of this text. To do this, we will first turn to a consideration of various **cognitive and perceptual biases** that undermine moral perception and judgment. And then we will look at the importance of **emotion** in moral decision-making .

What is moral psychology?

The field of Moral Psychology is an empirical, descriptive, and objective science focusing on human and animal behavior that has made many contributions in recent years to the behavioral study of ethics.

Moral psychological research, using controlled, empirical experimentation methods, aims to describe objectively and in concrete, verifiable terms, how people act morally in various life situations and how elements of those situations can influence moral consciousness and behavior. This research is necessarily interdisciplinary, drawing on both the empirical resources of

the human sciences and the conceptual resources of philosophical ethics.

Let's begin by looking at a specific example of how psychological research connects with moral deliberation and understanding in the research of social psychologist Dr. Paul Piff.

VIDEO (16:36): Professor Piff discusses his research on greed.

Paul Piff

Paul Piff, Ph.D. is a Social Psychology professor at U.C. Berkeley. Dr. Piff and his students carried out structured empirical experiments that focused on determining how the situational factors of income level and social position might influence moral behavior and self-understanding in various

naturalistic and controlled circumstances. In the video above, Dr. Piff describes the experiments he performed. Check it out!

Dr. Piff found that "relative to lower-class individuals, individuals from upper-class backgrounds behaved more unethically in both naturalistic and laboratory settings" such as ignoring pedestrians in crosswalks, lying in a negotiation, cheating at a board game, or stealing candy from an off-limits jar.

Dr. Piff concluded that "upper-class individuals' unethical tendencies are accounted for, in part, by their more favorable attitudes toward greed."[2] Thus, as individuals climb the ladder of success financially and socially they become more self-interested and focused on the usefulness rather than welfare of others. Watch the video above and see what you think.

Dr. Piff's findings seem to suggest that the pursuit of self-interest is a more fundamental motive among society's elite, and the increased desire for material signs of success associated with greater wealth and status can promote wrongdoing. Unethical behavior in the service of self-interest that enhances the individual's wealth and rank may be a self-perpetuating dynamic that further exacerbates economic disparities in society, Dr. Piff concluded from his research.

Then, based on the experimental outcomes of his work, Dr. Piff suggests that this mostly unconscious tendency of wealthy persons to lie, cheat, steal, and be more focused on self-interest and getting ahead at the expense of others is at the root of ***income and wealth inequality***; and since income and wealth inequality is a bad thing that is causing harm to many, in Dr. Piff's view, we should do something about it. Rich people *are* greedy, Dr. Piff is asserting, so they *should* donate more money to help others. They *should* change their attitude, stop lying and stealing, be more altruistic and brake for pedestrians in crosswalks.

How about it? Does the empirical evidence about what *is* the case in Piff's experiments justify the moral assertion about what *should* be done? What do you think?

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[2] Paul Piff, et al, "Higher social class predicts increased unethical behavior." *Proceedings of the National Association of Science*, vol. 109 / no. 11 (2012), p. 4088. See also, Paul Piff "Does Money Make You Mean?" YouTube 12/20/2013. https://youtu.be/bJ8Kq1wucsk

Zaria Gorvett

A second example of how social psychological research has been contributing to an understanding of our moral value formation and its everyday deployment is reflected in Zaria Gorvett's insightful article entitled "The reasons why politics feels so tribal in 2016," written just before the last U.S. presidential election featuring Trump versus Clinton. [3]

It is well known that, according to social psychological research, our moral beliefs and judgments can be influenced *externally* by unconsciously experienced situational factors and then be uncritically reinforced through *internal*, cognitive strategies that are biased or prejudiced. Gorvett applies these ideas to civil discourse today.

Zaria Gorvett

Gorvett believes that civil discourse is currently becoming more polarized into rigid, narrow-minded, camps of belief with little empathy for the other side. Such behavior, Gorvett asserts, is being reinforced by **situational factors** in modern society including educational levels, place of residence, and the internet … *all of which facilitate the possibility of limiting our social interaction to others who have beliefs that are similar to our own, while avoiding those who have dissimilar beliefs. And that is what is creating increasing social value polarization.*

Gorvett cites the research of psychologist Matt Motyl of the University of Chicago who showed that people are more likely to move to places where other people share their moral and political views, and it is easier for them to do that these days because of the high mobility in our society. Online communities also make it easier for like-minded individuals to interact exclusively with other like-minded persons and give a thumbs-down to opposing opinions, thus perpetuating the so-called "**group polarization effect**":

people tend to gravitate toward others who share their views and avoid people who don't, which tends to further radicalize and reinforce the inflexible rigidity of their views, and further delegitimize the opposition.

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[3] Gorvett, Zaria. "The reasons why politics feels so tribal in 2016," BBC Future, www.bbc.com British Broadcasting Corporation, August 2016.

Dr. Lilliana Mason: Social Polarization and the 2016 Elections. Mason's research shows that Democrats and Republicans are becoming more tribal and isolated from one another. (5:25)

Such critically unchecked views are then held in place by unconscious psychological strategies that are deployed to reinforce our biased and prejudiced beliefs. These strategies include things like "**the objectivity delusion**" (*the belief that I am being objectively true and reasonable, so if you don't agree with me you are being unreasonable*); "**the illusion of asymmetric insight**" (*the belief that I understand the views of others better than they understand my views*) and "**false consensus**" (*the belief that, if they knew what I know, any reasonable person would surely agree with me*).

These strategies for maintaining biased and prejudiced beliefs are *used to create and conceal our own moral blind spots.* Human beings alone seem to have figured out how to effectively fool themselves about their own true moral motivations without letting themselves know that they are doing so—a dubious achievement. The corrective for the development of this power of self-deception is to be challenged by an exposure to moral beliefs that are different from your own and that challenge you to reflect on the soundness and meaningfulness of your own moral beliefs and values. Because this takes us out of our "comfort zone," we resist and build walls of self-deception.

The psychological research on bias that Gorvett points to in her reflection on how polarized moral value positions are becoming in the U.S. is very applicable to our formation of moral value orientations in the ongoing everyday construction and constant reconfiguring of our morality. It is exactly these unconscious biases and prejudices operating in the domain of our everyday personal and professional engagements, *and which can result in disastrous life consequences,* that our textbook aims to elucidate and make available to your conscious control.

It is only by being challenged by others who hold dissimilar views from your own that your own moral perceptual consciousness will be exercised and developed to its fullest potential in order to achieve living the best possible life.
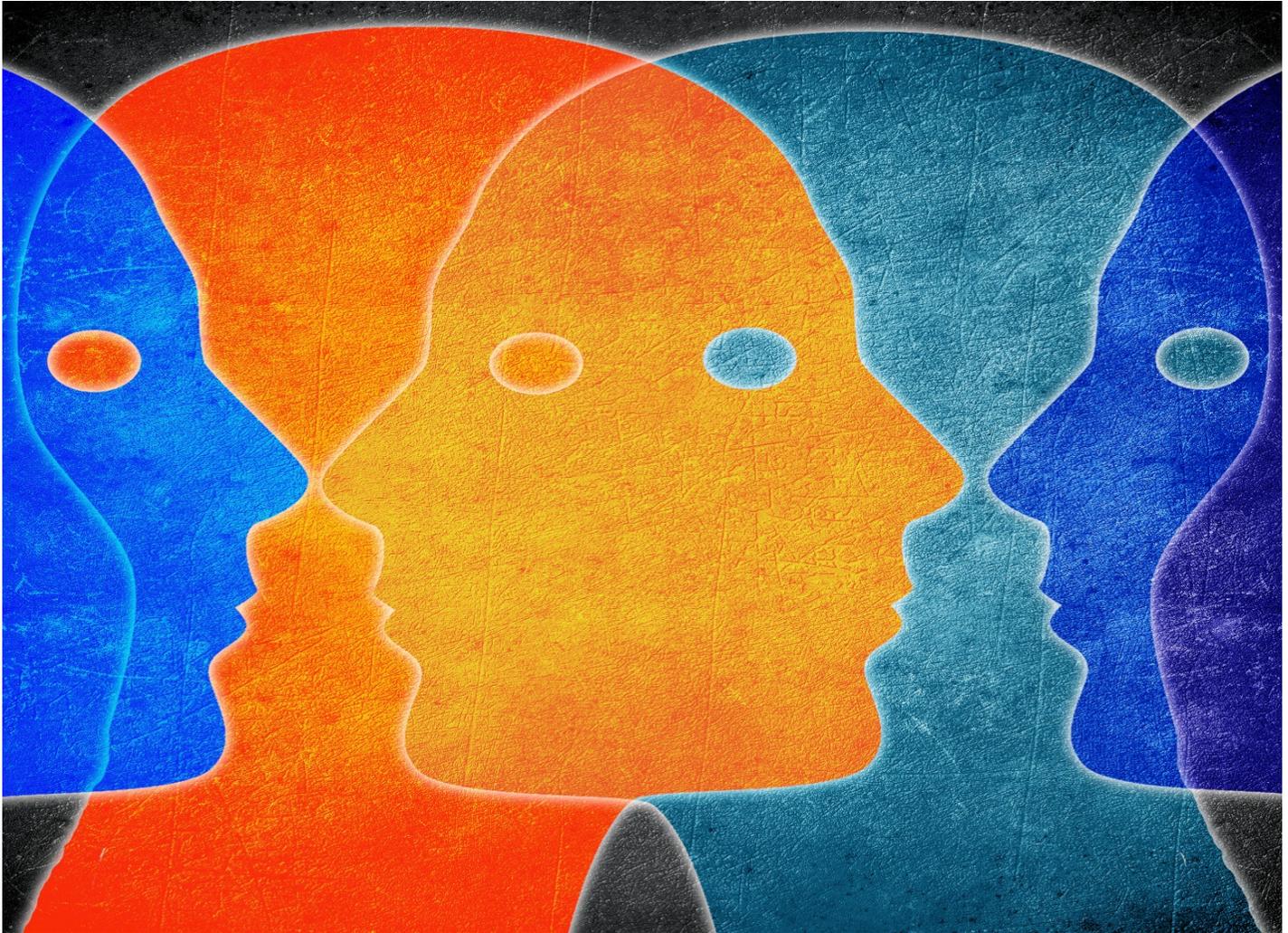
How psychology informs morality

Bias and Prejudice

Psychological studies focusing on morality have revealed that unconscious biases can radically alter the way you perceive, evaluate, and act in moral situations. Biases can blind you to the way you are unconsciously influenced in your beliefs and values by various aspects of those situations … without your knowing it.

1 every 2.5 seconds

That's how many decisions humans
make on average.

Source: PsychologyToday.com

Hot and cold empathy gaps, for example, are perceptual biases brought on by intense emotion, or the lack of it, which prevent us from empathizing with or understanding how others feel, or how we ourselves are being influenced by those emotions.

Confirmation bias causes us to unconsciously give more weight to evidence that confirms our own position than to evidence that is contrary to it.

Attractiveness bias is an unconscious bias that tilts peoples' evaluation in favor of individuals in hiring and other situations who fit the cultural or societal standard of "beauty."

Bias blind spot   Studies show that *almost everyone* demonstrates bias blind spot in which they perceive bias easily in others while pretty much denying it in themselves.

Psychological research has repeatedly established the widespread prevalence of unconscious perceptual and cognitive biases like those listed above. Also, research reveals that believing you are less biased than your peers has detrimental consequences on judgments and behaviors, such as accurately judging whether advice is useful. This research has important ramifications for morality. A moral blind spot can ruin your shot at living the best possible life.

A LIST OF BIASES

People seem to have no idea how biased they are. Whether a good decision-maker or a bad one, everyone thinks that they are less biased than their peers. This susceptibility to the bias blind spot appears to be pervasive, and is unrelated to people's intelligence, self-esteem, and actual ability to make unbiased judgments and decisions [4]

Research has found that the extent to which one is blind to his or her own bias has important consequences for the resulting quality of decision-making. <u>People more prone to think they are less biased than others are less accurate at evaluating their abilities relative to the abilities of others; they listen less to others' advice and are less likely to learn from training that would help them make less biased judgments.</u>

So, it seems clear that these and other unconscious perceptual and cognitive biases and prejudices can interfere with how you make moral judgments. And remember, moral judgments are always aligned with your desire to live the best possible life. Thus, unconscious biases can influence you to make damaging mistakes in moral judgments that can negatively alter the entire course of your life.

By working to see biases in your own perceptions and doing what is necessary to eliminate or manage them effectively, you will dramatically increase your chances for success in actualizing the best possible life and achieving personal and professional success.

DEBIASING

Helping people get passed their biases has become a thriving start-up business. The technique used is called "debiasing." Debiasing is the reduction of biases in judgment and decision-making through incentives, nudges, understanding, reinforcement, and training. *Cognitive bias mitigation* and *cognitive bias modification* are forms of debiasing specifically applicable to cognitive biases and their effects.

Is possible to ever become a completely "debiased" human being, a person who is totally free of bias and prejudice? Is bias a necessary part of human cognitive/perceptual functioning? When you think about bias as going against the norm of how *"the reasonable person"* would act in or evaluate a particular situation, you can see the necessity for distinguishing between bias, on the one hand, and original, divergent, critical, creative, disruptive and entrepreneurial thinking, on the other—a distinction which might be difficult to make clearly in some instances. The thing about most bias, however, is that it is entrenched, repetitive, and unrecognized as a bias.

Is bias a necessary aspect of human perception? We each see things from our own unique perspective even though, ambiguously, we also see those things with the belief that others see them in the same way as we do; which they maybe *do*, sort of, but, ambiguously, also they don't. From

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[4] Bias Blind Spot: Structure, Measurement, and Consequences. Irene Scopelliti, et al, *Management Science* 2015 61:10 , 2468-2486.

this ambiguous perspective, given the conjunction of both our individual uniqueness and simultaneous solidarity with others that 'structures' human perception, bias may be a necessary part of human perceptual experience. Like the need for a 'slant' in supposedly 'objective' news reporting, human perception may require a creative bias in order to form a new or revolutionary perspective.

So, perhaps it is not a matter of ridding yourself of bias and prejudice completely, but rather a matter of becoming aware of your pre-rational biases and how they might influence your perception and judgment. But keep this in mind: **believing that you are free of bias is itself a belief that is undoubtedly subject to bias.**
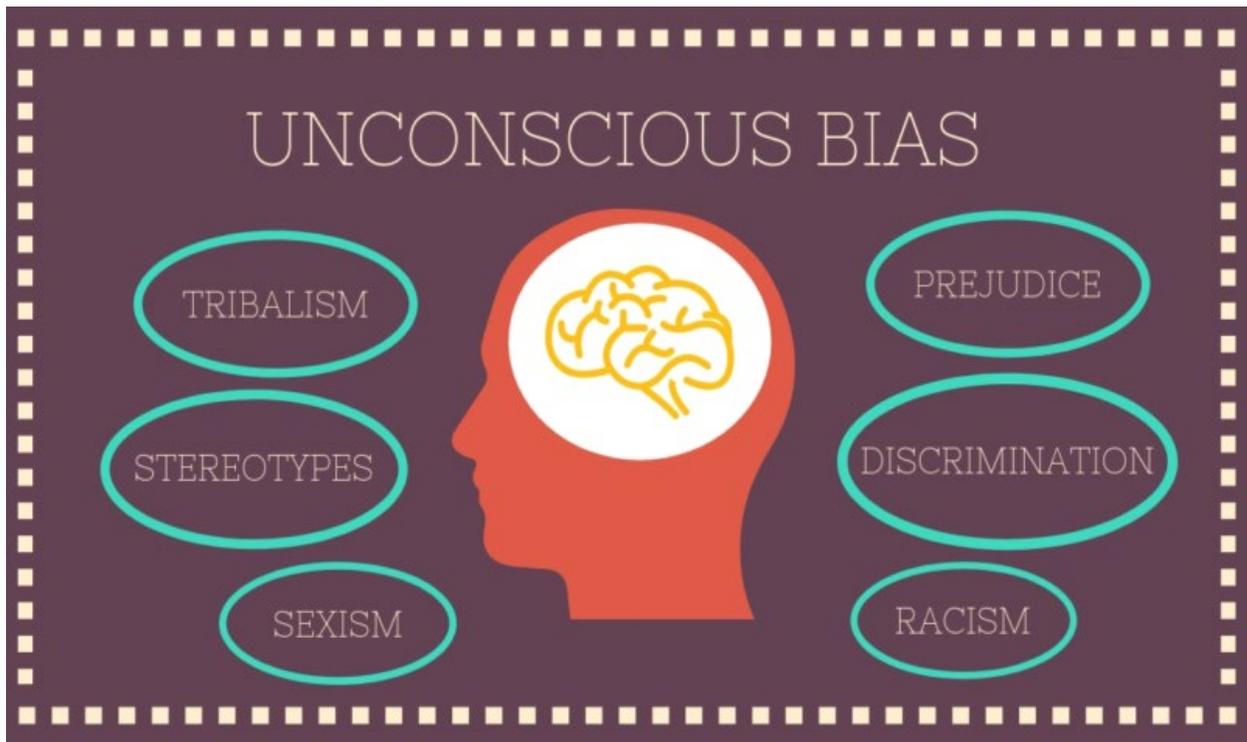
Cold and Hot Cognition

So-called "cold and hot" cognition (not to be confused with the bias of "hot and cold empathy gaps, see above) and "slow and fast" decision-making 'systems' illustrate another contribution from the psychological research that has implications for understanding moral feelings, motivation and responsiveness.

Hot cognition is a hypothesis about motivated reasoning in which a person's thinking is influenced by their emotional state. Put simply, hot cognition is cognition colored by emotion. Moral judgments made within the context of hot cognition can be problematic although hot responses are common in moral contexts since values are often held deeply with strong emotional wraps.

Hot cognition contrasts with cold cognition, which implies cognitive processing of information that is independent of emotional involvement.

Hot cognition is associated with cognitive and physiological arousal, in which a person is more responsive to environmental factors than usual. Hot cognition may arise, with varying degrees of strength, in politics, religion, business, personal relationships and other sociopolitical contexts where you are likely to encounter moral issues which are inevitably tied to emotion. As it is automatic, rapid and led by emotion, hot cognition may consequently cause biased and low-quality moral decision-making. For example, it is a bias to believe that you are capable of the same quality of decision-making under hot and cold cognition. In fact, research shows that hot cognition distorts our rational decision-making capabilities without our realizing it.

Thus, it is prudent not to make important decisions while under the influence of hot cognition. On the other hand, too cold of a response may cause you to miss a potentially rewarding opportunity. Knowing when to move fast and knowing when to slow down is a good trick to learn.

Slow and fast thinking and decision making

From "Deciding, Fast and Slow" by David Ludden, Ph.D.

"Traditionally, economists have assumed that humans are rational decision makers, yet in recent decades psychologists working in the field of behavioral economics have come to recognize that people are limited in their ability to make rational decisions. In some cases, such as when we have the time and the cognitive resources to think things through, we can be quite rational in our decision making. But when we're constrained by time or bombarded with other things that demand our attention, we tend to make quick, gut-feeling decisions. In his 2011 book *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, psychologist and Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman explains the so-called dual-process theory of decision making for lay audiences.

"Going with your gut isn't necessarily bad. We humans have evolved some pretty effective intuitions that usually lead us to very quick—and reasonably accurate—judgments, at least in the social realm. Likewise, taking the time to make a rational decision can lead us to what psychologists call "paralysis by analysis." That is, we're unable to make a decision in real time because we're bogged down by slow reasoning processes. For example, there's no rational process for deciding what to order for lunch, and so we just have to go with whatever feels right.

"According to dual-process theory, intuitive thinking is fast, while rational thinking is slow."

Emotions, ethics, morality

Moral psychologists have increasingly focused on emotion as a key component of moral judgment and action. There are numerous theories of emotions. These theories focus mostly on what causes emotions and what we are experiencing when we report that we are feeling this or that emotion. But none of the theories of emotion are universally accepted by all researchers.

In short, we certainly know that we have emotions experientially and we have an immediate awareness of those emotions in connection to moral judgments. But we don't seem to know much more about emotions from a scientific point of view after that.

Fortunately, what matters most from the ethical perspective of this text—geared toward illuminating how your morality operates in your everyday experience—is your clear awareness of the emotions you are having at any given time; how and when they seem to come about for you; what the outcome of the emotional experience is; and your ability to manage your emotions (and others') within a moral context. This can be tricky to accomplish because emotions bridge the rational and non-rational domains. Sometimes emotion behaves the way thinking behaves. Emotions can be used in a rational way to make judgments. At other times, however, emotion behaves like passionate desire. In this mode it can be hard to control.

I am more interested in you being able to effectively work with highly charged and sometimes problematic energies rather than trying to scientifically figure out the nature of emotional 'mechanisms'. Phenomenological investigation begins with your subjective emotional experience, which is always immediately available to you, but it must be brought from the intuitive level into reflective consciousness in order to assess its coherence and meaningfulness.

Merely asserting that "I feel this is the right thing to do" is insufficient for our purposes without unpacking what those feelings that are motivating your moral judgment and being able to justify them. With this practical goal in mind, let us consider emotions from the perspective of the Emotional Intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

The ability to recognize, express and control our emotions is essential, but so is our ability to understand, interpret, and respond to the emotions of others. Imagine a world in which you could not understand when a friend was feeling sad or when a co-worker was angry or when your child was feeling needy. Psychologists generally refer to these affective, emotional skills and abilities as "emotional intelligence."

From a everyday perspective, emotional intelligence (fast thinking) may be more important than rational, calculative intelligence (slow thinking). This is particularly true from a moral point of view, since many of our everyday moral judgments are emotional judgments rather than reflective, cognitive judgments. We can know with great assurance that we do not approve of

something without knowing clearly why we don't approve of it. With reflection on our emotional judgment, however, we can come to know why we disapprove.

Emotional Intelligence: The Social Skills You Weren't Taught in School

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to perceive, control, and evaluate emotions. Some researchers suggest that emotional intelligence can be learned and strengthened, while others claim it is an inborn characteristic.

Since 1990, Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer have been the leading researchers on emotional intelligence. In their seminal article "Emotional Intelligence" they defined emotional intelligence as a "subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions." [5]

Learning to recognize what other people are feeling can be tricky. It is challenging enough just to be aware of what I am feeling. When I get very angry, for example, it is usually clear to me that I am not merely irritated or bothered or simply disgruntled, but am having a full-blown intense experience of hot, angry emotion in regard to another person, persons, or situation that entails much more powerful energies than simply feeling dismay or irritation.

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[5] Salovey, Peter and Mayer, John D. "Emotional Intelligence," Imagination, Cognition and Personality, vol. 9, (3) March 1990.

My anger experience is accompanied by changes in my physical state, like feeling hot or suddenly flushed, and also with a desire to suddenly act out, or maybe a feeling of being on the verge of getting out of control, so perhaps a little scary energy in there too. This all seems to happen without me willing it and I may find it difficult to control the anger energy, especially if it seems to happen suddenly in an already hotly charged context.

So, the first skill to develop to become more emotionally intelligent is simply to become more consciously aware of the emotions that you are experiencing at any given time, along with their subtle attributes and complexities, including when and how they occur, etc. This will help a lot when trying to identify what others are feeling, which is a tricky field full of difficulties. So, first try it out on yourself. What emotions are you feeling right now, for example? Try to describe them in as much detail as possible, not just a single word.

You can also 'reason' with your emotional experiences to a certain extent. Upon reflection, suppose you notice that you often have the same kind of emotional experience whenever you find yourself in a particular situation, like maybe when you first wake up or when you are under the stress of a work deadline or when you are with certain people. You can use that insight provided by your emotions to make improvements in your routines, like maybe avoiding certain people until after coffee in the morning, or making certain to plan appropriately and take rest breaks when engaged in stress-producing projects, or maybe to see less of certain friends.

The emotions of others as we perceive them can carry a wide variety of meanings, so learning to interpret the sense or meaning of our own and others' emotional responses can be challenging.

If someone is expressing angry emotions, for example, you must interpret the cause and the strength of their anger and what it might mean. For example, if your boss is acting angrily, it might mean that she is dissatisfied with your work. Or, it could be that she got a speeding ticket on her way to work that morning or is stressed out by a personal relationship. You may be able to help your boss manage her emotions if your EI skills are up to it. But you can certainly manage your own emotions in relation to your boss's situation. Anger, for example, is something that a person *can* control, don't you think? Or, can other people cause you to get angry?

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IS A FAST-GROWING JOB SKILL

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The ability to manage emotions effectively is also a crucial, though challenging, part of emotional intelligence. Regulating your emotions with sensitive insight, responding appropriately, and responding to the emotions of others effectively are all important aspects of emotional management. This is a fantastic skill to have as a manager and business leader; perhaps *necessary* to achieve real success. And good for anyone and everyone aspiring to live the best possible life. Acquiring emotional skills, however, requires practice.

According to Salovey and Mayer, the four branches of their model listed below are, "arranged from more basic psychological processes to higher, more psychologically integrated

processes. For example, the lowest level concerns the (relatively) simple abilities of perceiving and expressing emotion. In contrast, the highest level concerns the conscious, reflective regulation of emotion."[6]

Remember, emotions are almost always complex—sometimes *incredibly* complex—and can be fluid even within a situation. So, be cautious not to reduce your own or others' emotional responses to a simple formulaic term like "angry" or "sad" or "happy" when these experiences are usually much subtler, nuanced, inflected, influenced by and connected to other emotions and cognitive states, etc.

A HIERARCHY OF EMOTIONAL SKILLS

1. **Perceiving emotions** (awareness of the emotions you/others are feeling)

2. **Reasoning with emotions** (using emotion to determine what to do)

3. **Understanding emotions** (what do my/others' emotions mean/signify?)

4. **Managing emotions** (using/guiding my/others' emotions effectively)

Try this Reflective Exercise: Begin to notice the emotions you have at different times of the day and try to distinguish among them by describing them clearly to yourself. Note whether you are experiencing different emotions simultaneously and whether they are acting harmoniously or are in conflict or what. Notice how long the emotion lasts, whether it is pleasant or not, whether it is recurring or not, the physical, sensual feel of it, its intensity, the extent to which you can control it, and so forth.

Since emotion generally urges us to action, notice toward what kind of action the emotion is encouraging you.

Regarding others, here is a simple practice for sharpening your emotional insightfulness. Try to determine what another person might be feeling and then ask them if they are feeling that way. See how accurate your interpretation is. Try to improve.

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[6] Salovey and Mayer, 1990

Caution: your perception of how others' might be feeling can easily be biased or skewed by other influences such as your physical condition, the mood you are in, beliefs, etc. "Checking out" your interpretation of others' feeling-states and correcting your view as warranted is the respectful thing to do. You might say: "You seem like you are feeling sad (or joyful or worried…). Are you?"

Moral Sentiment Theory

Moral sentiment theory approaches the intersection of emotion and morality from a naturalistic starting point. Although Moral Sentiment theory focuses on emotions like empathy and sympathy as a basis for moral decision-making, it was developed more as a philosophical theory than a psychological one. Yet, these two disciplines should not be thought of as separate, as should be clear from the present text you are reading.

Because of **Moral Sentiment theory's belief that human beings have an innate moral "sense"** there is a renewed interest in Moral Sentiment theory among contemporary moral psychologists and empirical philosophers. So, it is important to take moral sentiment theory into account, however briefly, since it is a moral orientation that will be useful in adjudicating the relation between emotion and reason in everyday moral practice and will re-appear later in our text.

The term "sentiment" is basically an older term for an emotion or an affective, feeling-state.

For moral sentimentalists, our emotions and desires play a leading role in the anatomy of morality. Some believe moral thoughts are fundamentally sentimental (emotion-oriented); others that moral facts make essential reference to our sentimental responses, or that emotions are the primary source of moral knowledge. Some believe all these things.

The two main attractions of moral sentimentalism are making sense of the practical aspects of morality, on the one hand, and finding a place for morality within a naturalistic worldview, on the other.

The corresponding challenges, however, are accounting for the apparent objectivity and normativity of morality if our moral judgments are merely autonomic (automatic) visceral responses. In other words, if our emotional moral judgments are relative to innate bodily processes, how can abject relativism be avoided?

I have tried to respond to this worry with my description of "relational or intersubjective relativism" in the previous chapter, whereby social interaction and connectedness with others influences and socializes our visceral and innate moral reactions.

Recent psychological theories by empirical philosophers emphasizing the centrality of emotion in moral thinking have contributed to the renewed interest in sentimentalist ethics. This is true for the emerging **moral paradigm of Care theory**, for example. Moral sentiment theory

has been embraced by some proponents of the Care approach to better understand the existential scene of moral experience from an organic, naturalistic, emotional and non-rational perspective.

Moral sentiment theory is especially compatible with the Care approach to morality because of Care's emphasis on emotional response and the interpersonal, social dimension of everyday human interaction. The Ethics of Care will be investigated in the following chapter.

Here is a brief summary of Adam Smith's Moral Sentiment theory:

Adam Smith's (1723–1790) Theory of Moral Sentiments was a real scientific breakthrough. It shows that our moral ideas and actions are a product of our very nature as social creatures. It argues that this social psychology is a better guide to moral action than is reason. It identifies the basic rules of prudence and justice that are needed for society to survive, and explains the additional, beneficent, actions that enable it to flourish.

Self-interest and sympathy. As individuals, we have a natural tendency to look after ourselves. That is merely prudence. And yet as social creatures, explains Smith, we are also endowed with a natural sympathy – today we would say empathy – towards others. When we see others distressed or happy, we feel for them – albeit less strongly. Likewise, others seek our empathy and feel for us. When their feelings are particularly strong, empathy prompts them to restrain their emotions so as to bring them into line with our, less intense reactions. Gradually, as we grow from childhood to adulthood, we each learn what is and is not acceptable to other people. Morality stems from our social nature.

Justice and beneficence. So does justice. Though we are self-interested, we again have to work out how to live alongside others without doing them harm. That is an essential minimum for the survival of society. If people go further and do positive good – beneficence – we welcome it but cannot demand such action as we demand justice.

Virtue. Prudence, justice, and beneficence are important. However, the ideal must be that any impartial person, real or imaginary – what Smith calls an impartial spectator – would fully empathize with our emotions and actions. That requires self-command, and in this lies true virtue.

From The Adam Smith Institute
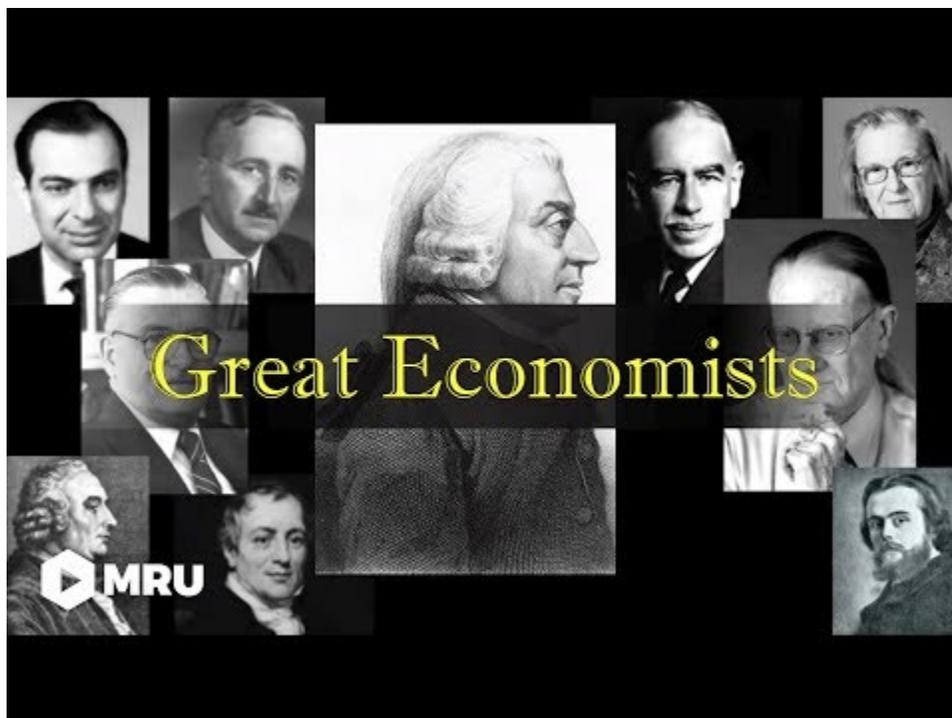
Adam Smith's theory of moral sentiments explained (8:21)

FURTHER READING: <u>Adam Smith's words on market-driven economies still ring true</u> (*Ravalli Republic*, 8/4/2019)

Some current research in Moral Psychology

Evolutionary psychology/primatology

Franz de Waal's *The Bonobo and the Atheist*[7] and, more recently, *Mama's Last Hug*, present some compelling evidence for a kind of **emotional proto-morality** among high level primates like chimpanzees, orangutans, and bonobos, a proto-morality that was co-opted by organized religion, according to de Waal. A respected primatologist and avowed atheist, de Waal is critical of religion's self-assigned monopoly on morality. The greatest enforcer of good behavior, according to de Waal, isn't the wrath of an omniscient deity or any dogmatic moral framework, but, rather, our own natural emotions.

De Waal offers vivid examples of emotionally guided moral behavior in animals: elephants recruiting friends to help pull a heavy box, chimps refusing undeserved rewards and bonobos comforting losers after a fight. Empathy and reciprocity, the basis of prosocial behavior, appear to have deeper evolutionary roots than religion, according to de Waal.

If morality comes from emotions and religion from superstitions, as de Waal claims, what explains their long, historical entanglement? De Waal suggests that as communities grew larger and more impersonal, religion gained influence as a supervisor of moral behavior. But he believes

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[7] De Waal, Frans. The Bonobo and the Atheist: In Search of Humanism among the Primates. New York: Norton, 2013.

secular humanism could serve a similar role and do so by appealing to human potential rather than defaming human nature, as de Waal thinks dogmatic moral codes do.

De Waal's argument is basically that morality has evolved just as the human species has evolved. Morality was not injected into human beings from above. It grew and developed organically and naturally from below. Indeed, some thinkers believe that this development is already threatening to surpass human control, as seen in the growth of deep learning algorithms, robotics and big data analytics—the new triune god on the block to whom we now routinely expect to find answers to our most pressing questions. [8]

Cognitive & Social Psychology

Some recent research with infants seems to support de Waal's claims about the innate structure of prosocial (moral) behavior and its orientation to the emotions.

Philosophers and psychologists have long believed that babies are born "blank slates," and that it is the role of parents and society to teach babies the difference between right and wrong, good and bad, mean and nice. But, a growing number of researchers now believe differently. Their research argues that babies are in fact born with an innate sense of morality, and, while parents and society can help to develop a belief system in babies, they don't create it. Here is how the team of researchers at Yale University's Infant Cognition Center--known as The Baby Lab--came to that conclusion.

Video (6:23) Infant morality?

About eight years ago, researchers at the lab began running a series of studies on babies under 24 months to see how much these babies understand about good and bad behavior. The first test is the simplest. Show a baby an example of good behavior, and then an example of bad behavior, then let the baby decide what she likes.

In one experiment, the infants see a gray cat trying to open a big plastic box. The cat tries repeatedly, but he just can't open the lid all the way. A bunny in a green T-shirt comes along and helps open the box. Then the scenario is repeated, but this time a bunny in an orange T-shirt comes

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[8] Harari, Yuval. *"Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow."* HarperCollins: New York, 2017.

along and slams the box shut before running away. The green bunny is nice and helpful. The orange bunny is mean and unhelpful.

The baby is then presented with the two bunnies from the show. A staff member who doesn't know which bunny was mean and which bunny was nice will offer both bunnies at the same time to the baby. The baby's mother, who is usually present during the study, closes her eyes so as not to influence the baby in any way

Which bunny do the babies choose? More than 80% of the babies in the study showed their preference for the good bunny, either by reaching for the good bunny or staring at it. And with 3-month-olds, that number goes higher, to 87%.

Such research strongly suggests that the rudiments of empathic, prosocial morality are innately present or inborn in infants. [9]

What do you think about that?

A Brief Overview of Chapter 2

Chapter 2 focuses on some important contributions to Ethics from the field of Moral Psychology. Professor Paul Piff's work is a good example of how **empirical psychologists** go about doing empirical research about moral issues and is also a good example of **Descriptive Ethics**. Piff was looking at how **situational factors** -- "social status" and "economic level" – how these factors influence people's understanding of and moral judgments about greed; how this contributes to income inequality; and what should be done about it. You should have watched the video of Piff's TEDx talk and thought about it.

Piff is describing a kind of bias that he thinks forms in people's attitudes as they move up the socioeconomic ladder (the higher up the ladder, the more likely they are to believe that greed is good) and, like most biases, is probably invisible to the person biased in regard to greed.

The focus on **bias** in this chapter is important. It may be the biggest impediment to successful moral decisions and actions in our life. Overcoming bias and prejudice is the first step in the **phenomenological method of research**. If you view your experiences through a filter of bias or prejudice (without believing you are biased, of course), you will not see your experience clearly as it presents itself to you because your perception will be unconsciously skewed by the bias. Thus, you lose the benefit of the reflection and are perhaps led further astray from true success. Be sure to focus on this in the text so you have a clear understanding of

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[9] Van Ijzendoorn, Marinus H, et al. "On embodied and situational morality: neurobiological, parental, and situational determinants of altruism and donating to charity." In de Ruyter, Doret J. and Miedema, Siegren, eds. *Moral Education and Development.* Sense Publishers: The Netherlands, 2011.

how this works. You should be familiar with the various biases brought up in **Zaria Gorvett's** article.

The section on **emotion** is very important because it seems to be inseparable from moral deliberation and judgment and our experience of moral situations. You should have a clear understanding of how emotion impacts moral judgment.

You should be clear about **Emotional Intelligence**, the difference between **"basic" and "moral"** emotions, and the general idea of **Moral Sentiment theory** (emotional moral response is hard-wired or innate and this innate moral sentiment is how we make moral judgments, etc.).

PRACTICE

TERMS TO KNOW

Exercise hint: If you really want to test your understanding of these terms, try this with a friend: First, explain to your willing friend one or more of the terms from the following list. Then, ask your friend to repeat your explanation back to you. Finally, see how close your friend's restatement matches your own understanding. Discuss and bring your understandings into sync. Repeat the exercise. Anyway, you should be able to give brief explanations of these key terms.

- moral psychology
- emotive reasoning
- group polarization effect
- the objectivity delusion
- the illusion of asymmetric insight
- false consensus
- bias
- hot and cold empathy gaps
- confirmation bias
- attractiveness bias
- bias blind spot
- debiasing
- cold and hot cognition
- emotional intelligence
- emotional skills
- moral sentiment theory

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How does moral psychology differ from moral philosophy?

2. Briefly explain how psychologist Paul Piff relates his experimental research to the moral problem of income equality. How compelling do you think his argument is?

3. Explain how one or more of the specific biases presented in this chapter could influence you to maintain a false belief.

4. Is it possible to be totally free of bias? Is striving to become free of bias a worthy, realistic and meaningful goal?

5. Which of the cognitive biases presented in this chapter involves an unconscious willingness to give more weight to evidence that supports your own view and to downplay contrary or contradictory evidence? Describe an example of this bias. What would be a good practice strategy for overcoming such a bias? Here is one possibility. Watch carefully how you restate the views of others, especially when you do not agree. In your everyday conversations, try practicing the restatement of others' views in a fair and balanced way (even though you might disagree with the view), and, in order to compensate for any possible hidden bias on your part, always give the opposing view the 'benefit of the doubt' in your restatement. Take note whether people agree with your re-statements or not. Heed the feedback wisely

6. We all tend to think that other people are more biased than we are. What is this bias called and what can be done about it? Give an example.

7. Why is hot cognition a problem for moral reasoning? Describe a situation where this could happen.

8. Is it really possible to have a purely rational or a purely emotional moral judgment? Can these two elements of human beings be definitively separated in practice or not? Explain. Give an example.

9. Moral sentiment theory argues that we have a natural ability to empathize and sympathize with others. What does empathy mean to you, exactly? Give an example. Can we ever really put ourselves in another's shoes and feel what they are feeling? Is empathy an exercise in imagination only or do you think we can really feel what someone else feels?

REFLECTION EXERCISES

Begin to notice the emotions you have at different times of the day and try to distinguish among them by describing them clearly to yourself. Note whether you are experiencing different emotions simultaneously and whether they are acting harmoniously or are in conflict or what. Notice how long the emotion lasts, whether it is pleasant or not, whether it is recurring or not, the extent to which you can control it, and so forth. Since emotion urges action, notice to what kind of action the emotion is encouraging you. Try to distinguish between basic emotions and moral emotions.

Regarding others, here is a simple practice for sharpening your emotional insightfulness. Try to determine what another person might be feeling and then ask them if they are feeling that way. See how accurate your interpretation is. Try to improve.

Caution: your perception of how others' might be feeling can easily be biased or skewed by other influences such as the mood you are in, your physical condition, drugs, situational factors, etc. So, "checking" with others about your interpretation of their feeling-states and correcting your view as warranted is the respectful thing to do. Phenomenologically, each individual is the only expert on their own experiences. Try asking like this: "You seem to me like you are feeling sad (or joyful or worried or whatever…). Are you?"

SCENARIO EXERCISES

Here is a general note on engaging the scenario exercises in this text: "Sayeed's moral dilemma" is a moral thought experiment meant to highlight an actual, real-life moral dilemma in which you might or could possibly find yourself. For it to be most effective, you should engage the scenario from your total moral orientation, both how you think and how you feel. Try to imagine the scenario as being real, not pretend. Empathize with Sayeed as best you can. What would you *really do? Of course, it is not merely an abstract, rational moral dilemma that Sayeed is dealing with. There are also emotional, relational, and situational factors for him in the conflict he is experiencing between how he feels about the fairness and thus importance of impartiality in making moral judgments, on the one hand, and the justifiable partiality he feels toward his friend, on the other. What does it feel like to be in such a bind? How would* you *deal with it? How would* you justify *how you dealt with it?*

What should Sayeed do?*

Sayeed has the responsibility of filling a position in his firm. His friend Paulo has applied and is qualified, but Maria, a stranger, is even more qualified. Sayeed wants to give the job to his friend Paulo, but he feels guilty, believing that he ought to be impartial so that he will be fair in his hiring practices. That's the essence of morality, he initially tells himself. This belief is, however, rejected, as Sayeed resolves that friendship has a moral importance that permits, and perhaps even requires, partiality in some circumstances. So, he gives the job to Paulo.

Was Sayeed right? Briefly justify your judgment using any of the moral theories, principles, or orientations we have studied so far. What kind of emotions do you think Sayeed was experiencing? Do you think Sayeed's emotions influenced his hiring decision? What would you do in this situation?

*It might help your engagement with this scenario to review the following terms: "favoritism," "cronyism," and "nepotism."
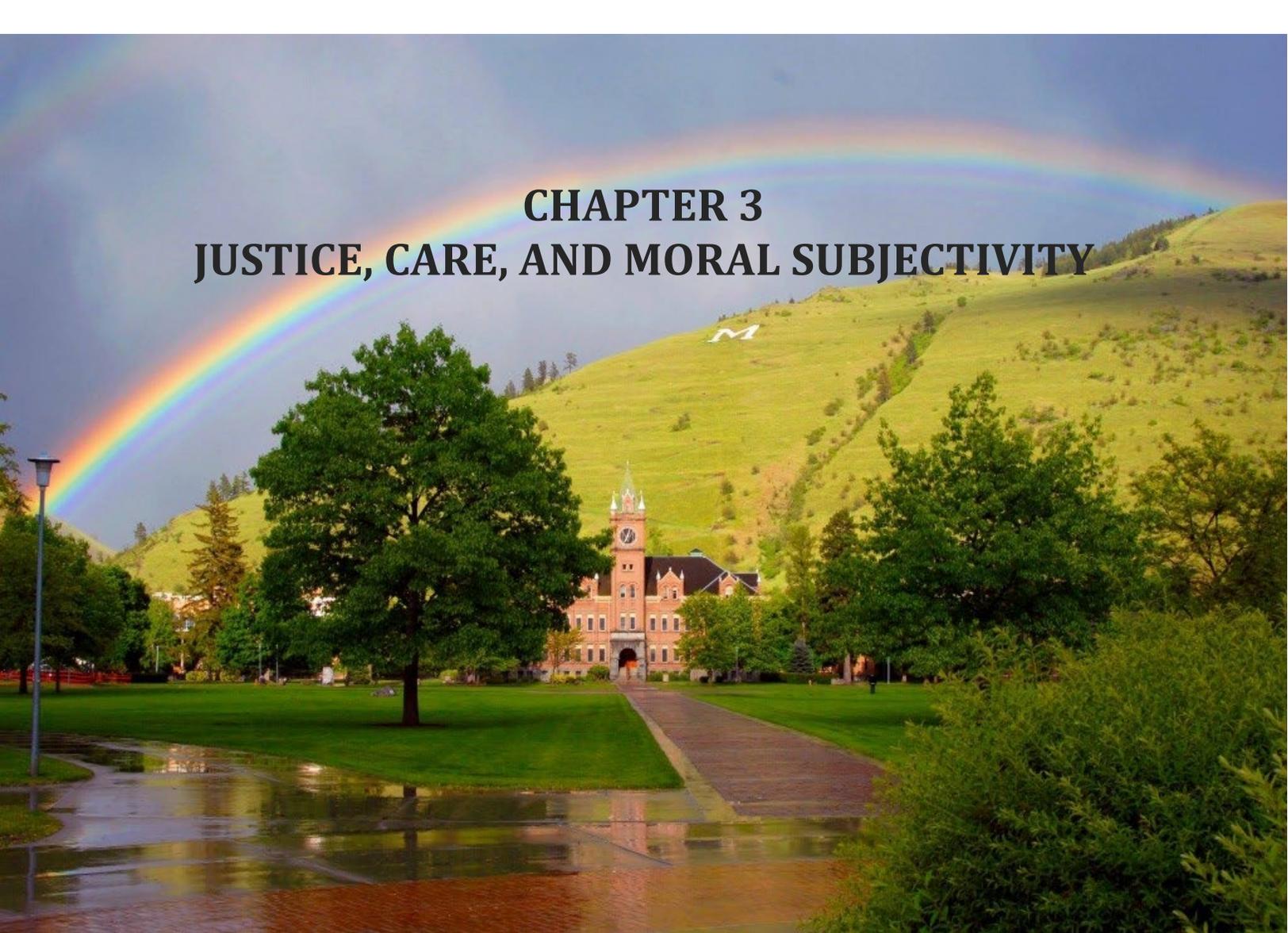
CHAPTER 3
JUSTICE, CARE, AND MORAL SUBJECTIVITY

"…The reasons why postsecondary education may facilitate growth in principled moral reasoning are not completely clear. However, numerous researchers suggest that part of the explanation may be that college provides a relatively challenging and stimulating environment that leads students to overhaul and rethink the fundamental ways in which they form moral judgments. College may do this in large measure because it encourages students to think about the larger social context of history, institutions, and broad intellectual and cultural trends—many of which involve moral and ethical issues. Consistent with such an explanation is evidence reported from one study which shows that academic perspective-taking (that is, exposure to broad perspectives concerning intellectual or social issues) is a strong predictor of advanced levels of moral reasoning among college students."[10]

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[10] Pascarella, Ernest T. and Terenzini, Parrick T. *How College Affects Students*. San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 2005, vol. 2/349.

Introduction

This chapter presents Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral stage development and Carol Gilligan's criticism of it as a way of introducing two distinctly different ways of understanding and approaching the practice of ethics. These two general moral orientations will be referred to as the **Ethics of Justice** and the **Ethics of Care.** The practical position you take up regarding these two orientations and the way that you understand the nature of **moral subjectivity** will be shown to be basic schemes structuring your personal morality.

Moral judgment was understood by Kohlberg to be a response to seeking what justice requires in any specific moral situation, question or dilemma. Kohlberg used moral scenarios (moral dilemma situations) to assess the level of moral reasoning of participants in his study. From data gathered from these experiments he formulated *six stages of moral development*.

Here is an example of the kinds of scenarios Kohlberg used. In the Heinz scenario presented below, a man's wife is dying, and Heinz cannot afford the only drug that will save her. What should Heinz do? In other words, what does justice require? Should Heinz not steal the drug because that is wrong? Or is the just solution that Heinz should steal the drug but not go to jail? Or does justice require that he steal the drug but go to jail for stealing it? Is that the just outcome? How a person responds to the Heinz scenario, then, will provide an indication of their level of moral reasoning, according to Kohlberg's theory.

Carol Gilligan, who worked with Kohlberg on his groundbreaking research, criticized Kohlberg for presuming that an Ethics of Justice is the *only* meaningful approach to moral reasoning. This presumption was a moral blind spot that she thought limited the scope and import of Kohlberg's findings. She argued that there is more to morality than merely the making of *reasoned* moral judgments about what justice requires.

Kohlberg's research was biased, Gilligan claimed, by a traditional, patriarchal view of gender roles. Gilligan called Kohlberg's understanding of morality the "Ethics of Justice." Gilligan thought that this is how *men* were more likely to approach moral decision-making. On

Ethics of Care vs. Ethics of Justice

- Ethics of Care- "What are my responsibilities to those around me, especially those I care about and who care about me?"
  - For example, a young girl might express concern about "leaving out" a friend in a game of checkers, if they are in a group of three.
- Ethics of Justice- "What can I do to ensure that the way I live my life does not infringe on anyone else's in way that would be a detriment to their rights/human dignity?"
  - For example, a young boy might choose to kick his soccer ball away from anything breakable, out of a knowledge that he should seek to avoid destroying anyone else's property
- Gilligan believed, ideally, TRUE moral development meant reconciling these two principles.
- However, patriarchal societies meant that women were given access only to an Ethics of Care, crippling them in issues of self-determination and individualism.
- Men were given the Ethics of Justice, making them fearful of expressing attachment to personal relationships, especially over and above matters of "justice"
  - Especially visible in issue of the draft

the other hand, she found that *women* were more likely to have a different understanding and practice of what it meant to be a moral person. Women's morality developed differently than men.

Men tend to seek justice, Gilligan argued; women tend to care.

The "Ethics of Care" developed by Gilligan (she was the first to use this term) stressed relationships and sensitivity to the needs of others. It was informed by Moral Sentiment Theory (See Chapter 1) and non-rational human experiences such as emotion, passion and intuition rather than solely by rational judgment. Instead of relying on abstract judgments handed down from on high, as it were, the care approach to moral action originates naturally out of the everyday situated existence of the moral person in a web of personal and interpersonal relationships in the world.

The second part of this chapter presents a kind of roadmap for how different moral theories fit in with and inform your everyday moral judgments. We will have to look more closely at what it means to be a moral subject. Ethics, as a reflection on morality, certainly presumes a *moral subject* or *moral agent* who is capable of volition and moral action. But there are different ways of viewing and understanding moral subjectivity. And how you understand human moral subjectivity (what it means to be a human being) will make a difference to your approach to morality.

Just as everyone 'has' a morality, everyone also has some conception of what it means to be a human being. That 'sense' of who you are which accompanies you in the background of everything you do is your personal human subjectivity; the basis of your self-awareness. Let us say provisionally at this point (until we look at it more closely) that *"subjectivity" (or agency) is the capacity to act and to have experiences*. Now, what happens when we overlay this concept of moral subjectivity with the distinction between justice and care?

The Ethics of Justice and the Ethics of Care have different conceptual assumptions about what it means to be a human being.

The Ethics of Justice **presumes a rational, autonomous, individualized and free moral subject capable of pure reflective deliberation oriented toward sound, rational decision-making.**

The Ethics of Care **presumes a sensuously and affectively oriented responsive, inter-subjective subjectivity immersed in the immediacy of lived life and oriented altruistically to the welfare of others.**

The Ethics of Care is more consistent with a focus personal moral growth and development. This focus is best informed by certain moral theories: Virtue Ethics, Phenomenology, Existentialism, Self-actualization theory, Moral Sentiment theory and Pragmatism.

The Ethics of Justice is more consistent with a focus on rationally trying to deliberate, determine, and decide what is the morally correct thing to do and what is not. This rational decision-making approach to Ethics is best informed by Deontology, Utilitarianism, and Human Rights theory.

As you read through this chapter, try to get a feel for the two different moral perspectives of justice and care, and how these perspectives influence your understanding of what it means to be a human being in a world with others.

Moral Development Research

Lawrence Kohlberg

Much of the research that has been done about the effectiveness of ethics education during the last fifty years has been based on Kohlberg's seminal work in the field of human moral development. He is certainly among the most influential psychologists of the 20th century. Kohlberg was one of the first psychologists to look seriously at whether a person's ability to deal with ethical issues can develop in later life and whether education can affect that development. Thus, Kohlberg's work, in many ways, initiated the whole field of *moral psychology*.

Kohlberg used scenarios of moral dilemmas as the basic instrument of his research, scenarios like the well-known "Heinz dilemma." The Heinz dilemma is a scenario that Kohlberg used to study the style and level of moral reasoning of the subject. Kohlberg would present this dilemma to the subject and then ask questions to determine the subject's stage of moral development.

Here is the Heinz scenario dilemma:

> *Heinz's wife was dying from a rare type of cancer. Doctors said a new drug might save her. The drug had been discovered by a local chemist and the Heinz tried desperately to buy some, but the chemist was charging ten times the money it cost to make the drug, and this was much more than the Heinz could afford. Heinz could only raise half the money, even after help from family and friends. He explained to the chemist that his wife was dying and asked if he could have the drug cheaper or pay the rest of the money later. The chemist refused, saying that he had discovered the drug and was going to make money from it. The husband was desperate to save his wife, so later that night he broke into the chemist's and stole the drug.*

Kohlberg would then ask the subject the following kinds of questions:

1. Should Heinz have stolen the drug? 2. Would it change anything if Heinz did not love his wife? 3. What if the person dying was a stranger, would it make any difference?

The answers and explanations given by the subjects to these questions would then be analyzed to determine what *stage of moral reasoning* was being used by the subject to make the moral judgment.

The first and most basic level of moral development is that of the young child, which Kohlberg called the ***pre-conventional or pre-moral*** stage. The person at the pre-conventional level defines right and wrong in terms of what authority figures say is right or wrong or in terms of what results in rewards and punishments. Any parent can verify this. Ask the four or five-year-old why stealing is wrong, and chances are that they'll respond: "Because daddy or mommy says it's wrong" or "Because you get punished if you steal." Some people stay at this pre-moral level all of their lives, continuing to define right and wrong in terms of what authorities say or to avoid unpleasant consequences.

The pre-moral orientation involves a lack of moral reasoning altogether. Rather, the subject acts from fear of punishment. Kohlberg called it "pre-moral," because persons at this level are reacting in terms of possible pleasure or pain and are not *reasoning* from any moral principles or perspectives.

The second level of moral development is the stage most people attain. Indeed, most adults function morally in accord with the dynamics of this stage for their whole lives. Kohlberg called this the **conventional level**. The term "conventional" means basically the way 'everyone' thinks or acts. In one phase of this conventional level, the person will internalize the norms of those groups with whom he or she lives most closely. For an adolescent, for example, right and wrong at this stage is generally based on group loyalties: loyalties to one's family and/or loyalties to one's friends. In the later developments of this stage, loyalty is directed to the laws of one's nation as a good citizen, since being a good citizen is viewed as being a primary source of moral identity.

If you ask persons at the conventional level why something is wrong or right, they will tend to answer in terms of what their families have taught them, what their friends think, or what the law-abiding citizen should do.

If a person continues to develop morally (as often happens as a result of going to college – See the epigraph to this chapter), he or she will reach what Kohlberg labeled the ***principled or post-conventional*** level of moral development. The person at the post-conventional level stops defining right and wrong in terms of group loyalties or norms. Instead, the person at this level develops moral principles that define right and wrong *from a universal point of view*, such as the principles derived from deontological, teleological or human rights theories which we will investigate in later chapters. The moral principles of the post-conventional person are principles that would supposedly appeal to any reasonable person because they take everyone's interest into account. Thus, they claim a certain moral high ground, assuming it is better to act from universal moral principles than to merely go along with what everyone else is doing.

If you ask a person at the post-conventional level why something is right or wrong, she or he will appeal to what promotes or doesn't promote the universal ideals of justice, human rights, human welfare or similar universal moral principles. The good of others will be paramount in this perspective of what is good, right and just.

Many factors can stimulate a person's growth through the three levels of moral development. One of the most crucial factors, Kohlberg found, is education. ***Kohlberg discovered that when his subjects took courses in ethics and these courses challenged them to look at issues from a 'universal values' point of view, they tended to move upward through the levels to principled levels of moral reasoning.*** This finding has been repeatedly supported by replications of Kohlberg's research all around the world with diverse populations.

But not everyone accepted Kohlberg's ideas uncritically.

Carol Gilligan

Carol Gilligan, who was a student of Kohlberg's, came to be critical of her mentor's work. She thought that his research model was biased in favor of males and the *patriarchal* (relating to or characteristic of a system of society or government controlled by men) moral values that structured male-dominated social orders.

Gilligan argued that female morality was structured and reinforced differently than that of males in our society. Women were more likely to respond from an orientation of care. This type of moral orientation was often invisible to men who were focused on questions of justice and the application of abstract moral principles derived from abstract moral theories.

Although there was already some discussion of alternative ethical theories that went against the mainstream classical approach focusing on justice, Gilligan was the first thinker to formalize these ideas as an "Ethics of Care."

Gilligan first achieved large-scale recognition from the psychological and educational communities with the publication of her groundbreaking book, *In A Different Voice*.[11] This text was a landmark text for at least two reasons. First, it cast doubt on the generalizability of Kohlberg's theory of morality, and second, it articulated a new form of feminist critique.

Psychology, Gilligan argued, had been unknowingly ignoring the voices and experiences of half the human race. *Difference feminism*, as her perspective has come to be called, highlights the different qualities of both men and women, but asserts that no value judgment can be placed upon them. In other words, one is not necessarily better than the other. You will virtually always find a blend of these two orientations in any moral person. Yet, the care perspective needed a voice.

In her book, Gilligan outlined her findings on female moral development and decision-making, drawing on studies with children and university students. In Kohlberg's classic studies, females appeared to be deficient in moral reasoning when compared to similarly aged males. This was true of both children and adults. However, Gilligan had noticed a problem with Kohlberg's research.

Kohlberg's early work in developing his moral stage theory was based on studies with only white male participants. Gilligan began working with female participants who were facing a personally and politically charged dilemma: whether or not to terminate a pregnancy. The results of her study indicated that women were not deficient at all. They were simply using a style of moral reasoning that was not being captured by Kohlberg's assessment methods. They did not fit within his theory, and their voices were not registering.

Gilligan suggested that the women she interviewed used an ethics of care instead of the more abstract ethics of justice. Their morality was based around care for others rather than appeals

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[11] Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice*. Cambridge; Harvard University Press, 1982.

to seemingly universal codes or principles of behavior. She believed that this ethic of care was not inherently limited to females, but it was certainly more common among her female participants.

The ethic of care was not designed to replace Kohlberg's theory of moral development, but to complement it. In fact, Gilligan has consistently argued that she would like to see psychology free itself, both in theory and in methods, from the gender binary and the gender hierarchy altogether. Current psychological research on moral development reflects this view, often finding no difference between the performance of men and women on scales of moral reasoning, sensitivity, awareness and development.

Gilligan's book generated much controversy in its day, which cut across disciplines. Feminist psychologists and mainstream psychologists fell on both sides of the debate – some praising the *difference feminist* view, some heralding it as deeply problematic gender stereotyping. Whatever the controversy over the book, it still had a deep impact in psychology, education, ethics, and among the general public; a necessary corrective to Kohlberg's groundbreaking research.
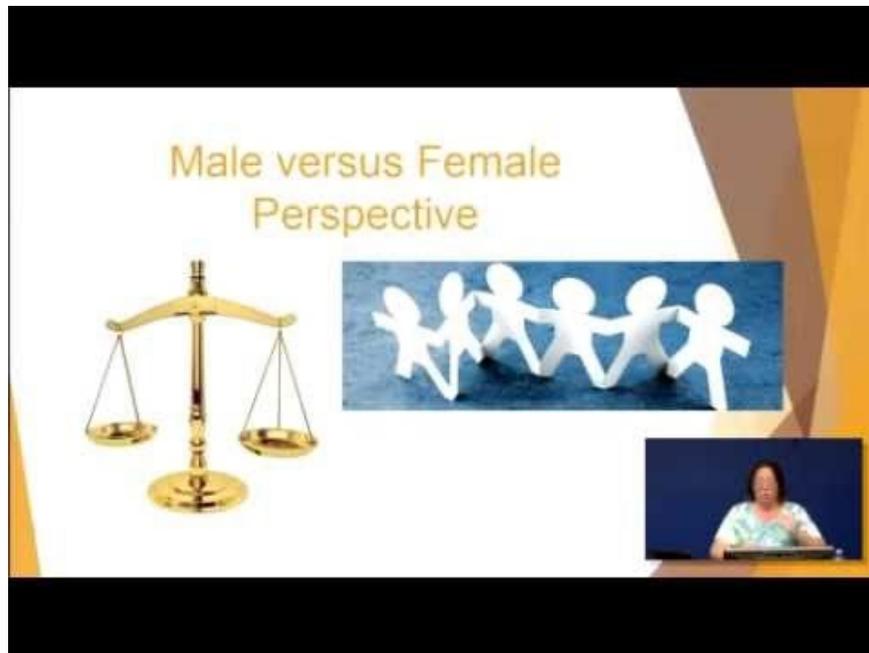
Carol Gilligan's theory of moral development…a brief overview.

Ethics of Justice and Ethics of Care

Generally speaking, the **Ethics of Justice** *is a perspective in terms of which ethical decisions are made on the basis of universal moral principles in an impartial and verifiable manner with a view to ensuring the fair and equitable treatment of all concerned.*

It is the constant endeavor of those who subscribe to the Ethics of Justice to let justice prevail by making verifiable and reliable decisions based on impersonal, universal rules and principles. In order to enable objective decision-making about ethics, the individual acts in the capacity of an autonomous, objective and impartial agent exercising moral agency, moral deliberation and judgment.

*The **Ethics of Care**, on the other hand, is a broad moral perspective in terms of which interpersonal involvement, harmonious relations, and the needs of others play an important part in moral decision-making and moral action.*

Contrary to that of the individual who subscribes to the Ethics of Justice, the moral focus of the person who subscribes to the Ethics of Care is to fulfill the needs of other people in the situation and, in this way, to maintain harmonious relations overall.

Care, therefore, implies that moral decisions are made from the position of empathically feeling the needs of others to be primary. Impacted by the context and features of each unique and original moral situation, the care perspective views the moral subject as always immersed bodily and emotionally in the situation with empathy for every other role-player connected with that situation.

Rationality, 'modernism' and the Ethics of Justice

As stated above, the Ethics of Justice seeks to adjudicate moral questions by the fair and impersonal application of universal, rational principles. Like the care perspective, it is an umbrella concept for numerous moral theories and their variations that are linked by a common and unflagging emphasis on the importance of moral reasoning and rational moral action. Rationality concerns all aspects of fairness and, by implication, rationality is the justification of findings through reasoned argumentation.

Reflection on the Ethics of Justice and Ethics of Care reveals two different forms of rationality. Underlying the Ethics of Justice is a positivist or modernist commitment to the central and absolute importance of rationality and reasonableness, to the exclusion of all non-rational elements. On the other hand, the salient features of the Ethics of Care manifest themselves in a socially extended, interpersonal and *communicative rationality* immersed in everyday practices.

The positivistic rationality (based on empirically verifiable data interpreted logically) underlying the Ethics of Justice is a specific type of rationality that serves as the distinguishing feature of the analytic, data-driven modern study of psychology, which has its origins in the rational, scientific method of the physical sciences. This universal impartial methodology—reductionism for the sake of objectivity—forms part of this strict rationality model, which has reigned supreme as the dominant model for science in the western cultural tradition since the eighteenth century, the hallmark of scientific modernism.

What is Justice?   Crash course in philosophy

The Ethics of Justice clearly has its roots in this modernist model of the primacy of rationality. The reduction of human moral functioning solely to this type of rational moral reasoning becomes a determining factor for understanding the nature of human subjectivity that is presumed by an Ethics of Justice.

This modernist rational reductionism, according to numerous commentators, has resulted in a pernicious depersonalization of human beings which, ultimately, would be counterproductive to human flourishing and would give rise to, first, an existential, and then, secondly, a postmodern feminist critique ... a critical situation which is ongoing today in both philosophy and psychology.

Through the impartial and objective application of universal rules and principles it is hoped that the fair and equitable treatment of all people will be ensured, even if it means exiling certain aspects of human functioning such as emotions and passions from the process of ethical decision-making in favor of retaining a strict and proper moral objectivity.

But this reduced, diluted and narrow version of rationality, and the diminished or dehumanized version of human moral subjectivity that it entails, causes problems particularly

when it comes to moral action in our everyday inter-relations and practices. Social and moral practices fluctuate in terms of interpersonal relations, context and values, and are multifaceted and dynamic in nature and do not always operate in accordance with the strictures of a de-animated and unbounded rationality, if ever.

This should not be interpreted to mean, however, that we should throw rationality overboard in moral decision-making. In the light of the fact that moral problems are often complex in nature, as we noted from the pluralist perspective in the first chapter, and that moral decisions often have far-reaching consequences, it is vital to retain the element of rationality in the ethical decision-making process as a check against the overvaluation of emotion, passion and desire—non-rational aspects of being human which nevertheless should not be ostracized from the process of moral deliberation.

In order to accommodate the typical characteristics of moral and social phenomena, the modernist concept of rationality ought to be expanded to that of an ***interpersonal communicative rationality*** (a bounded rationality or embodied cognition) which is both derived from and formative of the everyday community of interpersonal practices in which you and I are immersed and engaged in our everyday lives.

In the light of *discourse* being the manner in which consensus is reached in a free society within the context of an interpersonal or relational rationality, that is, through dialogue, conversation and interpersonal communication, an extended *communicative rationality* that is given voice in free discourse ought to be an important facet of the complementary application of the Ethics of Justice and Ethics of Care. This complementarity will be reflected in the remaining chapters of this textbook.

Affect and the Ethics of Care

Following to some extent in the sentimentalist tradition of moral theory introduced in Chapter 2, but substantially different than the positivist rationality underlying the Ethics of Justice as described above, Care ethics affirms the importance of *altruistic motivation*, interpersonal relationships, emotion, empathy, and the impact of the corporeal, sensuous body in moral deliberation. Care is also oriented to reasoning from specific, everyday experiences in an inductive, organic manner rather than deducing action-positions from theoretically derived universal principles 'scientifically'. Psychologist Paul Piff's use of empirical research to diagnose a psychological basis for income inequality and offer a cure, is an example of the care perspective guiding research.

An ethics of care begins with the recognition that we are all immersed in a web of vital relationships throughout the various practices that constitute our life. This dynamic, personal web of meaningful relationships is a central source of guidance and orientation of expectations in the configuration of our moral value orientation. ***Thus, an ethic of care assumes the primacy of relationship to be of equal moral value to autonomy***. Instead of assuming an ultimate ideal of an utterly independent and separated autonomous subjectivity while ignoring relationship, the ethics of care begins from the central importance of relationship to human life.

Care ethics assumes that there are no two situations requiring moral judgment that are identical. We are immersed in a sea of everyday particularity. Thus, the focus of an Ethics of Care is on understanding the concrete context and particulars of a situation, including who has a stake in the resolution, and a rich description of factual and interpretative information surrounding the situation.

The focus is not on determining what abstract, universal principle might apply to the situation. Rather, it is on crafting a set of ethical responses that address the well-being of all those in the relationship or situation and who are affected by the actions. Indeed, *an ethic of care takes the needs of the relationship and those who participate in the relationship as the starting point for ethical responsibility and responsiveness, as opposed to depending upon generalized, external, overarching categorical imperatives, universal principles or rigidly applied arbitrary rules.*

Care Ethics overview (3:01)
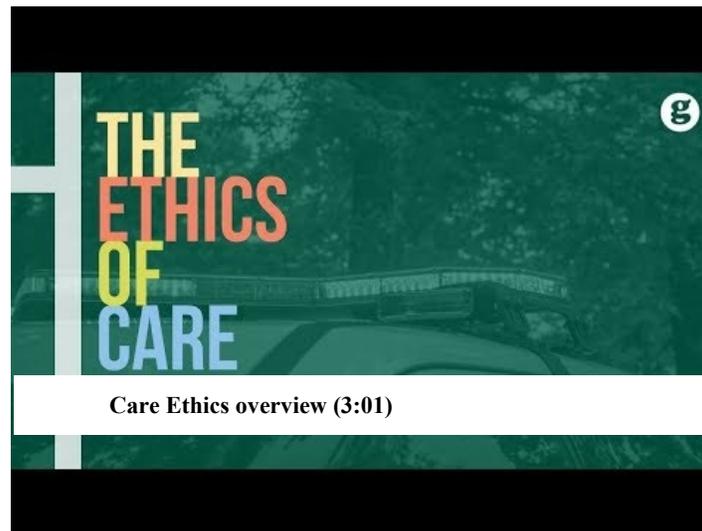
An ethic of care relies on the whole person to be attentive, responsive, competent, empathic, sensitive, and responsible. Cognitive, affective, and intuitive capabilities are immediately brought to bear on the situation rather than being limited to explicit cognitive analysis and rationality. These capabilities include such competencies as listening, articulating, framing and re-framing (perspective-taking), observation, questioning and inquiry, empathy, imagination, responsiveness, and responsibility. This all leads to a responsive practical rationality and responsive practical reasoning as opposed to the strictly cognitive, deductive rationality of justice frameworks.

An ethic of care always leads to some concrete, empathically constructive act or actions. Ethical assessments and judgments about what to do carry with them both the obligation to care and consequences for both those cared for and the one caring.

There must be some effective, constructive result from an ethic of care act, it should actually do some good or alleviate some suffering and it should be constructively developmental in character.

Finally, an ethic of care has moved beyond an ethical framework that is characteristic of just women. Men have the same potential to take up an ethic of care perspective as women, although the socialization process emphasizing male and female gender role stereotypes may make it more problematic for men to access this orientation. What do you think?

Moral Subjectivity

The way in which you understand your morality right now, and the way you think about it from an ethical perspective—while engaging in the practical exercises for moral development presented in this text—is connected to and dependent upon presuppositions you hold about the nature of **human subjectivity**, or what it means to be the kind of being that you are.

Now, everyone has some idea about the definition of human nature, an idea of what kind of beings we are and what we are all about. Every reference you make to yourself already involves some tacit understanding about the kind of being you are.

The typical ancient Greek view of the person, for example, was somewhat dualistic. It was thought that all living beings were made up of a body and soul which were closely conjoined in some mysterious way. The human soul was understood as a principle of motion or what accounts for all the many types of movements in a living physical body.

For Greek philosophers, the human soul was thought to have three dimensions: reason, emotion/will, and desire/passion. Emotion and passion were considered to be difficult to manage, capable of leading us astray morally, and thus in need of being controlled. It was the job of reason to try to control and tame emotion and passionate desire. This platonic (derived from Plato's philosophy) view of the human person sees reason as the best way to make moral decisions.

The 17th and 18th century European Enlightenment (the Age of Reason), in the Modern Era has given us another version of human nature which continues to persist into the present day. I call it *modernist moral subjectivity*. Similar in some ways to the Aristotelian or neo-classical view, reason or rationality is seen in the modernist view to be the chief characteristic of the moral person, while emotion and passion and other non-rational elements are viewed as being in need of control.

But, what flows from this understanding of subjectivity understood according to the rational, liberal, humanistic model originating in this period is ***the radically new idea that human beings are sovereign, autonomous, self-interested, self-determining free individuals having absolute moral agency, separate and distinct from other rational beings, and able to determine what is morally correct for themselves through a rational, deductive process based on universal moral principles generated from rational moral theoretical reflection***. No authority or divine intervention needed.

Here, in the Modern era, was the birth of the so-called Sovereign Individual. It is this rationally lopsided modernist model of sovereign subjectivity that Gilligan accuses Kohlberg of unconsciously presuming to be the one and only proper view of human subjectivity.

Gilligan was critical of the modernist liberal, rationality-dominant model of moral human nature which she associates with the Ethics of Justice, males, and patriarchal values. She thinks this view involves culturally reinforced prejudice against women and their emotional and non-rational ethical approach of moral responsiveness and care. Gilligan presents an alternative model of the moral person, as we saw above.

For Gilligan, what it means to be a moral person is grounded in relationship and interpersonal interaction. To be a person is primarily to care about yourself and about others. It is to be responsive to the needs of others. It is to be empathetic and compassionate, sensitive and mindful, and willing to put the good of others before your own good. It is more about feeling, sensing or intuiting what is the right thing to do in a situation and responding appropriately, rather than deducing what you should do from abstract universal principles.

Perspectives on human subjectivity

1. **Classical view** (Greek/Roman, antiquity up to 3rd century CE; revived in Europe in 11th - 15th centuries). Dualistic: body and soul. Citizen. Reason rules. Moral absolutism (Patriarchy) (Ethics of Justice)

2. **Enlightenment / modernist view** (European, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th centuries) Dualistic/monistic, Moral absolutism. Liberalism. Sovereign Individual. Transcendental Ego. Absolutism. Autonomy. Freedom paramount. Posivitism: com-prehending, reductionistic, objectifying, grasping, measuring, re-presenting…. Science/reason rules. (Patriarchy) (Ethics of Justice)

3. **Existential / Post-modern view** (19th, 20th, 21st centuries) Holistic/monistic. God is dead. Moral Relativism. Feminism. New subjectivity. Inter-subjectivity. Anxiety, freedom, absurdity. Solitary, separate individual, conflict. Solopsism. Aloneness. (Breakdown of Patriarchy…Simone de Beauvoir) (Ethics of Care) (See Chapter 4)

4. **E. Levinas / Moral phenomenology view** (20th, 21st centuries) the Other. Response-ability. Deferred ego. Flexible self. Open-ended learning. (Radical Ethics of Care) (See Chapter 4)

Moral domains

Moral subjectivity does not exist in a vacuum. We can distinguish two 'domains' of human moral activity: the **personal/interpersonal domain** and the **social/political domain**. Within these two domains, moral responsiveness can be framed primarily from a rational point of view or from a non-rational one, while usually appearing in blended form.

The term "domains" here is intended to include a broad array of types of activities of a similar kind but it is not meant to be rigidly bounded since the two domains presented here overlap considerably. They are thoroughly interrelated existentially and can only be separately distinguished for the purposes of reflection. Thus, the dynamic mutuality and reciprocity of the two domains should be presumed despite the clear differentiation of the activities involved in each of them. Each of these two domains will have specific moral theories attached to them, as will be shown below.

Personal/interpersonal moral domain

The first moral domain is the personal/interpersonal domain. Here the focus of my moral concern is, first of all, me, myself. The "self" is comprised of an "I" from which action is felt to emanate, fused ambiguously with a "me" to whom it is felt that things happen. The moral self exists in an immediate, contextually situated, pre-conscious relation with others—a pre-conscious 'relation' which is not the same thing as conscious social interactions or relationships, discussed below, which are nevertheless included in this domain.

Within the extensive reach and depth of the everyday personal/interpersonal domain, we "absorb" and are shaped by felt vectors of influence, intuitively perceived indications, and 'vibrations' of energy from our interpersonal environment, while simultaneously shaping these experiences within our own conceptual/perceptual framework and contributing recursively to the context making the experience possible. These non-rational, mostly immediate experiences include things like desires, feelings, emotions, inclinations, passions, hunches, gut responses, urges, premonitions, extra sensory perceptions, deja-vu, insights, daydreams … 'mindless' sense intuitions that nevertheless productively function to configure our moral value orientations and expectations and guide our actions tacitly within and among our life practices—with amazing efficiency!—structuring our moral economy to be in harmony with our everyday practical engagements, in and out of many situations structured differently from a moral value perspective … a somewhat chaotic, spontaneous, messy, and mostly unconscious process which can nevertheless be brought to consciousness and managed to some degree through strategic reflection.

Within the context of this personal moral domain I might wonder how I can become less selfish and more altruistic, for example. I might reflect on how not to repeat moral mistakes, be more patient, or think about in some way upgrading my existential moral value orientation to be more consistent and in harmony with my ever-changing-and-being-refined delineation of the best possible life, something which spontaneously emerges as a natural life goal in this domain. Having reflected on my personal morality, I can then accomplish desired changes by taking responsibility for the configuration and deployment of my morality; exercising it to get better at making moral judgments; courageously taking value-consistent moral positions without knowing if they are absolutely correct, but feeling strongly; studying the ways of moral judgment (such as engaging this text and discussing with friends); pursuing excellence and authenticity through moral exercise and reflection; and challenging yourself to take charge of what is within your power while letting go of what is not.

Social/Political moral domain

The second domain of moral activity is the social/political domain. Here the direction of moral interest and concern is the good of the collective social order in which we all participate, the domain of society and the state. How should the state be organized? How should it be managed? How should burdens and benefits be distributed? And many other questions of this kind arise within the social/political moral domain.

These two domains of moral action, then, the personal/interpersonal and the social/political, will be each investigated more closely in the next six chapters of the text. We will

look first at the moral growth and development orientation of the personal/interpersonal domain in Chapter 4 (up next) and further in Chapters 6 and 7. We will investigate the rational decision-making orientation within the context of the personal moral domain in Chapter 5. In Chapter 8, we will look at how an Ethics of Justice informs the nature of the social/political order. And, finally, in Chapter 9 we will look at the social/political order from the perspective of a community of responsive care.

1. Personal/interpersonal moral domain

- **Personal moral development perspective (Chapters 4, 6 and 7)**

- **Rational perspective (Chapter 5)**

2. Social/political moral domain

- **Rational, theoretical, justice-oriented perspective (Chapter 8)**

- **Responsiveness and Care perspective (Chapter 9)**

A Brief Overview of Chapter 3

Chapter 3 pulls together what was presented in chapters 1 and 2 in terms of how philosophical and psychological features of everyday morality fit together and then situates these two sources of moral knowledge with different perspectives on human moral subjectivity. Everyone's moral value orientation presupposes an understanding of **moral subjectivity** or what it means to be a human being.

I understand "subjectivity" generally to mean the capacity to have experiences. To have an experience, at the very least, there must be at least some consciousness that this experience is something happening to "me." Animals are not thought to have a *subjective* consciousness? Subjectivity is revealed in the "self" portion of the self-consciousness that accompanies every act of consciousness. My acts of consciousness are always something that happens to me, that I experience. This chapter investigates the moral dimension of that subjectivity.

Kohlberg showed that the way we make moral judgments can change over time. This is good because it also shows that it is worthwhile to spend time working on getting to know and developing your moral value orientation. Kohlberg's work and Carol Gilligan's criticism of it also brings to light the general orientation of the **Ethics of Justice** and the **Ethics of Care**. You should be familiar with the general characteristics of these two broad moral perspectives and be able to describe their similarities and differences and the kind of subjectivity that is peculiar to each orientation. You might want to listen to the two short videos below that focus on justice and care.

It is important to get a feel for these two general moral perspectives (Justice and Care) and how they impact our understanding of human nature because how you understand human nature influences your beliefs about the nature and functioning of morality. You should be able to compare and contrast **modernist subjectivity** and the emphasis on Justice with the understanding of human subjectivity from the perspective of Care.

What I call "modernist subjectivity" involves an overvaluation of the rational approach to morality to the exclusion of non-rational and affective elements. The whole moral person involves an everyday, effective integration of these two perspectives in her or his morality. In the following four chapters we will investigate corresponding moral theories to these perspectives of human nature as they play out in the two domains of human moral action: the personal/interpersonal domain and the social/political domain. Various moral theories corresponding to these two moral domains will be presented in the next four chapters or our text.

You should also be familiar with the **moral domains** presented in this chapter and how the ethics of justice and the ethics of care are interpreted in them.

PRACTICE

TERMS TO KNOW

- Ethics of Justice
- Ethics of Care
- Moral Development
- Lawrence Kohlberg
- Moral stage theory
- Carol Gilligan
- Difference feminism
- Moral subjectivity
- Modernist subjectivity
- Communicative rationality
- Modernist rationality
- Personal/interpersonal moral domain
- Social/political moral domain

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Explain why it is important to determine whether morality can be effectively taught?
2. Briefly explain the main points of Kohlberg's moral development theory.
3. Explain how and why Gilligan was critical of Kohlberg's research?
4. What does Gilligan mean by "difference feminism?"
5. What is modernist rationality and how does it differ from communicative rationality?
6. Briefly describe the "Ethics of Justice."
7. Briefly describe the "Ethics of Care."
8. What is subjectivity? Why is it necessary to consider subjectivity within a framework of ethical reflection? What connection does subjectivity have to ethics?
9. How does the modernist version of rationality differ from the rationality of the care framework?

REFLECTION EXCERCISES

1. Read the Heinz scenario (included in this chapter) that Kohlberg used in his experimental research. First of all, note what your immediate gut response is, what you immediately (without thinking) feel that Heinz should do in his dire situation. Write that down. Now write down why you think that is the right thing to do. After doing this, reflect on your response and your reason for it and see if you can determine which of Kohlberg's stages this puts you at: pre-moral, conventional, principled. Try to extend your analysis to other

moral decisions you have made and see if you can form a picture of where your moral reasoning would fall on Kohlberg's developmental schema. Are you always at the same stage or do you sometimes reason differently? Do you see how your morality could be upgraded? Sketch out an upgrade plan for yourself with specific goals. Write them down. Now put this away until you have finished the course of studies presented in this text.

2. Imagine a scale calibrated 0 to 100, with "Ethics of Justice" at the 0 mark and the "Ethics of Care" at the 100 mark. Where do you think your own style of moral reasoning fits on the continuum between these two poles, considering the overall balance of your moral actions? More toward a rational, deliberative approach (Ethics of Justice)? Or more toward an affective-oriented, relationship and situation-focused approach (Ethics of Care). What do you think is the balance of these two ethical approaches in your life? Where would you place yourself on the 0-100 continuum between them? Why?

SCENARIO EXERCISE

Bias Against Women in Management

International management consulting firm Burns & McAllister is listed by *Working Mother* magazine as one of the top fifty firms in the United States for employment of working mothers and by Working Woman magazine as one of the top ten firms for women. The firm has earned this reputation for several reasons. First, nearly 50% of its partners are women. Second, it has a menu of employee benefits that includes such things as flex hours, sabbaticals, family leave, home-based work, and part-time partner-track positions.

However, B&M recently has been the subject of a series of reports by both the Los Angeles Times and the New York Times that scrutinize its policy on female executives in certain nations. B&M has learned, through its years of consulting, that certain countries in which it negotiates for contracts prohibit the use of women in the negotiation process. The cultures of many of these countries do not permit women to speak in a meeting that includes men. Consequently, B&M has implemented a policy prohibiting women partners from being assigned these potential account negotiations and later the accounts themselves. Clerical help in the offices can be female, but any contact with clients must be through a male partner or account executive.

For example, Japan still has a two-track hiring system with only 3% of professional positions open to women. The remainder of the women in the Japanese corporate workforce become office ladies who file, wear uniforms, and serve tea. Dentsu, Inc., a large Japanese advertising firm, had a picture of the typical Dentsu "Working Girl" in its recruiting brochure. Surrounding the photo are comments primarily about her physical appearance: such as (1) her breasts are "pretty large" and (2) her bottom is "rather soft."

In response to criticism regarding B&M's posture, the head of the firm's New York office has explained: Look, we're about as progressive a firm as you'll find. But the reality of international business is that if we try to use women, we can't get the job. It's not a policy on all foreign accounts. We've just identified certain cultures in which women will not be able to successfully land or work on accounts. This restriction does not interfere with their career track. It does not apply to all countries.

The National Organization for Women (NOW) would like B&M to apply to all its operations the standards that it employs in the United States. No restrictions are placed on women here, NOW argues, and other cultures should adapt to our standards; we should not change our standards to adapt to their culture. NOW maintains that without such a posture, change can never come about.

What should B&M do?
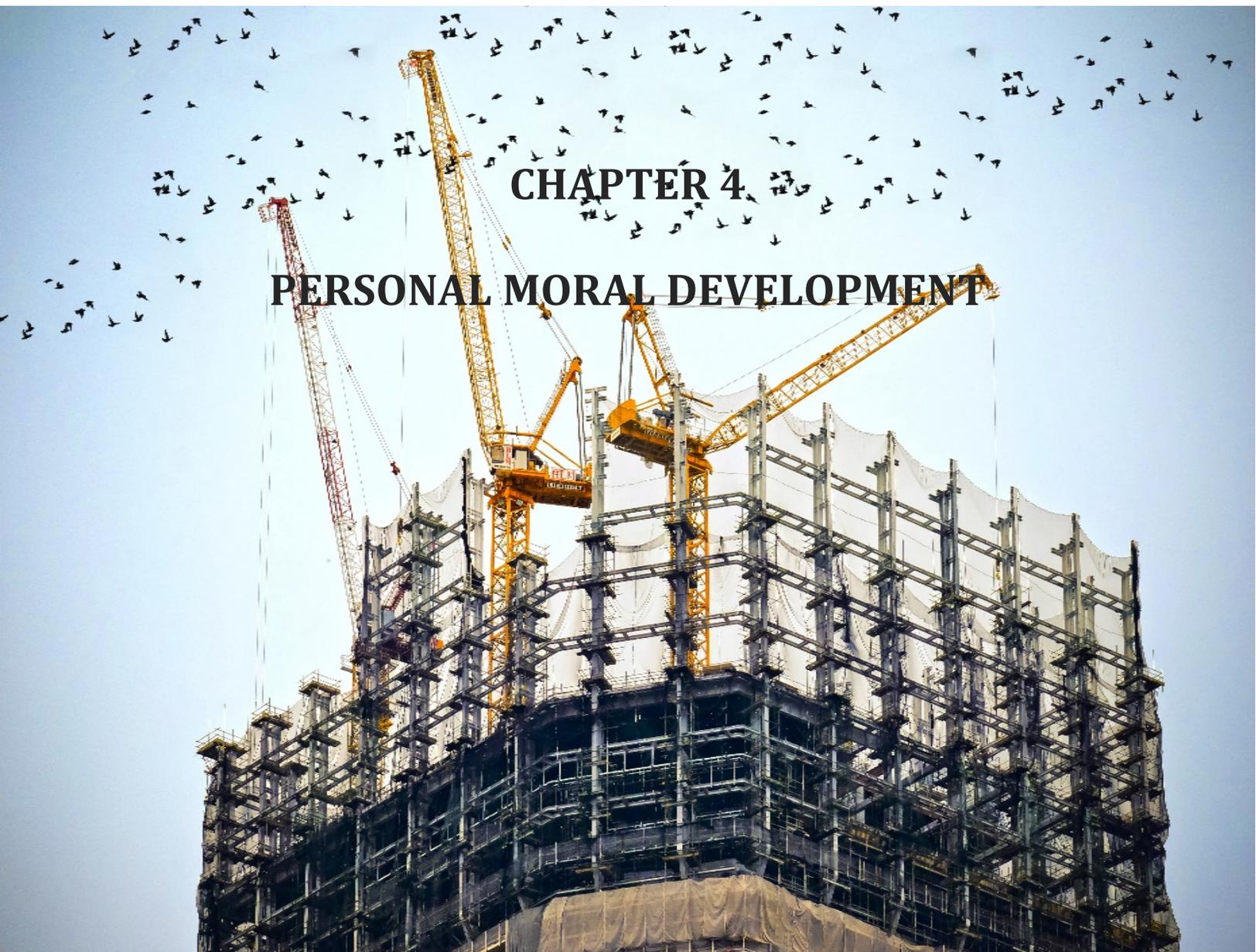
CHAPTER 4

PERSONAL MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

From our investigations so far, two moral domains have been delineated: (1) the personal/interpersonal domain, and (2) the social/political domain. Within each of these domains, two general orientations to the practice of ethics can be defined: (1) Ethics understood as a conscious, *rational decision-making process*, and (2) Ethics understood as a guide to *personal moral growth and development*. Although we can talk about these two orientations separately, you should keep in mind that in practice they almost always work together.

The present chapter (Chapter 4) is focused primarily on the personal growth and development orientation to ethics within the personal/interpersonal domain. We will investigate the theoretical moral frameworks that best embody and support this orientation and define human subjectivity from this point of view.

CHAPTER 4. PERSONAL/INTERPERSONAL DOMAIN:
PERSONAL MORAL DEVELOPMENT

The rationalist, decision-making orientation within the personal/interpersonal domain presumes a modernist, liberal understanding of human subjectivity. The moral theories associated with it will be the subject of our investigations in the following chapter (Chapter 5).

The personal growth and development approach to ethics is especially compatible with four moral theoretical frameworks: **Virtue Ethics, Self-actualization theory, Phenomenology and Existentialism.** These theoretical moral perspectives focus on helping you to become the kind of person you want to be as you go about living your life every day, striving to live the best possible life and achieve your life goals. Each of these four theories provides a specific perspective on and understanding of the nature, function, and coming-to-be of the moral subject—you and me. They each define a version of the moral self and a process that accounts for the appearance and meaningfulness of that self.

Think about this as you read through this chapter: Which of these theoretical versions of moral self-creation do you find most useful for understanding your own self-development and the world in which you live?

Virtue Ethics and Self-creation

Imagine that your Self is like a big piece of rough-hewn granite that you are given to carve into a finished work of art. You are both the sculptor *and* the sculpted work of art—which is how it really is, isn't it? By chipping away here and chipping away there, over time, you create your Self as a perpetual-work-in-progress. From the perspective of Virtue Ethics those little "chippings" as you create yourself are the specific practices of virtue in your pursuit of moral excellence. By pursuing and practicing the moral virtues you create your moral self like an artist creating a 'work of art'. Virtue ethics involves you creating yourself.

It is understood from the perspective of virtue ethics that you can become a continuously more virtuous person through the practice of specific virtues. This means that you are more likely in the future to act consistently with the virtues you practice because the practice of being virtuous creates character traits. Practicing virtue ethics is like going to the gym. If you get there and do the exercises, you will get toned. Not a huge amount of reflective thinking required. It is mostly about repetitive and consistent *practice*.

> From the perspective of personal moral growth and development, virtue ethics makes the general claim that if you practice specific acts of a specific virtue (like acts of courage or patience or kindness, for example) until acting in those ways becomes *habitual*, then you will develop a corresponding *trait** of that moral virtue that will now be a permanent part of your moral "character"—a *character trait.*
>
> * Personality or character **traits** reflect people's characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Personality traits imply consistency and stability—someone who scores high on a specific trait like extraversion is expected to be sociable across different situations and over time.

Virtue ethics is a **teleological moral theory** because it involves the belief that every human being has a natural end, (*telos*), goal, or purpose in this life which involves the actualization or the realization of the highest 'function' of a human being. According to Aristotle, the highest human functioning would involve using your rational intelligence to achieve happiness *(eudaimonia)*. Exactly what is meant by "happiness" is open to some interpretation, but Aristotle thought it was definitely *a kind of activity* (like creative thinking) rather than a passive end state (pleasure).

Every rational being seeks happiness as an end or goal in life naturally. That is, they want to live the best possible life. It is more than just feeling good. The ultimate end or goal of virtue practice is creating a moral self through concerted practice that will complete you or actualize you most fully as a whole and complete human being. When you have this ultimate good, you will 'be all that you can be'. You will have fulfilled your purpose for being, that is, your purpose in life.
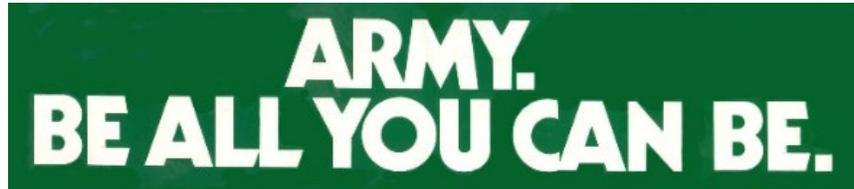
Aristotle argued that each moral virtue is a kind of *mean* or average between two corresponding vices (extremes). For example, the virtue of courage is a mean between the two vices of cowardliness and foolhardiness, where cowardice is the disposition to act more fearfully than the situation deserves, and foolhardiness is the disposition to show too little fear for the situation. Courage is thus the mean between the two: the disposition to show the amount of fear appropriate to the situation but to charge ahead nevertheless in a reasonable fashion. Watch the video (9:22) below which presents a good summary of virtue ethics theory and practice.
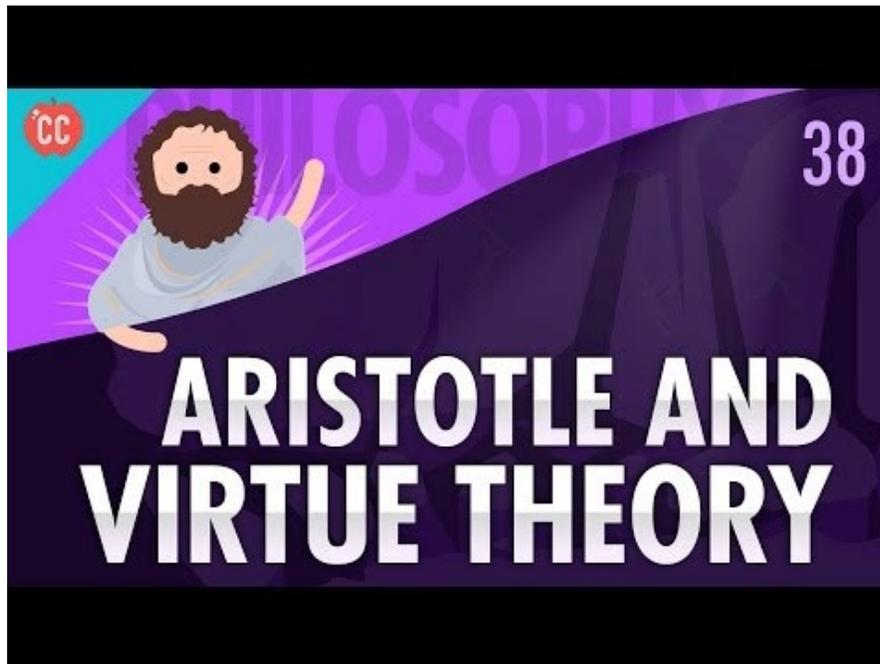
Virtue ethics, self-realization achieved through virtue practice, is still a popular approach to ethics today and is in widespread common usage. This orientation to ethics practice has been incorporated into many approaches to self-development and psychological schemes for self-improvement. You will see it reflected in Abraham Maslow's Self-actualization theory.

Self-actualization theory

Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) was an American psychologist who is perhaps best known for his 'hierarchy of needs' pyramid. This heuristic device provides a roadmap for what I think of as everyone's natural desire to live the best possible life. We are naturally motivated to get our needs fulfilled, and as we fulfill lower needs, possibilities for the fulfillment of higher needs automatically become possible.
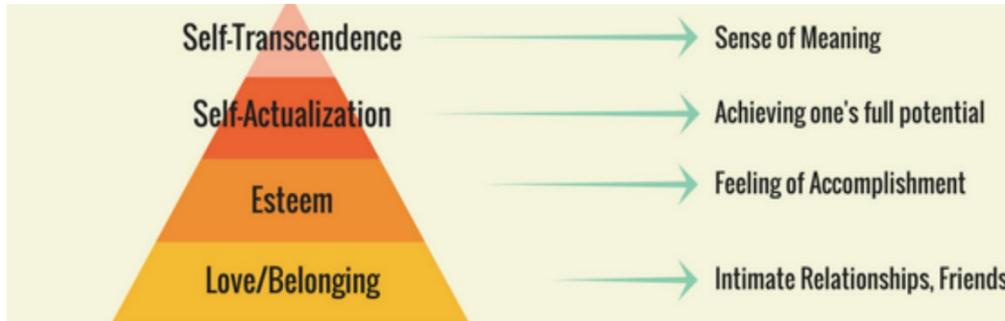
Maslow's self-actualization theory reflects the general orientation of virtue ethics in that it focuses on your individual, personal achievement of moral excellence as a life goal. In both perspectives, this is accomplished through a concerted effort of practice. In virtue theory, personal moral growth and development focuses on the practice of creating virtuous habits through targeted, repetitious practice of various virtues.

In Self-actualization theory, personal moral growth and development is conceived in terms of need-fulfillment. It starts with the practice of fulfilling the most basic needs we have and moving toward the fulfillment of our most spiritual need, self-transcendence.

All human beings, as a part of the human condition, are confronted with the same hierarchy of needs that they naturally strive to fulfill. Not everyone gets equally far up the need- fulfillment pyramid, however. Only an elite group make it to full self-actualization, according to Maslow; even fewer to self-transcendence.

Characteristics of self-actualizing and self-transcending persons

What might a self-actualizing or self-transcending person look like? Of course, it isn't possible to give a definitive profile, but Maslow's broad sketch of the self-actualizing type is revealing and helpful to see what he is talking about.

Self-actualizing types of people perceive reality efficiently and can tolerate uncertainty when necessary. They accept themselves and others for who and what they are. They tend to be spontaneous, with a well-developed sense of humor. They look at life objectively, are often very creative, and are resistant to value enculturation (going along with the crowd), but without being ostentatiously unconventional.

Self-actualizers are well-balanced people with a great love of life and concern for the welfare of other people. They prefer to establish a few deep, meaningful interpersonal relationships, have a definite need for privacy, maintain strong moral standards, and enjoy occasional 'peak experiences' like having a great new insight, creative inspiration, or solution to a problem.

Self-actualizing people tend to experience life in a childlike way, according to Maslow, with full absorption and concentration, willing to try new things instead of always sticking to safe paths. They are more likely to listen to their own thoughts and feelings when evaluating experiences instead of the voice of tradition, authority, or the majority. They avoid pretense and game-playing, and tend to be honest, responsible and hard-working. They are willing to ruthlessly examine their own beliefs, values, and actions, and they admit their shortcomings once they see them and try to change.
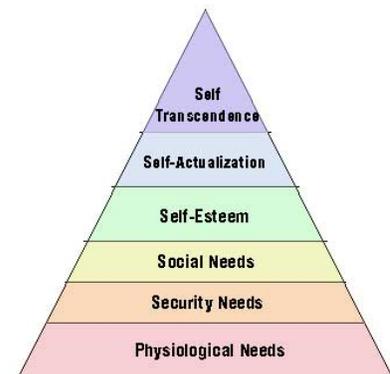
Maslow's Modified Hierarchy Of Needs Including Spiritual Needs

Above all, self-actualizing persons who have achieved the highest level of motivated need-fulfillment undergo a clear shift away from a focus on their own self-interest and its development, and 'transcend' toward a motivational focus that puts the welfare of others before their own welfare. In short, they become less egoistic and more altruistic, or self-transcending.

Biological and Physiological needs - air, food, drink, shelter, clothing, sleep. Physiological needs are the physical requirements for human survival. Physiological needs are most fundamental and must be fulfilled first.

Safety needs - protection from elements, security, order, law, stability, freedom from fear. According to Maslow, humans need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance among their social groups, regardless whether these groups are large or small.

Love and belongingness needs - friendship, intimacy, trust and acceptance, receiving and giving affection and love. Affiliating, being part of a group (family, friends, work) and knowing that you are loved. Humans need to love and be loved by others

Esteem needs - achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, self-respect, respect from others. People have a need for stable self-respect and self-esteem. Maslow noted two versions of esteem needs: a "lower" version and a "higher" version. The "lower" version of esteem is the need for respect from others. This may include a need for status, recognition, fame, prestige, and attention. The "higher" version manifests itself as the need for self-respect.

Self-Actualization needs - realizing your personal potential, self-fulfillment; seeking out personal growth and peak experiences. Maslow describes this level as the desire to accomplish everything that one can, to become the most that one can be. Individuals may perceive or focus on this need very specifically. The fulfillment of this high-level need must encompass the whole person.

Self-Transcendence needs - In his later years, Maslow explored a further dimension of needs he labeled self-transcendence, while criticizing his own vision on self-actualization. The self only finds its actualization in giving itself to some higher goal outside oneself, in altruism, care for others, and spirituality. Transcendence refers to the very highest and most inclusive or holistic levels of human consciousness and moral responsiveness to oneself, to others, to human beings in general, to other species, to nature, and to the entire cosmos. This achievement would be the highest possible accomplishment of personal moral growth and development. Self-transcending types of persons, in Maslow's sense, go beyond the self-actualization inherent in Virtue Ethics, and strive to live a way of life that includes helping others achieve their best as well.

How Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Impacted Work Management Theory in the U.S. (4 minute read)

Phenomenology: method and practice

Phenomenology (from Greek *phainómenon* "that which appears" and *lógos* "to study") involves the philosophical investigation of your subjective experience or your consciousness of phenomena (how things appear to you in your experience) and the necessary conditions for the possibility of you having those experiences. Basically, it entails a careful, bias-free description of your experiences of things, ideas, situations, etc., anything you experience.

Founded in the early years of the 20th century by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and later expanded by a circle of his followers, phenomenology should not be thought of as a unitary philosophical movement or research method in a rigid, scientific sense. Rather, different phenomenologists share a family resemblance in their approach to the practice of phenomenology, but also embody significant differences in their work.
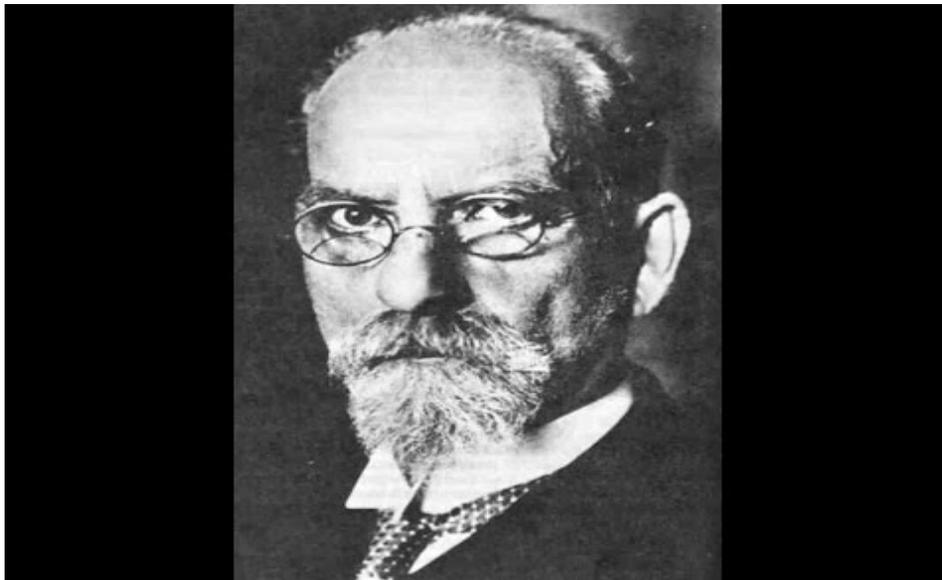
Video: E. Husserl & the Adventure of Phenomenology (11:59)

Phenomenology is not a doctrine, nor a philosophical school, but rather a style of thought, a method of seeing, an open and ever-renewed description of subjective experience, having different, yet equally successful, results.

Phenomenology is by its nature very personal and perspectival. This may disorient anyone wishing to define the meaning of phenomenology objectively once and for all. Phenomenology makes it clear that meaning is not a static phenomenon. Meaning is subjective and always requires interpretation.

Phenomenology practice focuses on your subjective experience as the source of meaningful insights and understanding about your interpersonal value orientation with others and with the world. The phenomenological approach to investigation of consciousness inspired many thinkers, especially in creative and artistic practices, because it opened up the rich field of subjective experience for purposeful reflection and first-person articulation. This is the method that underlies the basic structure of this textbook, *Intro to Ethics*.

Check out this article for a brief phenomenology of gravity. It illustrates how we should investigate words to question the meaning that is supposedly conveyed by those words. Think you know what gravity "is"? Read this article: We don't know what gravity is

The practice of Phenomenology can be understood as both a contemporary method or style of philosophical investigation and as an existential philosophical practice that is *distinctly different from either the rational or the empirical approaches to reflection and research in ethics*. Phenomenology does share some of the features of both rational analysis and empirical demonstration, and it certainly values these two research approaches while yet being distinct from them.

Thus, phenomenology can be thought of as a third way of investigating the self and the world that sort of weaves in between the rationalist and empirical approaches. To get a better understanding of this let's look a little closer at the empiricism and rationalism.

Empiricism	Rationalism
Knowledge is derived from experience/experimentation.	Knowledge is derived from reason and logic.
Experimental science is the paradigm of knowledge.	Mathematics is the paradigm of knowledge.
Experimental science cannot produce certainty.	Genuine knowledge is certain because it is rational, not empirical.

The problem with Empiricism and Rationalism

Empiricism

Empiricism and empirical research reduces complex human phenomena to objective, quantifiable categories capable of being tested, measured, and evaluated through experimentation (as we saw with psychologist Paul Piff's research regarding the impact of wealth and social position on attitudes about greed). This empirical reduction entails certain problems.

First, empiricism tends to miss the real nature of what it is supposedly investigating. Why? Because it objectifies what it studies and, thus, necessarily distorts it in order to study it.

Take greed, for example. **Greed is never just "greed" pure and simple.** It is always *your* greed or *my* greed or someone's, at some time, in some unique life circumstances, to some extent or other, regarding certain desires and goals that are manifested in a certain way, etc. This or that specific act of greed is always situated uniquely, whereas Piff's supposedly empirical idea of "greed" is abstract and universal. Thus, it is impersonal and, actually, non-existent in reality.

The fact is that no two existential value orientations about greed, of any two persons, are ever exactly the same. Empirical research is less sensitive to individual differences than is phenomenology and thus often misses the real, existential value and significance of what it is investigating.

Thus, secondly, regarding human-focused research, empiricism risks depersonalizing and dehumanizing the dynamic and ultimately incomprehensible and unique existential individuality of human beings—you and me in our actual, lived, unique everydayness. This is what Emmanuel Levinas, a student of Husserl, and other Existential philosophers will strive to describe in their work. More about existentialism and professor Levinas below.

Rationalism

On the other hand, **rational analysis** strives to eliminate emotions, sentiment, gut-responses, hunches and passions from their natural place as integral parts of the moral decision-making process. This results in a false, unrealistic, narrow, and sterile view of human nature and the moral person. As a result, both approaches to moral research, Empiricism and Rationalism, miss connecting to the unique subjectivity of the everyday existential person (you and me!) for whom alone morality makes any sense. Humans are more than just rational agents or actors.

Phenomenology begins precisely in the experience of your own unique moral subjectivity where it will be shown to be a method for seeing insightfully, developing insightfulness, and practicing moral development.

Phenomenology

As indicated above, it is difficult to say exactly what phenomenology "is" once and for all. It is more of a style of thinking and perceiving rather than a specific, rule-governed method for doing philosophical research. The key difference from other styles of thinking is that phenomenology focuses on the first-person experience of the subject (the meaningfulness of the subject's experience, of *your* personal experience) as the primary source of research 'data' … like what you are experiencing right now as you are reading this text.

The discipline of phenomenology, then, may be defined initially as the study of the structures of your experience or consciousness, including all the 'contents' therein, that is, all the cognitive and affective phenomena of your experience. Literally, phenomenology is the study of "phenomena." **Phenomena (plural) or a phenomenon (singular) are the appearances of things to your consciousness, or things as they appear in your experience, what you see, feel, taste, hope for, fear, love, etc.** Phenomena are constituted or appear in your consciousness as the *meaningfulness* they have for you in your direct experience of them. In short, phenomena are all the meaning-full contents of your subjective, conscious experience.

Your conscious, subjective experience is the starting point of phenomenology, but conscious experience always shades off into less consciously experienced phenomena. We are only vaguely aware of things in the margin or background of our attention, and we are only implicitly aware

of the wider horizon of things in the world around us outside of that. So, in a sense, the whole world (even the whole cosmos) is logically implicated in any subjective experience.

Conventional morality, as I suggested above, often functions invisibly in the zone of implicit awareness, rather than being something we are always consciously aware of. We make most of our moral judgments throughout the day automatically and are only half-conscious of doing so, if that. This is similar to how, in practical activities, which are governed by tacit knowledge, like walking along a road, hammering a nail, riding a bike or speaking our native tongue, we are not explicitly conscious of our habituated patterns of action since we are thoroughly immersed bodily and existentially in that experience. 'I' don't really *have* such experiences; I *am* those experiences. Experientially, there is no separation between "me" and "riding the bicycle" in the **lived experience** of riding it. An effort of reflection about my riding the bicycle is necessary to accomplish that theoretical separation of me, the rider, from the act of riding.

Reflection, from a phenomenological perspective, takes the form of an unbiased description of your subjective experience. You know you have this right when what you say equals what you mean to say. Check out the exercises at the end of this chapter for how to go about doing this.

Video: Phenomenology and Commodity Culture (12:00)

The above video, "Phenomenology and Commodity Culture," demonstrates the difference between the kind of moral values underlying a materialistic, commodity-driven cultural consciousness (all-too-common these days!) and the moral values underlying a phenomenological approach to the meaning and purpose of life. I strongly encourage you to watch this video and make an effort to understand the argument that is presented in it.

The distinction between a materialistic or 'realistic' perspective and a phenomenological perspective is a fundamental distinction weaving its way through the entirety of this text, *Intro to Ethics*.

Existentialism: Authenticity and Self-creation

Phenomenology had a huge impact on the existentialist philosophers. You can see the influence of phenomenological philosophy on Existentialism's practice in the work of the well-known existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre's (1905-1980) studies about the human condition.

Sartre's ideas were articulated in numerous philosophical and non-philosophical books and articles. Using Husserl's phenomenological approach (which he learned from Emmanuel Levinas), Sartre describes how life appears to everyday existential consciousness (you and me), and what must be the necessary underlying conditions for that consciousness to appear as it does.

In Sartre's experience of what it is like for you or me to find ourselves existing in the world, certain key, essential features stand out. Experientially, Sartre claims, we all find or experience ourselves as being **"thrown" into a world** which initially is absurd and senseless. We didn't choose to be here. We simply find ourselves already being here. How is it that we have appeared in the world here and now? What is the meaning of this? There are no clear and certain answers to these existential questions, which is exactly the meaning or sense of Sartre's phrase that we are "thrown into the world."

We also find ourselves **"condemned to be free,"** Sartre says. What he means is that we cannot escape the exercise of our absolute and unconditional freedom. Human beings are radically free, whether they like it or not, according to Sartre. Consequently, we all *must* (are 'condemned' to) make moral choices. And, our choices will create our self and a meaningful life of one kind or another for us. Our choices will determine who we are, for better or worse. There is no way to avoid this.

Choice situations confront us in life that cannot be avoided, like Sophie Zawistowski's repugnant choice depicted in William Styron's novel (and Oscar-winning film) *Sophie's Choice*. You *must* make choices and you must live with the consequences of your choices for the rest of your life since they will determine the entire course of your life and how close it comes to being the best possible life, or not. That is the existential situation.

Sophie's Choice depicts how tragic freedom can be when choice situations are forced upon us in which neither choice is something we want. Watch the video clip below from *Sophie's Choice (*Meryl Streep won an Academy Award for her performance as Sophie). Note the existentialist

themes, complex emotional content, Sophie's pleas for special consideration because she is a Christian and not a Jew (hence the sick irony of the 'privilege' she is given) and, most importantly, pay attention to your own cognitive and affective responses as you watch. The action takes place on the unloading dock at the concentration camp at Auschwitz. Sophie, who is Polish, not Jewish, has been arrested because she was caught with a contraband ham she had gotten for her sick mother. It was forbidden to have meat. She has just gotten off the train at Auschwitz. (Warning: a tense and emotionally charged scene.)

Sophie's Choice - The "choice" scene (5:00)

You may try to skip any possible tragedy in your life by avoiding a difficult choice. But that may not be possible, as with poor Sophie. And even if it were possible to avoid or evade making a difficult moral choice, it would be **"bad faith,"** or **inauthenticity** Sartre asserts, that is, a moral cop-out, putting your self-creation in the hands of someone else's decision-making rather than shouldering the burden of free choice yourself. To be morally "authentic," that is, a self in harmony with itself, *we must take responsibility for the choices we make, no matter what.*

According to existential philosophy, your moral choices constitute or make you into the kind of person you are. This is a heavy, inescapable burden for the solitary existential individual. We are cut off from others because of our freedom, existentialist claim. To be free means we are not influenced by others.

In addition, within the framework of your everyday life, you never have absolute certitude that you made the correct moral choice (contrary to the supposed certitude claimed in the rationalist and empirical approaches). Why? Because there is no absolute standard by which to measure the moral correctness of our choices, according to existentialism. In Styron's novel, *Sophie's Choice*, for example, poor Sophie is haunted all of her life by the choice she was forced to make that day on the loading platform at Aushwitz, which, ultimately, will lead her to despair.

Part of the existential condition in Sartre's view is that by being "pure freedom" we never catch up with our self. We never achieve identity with our self. And, the same radical existential freedom that separates us from our self, also leaves us separate from one another, and, thus, for Sartre, in conflict with one another for dominance and control interpersonally and socially.

This essential separateness of the existent (the individual person) leaves Sartre's version of existentialism open to the charge of solipsism (being isolated and closed off to others) and a lack of satisfactorily accounting for inter-subjectivity and co-operative community-building. This led Sartre to proclaim that "hell is other people." The same freedom that is the source of our personal, moral authenticity also necessarily separates us absolutely from others within Sartre's existential framework.

"Why I like Existentialism" by Eric Dodson (16:55)

For Sartre, existential *authenticity* means taking responsibility for *my* choices only, to the full extent of *my* freedom. Thus, both Husserl and Sartre have difficulties accounting for the possibility of a positive conception of inter-subjectivity and our relations with others. Emmanuel Levinas, a student of Husserl and contemporary of Sartre, attempts to resolve this problem by arguing that human moral subjectivity *is,* itself, *intersubjective*, always already connected to others. Levinas makes the radical claim that your and my individual subjectivity comes into being out of and *as* a pre-conscious responsiveness to the otherness of the Other, the fact that others always will remain others. What does all that mean?

Beyond freedom: responsibility for the Other

Emmanuel Levinas

In a series of complex phenomenological texts, Professor Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) argues that we are essentially connected to the Other. Why is "Other" capitalized? Levinas wants to indicate that the "Other" is not the other empirical person exactly, not the person you can shake hands, not the empirical person you see and know. The person you know has already been reduced to an empirical object in your consciousness. But persons are not objects.

Rather, 'the Other' is the other person insofar as she always remains truly *other* for me and is not thought to be equal to my cognitive, perceptual representation of her; i.e., not equal to who I *think* she is. The Other is precisely the other person insofar as I am unable to comprehend her fully and reduce her to an objective category in my mind, a representation of her, believing that I then know "her" in some objective, definitive sense.

According to Levinas, this objectification of Others does a certain existential damage to their true being. Another way to put this is that the Other is that dimension of human being that disrupts the consciousness that is trying to reduce it to objective categories, which it resists infinitely. We are never able to know anyone fully and completely.

In Levinas' radical phenomenological way of seeing, the Other always breaks out of my attempt to objectify her or his otherness and reduce that otherness to a conceptual representation in my mind that 'captures' it, dominates it and controls it. The Other challenges my totalizing and objectifying consciousness in the simple, straightforward face-to-face relation. Ultimately, Levinas points to the human face as an example of what is an incomprehensible 'object' or a perception that cannot be fully objectified without doing a kind of spiritual damage to that person. The human face is something more than the sum total of eyes, ears, nose, mouth, etc. It is transcendent.

Hanging out with Professor Levinas at his home in Paris, 1989.

The face can be harmed because it is naked and vulnerable, yet that very vulnerability of the face 'commands' me to "Do no harm!" This moral imperative in the face of the Other is the origin of morality for Levinas. The face speaks the first law of morality: Do not kill me!

By Philip Ivanhoe

The Dehumanization of Facial Recognition Tech in China Today

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Face is particularly important in East Asian societies, such as China, and found in two related forms. The first and more popular conception, *mianzi* (面子), primarily concerns wealth, social status, position, power and prestige; the second, *lian* (臉), concerns moral character and behaviour. A person can have *mianzi* – eg, status, position, etc – but lack a corresponding level of *lian* – eg, be regarded as morally bad. A complete lack of *lian* erodes and eventually undermines one's *mianzi*, while someone with great *lian* will have considerable *mianzi*.

In contemporary Chinese society the question of face has taken a new and disturbing form that profoundly affects these more traditional, Confucian-inspired conceptions. China's rapidly expanding network of surveillance cameras increasingly relies upon AI-aided facial-recognition technology to achieve much of its primary mission: to keep track of, record, control and modify the behavior of its citizens.

Within this system, 'face' really has nothing to do with traditional conceptions of moral or social status – at least, their ideal forms; it is not about how one views oneself or how the members of one's community regard one. Instead, it is to be an object under the gaze of a systematic government surveillance system established by the Communist Party of China (CPC) and guided by increasingly sophisticated AI. My primary interest is what this does to the traditional notions of *mianzi*, *lian* and related ideas about virtue, but I will also note an unanticipated implication that the new mass surveillance carries for the CPC, an implication that betokens a more general concern with the ethics of AI…. **Read More**

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Infinity shines forth in the incomprehensibility and the spiritual inexhaustibility of the face of the Other, Levinas argues. This incomprehensible and infinite 'presence' exposed in the face of the Other thus calls upon or 'commands' the totalizing consciousness of rationalism and empiricism not to objectify the vulnerable otherness of the Other, not to reduce the Other to an object that can be controlled and manipulated, as if this representation were the real thing itself. The Nazi soldier in the Sophie's Choice video clip presents a

Incredible honor to have a drink with this renown philosopher!!!

good example of this dehumanization. "I would like to get you in bed," the soldier says, reducing Sophie immediately to a sexual object. This would be a first violence done to the Other, reducing them to an object. After this initial, depersonalizing violence, anything is possible, all the way up to Auschwitz, in Levinas' view. It is what made the Holocaust possible. Numerous members of Levinas' family were murdered in the Nazi concentration camps and the Holocaust was never far from his mind.

Brief overview of Levinas' philosophy (11:49)

The horror of this dehumanization is revealed in the inhuman choice imposed upon Sophie by the totalizing (totalitarian) consciousness of Nazi Fascism. Only the vulnerable face of the incomprehensible Other stands between what happened at Auschwitz and the possibility of it happening again. It is the sheer naked vulnerability of the face of the most vulnerable that 'commands' moral restraint—commands it of me before I even know it. It is out of this responsiveness that "I" emerge. The vulnerability of the face makes the most fundamental of moral claims upon me: It says *Do not kill me!* Morality is born along with subjectivity in this pre-conscious 'challenge' of the Other and my pre-conscious responsiveness to it. Morality *is* this responsiveness, in Levinas' view. It is this originary, inter-subjective responsiveness to the otherness of the Other that is the origin of moral subjectivity.

How does the moral Self emerge from this pre-reflective responsiveness to the Other? Prior to consciousness, before we have developed an individual identity, an "I" or subjective consciousness, we are connected to the Other from birth (or even before birth!) in a sensible, pre-reflective responsive inter-subjectivity, which is fundamentally an ethical or moral orientation of responsiveness to the Other, a being-for-the-Other. This is happening with you and me right now, all the time. It is from out of the context of this pre-conscious responsive or responsible inter-subjectivity, through the effort of individuation, the effort of making 'somebody' out of myself, that the existential subject strives relentlessly to become an "I" — i.e., a subject, a somebody, a Self…an ongoing, dynamic process of identity-formation which, ambiguously, never fully achieves its goal even as it strives for this. And it can be hampered by what happens that is outside of its control.

Caught up in this important and necessary process of individuation, we forget and become insensitive and blind to our original response-ability for and essential connection with the Other, a responding that happens all the time nevertheless, whether we acknowledge it or not. The poor, the vulnerable, the disenfranchised are always knocking at the door of your heart. Thus, Levinas' ethical phenomenology is meant to recall us to this deep, inalienable, original, inter-subjective connection of being for-the-Other that is the very origin of our own individual moral subjectivity, happening all the time every day. It is an exorbitant, pre-conscious, pre-rational responsiveness which, ultimately, Levinas will simply equate with Love.

Thus, in Levinas' curious formulation, subjectivity *is* inter-subjectivity. Truly, we are all in this together from Levinas' moral phenomenological perspective. We are bound together by a primordial loving responsiveness, and we are thus interdependent or 'co-dependent' with one another for the creation of our ongoing, dynamic sense of self.

A Brief Overview of Chapter 4

Two ways to approach an understanding of the practice of ethics can be distinguished. One approach focuses on ethics as a process of **rational moral decision making.** The other focuses on ethics understood as **a process of personal moral growth and development**. The first orientation answers to the question "What should I do?" The second answers to the question "What kind of person should I be?" In reality, these are two aspects of morality understood as a wholistic and existential frame of reference geared toward living the best possible life. Certainly, we need to and do make rational moral decisions based on moral principles derived from moral theories, but this should (and does) happen within a more general existential framework of personal moral development in the service of living the best possible life and being the best person I can be.

In Chapter 4 we looked at moral theories that are especially attuned to personal moral development and being the best person you can be. In Chapter 5 we will look at moral theories that are more attuned to rational moral decision making and deciding what I should or should not do.

In conjunction with Chapter 4, you should watch the video clip from the movie **Sophie's Choice,** if you haven't seen it already. You should try to see how Existential themes are reflected in this dramatic video clip. The video depicts a confrontation between Sophie and a sadistic SS officer on the train platform at Auschwitz. Sophie, a Christian, grew up in Poland. Her father, a professor, supported the Nazi program. Sophie disagreed with him and thought she was no better than the Jews. But in her confrontation with the SS officer at Auschwitz (after he initially sees her in a degrading, dehumanizing manner as a mere sex object), she pleads her case as a Christian for special treatment. With sadistic irony, the officer extends her a morally repugnant 'privilege'. Look for Existential themes….

There are also connections between this scene and the ideas of moral subjectivity we have been investigating in chapters 3 and 4. In his criticism of the modernist subjectivity that is reflected in the Ethics of Justice, Emmanuel Levinas argues that it is precisely this objectifying modernist consciousness that made Auschwitz possible. The dehumanizing objectification of human beings—inherent in modernist consciousness, according to Levinas—reaches its most degrading form in

the horror of the Nazi's "final solution"—the extermination of the Jews, misfits, homosexuals, etc.

On the other hand, Sophie depicts elements of the Ethics of Care. She was caught by a Nazi patrol in occupied Poland bringing a ham to her sick mother, at great risk to herself since it was forbidden for residents to have meat, and was arrested for this altruistic act of care. On the platform at Auschwitz, clutching her frightened children to her, she is the very picture of care and concern for others, oppressed by the brutal and uncaring rationality of totalitarianism all around her. The outcome of the scene seems to depict what can happen when the Ethics of Justice is not held in check by the Ethics of Care. Think about that.

Virtue Ethics, **Self-actualization theory**, **Phenomenology** and **Existentialism** all have something in common concerning their understanding of what it means to be a human being. Each of these theories starts off with an empirical understanding of human beings without ever accounting for how that empirical person came to appear on the empirical scene, i.e., how they got to be a person in the first place. In other words, the fact of human beings is taken for granted, as if it is already clearly known what it means to be a human being, as if it is not necessary to consider the meaning of human nature. Phenomenology and Existentialism anticipate this question, however, as the two videos on phenomenology included in this chapter make clear. Emmanuel Levinas, on the other hand, focuses on this question directly.

Levinas argues that we get to be a human being through a pre-reflective, pre-rational, and pre-conscious, affective (i.e., felt), intuitive relation of responsiveness to the Other, a moral responsiveness that is more consistent with an **Ethics of Care** than with the **Ethics of Justice**. We cannot see this pre-conscious responsiveness directly (empirically) but we can see situations for which this must be the very condition for the possibility of that situation; and, therefore, an actuality. The parent-child relation is a good example of this, Levinas argues. The mother's pre-conscious responsiveness to the child is what configures her *as* a mother. It is what makes it meaningful to be a mother. Thus, Levinas' ethical phenomenology is not only a theory about the 'origin' of human morality, it is also a theory about the origin of human subjectivity and inter-subjectivity. Levinas argues that my subjectivity (how it is meaningful for me to be who I am) *is* based on or derived from inter-subjectivity (a pre-conscious connectedness with the Other). In short, we are all connected before we know it. We are all in this together.

[Note: I understand that all of this may be a little hard to comprehend right off. That is perhaps because it cannot be comprehended fully by a totalizing, modernist, reflective consciousness. Yet, it can be experienced and described phenomenologically in its incompleteness. If you have ever fallen in love…if you have ever suffered the death of a loved one…if you ever given birth or taken on the responsibility of parenting, if you have ever sacrificed deeply for a friend…then you already know in your gut and your heart what Levinas is trying to articulate.]

PRACTICE

TERMS TO KNOW

- Virtue Ethics
- self-actualization
- self-transcendence
- phenomenology
- existentialism
- character
- character trait
- virtue as mean
- self-actualization
- hierarchy of needs
- phenomenological reductions (see video)
- phenomenology and commodity culture (see video)
- authenticity
- bad faith
- the Other
- the moral subject

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How does Virtue Ethics approach the question of personal moral development?
2. What are some of the similarities between Aristotle's Virtue Ethics and Maslow's self-actualization theory.
3. Virtue theory begins with the idea that human beings have a natural end or purpose in life. What would you say is your own purpose in life as you understand this?
4. What does the term "moral excellence" mean to you?
5. Explain what Aristotle was talking about when he likened virtue to the mean between two extremes.
6. How would you explain to an intelligent friend that what Maslow means by "self-actualization" is very similar to what Aristotle means by the practice of virtue?
7. Maslow sees "self-transcendence" as the ultimate goal of personal moral growth and development along a path of need fulfillment, a goal that even goes beyond self-actualization. What is self-transcendence exactly and how important to you is it to achieve this moral value orientation?
8. When you read Maslow's descriptions about self-actualizing and self-transcending types of people, how do you feel that you compare to this generalized description? Do you know anyone who seems to embody these types of characteristics? Is it meaningful to want to become like this type of a person?
9. How would you describe your own social world and the norms and values that structure it? What persons or groups are a part of your social world? Are you an insider or an outsider? How important do you feel your relation to your social world is for your sense of self? How do you see where you stand in relation to your social world?
10. Phenomenology says that you should look to your experience in order to determine the meaningfulness of things. Pick a phenomenon—being a student in college, for example—

and do a phenomenological examination of it. Describe your experience of being a student in college carefully and thoroughly, following out leads that arise and articulating as fully as you can how 'being a student' is meaningful to you. How is your understanding of what it means to be a student unique to you? Such a phenomenological investigation could be written out in the space of a paragraph or a book. If everyone who reads this text were to do this exercise, why would no two of these phenomenological descriptions be the same?

11. Are you a blamer or a responsibility-taker? Do you tend to think that when bad things happen to you it is someone else's fault? Do you ever notice a tension between what existentialism calls "authenticity" and "bad faith" play out in your life?

12. Do you think that our basic relationship with others is structured primarily by conflict or co-operation?

13. What causes the existential subject to be isolated and separate from other subjects? In what sense is this a problem for Existentialism?

14. How does Levinas' understanding of the moral subject overcome the solipsism of the existential understanding of the human subject?

REFLECTION EXERCISE

Watch the video clip from the movie *Sophie's Choice,* where she is confronted with the horrible choice she must make that gives the novel its name. (You can find a short synopsis of William Styron's great American masterpiece and the 'choice' scene from the movie online **here**).

What existential themes are illustrated in the video clip? (Hint: For example, how does Sophie find herself "thrown" existentially into this situation? Other existential themes?) Also, from the perspective of Emotional Intelligence, you should track your own emotions as you watch the clip, noting the extent to which your emotions drive your moral judgments. Finally, make an effort to separately empathize with Sophie, the SS officer, the daughter and son. How are they feeling? Do you feel resistant to empathize with any of them? Sympathetic? What else? How do you feel about your own emotional response? What would you do if you were in Sophie's horrific situation? Can you think of any other ways the various perspective on the moral self presented in this chapter can help to make sense of this phenomenon? Watch the clip several times. Note the differences in your responses. Put yourself imaginatively into the situation. What does it feel like to be there on the platform at Auschwitz?

SCENARIO EMPATHY EXERCISE

What should Kathy do?

Kathy W., a sales rep for a large, international educational materials supply corporation, was achingly close to making her million-dollar sales goal — only $1,000 short. This year her company was offering a special bonus.

If she made her sales goal by the end of the year, it would mean a fat $10,000 bonus check and a happy trip to the bank to finance a dream home she'd recently found. Other sales reps among the twenty-five or so in Kathy's division, also were close, and one had already made the bonus. The books would close in just a few more days, but at the end of the year her clients had exhausted their budgets and weren't in a buying mood. And she had no new clients in sight.

One possible hope popped into her mind: inner-city Lincoln High School. Its students, who often had to share textbooks, could really use her company's multimedia educational aids, but Lincoln had no discretionary budget for new teaching materials. What if Kathy donated the money to this needy school for the purchase, and put herself over the magic quota?

Or perhaps she could offer partial "donations" to close sales at several schools. She would then surpass her quota goal with room to spare. The Lincoln school or other needy schools would gain immensely valuable educational programs that would help them serve their students, her company would pick up sales revenue, and she would meet her sales quota. Even better, she would earn a cool $10,000 on an investment of $1,000.

At first thought, this seemed like a win-win solution. But the idea needled Kathy's conscience. The more she thought about it, the more something about it bothered her. Yet if she didn't close this "sale" — one which would help out disadvantaged students — she wouldn't make that bonus, and her dream house would remain out of reach. She found herself wondering, "What should I do?"

What do YOU think Kathy should do? How confident do you feel that your judgment is the morally correct one? Is what you think Kathy should do the same as what you feel she should do? What would you really do if you were in her situation?

CHAPTER 5
RATIONAL
MORAL DECISION-MAKING

1. Identify Problem

2. Generate Options

3. Analyze Options

4. Select Best Option

5. Implement Decision

6. Evaluate and Learn from Decision
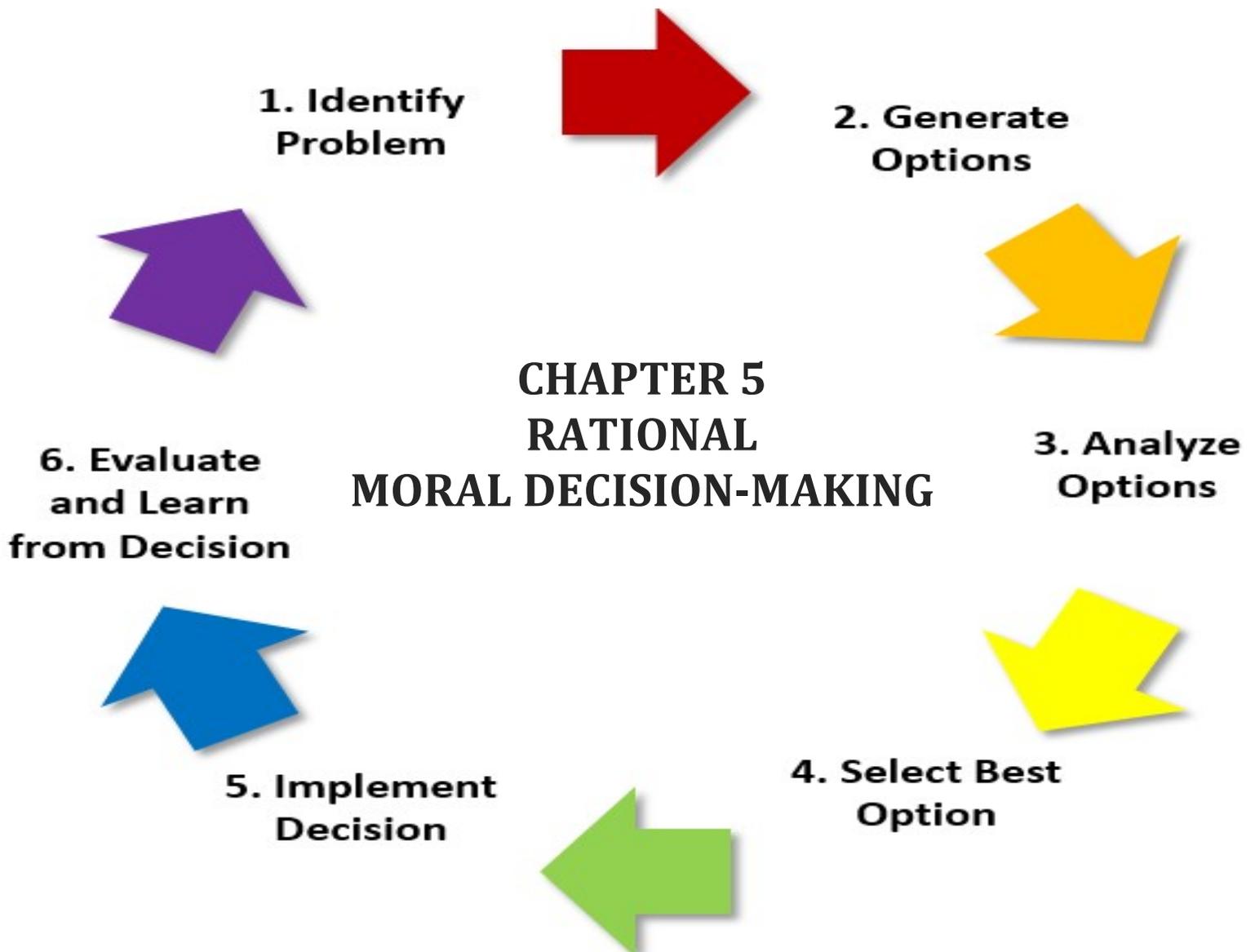
Introduction

N ormative moral theories generate normative moral principles. A norm is a standard or principle. A moral principle is a *general* moral value which is used to make *particular* moral judgments. To think or deliberate ethically in a rational manner often takes the form of determining logically (rather than merely intuiting sensibly by 'feel') the extent to which a specific moral situation or issue 'fits' within the scope of a general moral principle. If you think the situation fits under the principle, you will judge the moral issue favorably. If it doesn't fit in with the scope of the moral principle, you will judge that something is morally wrong.

Using rational moral principles to make moral decisions takes place unconsciously for most

What moral principles *must* be involved in the decision to do business on Sunday?

people most of the time. But your personal moral value orientation can be detected to be 'in play' behind the moral judgments you make, since you would not have made the judgments you did make if you did not hold certain moral principles, however consciously. Those moral principles, then, could be understood as *necessary conditions for the possibility of making the judgment you make*. Which moral principles you are using when you make moral judgments can be brought to light and made clear through targeted *thought experiments*, as will be illustrated below with the runaway trolley thought experiment toward the end of this chapter.

In this chapter we will look at the normative moral principles generated by two different and very common rational moral theories or ethical perspectives. First, we will look at a *deontological or duty-oriented* approach to ethics focusing on the rationalist deontological moral theory of **Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)**.

Secondly, we will investigate the *teleological moral theory called "utilitarianism"* and the consequentialist moral principle generated by it as this moral perspective was described in the work of the liberal, empirical philosopher, **John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)**. We will then consider a criticism of these two theories proposed by ethics Professor **Mollie Painter-Morland**.

Both deontological and utilitarian moral theories establish rational moral principles which provide a supposedly absolute foundation upon which rational, autonomous and free moral agents—like you and me—can make sound and rationally justified moral judgments. In practice and in the context of specific moral issues, these two approaches to moral reasoning are often at loggerheads, however, as we will see. (Why do you think that is the case?)

We will see numerous uses of both duty-oriented and utilitarian-oriented moral arguments on both sides of the moral issues that we will investigate throughout this course. So, it is crucial to get familiar with these theories now and even more important to see how these two orientations guide your own moral judgments in different situations, for it is quite certain that they do. That you use both of these theoretical perspectives already should become clear to you in the **runaway trolley thought experiment** presented later in this chapter.

Moral principles

Because of their importance to rational moral decision-making, we should take a moment to reflect on the nature of moral principles. As I suggested above, you can think of *moral* principles as general rules or standards that you use as guides for making particular rational judgments. You may want to determine whether a particular course of action you are considering fits under the general category of 'things that will be beneficial for me in the long run', for instance.
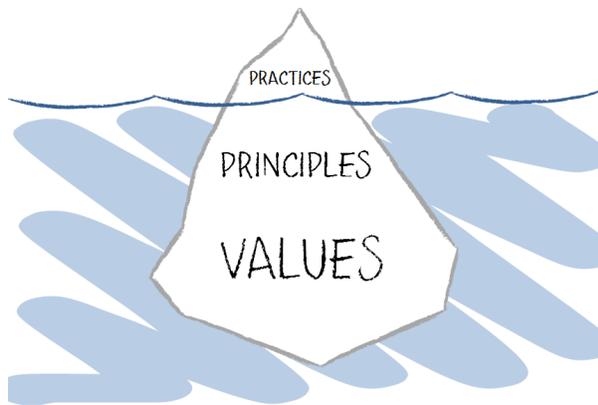
Again, the belief that persons have inalienable *human rights* is a moral principle (or set of moral principles) generated from theories about human nature that are then used to judge the particular actions of persons, states, political regimes and political/military groups' actions to see how these actions square with the principle of 'persons having inalienable human rights'.

Based on the theory of human rights, for example, the use of torture has been banned under international law and the laws of most countries. So, whether to use torture in a particular situation would have to be justified before the principle of persons possessing inalienable human rights. The concept of sustainability is another moral principle that limits the acquisition of resources by current consumers based on the rights of future generations to those same resources. Sustainability is a moral principle which can then be used to judge whether particular actions, like Norwegian whale hunting or rain forest clear-cutting, for example, is sustainable or not by comparing the particular whale hunting actions of Norwegians or the rain forest clear-cutting with the scope of the principle of sustainability. This is how the moral principles that are generated by Kant's deontological moral theory and Mill's teleological moral theory are used to ethically evaluate particular moral issues. You will be doing numerous analyses of this type.

What are the origins of these two moral theories? They have different origins. Kant's moral theory is derived from a deductive, analytic reflection on the rational nature of human beings. Mill's moral theory is derived from an empirical reflection on the way in which people

can be observed to make moral judgments naturally. Both theories are absolutistic in that they claim to establish the correct way to make moral judgments. Let's take a closer look.

Duty Ethics

Your moral motive, intention, and maxim

Kant believed that you have two possible sources of motivation for your actions regarding what you should do: reason and sensible inclination; i.e., the world as you think about it, and the world as you experience it through your senses. Existentially, this is the difference between what you *think* you should do and what you just *feel* like doing. In general, acts done from rational conformity to correct moral principles, like Kant's "Categorical Imperative" (described below), and not f [Grab your reader's attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

rom mindlessly going along with inclination or what you just feel like doing, are consistent with your **moral duty**, according to Kant. Moral duty is that which necessarily imposes an obligation on you to act in a specific way.

> **Moral duty should not be confused with social or professional duties that attach to social roles, such as the professional duty of a teacher to her students or the professional duties that attach to the social role of being a captain of an airplane or ship. Moral duties are different in that <u>everyone is equally subject to moral duty.</u>**

Kant deduced the nature of moral duty from the fact that human beings are rational. To act rationally is always to act from principles. Whenever I make a rational judgment about anything, I necessarily propose a principle to myself (even though I may not be conscious of doing so) that I believe is pertinent to the situation, and then I act from that *subjective* principle, just as if I were following the law, say, about speed limits.

Think of speed limits as rational principles imposed by legislatures (instead of being self-imposed) concerning how fast you are allowed to drive. When you obey the speed limit (because it is the law and *not* because you might get caught and punished), then you are forming your will to act *from* principle. In this case, the rational principle is imposed upon you in the form of the speed limit law. On the other hand, if you don't speed because you are afraid of getting caught, then you are acting from inclination (from the fear of punishment), like children and child-like people in Kohlberg's pre-moral stages.

So, you should see clearly that you can and do determine and impose moral principles on yourself and then act from them. This is the essence of acting rationally. We all do this all

the time, sometimes very consciously and sometimes not. You do this when you make up rules about things for yourself and then follow those rules. Insofar as you would ever claim to be acting reasonably or rationally (rather than from inclination), you would *always and necessarily* be acting from some principle or other.

For example, when I decide not to eat a second helping of desert, although I crave it (am *inclined* to eat it), because I have imposed subjective rules on myself for dieting and trying to lose weight – if this truly is a rational decision and not merely a blind, emotionally motivated reaction – I will have, in actuality, proposed a principle to myself something like this: "Whenever someone is trying to lose weight they should not eat a second desert." And, then, I act rationally *from* this principle in practice by actually, in practice, foregoing the second desert.

Such a principle that I generate myself, impose on myself, and then utilize to make a rational decision in a particular situation, Kant called a **"maxim"** or "**subjective principle of action**." Your maxim regarding a particular action is the principle you create ad hoc in the context of a particular action. You can get a good determination of what your maxim is in any given situation in which you believe you are acting rationally when you answer the question: "Why did I do that?" or "Why am I doing this?" Your answer to these questions will reveal your maxim. Maxims are subjective (self-imposed) moral principles
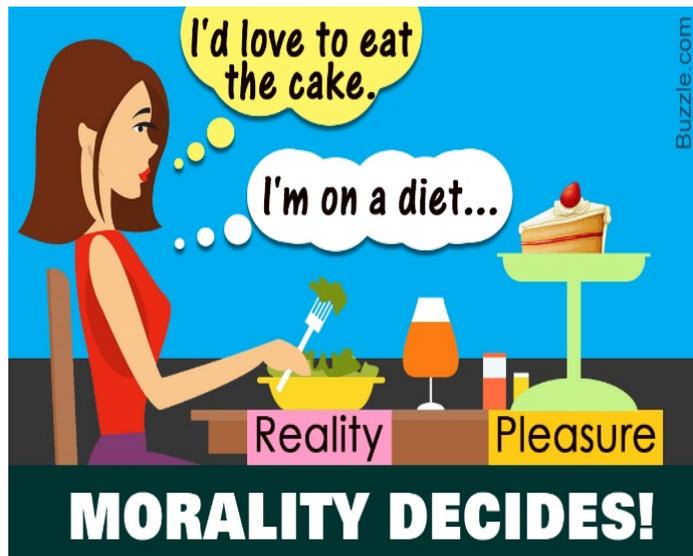
And, if whatever you did was truly the rational thing for *you* to do, then it ought to be the reasonable thing for *any rational person* to do in the same situation. If the principles that you propose to yourself to lose weight are rational, then they will be the correct principles to rationally guide *anyone* who, like you, wants to lose weight. Otherwise, it must not be the rational thing for you to do. Such is the absolute and universal force of all true principles and laws.

But, how can you tell whether the supposedly rational maxim you propose to yourself to guide your action in some situation is, in fact, in line with your moral duty for what you should do? The Categorical Imperative is the answer to that question.

Categorical imperative

To determine whether your personal, subjective moral principles or maxims are in line with moral duty, Kant offers two suggestions or two versions of what he calls the "Categorical Imperative," which is his name for the universal moral principle that he believes we all should follow in making every moral judgment: the Principle of Generalizability and The Principle of Respect. You should be familiar with how these principles work in real-life situations.

Principle of Generalizability

To see whether the subjective principle or maxim that you have proposed to yourself is truly informed by reason rather than inclination, try to generalize your maxim by imagining that it

would become a general law for everyone and anyone in your situation. Using the diet example above, the generalized maxim would now read something like this: "Whenever *anyone* is trying to lose weight they should not eat a second helping of desert." If you can imaginatively generalize your maxim, without contradiction, as applying to everyone, then your maxim coincides with your duty. In this case, it sounds like your duty to yourself requires you not to eat a second desert, *and any reasonable person in the same situation should act the same way*. No problem or reality contradiction with that generalization. So, not eating a second desert must be your duty within the scope of your self-imposed diet.

But, suppose another person, with a weaker will than you, decides to go ahead and eat a second desert despite being on a diet to lose weight just like you. That person's maxim in that case might be: "Whenever you are on a diet and trying to lose weight but really, really crave a second desert, then you should eat a second desert since you crave it so badly." Trying to generalize that maxim into a universal law that commands and requires everyone to eat a second desert whenever they want to lose weight would be ridiculously contradictory since it would undermine the whole idea of dieting. If you are trying to diet but have a rule that you must follow that says you should eat double deserts whenever you happen to crave them, then that isn't much of a diet for losing weight, is it? Therefore, eating the second desert whenever you feel like it must not be your duty within the scope of your diet. (Try applying this same reasoning to speed limits.)

Kant calls this generalizability strategy the "universal law" approach to determining your duty. It is a Categorical Imperative or absolute duty we should always follow, since we should always act rationally. He states it as moral principle like this:

You should always act in such a way that the maxim of your action can be made into a universal law for everyone.

You can think of it this way: How would it be if everyone were *required* to act the way you did? If it wouldn't be good, then it is not your duty.

Principle of Respect

There is a second formulation of the Categorical Imperative, equal to the first version, according to Kant, but somewhat different. Let's call it the "end-in-itself" or 'respect' version.

What it means to be rational, Kant argued, is to have the ability to propose laws to ourself and then to act from those laws. To have the ability, the power, to do this is the source of our incalculable *dignity* as human beings. It is what sets us apart from all other non-rational beings, including all other animals. To have such superior dignity is the moral equivalent of being an **end-in-itself.**

Here is what it means to be an end-in-itself. Think of rational actions as always being means to some end; when an end is achieved by some means, it then becomes a means for achieving another end. Going to school is the means to achieving the end of getting a good education. After achieving the good education, that "end" then becomes a means for achieving the end of getting a job; the job then turns into a means for fulfilling the end of making money,

etc. This means/end process goes on until it runs into an end-in-itself which cannot be turned into some means. An end-in-itself is precisely what should not be used as a *means* to accomplish some other end. All human persons are ends-in-themselves.

For a person to be an end-in-itself means that it is morally wrong to reduce a person to a mere instrumental means, i.e., to use them as a mere means for achieving some material end—without fair compensation for that use. To act morally toward other rational persons, who automatically have the dignity of being ends-in-themselves, is to treat them with *respect*. This means not to objectify and use them. Thus, when you treat someone as an end-in-itself you are treating them with respect, and you are thus acting *from* duty in your actions toward that person.

This version of the Categorical Imperative is stated as follows:

You should always act in such a way that your actions treat others as ends-in-themselves and not as mere means.

In short, the principle of respect asserts that you should treat others respectfully and not use them as a mere means to accomplish some end. All rational persons are worthy of respect, no matter what. It is 'built in' to their being rational. Respect is not something you "earn" for Kant. All rational persons *deserve* respect simply because they have the dignity of being rational persons.

You should be clear about the fact that the principle of generalizability and the principle of respect are used to determine *moral* duty. Do not confuse moral duty from other ways in which the term "duty" is used. All social roles have special duties attached to them. These duties are usually determined and judged by codes of ethics or other legal documents specific to the role. Professional duties, such as the duty of the captain of a ship to his or her passengers, is different from moral duty in general, which would be the same for the captain and all the human passengers on the ship. The CEO of a company will have duties determined by law and tradition, for example, that workers do not have. Professional or social duties attach specifically to professional or social roles; moral duties are the same for all rational persons.

The short video below summarizes Kant's moral theory.
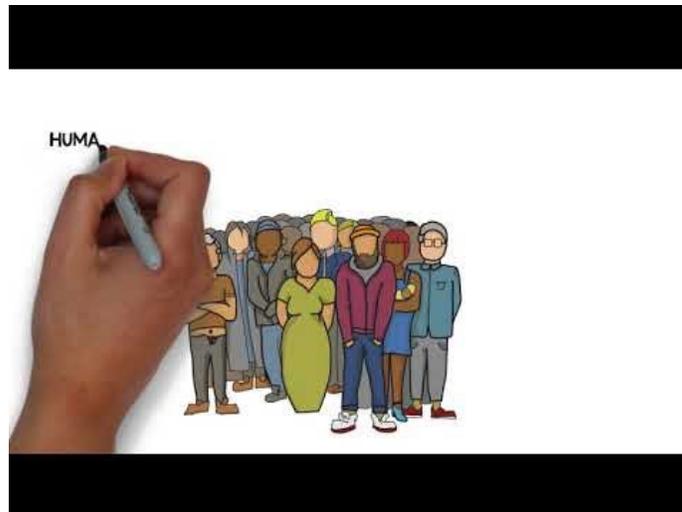
Question: The "Golden Rule" moral principle asserts that you should treat others as you wish to be treated. How similar or different is this to the Categorical Imperative principle?

Utilitarian Ethics

John Stuart Mill's Utilitarian moral philosophy focuses on the *consequences* of our actions as the way to determine whether they are in line with moral correctness or not. From an empirical perspective, utilitarians argue, it is not the motivational principle by which an act should be judged good or bad, as with Kant, but the amount of good and bad that *flows from the act.* It is the consequences that determine whether an act or policy is moral or not.

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)

Thus, when trying to determine the rightness or wrongness of an action, you should calculate how much good (happiness, pleasure, welfare) will follow from the action and for how many sentient (capable of feeling pleasure and pain) beings (including non-human sentient beings like dogs and frogs). That is the general idea.

The good or bad (pleasure or pain) flowing from an act could also be determined for classes of acts. U*tilitarian rules* can be formulated to cover all acts of a certain kind, like all acts that unnecessarily injure an innocent person. We don't need to keep testing every case of torturing innocent children and animals for the fun of it to see whether it is moral to torture this particular innocent child or animal for the fun of it. We can establish a utilitarian-based rule to cover all such acts. *Notice, however, that this kind of a utilitarian rule, although it may sound similar to a duty-oriented moral law, is certainly different in terms of the cognitive procedure for determining it and justifying it.*

Principle of utility

In general, the utilitarian moral principle is formulated in accordance with the welfare distribution of outcomes and is usually stated thus:

You should always act in such a way that your acts produce the greatest good for the greatest number (of sentient beings).

Couple of things about this principle. First, there is the question of how to interpret that word "good" in there. Some traditional consequentialists think of this as pleasure, where pleasure is understood as the highest good. Mill distinguished between "higher" and "lower" pleasures. The pleasure of drinking a craft beer – though certainly a worthy pleasure in itself – is of a lesser quality, Mill argued, than the intellectual pleasure of solving a difficult mathematical problem with an elegant equation, such as when Pythagoras discovered the "Pythagorean Theorem." He was elated! This difference in the quality of pleasure should be taken into account when calculating the consequences of an action or decision. *Based on this idea, Mill thought it was better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied.* What do you think of that?

A second thing to note about the utilitarian moral principle is that the term "greatest number" means the greatest number of *sentient* beings – beings who can feel pleasure and pain, like animals and maybe trees, too. Any beings that can experience pleasure and pain need to be taken into consideration in the utilitarian calculus of consequences. There have been some strong

A brief explanation of Utilitarianism

utilitarian arguments made by animal rights activists, like the philosopher Peter Singer, against vivisection, for example, because of the harm done to the animal. Kant, on the other hand, thinks you can use animals in pretty much any rational way you see fit within the bounds of moral duty as this applies to you, since you are a moral agent. Animals, being non-rational, are not moral agents for Kant and may be used without compensation. Singer has famously stretched the utilitarian argument so far as to suggest that some specially trained dogs may have greater utility or welfare value than some vegetative humans, something a Kantian would be unlikely to accept.

Finally, consequences can be extremely complex and sinewy, maybe even impossible to determine ultimately sometimes, or even most of the time, as in the Butterfly Effect. What will be the consequences of building the Keystone XL pipeline or the Mexican border wall, for example? What will be the consequences of raising the federal minimum wage to fifteen dollars? What will be the consequences of relaxing Dodd-Frank banking regulations under Trump? What will be the consequences of marrying one person rather another, or taking one job rather than another? These consequences will be hard to determine absolutely.

Consequences can be of diverse types and insanely complex and difficult to ascertain in advance, yet they may sometimes appear deceptively simple and straightforward. This is something that you should be aware of when thinking through a moral decision from a consequentialist perspective.

The overvaluation of moral reasoning

Despite their fundamentally different approaches to moral reasoning, both Duty Ethics and Utilitarianism generate rational principles, sketched out above, that are commonly used to make supposedly morally correct rational judgments by everyday people. These general moral principles have been deeply established in Western culture over a long period of time. And they come with a general sense of what it means to be a moral human being attached to them.

Deontology focuses squarely on the deployment of "pure" reason, unadulterated by non-rational inclinations such as emotions, desires, and passions, which must be excluded from the rational decision-making process, since they would muck it all up and have us following the bliss of our feel-good inclinations instead of doing our duty. Remember, the harder it is to do your duty, the more meritorious it supposedly is when you do it.

Utilitarianism, as we saw above, based on the empirical idea that the consequentialist calculus is actually how persons go about making moral judgments anyway, argues for a rational analysis of consequences achieved by any means as long as they are justified by the greater good, in order to arrive at a correct rational moral judgment.   Emotional pleasure or pain are consequences of actions, sure, but they must not be an active part of the rational calculus itself that weighs and evaluates the strength, duration, etc. of those consequences in a reasoning process that *starts* from a rational estimation of consequences and leads to a rational judgment about whether the act or class of acts under consideration is moral.   For utilitarians and for deontologists, rationality is thought to be the only proper guide to moral reasoning.   What about this reliance on rationality by both deontology and utilitarianism?

These "grand narratives," as Mollie Painter-Morland refers to both duty ethics and utilitarianism in her book *Business Ethics as Practice,* make "claims of rational superiority that are attached to their principles and procedures…. Morality is described as the rational application of objective principles to practical problems. It is this view of morality that is primarily responsible for the theory versus practice distinction that plagues the field of business ethics. Different moral theories emphasize different "rational" principles, but none make adequate provision for the consideration of contingent contextual parameters and conflicting claims."   This is why an emphasis on a pluralistic entrepreneurial practice is so important.   Painter-Morland explains it like this:

Dr. Mollie Painter-Morland

"Business ethics models that use utilitarian, communitarian, deontological, rights-based, and contractarian suppositions and principles as their starting point may ultimately do the cause of ethics in organizations more harm than good. Though conceived as vehicles for creating authoritative normative frameworks in business life, these approaches often facilitate the abdication of moral discretion and responsibility…. When ethics is understood as practice, it can no longer be something that is practiced at arm's length. Moral agents are required to remain fully engaged with the concrete contingencies and dynamics of the world. Instead of an abstract cognitive exercise, ethics as practice is all about participation, relationships, and responsiveness."[12] Mollie Painter-Morland

It is the exclusively rational orientation of the "grand narrative" approach to moral decision-making that is worrisome to the Ethics of Care people.   They feel that such an exclusively rational understanding and approach to moral reasoning and moral action propounded by duty and utility ethics wrongly claims the moral high ground and thus misses the existential moral situation of everyday people functioning morally without ever thinking of Kant or Mill.

Existential pluralists like Painter-Moreland believe that both duty and utility ethics under-value, degrade, and exclude the non-rational aspects of human beings from moral consideration.

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[12] Painter-Moreland, Molly. *Business Ethics as Practice.* New York: Cambridge, 2008, pp. 81-88.

But these non-rational aspects of human beings, in fact, are more likely to guide our everyday moral interactions and relations with others, intuitively for the most part, yet with their own reasonableness. They are the mostly unconscious interpersonal sources of our dynamic and ever-changing value orientation. So, in the final analysis, you should not think of the distinction between rational and non-rational orientations to morality as an either/or type of situation between the Ethics of Justice or the Ethics of Care. As we have already seen, it is a matter of both/and, not either/or.

The extent to which deontological and/or teleological moral principles structure your own personal moral value orientation in particular situations can be determined and revealed to some extent by how you respond to the well-exercised Runaway Trolley moral thought experiment, to which we now turn.

Emotions and rational moral judgments: Runaway trolley

Thought experiments

Thought experiments in ethics are imaginary situations typically targeted to a particular moral value educative and developmental purpose that you 'enter into' empathetically and analytically for the purpose of resolving or illustrating a moral dilemma. They are often used by philosophers to clarify an abstract theoretical idea or value position in a more intuitive, concrete, and experiential manner.

Thought experiments can be personally helpful in other ways as well. For example, the targeted consideration of moral scenarios can help you to determine experientially how committed you are to certain moral principles or perspectives when those principles come into conflict with other moral principles you also consider to be important. You can do this in a thought experiment without having to actually be involved in such stressful, conflicted situations.

Thought experiments can also help you to determine more precisely what the moral principles are supporting your everyday intuitive and emotional moral judgments. For example, you can use the thought experiments found at the end of the chapters of this text to see where your moral value configuration stands regarding the various kinds of situations presented in those scenarios. Then, using the perspectives of justice and care as a general guide, for example, you could map out changes to your moral value orientation and direction of development as you see fit by, again, reflecting on how you responded to the various scenarios. In this way, you could steer a course that increases your likelihood of achieving the best possible life.

So, the first thing is to enter into the scenario empathetically and note how you respond to the specific circumstances of it. The second thing is to note what you think reflectively about how you respond and discern the principles behind your judgments. Give the following thought experiment a try. And stay tuned-in to how you respond.

The runaway trolley

The "Runaway Trolley" scenario is a well-known thought experiment created by philosopher Philippa Foot and used in her article "The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of

the Double Effect" (1967) to illustrate the double effect principle in practice in relation to normative questions about things like the moral permissibility of abortion. Generally, the moral doctrine of double effect asserts that if an act has two outcomes or effects, one good and one bad, the act is morally permissible only under certain conditions, the most important of which is that the good effect must be 'intended' (must be the primary motive for the act) while the bad effect must not be intended at all. This doctrine is nicely illustrated by the runaway trolley thought experiment, as you will see. But that is not our purpose here.

Beyond the interesting doctrine of double effect, however, I am even more interested in investigating how the runaway trolley scenario can help you to determine for yourself where you stand in regard to the moral principles espoused by Duty Ethics and Utilitarian Ethics presented in this chapter, and how your perhaps mostly unconscious positioning in regard to these theories is already announced tacitly in your everyday emotional moral judgments that may have been conditioned by those principles and theories since you were a child. Rational moral decision-making cannot escape the tacit influence of the emotions, and sometimes the emotions seem to act rationally themselves.
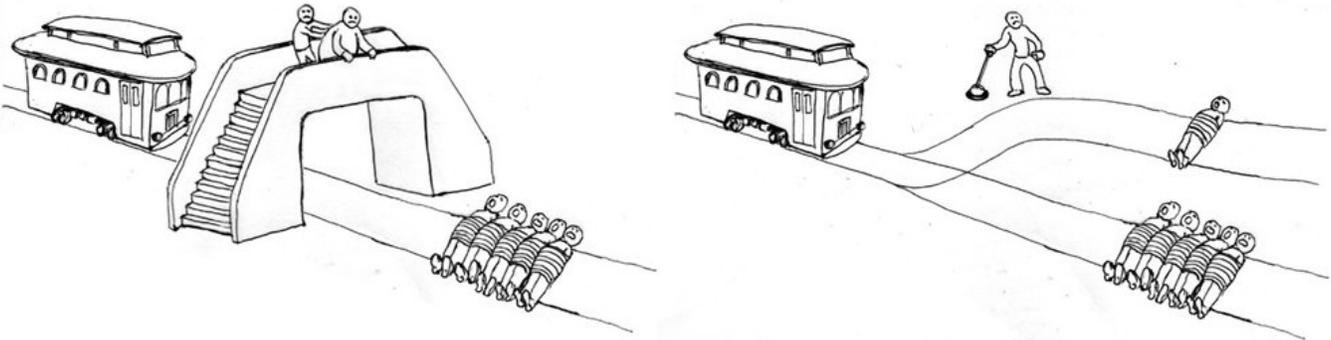
There are two parts to the classic version of Foot's runaway trolley experiment. Here is the first part:

> *A trolley's breaking system has failed, and it is hurtling driverless down the tracks toward four workers on the track who do not see it coming. If nothing is done, the four workers will surely die. You happen to be walking along the tracks at the time. You see that there is a lever that you can pull that will switch the runaway trolley onto a track where there is only one worker. Unfortunately, that one worker will get killed, but the four workers will be saved. Would you pull the lever to divert the trolley?*

If you were willing to pull the lever and divert the runaway trolley, you're in agreement with most others who participate in this thought experiment. Research consistently finds that people are willing to pull the lever to divert the trolley onto the track where only one worker will get killed. From a strict utilitarian perspective, it certainly seems *prima facie* better if only one worker dies instead of four. And this is usually what respondents will say to explain why they would pull the lever to divert the trolley, sounding like good utilitarians.

Okay, then, here is the second part of the scenario:

> *Same basic situation as in the first part: runaway trolley, four workers on the track who will get killed if nothing is done. But this time you are on a walking bridge that goes over the track the runaway trolley is hurtling down. There is a very large person on the bridge with you. The large person is near the edge of the bridge right over the runaway trolley's*

track, transfixed by the onrushing train. You see immediately that you could easily push the large person off the bridge onto the track and stop the runaway trolley. This would work. The four workers would be saved, but the large person would die. Would you push the person off the bridge?

Note your feelings and thoughts as you decide.

If you find that you are reluctant or unwilling to push the large person off the bridge, again you would be in alignment with the majority of respondents, including professor Foot herself. From a *strictly* utilitarian perspective, however, it seems as if there is little difference in outcomes between the lever situation and the bridge situation, at least from the strictly instrumental perspective of net 'human resources': one person dies and four are saved in each case. But it is *how* the one person dies in each situation that is the moral problem.

If you ask people why they would be willing to pull the lever but not push the person, they say things like "That would just be the wrong thing to do" or "Pushing the lever doesn't hurt anyone" or "I just couldn't do that." In short, these reports of emotional reasoning seem to clearly reflect the moral principle that it is somehow very wrong, *in itself,* for me to actively and physically kill another innocent human being, regardless of the good consequences that flow from it. But that sounds like a deontological or duty-based principle, derived from the idea that all rational beings have an intrinsic dignity deserving of respect.

So, if you were one of those respondents who is willing to pull the lever to divert the trolley but not push the person, you should have had a fairly clear experience of just how much of a moral pluralist you are in practice. You deployed utilitarian moral principles in the first trolley situation with the lever but deployed deontological moral principles about the integrity of persons in the second footbridge situation. You probably made these judgments somewhat unconsciously, easily, and immediately, experiencing only the felt emotional approval or disapproval that led to your decision in each case. You were able to intuitively 'feel' the significant differences between the two situations even though there are significant similarities. But what, exactly, is that significant difference between the two moral situations?

How emotion drives moral judgment

The moral brain

Neuroscientists have recently used scenarios like the runaway trolley to investigate the way in which areas of the brain that correspond to emotional response are triggered by elements of the scenario. In one study using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to measure subjects' responses to moral dilemmas, the two situations of the runaway trolley experiment were used to probe areas of the brain known to respond to emotional stimuli.

The Moral Brain

What the researchers found is that participant responses varied in accordance with the level of emotional engagement engendered by the scenario. They argue that these variations in emotional response were the chief causes of differences in moral evaluation and judgment of the scenarios. The authors argue that, "from a psychological point of view, the crucial difference between the trolley lever

dilemma and the footbridge dilemma lies in the latter's tendency to engage people's emotions in a way that the former does not. The thought of pushing someone to their death is more emotionally salient than the thought of hitting a switch that will cause a trolley to produce similar consequences, and it is this emotional response that accounts for people's tendency to treat these cases differently. [13]

Other neuroscientific research supports the conclusions on emotion from the above study, including one from The Morality Lab at Boston College. Researchers there were interested in how neuro-chemical changes can influence moral decision-making. They compared a group of subjects who had damage to their ventromedial prefrontal cortex, a region of the brain that scientists have associated with the processing of emotion, with a group of normal subjects in terms of how they responded to the runaway trolley scenario. Predictably, subjects with damage to the emotion-processing ventromedial prefrontal cortex were much more likely than normal subjects to be willing to push the person off the footbridge to stop the trolley. [14]

This adds to the evidence linking emotion with moral judgment, but it doesn't necessarily decide the question of whether the emotion produces a physiological change which then results in a moral judgment, or whether the moral judgment produces a physiological change that produces the emotion, or whether the physiological change produces the emotion which then results in a judgment. Nevertheless, it does support the close link between emotion and rational moral judgment .

Our moral tongue

In yet another cross-cultural study entitled "Your Morals Depend on Language" that ingeniously used the runaway trolley scenario to experiment with emotional response, researchers focused on the difference between the more emotionally laden consciousness associated with our native language and the less emotional consciousness associated with speaking a second language.

When the researchers had subjects respond to the runaway trolley dilemma in their native tongue, responses followed the usual pattern of people being willing to pull the lever to divert the trolley but not being willing to push the person off the footbridge. But, when the runaway trolley scenario was presented to subjects in a second language, willingness to push the person off the footbridge increased significantly.

The authors concluded that even the thought of actively pushing an innocent person to their death "engages a deeply emotional part of us" that we feel most fully and powerfully in the cultural context of our native tongue, whereas the same experience in a foreign language provides a muting of the emotional impact of the scenario. Subjects were less emotionally engaged with the scenario in the foreign language and thus more willing to push the person off the footbridge.

To check these findings, researchers presented subjects with a less emotionally laden version of the footbridge scenario. Instead of pushing the person off the bridge, the subjects could divert the trolley to a track where the person who had formerly been on the bridge would be killed by the trolley. The researchers found that this slight variation caused a big difference. When

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[13] Greene, Joshua D., et al. "An fMRI investigation of emotional engagement in moral judgment." *Science* 14 Sep 2001: Vol. 293, Issue 5537, pp. 2105-2108.
[14] Damasio, A. *Neuroscience and ethics: intersections*. The American Journal of Bioethics. January 7, 2007.

given the option, eighty per cent of the respondents chose to divert the trolley rather than push the person off the bridge, both in their native tongue and in a foreign language. [15]

A Brief Overview of Chapter 5

This chapter looks at two rational moral theories that generate moral principles that can be used in rational moral decision making: Duty Ethics and Utilitarianism

It is important to be clear about how **principles** are used in rational moral decision making. In a very basic sense, *to be rational is to be able to reason from principles*. Principles are general standards used to evaluate particular situations. Be sure that you are clear about this. There are different ways to define what it means to be a rational being, but this definition gets to the heart of the matter for our present purpose. To be rational is to reason from principles.

Duty indicates some level of moral obligation. You are surely familiar with how duties attach to social roles (note how difficult it can often be to specify these clearly and definitively, however, like the specific duties that attach to the pilot of a commercial airplane, for example). But rational beings also have moral duties just because they are rational beings. Duties that attach to social roles and moral duties are not always the same. Also, duties can conflict with one another, as with Jim in the hiring situation where the duty to be fair is in conflict with the duty to be loyal to a friend. In conflicts of duty, you must try to discern which is the most important duty in that situation.

The moral principle generated by Deontology (study of duty) is deduced from the idea of rationality. It is a rationalist starting point. Because we are rational, we have the possibility of two motives for our actions: **reason** (what we *think* we should do) and **inclination** (what we *feel* like doing). Non-rational beings are unable to have rational motives for actions; so, no moral conflicts for non-rational beings. From a duty ethics perspective, moral conflict is a conflict between reason and inclination *motives* that form our will to act. Our moral duty will always coincide with the rational thing to do. Sometimes, however, duty and inclination may inadvertently coincide. For example, this happens when I am inclined to do what duty commands, in which case there will be no moral conflict.

How do we know if the motive for our action is in line with our moral duty? The first test is called the **principle of generalizability**. This is based on the idea

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[15] Costa, A., et al. "Your Morals Depend on Language." *PLoS ONE* 2014: 9(4) e94842. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0094842

that to be rational is to act from principles. You can get an idea of what the principle is you are using to act rationally in a particular instance by asking yourself why you are doing what you are doing; this will reveal your motive for your action. This is your **maxim or subjective principle of action**. If you can generalize this into a law for everyone, without contradiction, then it is your duty. Just ask yourself: How would it be if everyone did this? If that picture doesn't look too good, then your motive is likely not in line with your duty. Take lying. Trying to coherently generalize a maxim allowing you to lie will never be possible because a general rule that you should lie whenever you feel like will undermine the presumption of honesty, screw up social relations, etc. Thus, all lies are contrary to duty. Again, duty *entails* obligation. (Utilitarians will have an easier time justifying a beneficial lie....).

One problem with this is that it is not always easy to clearly discern our motives for why we do what we do. Our maxims (subjective principles) and our motives for acting can be complex, internally conflicted and confusing. Another problem is when two or more duties conflict. This happens often in everyday living (like with Jim and the hiring scenario) and requires deliberation and choice to discern the more important duty.

Another way to approach duty is from the perspective of the **principle of respect**, especially regarding actions involving rational beings. What does it mean that we should respect rational beings as ends-in-themselves? This means that they should not be used as *mere* means, like the way we use a shovel as a means, because rational beings are ends-in-themselves. Thus, the principle of respect requires fair compensation in work situations, for example. One problem with the respect approach to determining moral duty is that it is not always easy to be able to say what constitutes respect *in practice*, especially when duties conflict. But if the duty question involves an action relating to another human being, you should try to employ the respect principle to gauge the morality of that action. If the action intends to use the person for some desired end (without fair compensation), it is likely not in line with duty.

Whereas Duty Ethics has its origin in a deduction from the nature of rationality itself, **Welfare Ethics or Utilitarianism** is derived from *empirical observation* of the desire to maximize pleasure and avoid pain. Utilitarianism is thus a hedonism or hedonic calculus. Actions, from this perspective, are evaluated from an analysis of real or possible consequences in terms of how much welfare (pleasure) or harm (pain) the consequences are likely to produce. We should thus act in such a way, or make rules up in such a way, that they result in the greatest amount of

welfare for the greatest number of sentient beings (beings that can feel pleasure and pain).

One problem with this is that the welfare of the many is held to be more important than the welfare of the few. Thus, for utilitarianism, harm can be intentionally inflicted on the few for the benefit of the many; the end justifies the means. Duty Ethics would not permit this because there would be no way to generalize coherently a maxim that says it is sometimes okay to inflict intentional harm on an innocent rational being. That certainly wouldn't be respectful.

These two rational approaches to making moral decisions are often in conflict, just as they are for most people who participate in the **Runaway Trolley experiment**. In this hypothetical exercise, most people are willing to push the lever to divert the trolley, employing a quick Utilitarian calculation: better only one should die rather than four. But when it comes to pushing someone off the footbridge, people are less willing to push the person off despite the similarity in outcome to the lever scenario. Instead, they act like Deontologists who would hold that it is never morally acceptable to inflict intentional harm on an innocent rational being, no matter how beneficial the consequences.

If you were willing to push the lever but not push the person, you had a good existential experience of how your moral value orientation can change from one situation to another, fairly quickly. The research suggests that this switch is due to the emotional content connected to pushing a *person* rather than a *lever*. Thus, it seems to be our sensitivity to emotional aspects of situations that causes us to switch our moral value configuration from the lever scenario (Utilitarian) to the footbridge scenario (Deontology).

We will be looking in more detail at how **situational factors** impact our moral reasoning in future chapters of our text.

PRACTICE

TERMS TO KNOW

- Moral principles
- Duty ethics
- Deontology
- Rationalism
- Empiricism
- Sensible intuition
- Motive
- Maxim
- Subjective principle of action
- Categorical imperative
- Principle of generalizability
- End-in-itself
- Utilitarianism
- Consequentialist ethics
- Teleology
- Principle of utility
- Sentient beings
- Thought experiments
- Runaway trolley
- Doctrine of double effect
- The moral brain
- Our moral tongue

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How are normative moral theories created?
2. What is a moral principle?
3. How are moral principles used to make particular moral value judgments? Provide an example.
4. In what way is the distinction between rationalism and empiricism pertinent to the investigation of duty ethics and utilitarian ethics. How do these differ?
5. What is the categorical imperative? Explain in a general way how Kant arrives at this moral principle.
6. What are the two forms or versions of the categorical imperative presented in this chapter? How are these moral principles used in practice to make particular moral judgments?
7. How can you use the maxim of your action to determine whether your action is moral or not from a deontological perspective?
8. Why does duty ethics focus on your motive for acting?
9. From the perspective of Kant's view of human nature, what does it mean to be rational?
10. What is the principle of utility and how does utilitarianism argue that you should make moral judgments? Why is it important to note that the principle of utility applies to all sentient beings?

11. What is the meaning of the idea of "good" inherent in the consequentialist assertion that the moral thing to do is whatever produces "the greatest good for the greatest number"?
12. What is meant by the "overvaluation of pure reason"?
13. What is a philosophical thought experiment?
14. How can the runaway trolley thought experiment help you determine how much of a utilitarian and how much of a deontologist you are?
15. Why do people consistently respond differently to the "lever" version of the runaway trolley and the "footbridge" version?
16. How does the runaway trolley thought experiment show that emotion plays an important part in moral decision-making?
17. Why were people who responded to the runaway trolley scenario in a foreign language more likely to push the person off the footbridge to stop the trolley than people who responded to the scenario in their native tongue?

REFLECTION EXERCISES

Duty ethics focuses on your motive for acting. If your motive or intention for acting is attuned to fulfilling your duty, if you are acting *from* duty, then your action is moral. This seems to presume that we are always immediately aware of and clear about our motives for doing things. Is that correct? Are you always 100% clear about your motives for doing something?

Look at what you are doing right now, reading this text. What are your motives for doing this? Assuming the text is assigned in a course, you're reading it now because it is required and you want to pass the course to fulfill the requirement. You may be genuinely interested in the material. You may want to get the requirement out of the way *and* be genuinely interested in the material. You may be doing it to see if you can find some flaw in the account. You may be reading it because you have nothing better to do and it helps to pass the time. Also, your motive may be under duress. You may feel somewhat 'forced' to read the text because it is assigned and perhaps resent that as part of your motive. You may have any number of motives, mixed and competing for your attention, don't you think? One thing is for sure. Your motive, whatever it is, is definitely sufficient since here you are actually reading the text.

Okay, but do you ever *fully* know your motive? Try this exercise. Reflect on and describe your motive for reading this text right now? Is your motive simple or complex? Is it 100% clear to you what your motive is? How does it feel? Is your motive in line with your moral duty?

SCENARIO EXERCISES

Scenario 1 DIRECTIONS: Evaluate the captain's actions from the perspective of duty ethics and utilitarian ethics and try to imagine the captain's feelings throughout his ordeal and how they are expressing his values and principles. What are the captain's moral values and principles that come into play? Also, imagine what the feelings of the other people might be. Imagine you are a member of the jury at the captain's trial. What would be your verdict? What moral theories and principles would justify your decision?

1. Overcrowded lifeboat

In 1842, a ship struck an iceberg and more than 30 survivors were crowded into a lifeboat intended to hold 7. As a huge storm threatened, it became obvious that the lifeboat would have to be lightened if anyone were to survive. If everyone remained in the lifeboat when the storm hit, all would perish certainly.

The captain reasoned that the right thing to do in this situation was to force some individuals to go over the side and drown. Such an action, he reasoned, was not unjust to those thrown overboard, for they would have drowned anyway. If he did nothing, however, he would be responsible for the deaths of those whom he could have saved.

Some people opposed the captain's decision. They claimed that if nothing were done and everyone died as a result, no one would be responsible for those deaths. On the other hand, if the captain attempted to save some, he could do so only by killing others and their deaths would be his responsibility; this would be worse than doing nothing and letting all die.

The captain rejected this reasoning. Since the only possibility for rescue required great efforts of rowing, the captain decided that the most reasonable thing to do would be to sacrifice the weakest. In this situation it would be absurd, he thought, to decide who stays by drawing lots, and who should be thrown overboard. I am needed to navigate and the strongest are needed to row.

As it turned out, after many days of hard rowing, the survivors were finally rescued. The captain was tried in court for his actions.

2. Favoritism and fairness: What should Kevin do?

Scenario 2 DIRECTIONS: Try using any of the perspectives we have considered so far, including Virtue Ethics, self-actualization theory, pragmatism, existentialism, deontology, and utilitarianism to evaluate Kevin's predicament. What moral principle(s) might be in play for Kevin that would be consistent with what he is feeling? What moral principles might be in play unconsciously for Kevin's brother judging by his actions and attitude? How do you think you would respond if you were Kevin?

Kevin is a talented basketball player whose high school team made it into the playoffs and all the way to the city championship game. As a result, Kevin had to miss his school's baseball tryouts and a couple of weeks of practice. So, he was grateful when the coach gave him an opportunity to come out for the team anyway. Kevin's older brother had been on the varsity team for four years, so the coach knew the family and assumed Kevin would follow in his brother's footsteps. But Kevin had never played league baseball before and had no expectation of getting a lot of playing time. Besides, the team already had a solid lineup of experienced players; he would just have to be patient and earn his position through hard work.

Which is why Kevin was shocked when the coach announced the starting lineup for the first game: Kevin was picked to start at third base.

Kevin immediately felt confused, then embarrassed, then guilty. He was confused because the coach had never seen him play. He felt embarrassed and guilty because everyone knew that the coach must have made this decision based on Kevin's athletic reputation and the coach's relationship with Kevin's older brother. Kevin considered himself a team player. He also knew the other third baseman—a strong player who never missed a practice. Surely the other guy deserved to be the starter. He looked around at his teammates and saw himself through their eyes. He felt bad. He walked to his position without making eye contact with the coach or the players.

After the game, Kevin called his brother and said he was thinking about asking the coach to let him step down until he had earned the position in a way that was fair to the rest of the team. His brother said no way. Life is about seizing opportunity. That's how you achieve your dreams. Why give up your big chance? "Besides," he said, "I put in a good word for you, so don't blow it."

Kevin felt like he was stuck. If he kept silent, he risked losing the respect of his team; if he came forward, he risked losing the athletic opportunity and his relationship with his coach. He needed to make a decision before the next game.

What should Kevin do?

CHAPTER 6
STOICISM AND PERSONAL MORAL POWER

Introduction

I n the previous chapter we considered two moral theories—Duty Ethics and Utilitarianism. These moral theories have generated rational moral principles which can be used to make particular moral judgments. Like what kind of particular moral judgments? Like these: whether it is okay to pilfer supplies from work; whether advertising junk food to kids is wrong; whether you should change your major, have a second desert, or uproot your family by accepting a promotion that requires moving to a foreign country. Duty ethics and Utilitarianism (or just 'Utility') can help you to make such moral judgments effectively. You use these theories every day whether you know it or not.

The moral principles generated by Utility theory and Duty ethics are common ways of evaluating and making decisions about various types of moral issues. You might do this intuitively and emotionally in a pre-reflective manner, or you might use these theories reflectively, consciously working coming to a decision about something. Remember what we learned from the Runaway Trolley thought experiment in the last chapter. Non-rational, situational factors like

emotion or the difference between pushing a lever and pushing a person, continually influence our rational moral decision-making. This leads to an important moral question:

How much of your everyday life is under your control or within your power to potentially control, and how much of what you experience in your life is not within your power to control?

Some things you can control, and some things you can't. Do you always know where the line is between these two dimensions of your life? What happens if you are mistaken about where that line falls? You are morally responsible for actions that are under your control and within your power. Why? Because you could have done otherwise. But you are less responsible for actions that are not under your control. It isn't your fault that it is raining on your golf day or that the train is late. Knowing what is under your control and what isn't will make a big difference to your living the best possible life.

So, it will be worthwhile to spend a little time considering the extent of your personal moral power—how you can cultivate it, how you can give it away, and how you can take it back. We must look more closely at what is under your control and within your personal moral power and what isn't.

This chapter addresses the question of how our moral power and/or lack of power weaves its way through our everyday lives by focusing on the ancient moral philosophy called **Stoicism** and its contemporary connection to **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**. Practices and ideas derived from these two perspectives can be very beneficial to your cultivation and development of personal moral power and achievement of success in life. That is the message I want to highlight right off about Stoicism: *there is a practical benefit to the practice of Stoicism.* And there is plenty of concrete evidence to support that message.

Jonathan Newhouse, CEO

In a recent interview with philosopher Jules Evans (we will hear more from Jules later), Jonathan Newhouse, CEO of the giant Condé Nast publishing empire in Europe, said he accidentally stumbled upon Stoicism and it immediately caught his attention. When he realized just how beneficial it could be, he said he "read just about everything" he could about it. "I incorporated it into my thinking, and it's shaped the way I think and interact with the world in a very positive way."

Stoic philosophy, Newhouse continued,

> **...helps me manage myself and my own feelings. There's not very much that disturbs my equanimity. I can have a detachment and calmness in doing what I do. I don't get offended if someone I do business with lets me down, I just recognize this is the way some people behave. It reminds me of a quote from Marcus Aurelius I was looking at this morning:**

"Whenever you are offended at someone's lack of shame, you should immediately ask yourself, 'is it possible for there to be no shameless people in the world?' It's not possible – do not ask for the impossible. This person is just one of the shameless inevitably existing in this world."

Sounds pretty straightforward but people get hung up on how other people act all the time, so the stoic skill of reframing situations positively can be beneficial across the board. Think about road rage. The Stoics would say that if someone is behaving in a rude way, stay cool, step back and say 'OK that's their problem. What's my responsibility? Mine is to follow the precepts of truth, justice, courage and self-control'. Nothing can prevent you from doing that.

Your attitude is entirely up to you and within your potential control. If you ask most people, do you think you can achieve your goal, people would say, maybe I will, maybe not. If your goal is to live according to reason and virtue, then that is always achievable. I'd never thought of that before running into Stoicism. Now it guides my life. [16]

Keep in mind that this personal perspective on the philosophy of Stoicism is coming from an extremely successful entrepreneur in the international publishing field. Stoic philosophy works.

Stoicism fits in with the theories we have investigated in previous chapters that focus on how morality operates in the actual *practice* of living the good life back in Chapter 4. Aristotle was influenced by Stoic ideas and that influence is reflected in his arguments about virtue and happiness, so some Stoic ideas have already been introduced in this text. This is in keeping with the fact that Stoicism was a widespread system of ideas and practices in the ancient world and continues to have a lively influence today in western culture. A life philosophy with that kind of staying power is worth taking a closer look at.

Within the context of focusing on how we should go about living the best possible life, I would like to zero in on the fundamental Stoic question of just how much of your life is under your control and how much isn't, since it will be shown that the clear determination of this will supposedly make a huge and decisive difference to your achievement of success in your personal and professional life. I have found this to be true in my own experience.

Because of its importance, we will continue to investigate the extent of your personal moral power in the following chapter regarding the question of character, situation, and the influence of company culture on your morality. And the topic will come up again after that because of the central place the idea has across the whole field of ethics. But, first, let's turn our attention to the philosophy of Stoicism and see how this connects with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to create a general moral approach to life that can really work for you.

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[16] Evans, Jules. "Jonathan Newhouse, Stoic CEO of Condé Nast's international empire." Philosophy for Life.org, October 16, 2013. Retrieved September 2015.

Stoicism

Stoicism focuses on how to achieve the best possible life through the development of certain moral value perspectives and the practice of basic Stoic principles, namely: being guided in your life decisions primarily by reason; moderating your desires by the pursuit and practice of virtue; living in harmony with the natural order; embracing what is under your control and letting go of what is not; and maintaining equanimity in both victory and defeat.

It was not only the contemplation and discussion of these ideas and principles that was important to Stoicism. Study and discussion and discourse are necessary, but the self-actualizing exercise of these virtuous qualities and characteristics in the existential, everyday life of the practitioner is the primary goal of Stoic practice.

> **STOIC LIFE PRINCIPLES** - Epictetus
>
> - Practice the virtues until they are habits
>
> - Live in accord with reason and Nature
>
> - Moderate your desires and passions
>
> - Get ethical and philosophical training for life
>
> - Practice *very* honest self-assessment
>
> - Make careful life judgments
>
> - Develop inner calm. How?
>
>   - Focus on what is under your control
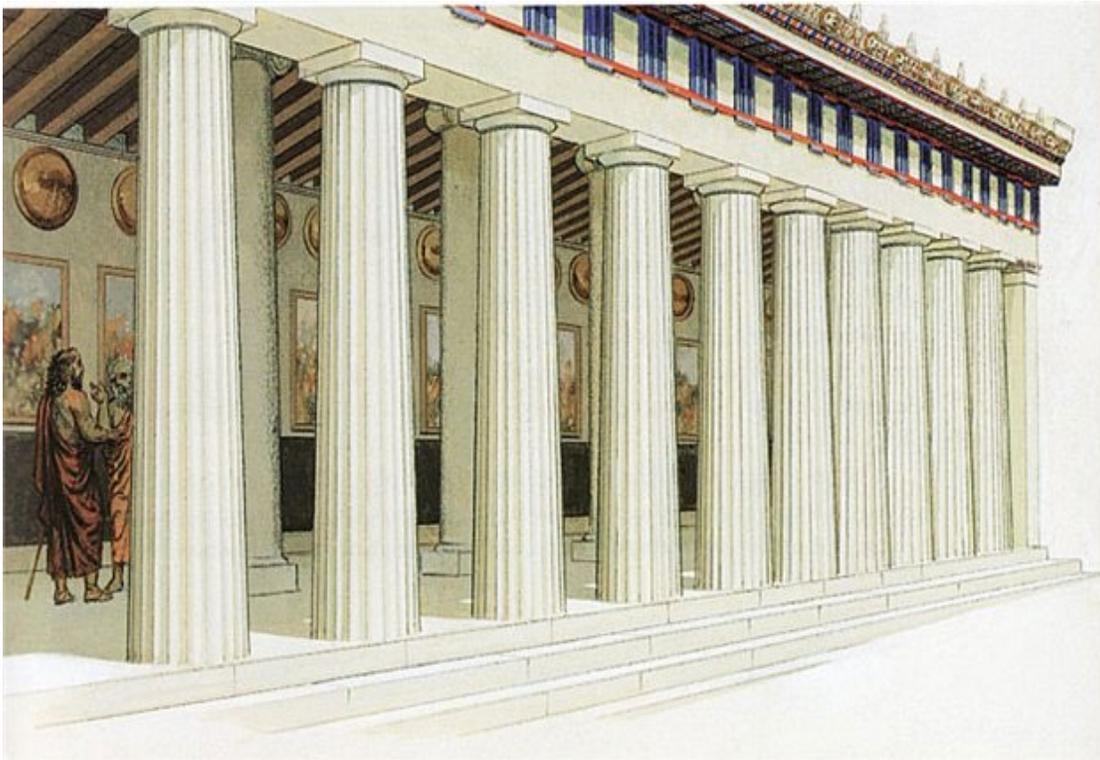
The origin of the Stoic way of life dates back to the teaching of **Zeno of Citium** in the 3rd century BC who taught in Athens. And, probably, Stoic ideals have roots further back into antiquity. Other notable "early" Stoic thinkers followed Zeno. Where did Stoicism get its name? The Greek term "Stoa" refers to the porch or colonnade where the Stoic students and teachers regularly gathered for instruction in downtown Athens.

Stoicism was a commonly known and influential cultural practice in its day. Christianity, from the very beginning, was highly influenced by Stoic philosophy to describe its newly developing belief system. Thus, Christianity has perpetuated Stoic ideas through the centuries down to our own day where they continue to be an integral aspect of Western culture, as can be seen in the movie "The Gladiator," for example, and in Tom Wolfe's best-selling novel *A Man in Full,* and even in the "Serenity Prayer" used by Alcoholics Anonymous: ***"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."*** That prayer gets right to three of the most important principles of Stoic philosophy.

Because the repetitive practice of Stoic ideas and virtues leads to the ability to be calm and rational in the midst of a crisis when everyone else is overwhelmed by the situation, these practices are particularly helpful in business and management, leadership roles, military life, raising children and athletic competition, as you will see in more detail below.

Stoicism was widely practiced for centuries in Greece and then in Rome, where some of the most notable "later" Stoic thinkers emerged, including **Seneca**; the Roman emperor **Marcus Aurelius**; and, my favorite, **Epictetus**, the renown Stoic teacher. Stoic values informed Greek and Roman culture for centuries and influenced the way people lived their lives every day.

According to Stoic philosophy, we should live a life that is guided by reason in harmony with the natural order and our own human nature. We should not allow ourselves to be swamped by our emotions, passions, or desires since that might derail us on the path to success by causing confusion about what is under my control or within my power. That can lead to bad judgments. Of course, it is important to note that this attitude of restraint doesn't mean that you shouldn't have emotions, passions, and desires at all. They are fine, even necessary, as long as they are not in charge of guiding our decisions like tyrants. Problem is, for most of us, it will take some practice to get there. Emotion, as we saw in the last chapter, can be a powerful force impacting moral decision making. Patience is a virtue; but so is assertiveness.

The dimension of Stoicism that I want to bring into relief in this chapter operates exactly where the rational and the non-rational aspects of moral decision-making come into play. And this is also the focus of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. So, here is another place where you can see the 'therapeutic' dimension of philosophy and psychology operating in tandem to help you achieve the best possible life.

Stoicism and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Jules Evans talks about Stoicism and CBT (15:31)

In his book *Philosophy For Life*, philosopher Jules Evans talks about how Stoicism and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) helped him to overcome a social anxiety disorder, panic attacks and drug abuse that were ruining his life when he was in college. [17] His TED talk in the video above details his experience. Evans said he accomplished overcoming these disabilities using a type of therapy pioneered by psychologist Albert Ellis called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Ellis claimed that he learned the essence of his therapeutic strategy from the Stoic philosophy of Epictetus. Here is what Ellis learned.

The very first principle that is referenced in *The Handbook* or *Enchiridion* of **Epictetus** (an "enchiridion" was a brief student notebook of the basic practical principles of Stoicism) focuses on the seemingly obvious distinction that some things are under our control while other things are not under our control. If you get this distinction wrong in some life situation, T*he Handbook* states, it could ruin your entire life and derail you from achieving the best possible life. Here is how Epictetus puts it:

> Some things are in our control and others not. Things in our control are opinion, pursuit, desire, aversion, and, in a word, whatever are our own actions.

Things not in our control are body, property, reputation, command, and, in a word, whatever are not our own actions.

The things in our control are by nature free, unrestrained, unhindered; but those not in our control are weak, slavish, restrained, belonging to others.

Remember, then, that if you suppose that things which are slavish by nature are also free, and that what belongs to others is your own, then you will be hindered. You will lament, you will be disturbed, and you will find fault both with gods and men.

But if you suppose that only to be your own which is your own, and what belongs to others such as it really is, then no one will ever compel you or restrain you. Further, you will find fault with no one or accuse no one. You will do nothing against your will. No one will hurt you, you will have no enemies, and you will not be harmed. [18]

Student Handbook

Stoicism teaches that we should be indifferent to things that are not under our control and focus our attention on the things that are under our control, like our beliefs, attitudes, emotions and desires. Getting this distinction wrong by thinking that something that is not under your control is under your control—like believing that you can control the way others judge you or feel about you, your reputaton—will lead to conflict and problems.

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[18] Epictetus. *The Handbook*. http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0557.tlg002.perseus-eng2:1

Conversely, believing that something that is under your control is not under your control, like believing that your friend can *make* you angry when, in actuality, that is not in your friend's power, will also result in existential life problems and the failure to achieve your goals. Determining where the line is between 'what is under your control' and 'what is not under your control' at any given point in your life, then, is crucial to achieving the best possible life. Let's try to see how this is the case in more detail.

Video (8:28)

STOICISM AND THE ART OF NOT CARING

One consequence of this Stoic principle, as it plays out in actual practice, is that, whereas you cannot control things that happen to you, you can control your reaction, response and attitude about those things. Epictetus argues that

> **"… it isn't the things that happen to you in themselves that cause you to be upset or cause you problems, it is your interpretations and judgments about those things…."**

This is especially true when those interpretations are based on irrational and self-defeating beliefs, biases, prejudices, attitudes, and ideas that we all hold to varying degrees without realizing their destructive power. Check out Ellis' list of 12 self-deceptive lies we tell ourselves below. We don't realize we are telling ourselves such lies, of course. We fool ourselves. These are 12 ways of giving away your personal moral power without realizing you are doing so.

Reframing

To view something in a different way or to process a situation from a new perspective.
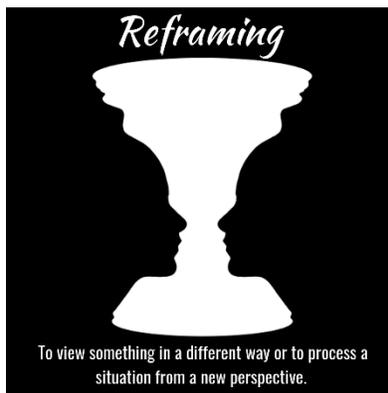
The psychological practice of *reframing* can be helpful here, as Jonathan Newhouse pointed out above. Instead of getting angry when your friend doesn't show up at the agreed-on time and condemning your friend for his or her thoughtlessness, you can bring before your mind all the possible things that might have happened to prevent your friend from showing up that were out of his or her control. Take advantage of the opportunity to practice perspective-taking or reframing.

Going back to Jules Evans' social phobias…. **By reframing his interpretation of people's actions in a way that was more consistent with and limited to what he actually perceived or what was happening rather than being informed by his own lack of self-confidence, he was able to defuse the debilitating threat of social situations and move toward success.** In short order, after putting the wisdom of Stoic philosophy into practice, the panic attacks in social situations stopped. Evans argues that there is much we can learn from ancient Greek philosophy that is practically applicable to our life today. Epictetus would agree with that. Epictetus would have been a good CBT therapist.[19] In the next section of our textbook we will look at how Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) incorporated a key idea from the Stoic principles taught by Epictetus.
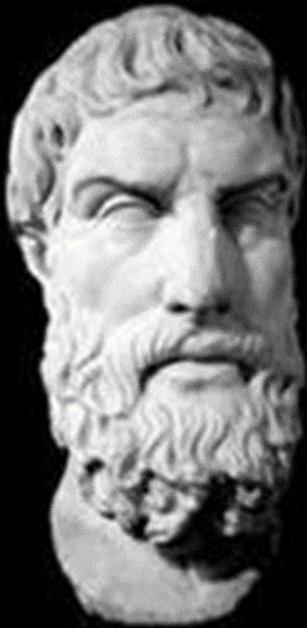
Happiness and freedom begin with a clear understanding of one principle. Some things are within your control. And some things are not.

--Epictetus

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[19] Check out Evans' TED talk detailing his experience with Stoicism and CBT at
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XuwYvFlNGns

How Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) works

A fundamental premise of CBT—borrowed from Stoicism—is that humans do not get emotionally disturbed by unfortunate circumstances. **We get disturbed by how we judge and construct our views of these circumstances through our language, evaluative beliefs, meanings, moral value orientation and philosophies about the world, ourselves and others.** In CBT, similarly to what students learned from Epictetus, clients are taught to apply this premise in life situations by learning the **A-B-C model** of psychological disturbance and change.

The A-B-C model states that it is not simply an **(A)** *activating event*, that causes disturbed and dysfunctional emotional and behavioral *consequences* **(C)** like social anxiety, panic attacks, eating disorders, etc., but also and primarily what people irrationally *believe* **(B)** about the activating event (A) and how they interpret its meaning. Now, the adverse activating event (A) can be an external situation, a thought, a feeling or a kind of internal event, a memory or thought, for example It can refer to an event in the past, present or future.

Our irrational beliefs (B) that are most important in the A-B-C model are explicit and implicit moral philosophical meanings, biases and assumptions about events, personal desires, and preferences. Our beliefs that are most significant are highly evaluative and consist of interrelated and integrated cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects and dimensions.

According to CBT, if your evaluative belief (B) about the activating event (A) is rigid, absolutistic, fictional and dysfunctional, the emotional and behavioral consequences (C) are likely to be self-defeating and destructive. This is definitely not on the path toward living the best possible life. Alternatively, if your belief is positive, flexible and constructive, the emotional and behavioral consequence is likely to be self-helping and constructive. Lesson to be learned: work at developing positive, flexible, self-affirming and constructive beliefs.

Situation
something happens

Thought
the situation is interpreted

Emotion
a feeling occurs as a result of the thought

Behavior
an action in response to the emotion
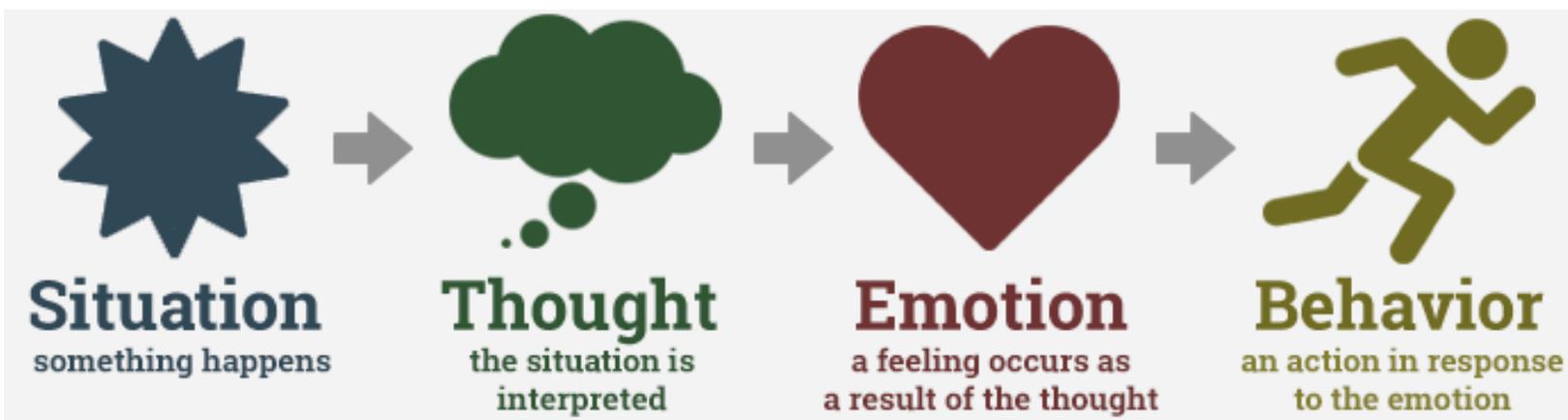
CBT claims that people consciously and unconsciously construct emotional difficulties such as self-blame, self-pity, anger, hurt, guilt, shame, depression, anxiety, and behaviors like procrastination, compulsiveness, avoidance, addiction and withdrawal by means of their irrational and self-defeating thinking, emoting and behaving. Stoicism and CBT can help to defeat these self-defeating beliefs and behavior patterns.

12 Lies We Tell Ourselves
By A. Ellis

1. I must have the love and approval of others. I must avoid disapproval at all costs.

2. I must be perfect, a success in all that I do. I must not make any mistakes.

3. People must always do the right thing. When they do not, they must be punished.

4. Things must be the way that I want them to be – otherwise life will be intolerable.

5. My happiness/(unhappiness) is caused by external events. I have no control over my happiness/(unhappiness).

6. I must worry about things that might be dangerous, unpleasant or frightening otherwise they might happen.

7. I will be happier if I can avoid life's difficulties, unpleasantness or responsibilities.

8. I am weak and need to depend on those who are stronger than I am.

9. Events in the past have strongly influenced me – and they must continue to do so.

10. I must be upset when others have problems. I must become sad when others are unhappy.

11. I should not have to feel discomfort or pain. I must avoid them at all costs.

12. There is one right and perfect solution to any problem (usually mine). It is a tragedy when it is not found.

Psychotherapist Albert Ellis thought that your beliefs about yourself, like the 12 false beliefs listed above, can be stifling. Humans have achieved the questionable distinction of being able to fool themselves. Unfortunately, false ideas mistakenly thought to be true will compromise your personal moral power and block your path to the best possible life. Stoicism and CBT can help overcome such obstacles to personal and professional success.

CBT, similar to Stoicism, is an educational process in which the therapist teaches the client, using specific exercises and directives, how to identify irrational and self-defeating beliefs and philosophies that are rigid, extreme, unrealistic, illogical and absolutist, and then to forcefully and actively question and dispute them and replace them with more rational and self-helping ones. By using different cognitive, emotive and behavioral methods and activities, the client, together with help from the therapist and in regular homework practice exercises, can gain a more rational, self-helping and constructive way of thinking, emoting and behaving.

One of the main objectives of CBT is to show you that whenever unpleasant and unfortunate activating events happen in your life, you definitely have a choice from within your personal moral value orientation to interpret and respond to those events in a way that will condition your experience of those events. This practice is the source of your personal moral power. Thus, Epictetus, like a good CBT therapist, thought that you should take up an attitude of indifference to things that are not under your control and focus all your practical energy on developing and managing what is under your control. That is the Stoic path to success.

Why Stoicism is good for today

1. Stoicism was built for hard times

Stoicism was born in a world falling apart. Invented in Athens just a few decades after Alexander the Great's conquests and premature death upended the Greek world. Stoicism took off because it offered security and peace in a time of warfare and crisis. The Stoic creed didn't promise material security or a reward of peace in the afterlife; but it did promise an unshakable happiness in this life available to you right now.

Stoicism tells us that no happiness can be secure if it's rooted in changeable, destructible things. Our bank accounts can grow or shrink, our careers can prosper or falter, even our loved ones can be taken from us. There is only one place the world can't touch: our inner selves, our personal moral choice at every moment to be brave, to be reasonable, to be good, whatever we want.

The world might take everything from you; Stoicism tells us that nevertheless you have a fortress on the inside where you can stand firm. Epictetus, who was born a slave and crippled at a

young age, wrote: "Where is the good? In the will.... If anyone is unhappy, let him remember that he is unhappy by reason of himself alone." That gets right to the heart of the matter, doesn't it?

While it's natural to cry out when in pain, the Stoic makes the effort to remain peacefully indifferent to everything that happens on the outside of his or her sphere of control, to stay equally happy in times of triumph and disaster, success and failure; in fact, to make a success *of* failure. It's a demanding way of life, but the reward it offers is freedom from enslavement to your passions and freedom from enslavement to the emotions that so often try to control us, when we should be in control of them. A real Stoic isn't unfeeling. But he or she does have a mastery of emotions, like the skills produced by Emotional Intelligence training, because Stoicism recognizes that fear or greed or grief only enter our minds and our bodies when we willingly let them be there. It is up to you.

A teaching like that seems designed for a world on edge, whether it's the chaotic world of ancient Greece and Rome, or a complex, modern, technologically-driven financial/political world like our own that always seems to be on the verge of a new national or world crisis or stunning tech breakthrough. But then, Epictetus would say that, as long as you make the basic mistake of gearing your happiness to perishable things, your world is always going to be on edge and under threat.

2. Stoicism is made for globalization

The world that gave birth to Stoicism was a parochial, often xenophobic place: people held fast to age-old divisions of nationality, religion, and status. If openly embracing those divisions sounds familiar to us, we have Stoicism to thank for it. It was perhaps the first Western philosophy to preach universal solidarity. Epictetus, influenced by the **Cosmopolitanism** of his day, said that each of us is a citizen of our own land, but "also a member of the great city of gods and men." The Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, perhaps history's best-known Stoic, reminded himself daily in his reflective meditations to love the whole world as much as he loved his native city.

If the key to happiness is really in your own will and your personal moral power, then even the biggest social divides start to look trivial. The Roman Stoic Seneca lived in a society built on slavery, but he also urged his fellow Romans to "remember that he whom you call your slave sprang from the same stock, is smiled upon by the same skies, and on equal terms with yourself breathes, lives, and dies."

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This embrace of Cosmopolitanism (a word invented by Stoics, which literally means citizen of the world, and which we will investigate in a future chapter) made Stoicism the ideal philosophy for the Roman Empire because this society brought an unprecedented range of races and religions into contact. Stoicism made sense for a globalized world--and it still does today.

3. If you're Christian, you're already part-Stoic

I mentioned this above but let me elaborate. Imagine a religion that stressed human solidarity under a benevolent creator God; a religion that told us to moderate and master our basic urges rather than being enslaved by them; that nevertheless insisted that all humans, because we're human, are bound to fail at this mission; and that spent a lot of time talking about "conscience" and the multiple aspects, or "persons," of a unitary God energy. All of that might sound somewhat familiar to you if you grew up in Western culture. But the philosophy that invented all of those ideas was not Christianity; it was Stoicism.

It makes sense that Christianity is a deeply Stoic religion. Stoic philosophy dominated Roman culture for centuries—and Christianity went mainstream in that same culture. What's more, many of the leaders of the early Christian church, especially among the Greeks, were naturally oriented to the philosophy of Stoicism prior to hearing the Christian message. Christianity inevitably borrowed much of its religious conceptual thought and terminology from Stoicism, because thinking about religion in the early 1st millennium meant thinking pretty much like a Stoic.

As Christianity continued to grow, church leaders who wanted to emphasize the uniqueness of their faith began to downplay this Stoic connection. But Stoicism is still there at the foundation of the Christian religion in some of its most basic explanatory terms, ideas, and concepts.
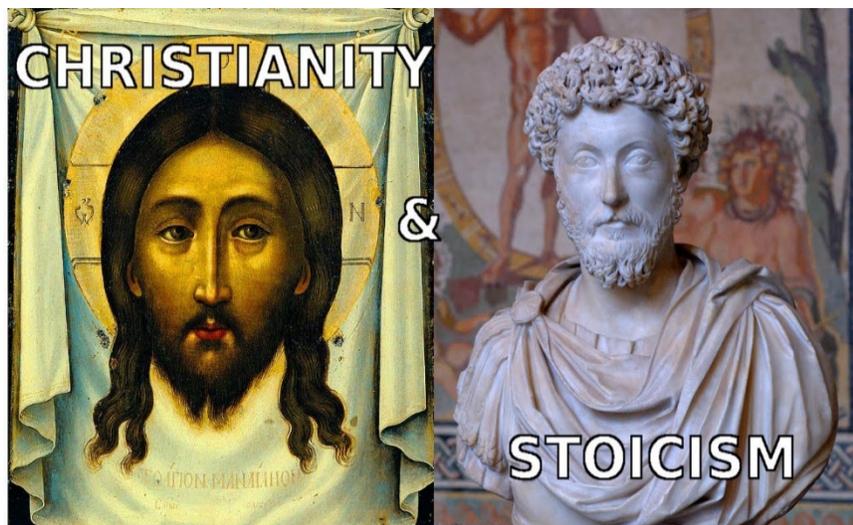
4. Stoicism is the unofficial philosophy of the military

In 1965, James Stockdale's A-4E Skyhawk was shot down over Vietnam. He later remembered the moment like this: "After ejection I had about thirty seconds to make my last statement in freedom before I landed...And so help me, I whispered to myself: 'Five years down there, at least. I'm leaving the world of technology and entering the world of Epictetus'."[20]
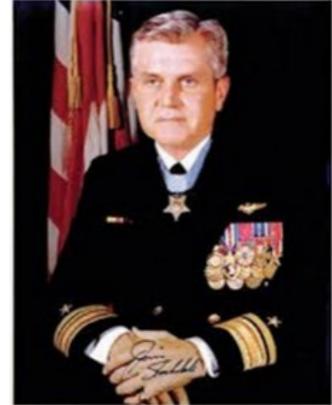
James Stockdale

"So what Epictetus was telling his students was that there can be no such thing as being the "victim" of another. You can only be a "victim" of yourself. It's all in how you discipline your mind."

— James B. Stockdale, Courage Under Fire: Testing Epictetus's Doctrines in a Laboratory of Human Behavior

"Retain faith that you will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties, and at the same time confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be."

—James Stockdale, U.S. Navy vice admiral
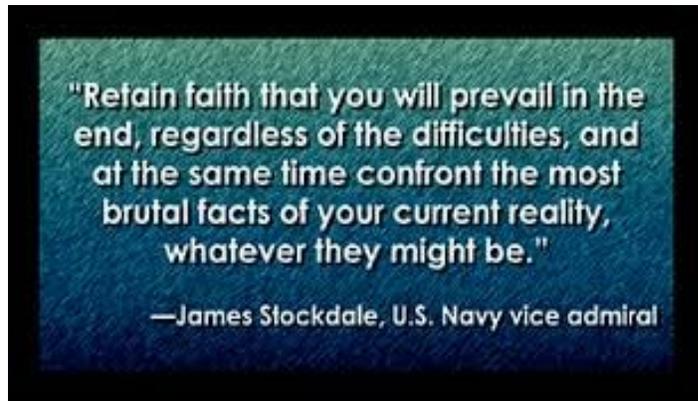
Stockdale spent more than seven years in a Vietnamese prison, and he wrote that Stoicism saved his life. Stockdale had spent years reflecting on Stoic thought before deploying, and he drew on those teachings to endure his captivity. These words from Epictetus kept coming back to him: "Do you not know that life is a soldier's service? ... If you neglect your responsibilities when some severe order is laid upon you, do you not understand to what a pitiful state you bring the army?" While some of his fellow POWs tormented themselves with false hopes of an early release, Stockdale's Stoic practice helped him confront the grim reality of his situation, without giving in to despair and depression.

Stockdale is not alone as a military person who drew strength from Stoicism. In her book *Stoic Warriors: The Ancient Philosophy behind the Military Mind*, **Nancy Sherman**, who taught Philosophy at the U. S. Naval Academy and visited the University of Montana recently, argued that Stoicism is a driving force behind the military mindset--especially in its emphasis on endurance, self-control, and inner strength. As Sherman writes, whenever her philosophy class at Annapolis turned to the Stoic thinkers, "many officers and students alike felt they had come home."[21]

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[20] Stockdale, James. *A Vietnam Experience.* Hoover Institute Press: Stanford, CA, 1984.
[21] Sherman, Nancy. *Stoic Warriors: The Ancient Philosophy behind the Military Mind.* Oxford: New York, 2005.

Speaking of officers and students, someone who has thought long and hard about Stockdale's experience is ex-Navy SEAL, Eric Greitens. Ideas from ancient philosophy and from Stoicism, are an integral aspect of his approach to living the best possible life presented in a book directed primarily at returning veterans. Entitled *Resilience: Hard-won wisdom for living a better life*, it is an exceptional book that would be enlightening for anyone. I found it to be very illuminating. The book is framed as a series of letters written to another ex-Navy Seal and combat buddy named Walker who is struggling to adapt to life after active duty service in Iraq.

I enthusiastically recommend *Resilience* to you, whether you are military or not. Here is a brief excerpt from Greitens' thought-provoking book:

"So now, step back with me for a minute as I try to explain what we're doing here together.

These letters, the back-and-forth, the discussions, this is philosophy.

Today we think of philosophy as something that happens in a classroom and nowhere else. We think of philosophy as a discipline of sitting and thinking, reading and arguing. But there was a time when philosophy was more than just talk.

During the Golden Age of Greece, philosophers were less interested in sitting and thinking. They were more interested in thinking and living. As a practical matter, the Greeks usually did not "read" philosophy in the way that you are reading this letter—silently and to yourself. Reading philosophy meant reading aloud to others; practicing philosophy meant living in a community.

The emphasis was not on the words alone, but on the effect of the words. Did a philosopher help people to examine their lives? Did that examination lead to happiness, to flourishing, to meaning? If it did, it worked. If it didn't, then it didn't matter how clever the words were.

Of the ancients who practiced this kind of life, one of my favorites is Epictetus, who started life as a slave and ended it as the wisest philosopher of his day. Here's what he told his students about what they were trying to do together: *"A carpenter does not come up to you and say, 'Listen to me discourse about the art of carpentry,' but he makes a contract for a house and builds it … Do the same thing yourself. Eat like a man, drink like a man … get married, have children, take part in civic life, learn how to put up with insults, and tolerate other people."*
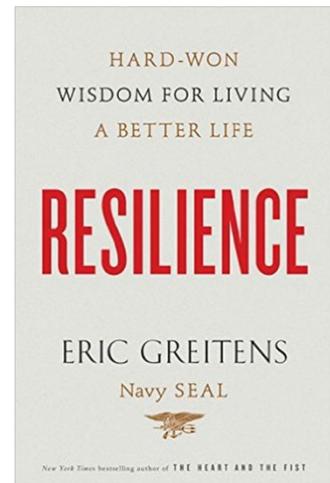
The test of a philosophy is simple: does it lead people to live better lives? If not, the philosophy fails. If so, it succeeds….

The question is, are you aware of the philosophy you have—the assumptions, beliefs, and ideas that drive your actions? Are you aware of the way those assumptions, beliefs, and ideas add up to shape your life? Can they stand exposure to the light of day?

…If we limit our understanding of resilience to this idea of bouncing back, we miss much of what hardship, pain, and suffering offer us.   We also misunderstand our basic human capacity to change and improve….

What happens to us becomes part of us. Resilient people do not bounce back from hard experiences; they find healthy ways to integrate them into their lives" [22]

5. Stoicism is a philosophy for leadership

Stoicism teaches us that, before we try to control events, we must learn to control ourselves. Our attempts to exert influence on the world are subject to chance, disappointment, and failure--but control of the self in a Stoic manner is the only kind of approach to life events that can succeed 100% of the time. From emperor Marcus Aurelius on, leaders have found that a Stoic attitude earns them respect in the face of failure, and guards against arrogance in the face of success.

Of course, Stoicism doesn't *guarantee* that you will become rich and famous. It can be a long way between making bright ideas into realities in the world. The Stoics taught that we fail far more often than we succeed, that to be human is to be fearful, selfish, and angry far more often than we'd like. But they also taught a realistic way to work toward overcoming the negative and irascible energies that hold us back and by which we undermine ourselves. They gave us a realistic, meaningful, practical, down-to-earth program for achieving the best possible life. It all turns on this principle: **effective leaders must first learn how to lead themselves effectively.**

Try incorporating Stoic ideas into your everyday life. The more you practice Stoic qualities in good times, the more likely that you will find them readily available when they're most needed in emergency situations that arise, often without warning, in your personal or professional life. As my dad liked to say, "A word to the wise is sufficient."

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[22] Greitens, Eric. *Resilience: Hard-won wisdom for living a better life*. Mariner: Boston, 2016, pp.24-31.

6. Stoicism and personal moral power

One final thought. I like to make a connection between Stoicism and *personal moral power* which we talked about earlier. I think of personal moral power as your ability to know what you want and to get what you want, get what you believe will lead to genuine and sustained happiness and flourishing in your life. But sometimes we get our priorities wrong and make less than profitable judgments.

For example, consider the outcome from missing the mark about what is under your control and what isn't, discussed above. When people think that something that really is under their control is not under their control, or when they mistakenly think that something that is not under their control is under their control, they lose some of their personal power. Because of that, they will be hindered or unable to get what they want to some degree and perhaps miss living the best possible life here and now by that much.
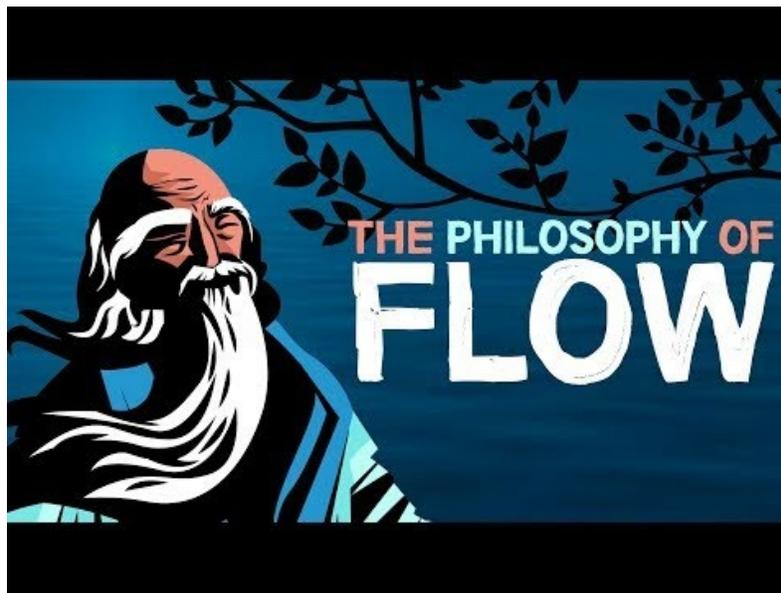
This short video compares the Taoist idea of *wu wei* (doing by not doing) with what the Stoics mean by living in harmony with Nature. This is called Flow.

When you get the distinction about what is under your control wrong in any situation in your life, you will be inevitably giving away some of your personal moral power. Not good. You can almost always tell those folks who have gotten that distinction wrong in some area of their lives and given away their personal moral power because they inevitably *blame* others for their own self-caused misfortune and fail to see the part that they, themselves, play. This is a bias blind spot that can have severely negative outcomes.

For example, a person who thinks other people can cause her to get angry, and says things like "My daughter made me so angry today!" mistakenly thinks that something which is under her control is not under her control, and thus she has 'given away' some of her personal power to her daughter, who now has the 'power' to make her mom get angry. The unwitting daughter now has personal moral power over mom and can 'push her mom's moral buttons' and 'make' her mom get angry and thus derail her on her path to success—a dangerous and vulnerable position to be in, as you can see. Of course, the daughter only has this power over mom because mom gave it to her by wrongly believing that her daughter actually has the power to make her angry (a lie she tells herself, and believes), thereby not having to take responsibility for her anger herself, as her own problem. Mom, however, could take back her personal moral power by 'owning' her anger as her own production, thus seeing that it is under her control. Now she has the power to do something about it.

The same thing is true regarding exam grades, to take another example. An exam grade does not have the power to make you feel good or bad, even though it may seem as if it does. I have taken plenty of exams. If you let go of that idea about the power exams have over you, if you take that power back, then an exam, whatever the grade may be, is simply a source of information that you can use as you wish to make the most effective future judgments on your path to living the best possible life. That way, you win regardless of whatever grade you get. If you reframe your exam situation according to Stoic principles, you will *always* benefit from taking exams no matter what grade you get. This puts the power of exams back in your hands, where it belongs. Of course, you must also be willing to ruthlessly question your motives, beliefs, true values and justifications in order to eliminate bias and see what is happening clearly. This is easier said than done.

When you get it right about what is within your power and what is not within your power—taking charge of the one and letting go of the other, as Epictetus teaches—your own personal power will be at its maximum level and you will be in the most likely position to succeed, to get what you want, and to live the best possible life.

A Few Final Reflections on Chapter 6

Here are some of the things I like about Stoicism:

1. It is a practical, usable and results-driven life philosophy. Because of the focus on self-mastery, Stoic ideas are perfect for entrepreneurial types who are willing to set goals and work hard in order to achieve their dreams and lead the way for others. Actualizing your potential for success is what Stoicism is all about.

2. Like most Greek philosophy, Stoicism involves a focus on Virtue Ethics, i.e., the pursuit of excellence through self-actualization that is accomplished by practicing the virtues. It is also compatible with the existential phenomenological orientation and is well-suited for dealing with existential obstacles to success such as life crises, phobias, bias, procrastination, anxiety, depression, fear of assertiveness, fear of success, etc. This is why Stoicism influenced Cognitive Behavioral Therapy practice.

3. Stoicism is aligned with the personal growth and development approach to ethics which I think is more important for Business students to engage than the cognitive/theoretical approach that leaves out so much about real, practical life and real, flesh and blood people immersed in everyday activities. Because of its focus on personal growth and development, Stoicism is a great guide for those who are willing and able to muster the hard work of self-development that will set them apart from the herd.

4. Stoicism utilizes a practice-oriented, exercise approach focused on active engagement. This involves reflecting on your experience, beliefs, values and ideas through directed exercises that aim at effective changes in your moral value orientation and hence your way of acting and responding in the world, like the exercise of not saying that people make you angry (since they can't), or the exercise of trying to resolve difficult moral dilemmas like Jim's hiring conflict, or working to gain control of your inner states like anger, boredom and other emotions, passions, moods, etc. in order to generate positive, productive energy.

5. The two main Stoic principles presented in this chapter have always seemed particularly meaningful to me in my life. I have passed them along to you in this chapter for your edification. The **first principle** has to do with the practice of determining and then letting go of what is not within my power to control (like the

weather and other people's judgments) and focusing *all* of my effort on what is within my power to control (like my emotions and passions and networking). This is a lifelong practice of development. The **second principle** is the idea that it is not what happens to me that upsets or disturbs me but my interpretation and judgment of what happens. These two principles can be applied beneficially throughout your personal and professional life. How you fare in terms of these two principles will make all the difference between success and missing the mark in life, love, and work.

6. Jules Evans in the TED video very effectively pulls together the connection between ancient Stoic philosophy and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy through a phenomenological reflection on his own life experiences. CBT, as Evans explains, makes it clear just how powerful for life development and overcoming obstacles to success are the principles and practices of Stoicism. Don't miss the video.

PRACTICE

Further reading:

[Donald Robertson – How to Think Like a Roman Emperor: The Stoic Philosophy of Marcus Aurelius, 2019](#) An excellent book by a well-known psychotherapist. Check out the short video (9:29)

TERMS TO KNOW

- Stoicism
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Epictetus
- Marcus Aurelius
- Seneca
- Personal power
- Personal moral power
- Reframing
- A-B-C model

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What are the basic developmental practices of Stoicism?
2. Why was Jonathan Newhouse, CEO of Conde Nast, attracted to Stoic ideas?
3. How would you describe Stoicism to an intelligent friend?
4. How were the values of Stoicism preserved through the centuries down to our present day?
5. Where did Stoicism get its name?
6. Describe the reasons why Stoicism is a good, practical moral value orientation for helping you navigate the moral challenges that arise in today's business world?
7. How is Stoic philosophy reflected in Eric Greitens' ideas about "resilience"?
8. How is CBT grounded in Stoic philosophy?
9. Does being a stoic mean that you shouldn't have any emotions, passions, or desires? Explain.

REFLECTION EXERCISE

Someone who embodies Stoic ideals

Seneca

"Choose someone whose way of life as well as words, and whose very face as mirroring the character that lies behind it, have won your approval. Be always pointing him out to yourself either as your guardian or as your model. This is a need, in my view, for someone as a standard against which our characters can measure themselves. Without a ruler to do it against you won't make the crooked straight." — Seneca, Letters From a Stoic

As the above quote from Seneca, the Roman Stoic philosopher, suggests, the Stoics, like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy therapists, encouraged practitioners to use thought exercises to train themselves to not be swamped by an emotion. It might be a simple technique like imagining that a driver who cuts you off is rushing home to a terrible emergency instead of just being mean and aggressive. This is an exercise a Stoic teacher might recommend in order to check your road rage.

Here is another typical Stoic exercise for your reflective pleasure.

In 300 words or less, describe someone you know or know about who best embodies the Stoic ideals that we investigated in this section of the course, like virtuousness in everyday living, rational decision-making, insightfulness, leadership especially in emergencies, problem solving, success in life and not just material success, happy in good times and bad, able to find the positive aspect of negative situations, and so forth … aspects about that person that you admire.

It is best if this is somebody who embodies Stoic ideals is someone you know personally (you don't need to reveal their identity), but it could also be a public figure or someone you know about and admire.

SCENARIO EXERCISE

Amazing Run or Avalanche?

Ultimate Ski Expeditions, Inc. provides just what the name implies: an opportunity for top-notch skiers to have the run of their lives. The company takes groups by helicopter to peaks of virgin snow and treacherous terrain. The small company has been tenuously established for two seasons when Mike joins as a field guide; Mike's primary job is to ensure the safety of the skiers.

Mike likes his boss, Charlie Masterson, but often feels sorry for him. As owner of the company and its official manager, Charlie has too much riding on each expedition. Insurance costs for such an operation are exorbitant, and since

each participant has to pay thousands of dollars, it is always difficult to book a party fully and cover all expenses.

One February morning, after a spell of bad weather and a consequent lack of expeditions, Mike is slated to accompany a group down Proud Peak, an hour away by helicopter. This morning's trip means everything to Charlie and Ultimate Ski Expeditions. There is every indication that a successful trip will keep the company afloat, but any mishaps could mean the end of the business Charlie has worked so hard to create.

The sky that morning is a clear, bright blue. There is little wind; conditions are perfectly safe to board the helicopter and land at the top of the mountain. Mike awakens with an uneasy feeling about the outing, however, that he cannot shake off.

Although Mike is trained in every aspect of skiing and feels confident about his ability to manage any challenge, there are some factors out of anyone's control. Part of Mike's job is to check conditions and decide whether or not it is safe to ski a slope. In his backpack, Mike carries gear used to test the snowpack and determine if avalanche conditions prevail. Proud Peak has accumulated many inches of snow in recent blizzards, and no one has been near the ski slope recently.

As the helicopter approaches the mountain, Charlie waxes poetic about the experience each skier is about to undergo. The plan is for the skiers and Mike to disembark by towrope and ski the mountain, while Charlie and the pilot monitor the activity from aloft.

The eight skiers are let down at the top of the mountain. Mike removes his testing gear and sets to work. After considering his data for a moment, Mike repeats the operation. In the helicopter above, Charlie sits watching, his walkie-talkie held at the ready. Mike looks at his second batch of results. They indicate skiing the slope is a gamble. The conditions are right on the edge of "avalanche." With luck, the group can ski safely. Mike knows plenty of skiers have skied through similar conditions with no harm at all. But if the snow shifts and begins to slide, Mike also knows there is a chance no one will get off the mountain alive.

As if from far away, Charlie's voice reaches Mike over the walkie-talkie. His tone is forced and bright.

"So, Mike! It looks like a perfect day for a perfect run! Let's hear the go-ahead and get these people on their way!"

Should Mike give the go-ahead, or play it safe?

CHAPTER 7
THE LIMITS OF PERSONAL MORAL POWER

Abu Graib prison, Iraq 2004

"The social psychology of this century reveals a major lesson: often it is not so much the kind of person a man is as the kind of situation in which he finds himself that determines how he will act…. Ordinary people, simply doing their jobs, and without any particular hostility on their part, can become agents in a terrible destructive process. Moreover, even when the destructive effects of their work become patently clear, and they are asked to carry out actions incompatible with fundamental standards of morality, relatively few people have the resources needed to resist authority." Professor Stanley Milgram, 1974

Introduction

The blowing snow was gusting sideways and the mercury was dipping down into the minus range on a Saturday evening in November of 2003 on the outskirts of Bozeman, Montana. Twenty-year-old Richard Presler was sitting at his kitchen table grinning to himself and drinking a beer. He had gotten some good news and found himself in a partying mood. "A little celebration is in order," he thought.

He called some friends and arranged to meet them at a bar nearby. He checked to make sure he had his forged military ID in his wallet as he got ready to head out.

Presler downed a couple of more beers at home before jumping into his pickup truck and skidding out onto the already slick and snow-covered road.

He stopped first at Stacey's Bar in Gallatin Gateway. He stayed at Stacey's for a few hours drinking with his friends. Already quite drunk, he thought about going home as he left Stacey's, but then decided, at the urging of one of his friends, to head down the road to a newly opened strip joint called The Buffalo Jump. The people of Bozeman had not been happy about the re-opening of The Buffalo Jump as a "gentleman's club" and there had been a failed effort to close it down.

According to a report in the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle,* Presler was dutifully carded at both Stacey's and The Buffalo Jump, but his fake military ID was realistic and effective and the bartenders were fooled by it.[23] After having a few more drinks (to the point that some patrons described him as now visibly drunk), Presler said goodbye to the friend he had been with and left The Buffalo Jump in his truck.

On his way home, Presler veered into the oncoming lane at high speed and slammed head-on into Michael Brown's vehicle traveling in the opposite direction, killing both Brown and him instantly.

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[23] *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*. "Strip club closes after losing suit." Bozeman, MT, October 25, 2004, p. A1.

A terrible and unnecessary tragedy, to be sure. But who, exactly, is morally responsible for that tragedy? Was Presler morally responsible for Brown's death? Were the bars? His friend? Is there a difference between his legal and moral responsibility? Should there be?

Brown's family sued and won a three-million-dollar judgment at court. But here is what caught my attention. The jury decided that Presler was 49% liable and The Buffalo Jump was 26% liable, while Stacey's Bar was 20% liable, and the friend who had been with Presler that evening was 5% liable. I wondered: Can moral responsibility for a single act be parceled out in percentages to co-moral agents in the same way as monetary liability for a single injury can be parceled out from a legal perspective? Furthermore, upon what, if not upon *moral* responsibility, could legal responsibility and monetary responsibility for damages possibly rely?

Looking at it from another perspective, this tragic story gives rise to the question of the extent to which we are morally responsible for our actions in any situation and how this is reflected in the law (accountability). And, most fundamentally, we must consider the extent to which 'our' actions are truly our own. Keep in mind what we learned in the previous chapter from Epictetus: it is crucial for us to determine what is under our control and what is not.

While thinking about the situation with Presler, we will investigate this question of moral responsibility, in part, by focusing on the debate about whether **moral character** or **situational influences** (or a blend of the two) are the effective cause of our actions.

Was Richard Presler simply an irresponsible person whose morally weak character led him astray and who thus should be *fully* responsible for his actions, at least insofar as he is responsible for his moral character? Or, was he mostly (51%) a victim of the various situational factors that

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were a contextual part of his experience that fateful night, situational influences such as the bars he went to; the effectiveness of his fake I.D.; the bartenders' willingness to serve him even when appearing intoxicated; the influence of his good news; his friend letting him drive home alone; the snowstorm; bystanders doing nothing, etc., as is reflected to some extent in the court's sharing of liability verdict? **Should his moral character have been able to resist these situational influences, such as the initial decision (made while sober) to use the false ID to go out drinking? Or was he mostly just a victim of circumstances?**

This question goes to the heart of morality and ethics, especially in business. It is reflected in the debate between two opposing camps. On the one side, are Ethicists like **Robert Solomon** [See Appendix 5] who support a Virtue Ethics approach to moral value orientation where your moral character and freedom to act are necessary to determine your moral responsibility. On the other side there are empirical philosophers influenced by social science, like **Gilbert Harman** [See Appendix 5], who believe that character is a false, misleading and counter-productive idea that is not necessary for establishing moral responsibility and does not reflect how influenced we are by situational factors.

The question of whether moral character is something real or merely a figment of popular imagination (and the difference this makes), and whether and to what extent our moral 'character' is able to withstand the influence of situational factors (the impact of corporate culture, for example), are the main interests of this chapter. Essentially, what I am interested in is the extent to which situational factors limit our personal moral power and, hence, our personal moral responsibility.

Character and character traits

Besides the nature of personal morality, our whole understanding of human nature is at stake regarding the question of whether our individual moral *character* can withstand situational pressures, or whether we are basically "victims of circumstances." Where you stand regarding this issue will make a big difference in terms of your overall approach to managing your moral life and achieving personal and professional success.

If moral character does not exist and we are merely victims of circumstances, then how can we be held morally responsible for our actions? If character does exist, then why do social psychology experiments like [Milgram's Obedience study](#), [Darley and Batson's Good Samaritan study](#), [the Stanford Prison Experiment](#), as well as what happened at [Abu Graib prison in Iraq](#) and what happened to the workers involved in the [Wells Fargo Bank cross-selling scandal](#) seem to show that character, if it exists at all, is generally an insufficient basis for resisting situational pressures to act contrary to your moral value orientation?

Before answering the question about whether your moral character can resist temptation, however, it will be necessary to address the larger question of whether there is such a thing as "character" at all. Character can be understood as *an habitual disposition to act that is an intrinsic, real, permanent psychological part of who you are that remains stable across different situations*. But, are you in control of your character or is your character in control of you?

Is your character the source of an inner determinism? Are you *determined* to act in accord with our character? If so, that would override your moral agency, and, also, your moral responsibility from within. If not, then your character must merely *encourage or dispose* you to act a certain way, yet, at the same time, leave you *free to choose*, thus avoiding determinism and the lack of moral responsibility.
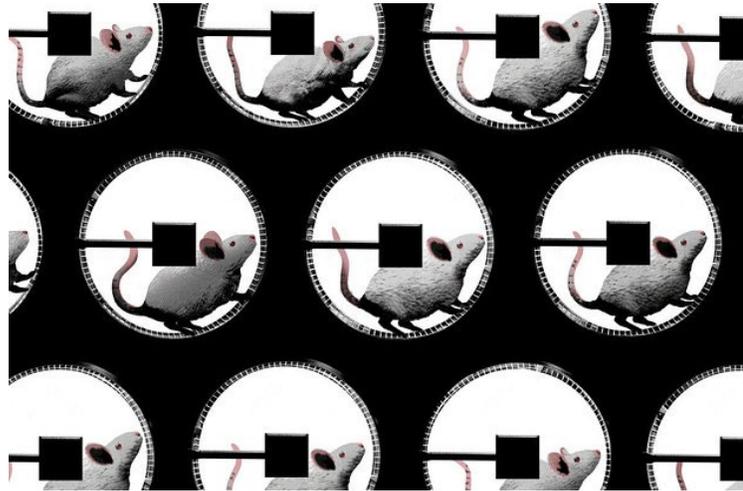
Without the freedom to choose there would be no basis for moral agency, and thus no basis for moral responsibility, according to philosopher **Robert Solomon**. Solomon thinks psychologist **Gilbert Harmon's** idea of denying the existence of character will undermine moral responsibility. What do you think?

Are we free in the sense that whenever we do something we could always have acted otherwise? This is a common definition of freedom. Are we truly free? Or, are we "victims of circumstances" regarding our behaviors, beliefs, and values, as Gilbert Harman

argues? Are we controlled by the many influences of the *situations* that we find ourselves in? Are we helpless victims manipulated by unconscious pressures to go along with the crowd?

Which is it? To what extent do we remain 'who we are' and free to act across different situations? Or, to what extent is our identity unconsciously configured by factors in the situations that we find ourselves in? Also, let's consider a third option: to what extent are a combination of freedom, character, *and* situational factors all interacting simultaneously, somewhat unpredictably and ambiguously at the root of all your motivations to act?

Think about this. Whenever you get a job with a company, whether large or small, it is virtually impossible not to get caught up in the <u>ethos</u> or culture of that company. The term "ethos" is a close cousin of the term "ethics." **Company cultures communicate moral norms and practices.** We all want to please. We all want to get along and cooperate. We want to obey our superiors dutifully; make things work; be a team player. We try to fit in and be flexible.   But to what extent? How 'flexible' are you willing to be?

At what point does it happen that the principles upon which your system of making moral judgments rests – your own personal morality – at what point does the bending of your moral values become a moral bust where your values and your dignity are compromised, eased, relaxed, and finally abandoned altogether? The pressures of the workplace or the urging of your friends to compromise your moral value orientation can be very hard to resist.

According to Solomon, the Virtue Ethics philosopher, there is surely such a real thing as "character." It is part of your "personality." But your moral character is always "character-in-a-situation," as Solomon puts it. Your character – who you are – acts freely while nevertheless being influenced by situational factors. Character is always a dynamic work-in-progress, in Solomon's view. It is a fluid process of development and not a static state. We are influenced by situational factors, but we are also free to choose the extent that we are willing to be influenced by those factors. But are we really as free as Solomon seems to think?

According to Harman, the empirical philosopher, the idea of "character" is pretty much a useless, non-objective, made-up notion based on non-scientific 'folk psychology' which fosters the false belief that what we refer to as "character" is thought to be a real, intrinsic part of what makes up the essence of a person and leads inescapably to (or pretty much causes) that person to make this or that moral judgment or to act in a certain way. That people act in accordance with their character is a false belief, according to Harman. It ignores the impact of situational influences. A person who thinks this way might say: "Jane didn't give in to temptation to steal because of her firm moral character." This is the *strong interpretation* of character.

But, according to Harman, what we *call* "character" is really nothing more than the sum of the influences of the situational factors that a person finds themselves in. To claim that our actions are caused by some mysterious inner force that is not in our immediate and verifiable experience, is to commit the ***fundamental attribution error***, according to Harmon – a psychological bias which tends to ascribe causality to mysterious inner motives while overlooking obvious external motives.

Harman points to psychological experiments like "Milgram's Obedience study," the "Stanford Prison Experiment" and the "Good Samaritan" study to show how our moral value orientation can be undermined by situational influences.

But, think about this: if we are not the efficient cause of our actions, if *situations* cause our actions, how can we be held morally responsible for those actions?

Social Psychology Videos

The general purpose of the following videos is to illustrate how situational factors, which are often unconscious, can influence the way we perceive, evaluate and judge a situation and thus influence the way we act. We like to think that we are in complete control of how we decide to act and what we will do; but are we?

The social psychology experiments shown in the videos below present strong and compelling empirical evidence that we are not as in control of our perceptions, judgments and actions as we might think. Rather, we are always influenced unconsciously by **situational factors**. Watch all the videos. Consider the extent to which they demonstrate that people are influenced in their moral decisions by situational factors. Ask yourself this: Are you convinced about the influence of situational factors on your moral judgments? Or do you still believe that you are completely free to decide what to do in any situation?

Video (5:05) Milgram's Obedience Study – response to authority figures.

Stanford Prison Experiment video link (15:11)

How social roles and setting influence our moral judgment.

Appearance makes a difference. Good Samaritan social experiment (2:28)

Classic Darley & Batson Good Samaritan Study explained. Hurrying makes a difference. (3:58)

Reactions to differently dressed bike thieves. Appearance makes a big difference. (11:45)
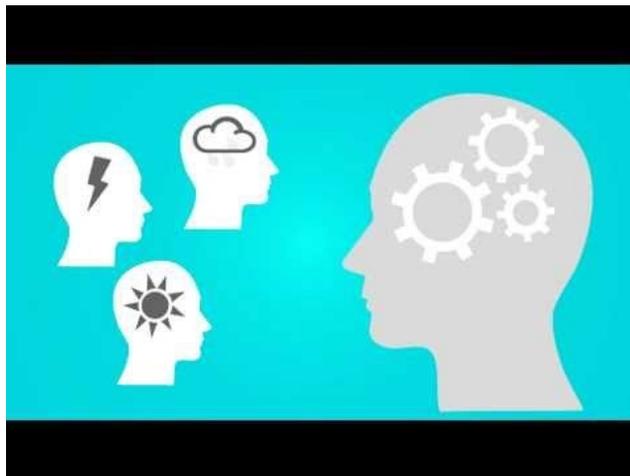
SITUATIONS MATTER Sam Sommers (2:49)

NUDGE THEORY - University of Chicago Graduate School of Business Professor Richard Thaler gives an overview of his new book: "Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness." He explains what nudges are and gives a few examples of how they can be useful.

Character, dispositions, and workplace culture

Having looked at some of the very convincing evidence that psychologists (like Gilbert Harman) use to argue that our actions are influenced by situational factors, let's return to the basic question of this chapter: **Is your moral character a real, objective and constitutive aspect of you, or is it just the 'folksy' way we talk and generalize about our perceptions of people's supposed behavior patterns?** What do people mean when they use the term "character"? What do I mean? Does "character" really exist?

When I think about this question, I see that I don't experience 'my character' directly the way I experience my hand, for instance, or an inner state like joy. Character seems to me to be more of a descriptive term rather than a substantive one. Character is not some 'thing'. It doesn't refer to an essence or mysterious power. Rather, the use of the term seems to me to reflect a perception of a supposed or expected disposition or likelihood to act a certain way across different situations based on my past perceptions of how I or another person acted. For example, say I have seen you act a certain way often in the past. Consequently, I expect that you will be disposed to act a similar way in the future. My expectation about your *disposition to act* could be weak or strong depending on how I interpret your past actions, how frequently I have seen you act a certain way, etc.

Okay, but what is a disposition? In my experience, a disposition is a belief I hold about how you or someone might act in some future context. It is an expected likelihood that you will act one way rather than another. Dispositions would be what we mean by "traits."

What is a trait? Traits are usually thought to be qualities of the person, a fuzzy notion since it is hard to pin down empirically exactly what a trait or a quality is. Perhaps a moral value trait, or character trait, is merely a perceived likelihood that a person will act one way or another across situations. For example, a person whom I observe acting courageously in past situations is more likely, I presume, based on my past experience of that person, to act courageously in a different situation in the future. This presumption on my part is what I refer to as a trait in the other person. Certainly, I feel that the person is more likely to act courageously than someone I have observed acting cowardly in the past. My presumption or belief is what I experience as a trait, but the trait is not an empirically verifiable dimension of the other person.

Thus, perhaps "character" is merely a perception of someone's supposedly being disposed to act a certain way across situations. This is very different from the idea that character is an essentially real and functionally permanent psychological dimension or mechanism of a person or 'personality'. Expectations of future events are built up from observations of past regularities in a person's (or my own) way of acting. Seems like a fairly normal thing to do, and it doesn't necessarily commit the **attribution error** or need to involve **confirmation bias** (looking exclusively at evidence that supports my view) since only observations of regularity or irregularity are being asserted.

I observe my friend John being helpful on several occasions and so I say: "John is a helpful guy." The empirical psychologist says that I have committed the fundamental "attribution error" because I am apparently attributing the cause of John's observed helpful behavior to his supposedly 'helpful character'. But I don't think that I am doing that, even though I use similarly sounding words to what the empiricist construes as folksy attributions of character determinism.

What I think I am doing is generalizing from past observations about what I suspect is likely to happen in the future, an intuited inductive reference to what I believe is a fairly well-fixed disposition or likelihood that John will act helpfully in *any* given situation in the future—although he may not. Likelihoods are just that, whether it is with people or racehorses.

John may tend to be helpful unless he is in a hurry or otherwise influenced to not be helpful, as we learn from the social scientists (e.g., Good Samaritan study), in which case he may be less likely to help on occasion, but, in general, my perception is that he will tend to find opportunities to be helpful. Ascriptions of character do not necessarily attempt to say something about the essential nature of someone, the dreaded attribution error. Rather, they articulate an intuited perception of likelihood for someone to act morally one way or another in future situations based on past actions. Empiricists like Harman should have no problem with that.

John may not act helpfully all the time because his character does not override his freedom and force him to act helpfully; he still gets to *choose* to act helpfully or not each time an opportunity arises, and he is still susceptible to situational influences even though he mostly feels an inclination to help all the time, because, well, that's just the kind of guy John is (attribution error, sorry). Character traits—that is, likelihoods to act a certain way across situations—can be strong or weak, that is, greater or lesser felt likelihoods on the part of the perceiver.

So, when I say that John is a helpful guy or has a helping-oriented character, I don't see that I am saying anything more than that I have observed John being helpful often in the past and so I expect, to some degree, that he is likely to be helpful in the future. What's all the fuss about?

I can see that it makes a difference how we think about character. If I get a low grade on a test and think that it means I am an unintelligent person, I am attributing the cause of the grade to some supposed permanent, fixed aspect of myself, my 'intelligence' that is not under my control and so there is not much I can do about it. And then I will feel helplessly miserable and stuck because, committing the fundamental attribution error in regard to myself, like getting Epictetus' distinction wrong between what is under your control, will lead to negative consequences, false beliefs about myself and, thus, lack of success. Not good.

But if I consider the situation more closely and see that my low grade on an exam reflects the fact that I didn't listen or take notes in class, didn't read the material, didn't manage my time well, and didn't prepare for the test … these things are all potentially under my control, so I can do something about *them*. And a good Stoic teacher would suggest that you *should*.

Insofar as character is merely a way of referencing what you perceive to be somewhat predictable behavior in yourself or others based on past records of behavior, depending on the situation you are in and realizing you are being influenced by it, it does not seem to me to be as problematic as the psychologists make it out to be; especially if we do not attribute dispositions and proclivities to essential and permanent features of the other person. Kids do things we think are 'dumb', but there are no dumb kids. So, we should make an effort not to talk that way.

What difference does it make?

Insofar as I think that character locks a person or myself into rigid and unchangeable perceptions, behaviors, beliefs or response patterns that are impervious to or not influenced by situations, *that* strong idea of character is problematic and could hinder your moral growth and development causing you to miss the goal of success. This is reflected in the fact that we really don't think that we are as affected by situations as much as we really are, a dimension of the bias blind spot lurking in all of us. That is what we learn from the social psychologists.

So, how does this stack up with corporate culture? Well, once we see that character is a way of referencing a likelihood of acting, rather than being some fixed personality essence, it is not hard to see how that likelihood or disposition can be influenced by the situation we are in. Likelihoods are just that: not sure things.

The evidence from Social Psychology research like the Good Samaritan study, the Milgram Obedience study and the Stanford Prison experiment seem to show clearly how situational factors influence and sometimes control your experience, perceptions, responses and behavior, mostly without you realizing it, thus limiting your freedom and undercutting your belief about having a fixed and stable moral identity, as Sam Sommers makes clear in his book *Situations Matter* (See below).

What this all seems to suggest is that situations, like the culture of a corporation, must bear some of the moral responsibility for workers' behavior in that situation, just as the bars that Richard Presler (the driver in the story that opened this chapter) went to and his friend who let him drive home bear some of the moral responsibility for his actions. The whole of the responsibility for the moral failure of the individual worker often must be shared. From this perspective, the toxic, high-pressure, quota-driven cross-selling culture at Wells Fargo is to some extent morally responsible for the immoral actions of its workers, the workers who were fired. That is why Presler was not held to be fully responsible for his actions on that snowy night in November.

Should we hold a company culture morally responsible for its conditioning influence upon lower level employees? If so, does this mitigate the moral responsibility of company employees to some degree? You're entitled to your own opinion, of course, but I would say yes to both questions. Just as various situational factors contributed to and enabled the outcome of Richard Presler's horrible head-on collision on that snowy night, thus mitigating his legal and moral responsibility, so, too, company cultures must be held morally accountable.

We should remember that poor fellow balking at shocking another human being in the popular video report of Milgram's Obedience Study presented above. You can see he is having trouble with shocking the 'student', but he goes ahead and shocks him anyway after being instructed by the man in the white lab coat to "Please continue, teacher." That is all it took to influence the subject; a white coat and a few authoritarian commands.

"Okay," the poor fellow says resignedly, as he fidgets uncomfortably with his moral values. He squirms, hesitates. "You're responsible for this," he finally mumbles sheepishly to the white lab coat, as he flips the switch on Milgram's "shock generator" and delivers 330 deadly volts to the now unresponsive "learner" in the other room.
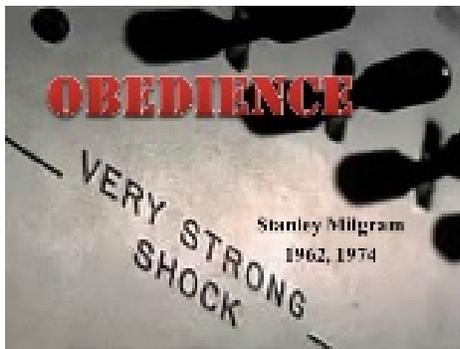
To what extent do you think that you are influenced by situational factors? Would you have stopped and helped a man in dirty clothes crumpled on the sidewalk? Would you have refused to become a sadistic prison guard? Would you have said No when instructed to shock the 'learner' in Milgram's obedience study? Although we may feel strongly that we would act morally in these situations, research consistently suggests that most people will go along with the crowd or do what an authority figure tells them, etc. This knowledge should at least motivate you to look closely at the extent to which you believe you are influenced in your perception and judgments by unconscious situational factors. If you think you are not, look again. What is under your control and what is not under your control can be an elusive line to determine. This seems to be amply

verified by the social science experiments in the videos above and the experiments Sam Sommers reports on in the following excerpt from *Situations Matter* where he argues for what he calls "the flexible self:"

The Flexible Self

Sam Sommers – from *Situations Matter*
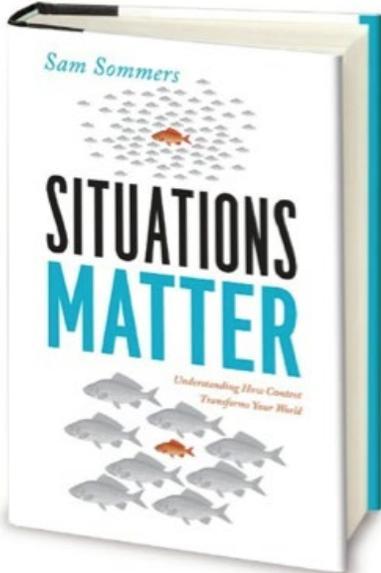
Often, it's not accurate knowledge about the self that allows peace of mind; it's the bit of self-deception that helps us bounce back from setback and trudge on through failure.

Are you looking to be a happier, more productive, more successful person? Are you in the market for self-help? Then stop worrying about how to see yourself for who you really, truly are. Forget about this "authentic self" business. Instead, learn to embrace the notion of the self as flexible.

Yes, your processes of self-perception are context-dependent. And, introspection yields different information at different times. Your sense of self varies depending on who you're with. Identity is malleable and personal preferences are constructed on the spot. But none of this is bad or distressing news.

So you're not the person you thought you were, at least not all the time? Big deal. Let that conclusion empower not alarm you.

It's refreshing to realize that you're not a finished product-—that who you are in the here and now may not be the same person you'll be in the then and there. In fact, it's that opposite view of the self as a fixed entity that causes problems. When you assume that there's a true core self waiting to be discovered, that's when your potential seems limited and the world around you is full of threats to be rationalized away.

Consider one study of college freshmen in Hong Kong. Researchers presented them with a series of statements regarding the stability of intelligence, including "you have a certain amount of intelligence and you really can't do much to change it" and "you can learn new things, but you can't really change your basic intelligence." Based on students' agreement or disagreement with these ideas, the researchers created two groups: those who saw their own intelligence as a

predetermined, stable entity and those who thought of their own intellect in more malleable terms.

The freshmen were then asked whether they intended to enroll in a remedial English course in the years to come. Not surprisingly, those who had aced their high school English certification exam were less likely to plan on taking such a course than students who had scored in the C range or worse. But even among low-performing students, those who viewed intelligence level as etched in stone saw no need for remedial work. They were already as good as they were going to get at English, they figured. So why bother? Only the low performers with a less fixed view of their own intellect were willing to sign up for the additional English work that they really needed.

In other words, seeing the self as a static and stable entity is what puts us on the defensive and mandates chronic self-deception. Think of a characteristic like intelligence in terms of fixed capacity and the poor exam grade or subpar performance review becomes intolerably threatening. Instead, you should train yourself to view intellect—and any other aspect of your personal skill set—as a muscle that grows with effort and atrophies with neglect. When you accept that the answer to "Who am I?" should be written in pencil and not pen, threats become opportunities and failures transform into life lessons. Even if this isn't how you usually see things, it's not too late to start now….

Bad grade on your paper? Lousy earnings projections for the quarter? First one voted off the celebrity dancing show? Now that you recognize how self-perception really works, you know the dangers of chalking up setbacks to a hopeless lack of ability. But you also know better than to automatically shrug it off as bad luck or someone else's fault. Instead, force yourself to ponder or even make a list of the changeable factors—internal and external—that can bring about better outcomes the next time around.

Because whether you're a Hong Kong student struggling with English or a pen pal at Stanford, good things happen when you embrace the self as malleable. Regardless of what you read in the self-help aisle, you don't have to lose sleep hunting for your core identity or reconnecting with your inner you. Chicken soup and numbered lists are overrated.

Instead, its time to start appreciating that you're a different person in different settings.

To recognize that who you are today need not dictate who you'll be tomorrow.

And to accept that the "authentic" self isn't some sort of Holy Grail, unless by the analogy you mean that you aren't sure whether or not it even exists in the first place. [24]

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[24] Sommers, Sam. Situations Matter pp. 142-145

Seems like Sommers wants to have his cake and eat it too. And why not? He argues that "the self" is something real and stable, but he also argues that it is something that changes from situation to situation. Then, he wants to 'resolve' this ambiguity. He seems to lean in the direction of the "malleable self" but not to the point of saying "the self" does not exist at all, as Harman does about character. But Sommers would like to eliminate the ambiguity of the self by apparently claiming that the self is entirely the result of situational factors, arguing that "you're a different person in different settings." Well, yes and no. I think we need to start from this ambiguity rather than start by trying to eliminate it.

My "self" does seem to change from situation to situation, yet, ambiguously, it also stays somewhat the same across situations and is somewhat predictable. It is this sameness-in-difference ambiguous structure that makes it difficult to pin down "the moral self" empirically and objectively. It results in a certain, perhaps unavoidable, vagueness or 'messiness' about the dynamic, existential, everyday self that reminds me of Sartre's ambiguous statement that we human beings are *who we are not and are not who we are*. That seems to me to be just 'how it is'. What do you think?

Although Sommers seems to want to avoid the unavoidable ambiguity at the heart of the self by de-emphasizing our ability to control, manage, cultivate and develop the self, nevertheless his analogy of the self with a "a muscle that grows with effort and atrophies with neglect" connects directly with the idea of moral self-development through *practice* underlying this Intro to Ethics textbook. Sometimes that muscle is tired and sometimes readier to act, but the muscle remains fairly stable across all situations. Like any muscle, the moral self develops from repetitive practice, as Virtue Ethics and Stoicism claim. Yet, not even the Stoic sage will have achieved complete freedom from the influence of situations, as the social psychologists claim. Thus, to a certain extent, both claims may very well be correct.

A Brief Overview of Chapter 7

This chapter investigated the question of whether your moral character—if there is such a thing—is capable of resisting social pressures that influence us to act contrary to our moral value orientation. Can your moral character resist the influence of corporate culture, or are we **"victims of circumstance"** as is suggested by numerous **Social Psychology experiments**?

Character is generally thought to be a fairly stable disposition to act consistently across situations. Character is structured by traits, which can be developed through practice. This is a central idea of Virtue Ethics.

A strong version of character asserts that we *must* act in accordance with our character. This would be a kind of character determinism. Not much acceptance of this view.

A weaker version of character says that we are generally disposed to act in ways consistent with our character's moral values, but we are also always influenced by factors of the situations that we are in and therefore might not always act consistently with our character's moral values. This idea that character is understood to be character-in-a-situation is Virtue Ethics professor **Robert Solomon**'s view. He thinks we are pressured by situational factors but can still resist the influence of those factors if our character is sufficiently well-developed.

Gilbert Harman, an empirical philosopher, believes that we are very influenced by **situational factors**, citing evidence from experiments like Milgram's Obedience study and the Stanford prison experiment. **Sam Sommers**—introduced in this chapter—would agree. He thinks that pointing to internal causal sources of actions (like character) is an attribution error, i.e., attributing to the internal (and unseen) idea of character what is actually caused by external situational factors. Sommers argues for a "flexible" idea of the self. What does he mean by this?

Honestly, I am not certain how far apart the two positions are in this debate (Solomon and Harman). Thus, I proposed a dispositional way to think about character that avoids problems with (but holds onto key elements of) both views. I think that the key takeaway from this chapter is that you should work to become more conscious of how you are influenced by situational factors because you certainly are so influenced. You can mitigate this influence, however, by becoming more conscious of it, and you can use that knowledge positively to work with situational factors constructively in your life to create positive outcomes, since the mere repetition of an action will make it more likely that you will act that way in the future.

TERMS TO KNOW

- Character
- Character traits
- Robert Solomon
- Gilbert Harman
- Milgram obedience experiment
- Stanford prison experiment
- Darley and Batson Good Samaritan experiment
- Folk psychology
- Attribution error
- Confirmation bias
- Sam Sommers
- Situational factors

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How does the story of Richard Presler at the beginning of this chapter relate to the basic question about character that is focused on throughout the chapter?
2. What is character and what is a character trait? Describe some examples of traits.
3. What is the ambiguity at the heart of the idea of character?
4. What is Sam Somers' opinion of character and how does he support his opinion with evidence?
5. What is Robert Solomon's opinion of character and why is this important for Virtue Ethics?
6. What is "folk psychology" and how does Gilbert Harman use this idea to argue against the idea of character altogether?
7. A phenomenological theory of character as "a likelihood of acting" was presented in this chapter. Summarize that perspective.
8. Describe the theory of character that can be used to support the argument that a company's culture is responsible to some degree for the moral behavior of employees. Do you agree with this?

REFLECTION EXERCISE

Begin to notice the way in which you are influenced by situational factors and think about how you can use this new consciousness to advantage. When you find yourself in a bad mood or feeling especially exuberant, for example, look for factors in the situation that you are in for their contribution to how you feel, your mood, etc. Everyone is influenced by situational factors. The more you are able to see these, the more you will be able to use them to your advantage. Sometimes the easiest way to deal with a problem is simply to change the situation. Try this out in your life.

SCENARIO EXERCISE

Employee reduction: What should Elizabeth do?

Directions: Get a feel for the existential moral conflict that Elizabeth is experiencing because of the choice she must make. Analyze the situation from a duty ethics and utilitarian ethics perspective. What would you do if you were Elizabeth and how would you justify your decision morally? What moral principles or perspectives would guide your thinking?

Elizabeth is the vice president of the marketing division of a midsized publishing company. The publicly traded company was beginning to gain market share over some of the industry's leading companies. Though the company was not experiencing financial losses and did not expect to experience any in the future, Elizabeth and the other company executives were called into the CEO's office to discuss budget cuts.

Two years ago, the company had a couple of highly publicized contracts fall through. Since those problems, the company had been performing much better, but the CEO, Jack, was eager to quickly regain the stockholders' confidence. In the meeting, Jack complimented the executives on performance over the past year. Jack expressed confidence that investors would view the company's upcoming second quarter earnings release as favorable.

However, Jack followed up that praise with some negative news. "I'm impressed with the measures we have implemented lately, but I just think we need to do more. We are a great company, and for this next quarter, I want to just knock it out of the park. I've done a little analyzing and have found that our employees, on average, have been performing far better than they were two years ago. The average employee in the sales department, for instance, has increased their sales 35% in just two years. To me, this shows that we have strong commitment from our employees to make this a truly remarkable company."

He continued, "But I think that everyone could use a bigger push. That's why I've determined that every department will eliminate one job, effective next week. This is great for us in two ways. First, we will obviously save money on that person's salary. Second, it will push the remaining employees to work even harder. Plus, I really think that our investors will applaud the fact that we are buckling down and starting to really cut our costs."

Jack, after seeing the look of dismay on many of the attendees' faces, began to reassure them, "I know this may seem like a hard decision. I'm standing firm on this one, so it's a decision you'll just have to make. It would be best for your budget if you looked at your employees and determined which one is relatively the least productive and the highest paid. I'll be out of town

for the next two weeks – I actually have to leave in a minute to catch my flight – but on Friday you need to dismiss one employee and then send me a voice mail letting me know who it was."

No one had the chance to say anything before Jack left the room. Elizabeth left the room and tried to catch Jack to discuss this decision, but he had already left for his flight. Jack was a stubborn man; Elizabeth knew he would not change his mind once he made a decision. So, she went back to her office to contemplate which employee to let go.

The marketing department had about forty employees. Most of those employees were young, because the department had traditionally been used as a stepping stone into management positions. Elizabeth knew she would not save a lot on the salary of any of these individuals. Plus, she could not think of one person in the group who was not a productive employee.

Next Elizabeth looked to her management staff. While her managers were highly paid, she thought every one of them were worth it. Finally, Elizabeth's thoughts turned to one employee: George. George was unique in the department because he was the oldest employee yet he was not a manager. He earned a large salary due to his years with the company. Elizabeth had noticed over the past couple of years that George was not very innovative in his marketing presentations. When George was assigned a task, he needed a great deal of supervision to perform it correctly. Clearly, George was the employee that Elizabeth should lay off.

However, in recent conversations with George, Elizabeth had discovered that he was six months away from retirement. George's wife was ill, and Elizabeth knew that George would be counting on his retirement benefits and the health insurance the company offered to retired employees. If George had to leave the company before his retirement, he would not be eligible for any of these benefits. It would be very difficult for George to find another job. Given that knowledge and George's performance, what should Elizabeth do?

CHAPTER 8
SOCIAL JUSTICE: THE GOOD SOCIETY

Introduction

In this chapter, we will look at how moral theories inform our understanding of the good society. This is important because your personal moral practices and goals are necessarily integrated with broader social/political interests. Our investigations in the present chapter will be focused on the rational, reflective, and deliberative perspective of the Ethics of Justice in its relation to the social order. In the following chapter, we will take up the question of our relation to the social order from the perspective of the Ethics of Care and its corresponding set of theoretical perspectives.

The individual and the state

Social justice issues — poverty, crime, national security, income and wealth disparity, homelessness, unfairness and bias in the distribution of benefits and burdens in society, etc. — are some of the most pressing moral concerns impacting the lives of all members of society, including you and me right now at this moment. To be an individual human being is already to be immersed dynamically in a social order that conspires with us to produce our

moral self, even as these moral selves collectively produce the social order that configures them in turn. In other words, we are inextricably connected to and intertwined with society. Thus, it makes a lot of sense to be concerned about its proper functioning — it's *moral* functioning — since **the proper ordering and functioning of society is integral to your possibility of achieving the best possible life.** Let's look a little closer at this.

The ancient Greek philosophers had a keen awareness of the fundamentally important and dynamic relationship between the individual and the social/political order. This was expressed in the all-important notion of the "citizen." You can see the importance of this communal belonging reflected in the severe criminal punishment of being exiled, for example. Exile was thought to be a near equivalent of execution. **To be exiled meant being severed from the state and the social order and thus from the very possibility of self-actualization and fulfillment as a moral person.** Exile from the moral community is not the route to living the best possible life. You *need* other persons and society in order to effectively be you.

That we need the state and the social/political order to self-actualize and ultimately to self-transcend as a moral self, that is, to achieve the good life, should be clear by now from our consideration of how the moral self is configured in previous chapters. The moral person and the community are inextricably and symbiotically connected through overlapping and reciprocal practices and processes. All your moral decisions are thus always made within a horizon of concern for the moral orientation of the social order, regardless of the extent to which you take it into consideration or are conscious of it. The social order is an *inescapable horizon* of all human perception and judgment.

Thus, to seek the good society, to seek social justice and to ensure that the laws and policies that organize and govern the social/political domain are fair and consistent with the best moral principles is to the benefit of every member of society. The health of society is everyone's concern.

The social order is like a collective individual person. From that perspective, it is as if the social order, just like you and me, also desires to live the best possible life that a society can live. And, it is in the best interests of all of us that it should.
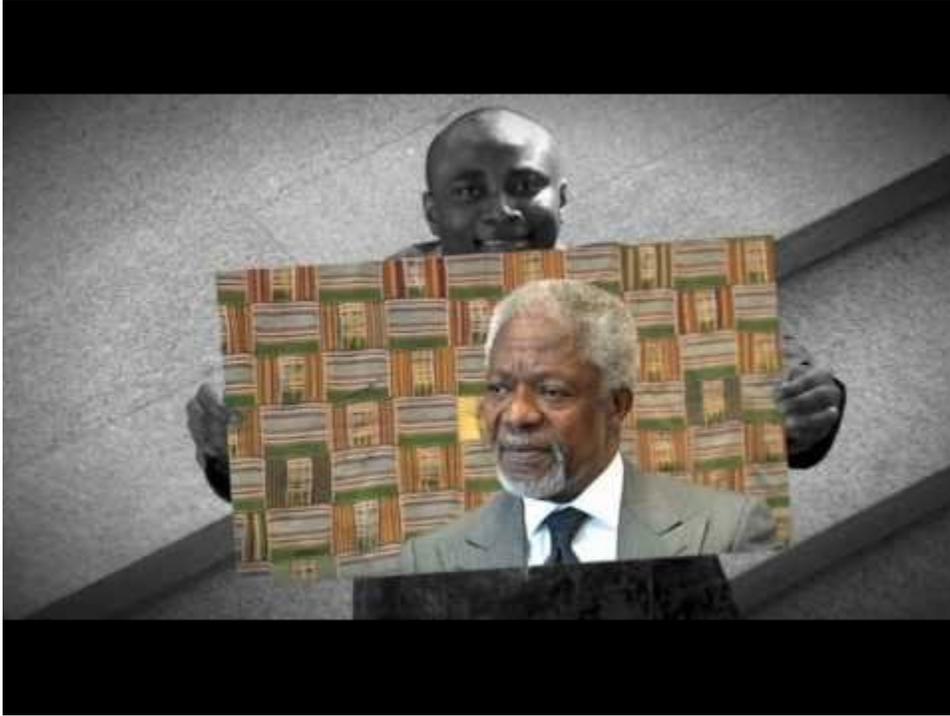
What does social justice mean to YOU? (1:54)

The question of social justice

How should we effectively conceptualize the just society? What is the best organizational form for society to have and the best form of government? What is the proper relation of the individual and society?   How should the benefits and burdens of society be distributed among its members in a way that is fair to all? How should the emerging global social order be morally understood and managed? In order to sketch out conceptual frameworks within which we may be able to formulate answers to these questions of social justice, we will turn to several versions of *Social Contract* theory and a variety of perspectives on *Distributive Justice* theories. These conceptual frameworks are used every day all around the world to evaluate the nature, structure, and functioning of the just society and the social/political policy-making by which it is governed.

 Finally, we will briefly consider the relation between *legality and morality* in this chapter. The social order is structured by both moral and legal orientations that are always changing along a continuum of relatively stable moral and legal foundations. We will see that the scope of morality is much broader and more fundamental than that of legality; yet law is what brings the moral order into being concretely and specifically for everyone. Thus, the development of law must be guided by moral considerations before and above all.

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Social justice

Social justice issues, as you might expect, often appear in the news stories of the day. This should not be surprising since the only place morality happens is in the everyday world of existential moral subjects engaged in various interweaving and overlapping practices. An ethics course could be structured effectively by events reported in the daily news. Two such stories that illustrate the difference between an enlightened and unenlightened view of social justice made headlines in the news toward the end of 2016 and into 2017.

The first story described a longstanding toxic culture at Wells Fargo Bank that resulted in extensive moral impropriety, lawbreaking, and moral harm involving thousands of bank employees and managers, as well as the bank itself. It was a moral implosion that had been instigated by over-the-top, immoral, and aggressively administered sales policies emanating from the CEO himself and primarily geared to benefit the bank's shareholders. These corporate policies were then thoughtlessly and ruthlessly implemented by all levels of the bank's management team, causing great harm, including harm to lower-level employees.

A second story in the news, weaving its way around increasingly damning accounts of the Wells Fargo debacle, focused on the announcement of the "Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative" in which the Zuckerberg family pledged many mega bucks toward the goal of eliminating all diseases in their lifetime or the lifetime of their daughter. Facebook may have its share of problems, but the Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative is a beautiful thing.

Two stories. The shadowy darkness and moral anemia of the first story provides a good illustration of the invisible **social contract** by its unfortunate breach, a breach caused by greed. In contrast, the hopeful brightness of the second story reveals an exemplary, altruistic responsiveness to the moral demands that the social contract places on us all.

Take a closer look at what happened at Wells Fargo back in 2017. According to numerous sources, there was a "pressure cooker" environment throughout all branches of the bank that put a great deal of performance-review stress on low-level employees to get existing customers to purchase the banks various products, a process known as "cross-selling." Because it was almost impossible for employees to meet the stringent sales goals that were imposed, with the threat of termination if they failed, many employees opened customer accounts, issued credit cards or lines of credit, and 'sold' other bank products to already existing Wells Fargo customers, often without their knowledge or approval. To meet the draconian quotas attached to the cross-selling policy and keep their jobs, employees opened more than 3.5 million fraudulent accounts.

Some bank employees resisted. In fact, some morally courageous employees used the Wells Fargo "Ethics Hotline" to complain about the process. These employees were fired shortly afterward for trivial reasons. Numerous stories emerged from terminated employees about the toxic conditions at the bank. Wells Fargo ended up firing 5300 low-level employees, and CEO John Stumpf was hauled before Congress to answer a barrage of critical questions from members of Congress, most of which were left unanswered. The board of directors finally forced Stumpf and other top-level executives to resign and withheld their bonuses. The bank paid a regulatory fine of $185M and settled a class action lawsuit for $142M. More fines will be forthcoming. The bank went into an expensive process of damage control from a self-inflicted catastrophe from which it is still reeling with a long, uphill process of reputational repair ahead. And the two-year scandal just won't seem to end. **Or end....**

Stumpf is a good example of a guy who missed achieving the best possible life as the result of a bad moral judgment that created a toxic culture at what had always been a successful business, thus harming a lot of people and tarnishing his professional success permanently. What happened at Wells Fargo put a good-sized dent in the social contract while the Zuckerberg initiative polished up the social contract a bit. Let us see how these two courses of action can be evaluated from the perspective of Social Contract theory. What is the nature of the Social Contract? How is it formed and what is the source of our obligation to it?

Social contract theories and principles

Social contract theory focuses on the tacit or explicit agreement among members of society to abide by the laws and norms that govern the social order and contribute to the social good from which all benefit. From the perspective of social contract theory, Wells Fargo violated the social contract by undermining public trust, which is an integral part of the social contract and of special importance for banks and the financial sector of society. As Martin Luther King put it, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

The social contract is held in place by laws, social norms, practices, regulations, and moral values that would guarantee that everyone benefitting from the social contract would be operating

on a level playing field. It is as if Wells Fargo decided to step back into what Thomas Hobbes called the "state of nature," a realm guided by morally unfettered self-interest in Hobbes' view. While other businesses were respecting the social contract, Wells Fargo was acting like a *free rider* seeking special advantage by unduly pressuring low-level bank employees through the situational impact of corporate culture to act immorally and break the law. Few found the strength of character to resist. Social contract theory, the very nature of the social contract, would condemn such actions. The first book-length description of Social Contract theory was written by philosopher Thomas Hobbes in his classic work entitled *Leviathan*.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

"During the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition called war; and such a war, as if of every man, against every man. To this war of every man against every man, this also is consequent; that nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law, where no law, no injustice. Force and fraud are in war the cardinal virtues. No arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death: and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short…."
From *Leviathan* by Thomas Hobbes
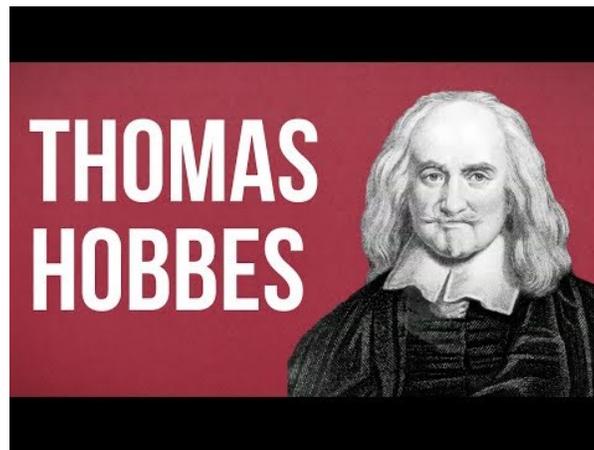
A brief overview of Hobbes' Social Contract theory
(6:45)

Social contract theory, which is nearly as old as philosophy itself although Hobbes is the first to thematize it as such, is the view that the moral and/or political obligations of all members of the social order are dependent upon an explicit or tacit agreement among them to form and govern the society in which they live. Social contract theory today is associated with a blend of moral and political theory called political science that was given its first full exposition and defense by Thomas Hobbes.

In its various versions, Social Contract theory, as with Ethics generally, always presumes a certain view of human nature or human subjectivity. Thus, Hobbes' political theory is best understood if taken in two parts: his theory of human motivation, based on an empirical form of *psychological egoism*, and his theory of the social contract, founded on the hypothetical thought experiment involving the construct called the *state of nature*. Hobbes has, first and foremost, a theory of human nature which gives rise to his view of morality and politics.

From Hobbes' point of view, human beings like you and I are essentially very complicated organic machines, responding to the stimuli of the social and physical world mechanistically and in accordance with universal laws of human nature.

The mechanistic orientation of human psychology implies the subjective nature of normative claims. 'Love' and 'hate', for instance, are just words we use to describe the things we are mechanistically and determinatively drawn to and repelled by.

In addition to *moral subjectivism*, Hobbes also infers from his mechanistic theory of human nature that humans are necessarily and exclusively motivated by **egoistic self-interest**. Thus, everything you do, from this perspective, is motivated solely by the will to better your own situation and satisfy as many of your own desires as possible by getting what you want for yourself and avoiding what you don't want; others come second.

From these premises based on his view of human nature, Hobbes goes on to construct a compelling argument for why people ought to be willing to relinquish some of their freedom and autonomy and submit to the rule of an *absolute political authority,* a monarch. He does this by imagining persons in the *state of nature*, prior to any laws or government, that is, prior to the establishment of the social order.

In the state of nature, Hobbes argued, people are naturally and exclusively self-interested and concerned primarily with their own self-preservation. People are more or less equal to one another since even the strongest man can be killed in his sleep. There are limited resources, of course. Yet, there is no governing power able to force people to cooperate and refrain from harming or stealing from one another. Given these conditions, Hobbes concludes that the state of nature would be unbearably brutal "…solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." It is the state of perpetual and unavoidable "war," as Hobbes makes clear in the quote from *Leviathan* above.

However, the situation for folks in such a miserable state of nature is not hopeless. **Being rational and self-interested**, Hobbes asserts, and thus recognizing the benefit of peaceful coexistence to fulfill their own interests, persons can be expected to construct a *Social Contract* that will afford them a life other than that available to them in the state of nature.

The Hobbesian view of the social contract has two parts. First, all must agree to cooperate peacefully, insofar as others are likewise willing to do so. Secondly, all must agree to be governed by an absolute power capable of punishing all breaches of the contract. While living under such a sovereign can possibly be harsh, it is better than living in the state of nature, Hobbes argued.
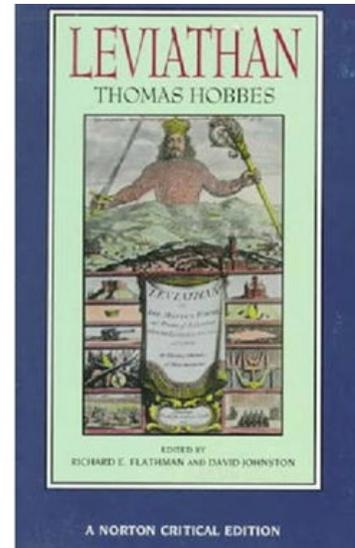
According to this argument, morality, politics, society, and all the benefits that come with it, are purely conventional, established by the social contract.

> **Prior to the establishment of the basic social contract, according to which people agree to abide by the terms of the social contract enforced by an absolute authority, nothing is immoral or unjust, for Hobbes.**

Thus, from this mechanistic and egoistic view, the social contract is the most fundamental source of all that is good and that which we depend upon for our self-actualization and achievement of the best possible moral life. Without it we would be lost.

Although it is certainly a good thing that the social contract lifts us up out of the state of nature, not everyone was happy about Hobbes' justification for society being ruled by an absolute monarch, since this left open the door to tyranny and despotism. Additionally, much criticism focused on Hobbes' dim view of human nature. The idea that humans in the state of nature were motivated solely by self-interest and self-preservation, and that no moral values existed until the formation of the social contract so that all morality is strictly conventional, was deeply problematic from the perspective of a **religiously informed worldview** and understanding of human nature common at the time. Hobbes was an atheist.

Consequently, challenges to the egoistic and mechanistic orientation of Hobbes' theory gave rise to another version of social contract theory from a younger contemporary philosopher by the name of **John Locke.**

John Locke (1632–1704)

According to philosopher **John Locke**, the state of nature, which is the natural condition of humans, is not a Hobbesian hell-hole but a state of perfect and complete liberty. You have the freedom to conduct your life as you see fit, free from the interference of others. This does not mean, however, that it is a state of licentiousness: you are not free to do whatever you want in the state of nature, or even everything that you think is in your best interest. There are others to consider.

For Locke, the state of nature is not a state without morality. The state of nature is pre-political, but it is not pre-moral. In the state of nature, we are already endowed with moral features called *inalienable rights* to life, liberty, and property. These basic moral values are inscribed in the God-given *law of nature* that is further inscribed in every person, according to Locke.

The state of nature for Locke, therefore, is not the same as the state of war, as it is according to Hobbes. It can, however, devolve into a state of war, especially over *property disputes* since **private property** was thought by Locke to be, by virtue of those God-given rights, a necessary condition for the possibility of happiness. Whereas the state of nature is the state of liberty, where persons recognize the laws of nature and therefore do not harm one another, the state of war can begin between two or more persons *by the stealing property*.

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Property plays an essential role in Locke's argument for civil government and the contract that establishes it. According to Locke, private property is created when you mix your labor with the raw materials of nature. So, for example, if you were to till a piece of land in nature, making it into a piece of farmland that produces food by the 'sweat of your brow', then you would have a basis for a claim to own that piece of land and the food produced upon it, as long as it is not owned by anyone else.
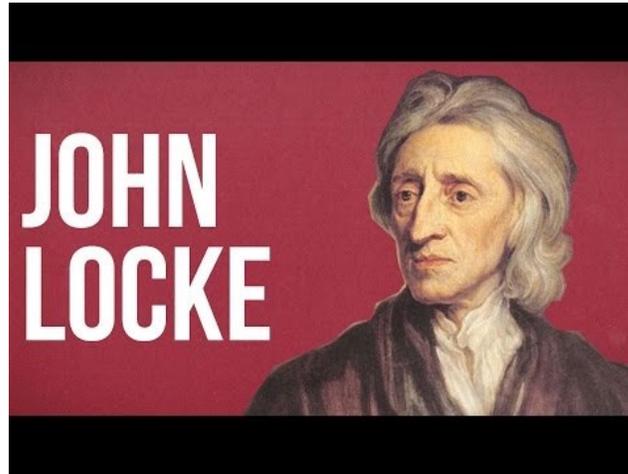
John Locke (9:14)

Given the implications of the law of nature, however, there are limits as to how much property you can own: you are not allowed to take more from nature than you can use, thereby leaving others without enough for themselves. Because nature is given to all people by God for everyone's subsistence, you cannot take more than your own fair share. This constraint upon our freedom of acquisition in Locke's social contract theory provides a philosophical basis for the current understanding of "**sustainability**."

You can see how property is the linchpin of Locke's argument for the social contract and civil government because it is for the protection of your enjoyment of property ownership, including the property of your own body (which is the first 'property' everyone 'owns' according to Locke), that motivates people to abandon the free state of nature and agree to be bound by the social contract.

Because the motivation to form a government arises from everyone's rational self-interest to enjoy and thus protect their property, their liberty, and their general well-being, it is not hard to imagine the conditions under which the civil compact with government could be destroyed. People would be justified in resisting the authority of a corrupt civil government, according to Locke. When the executive power of a government devolves into tyranny, then the resulting tyrant puts himself or herself back into a state of nature, and specifically into a state of war with the people, and so the people then have the same right to self-defense as they had before making a compact to establish society in the first place. This also justifies citizens "right to bear arms."

Because Locke did not envision humans in the state of nature as grimly as did Hobbes, he can imagine conditions under which one would be better off rejecting a particular civil government and returning to the state of nature, with the aim of constructing a better civil government in its place. ***It is therefore both the view of human nature, and the nature of morality itself, which account for the differences between Hobbes' and Locke's views of the social contract.***

Since people have an inherent morality in the state of nature and were thus able to control and direct the course of their own lives, Locke also held that the power to govern resides with the collective will of the people and should not be given to a monarch. Governments should be established through democratic voting. But would this guarantee that elected governments would be just and fair?

Philosopher John Rawls responded to this question by taking the basic orientation of Social Contract theory to a new level when he used it to establish his very influential theory of **justice as fairness**.

John Rawls (1921 - 2002)
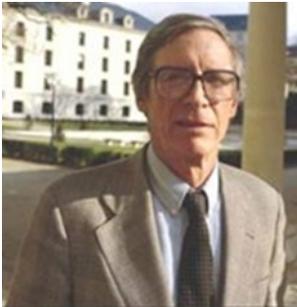
Professor John Rawls was an American political philosopher in the liberal or Enlightenment Liberalism tradition. His theory of *justice as fairness* describes a society of free citizens holding equal basic rights and cooperating within an egalitarian economic system. The way in which the basic values and rules that will govern this society are formulated, in order to assure that the rules are fair, borrows an idea from Hobbes and uses it as an organizing strategy for achieving fairness.

The basic idea underlying Rawls' idea of justice is that the goods in society should be shared or distributed fairly among the members of society. But what is fair? In his monumental text, ***A Theory of Justice***, Rawls uses a variation of Hobbes' social contract theory in the form of a hypothetical thought experiment to reach a practical notion of "fairness." He then argues that justice, itself, *is* fairness. Rawls was not trying to construct a complete social contract theory but merely to present a justifiable framework of principles by which social policies and institutions could be rationally created and evaluated.

Here is Rawls' approach to setting up the principles that will govern fair policy making in the good society. Imagine that you are among a group of people who are presently in a kind of pre-political state of nature and are tasked with the challenge of coming up with the basic rules by which your new society will be organized, a society that all members of the group will also themselves be a part of, but which is yet unformed.

Now, in this imaginative exercise, the members of the group are behind a "**veil of ignorance**." This means that nobody knows any of the specific characteristics (sex, height, race, etc.) of anyone else in the group or about any of the people who will be in the future society. The only thing that is known is that everyone is rational and motivated by self-interest. Rawls argues that from this "**original position**" the basic values or principles that this hypothetical group comes up with will be free of bias and prejudice and, thus, fair.
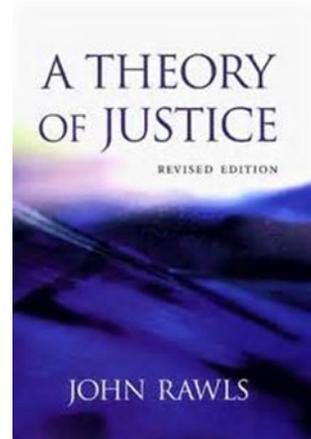
Rawls thinks that the only principles that would be agreed upon by all in the original position behind a 'veil of ignorance' are the **liberty principle** and the **difference principle**.

The *liberty principle* provides for maximum freedom and universal respect for persons as a minimum standard for all. But, while all persons may be morally equal, we also know that in the "real world" there are significant differences between individuals that under conditions of liberty will lead to social and economic inequalities.

The *difference principle* permits such inequalities and even suggests that it may be to the advantage of all, but *only* if two conditions apply. **First**, any special benefits in an otherwise **egalitarian** social/political order must flow to the least advantaged. **Secondly**, there should be an absolute and real **equality of opportunity** for all in order to offset the unequal natural distribution of physical ability, natural talent, social position, etc. A society constructed and governed by these moral principles would be a just society, according to Rawls.

Brief explanation of justice as fairness (6:33)

Distributive justice theories and principles

Introduction

Whenever a person or institution violates the fundamental public trust that is inherent in the social contract, you are sure to find that there are also issues of **distributive justice** at play in the mix. ***Distributive justice theories focus on how society's rules, regulations, and policies determine, allocate and disburse or distribute the benefits and burdens of society in a fair and equitable manner.*** The tax code, for example, is an obvious distributive justice mechanism. Questions of distributive justice are at the heart of the widespread income and wealth disparity that is increasingly threatening the national and international social order economically. For example, we have seen clear distributive justice violations reflected in the cross-selling scandal at Wells Fargo.

Think about this. Wells Fargo CEO Stumpf was pulling down a lot more than chump change in dividends from his substantial holdings of Wells Fargo stock options, (not to mention the rest of his outsized compensation package). This rose in value substantially during the years

that low-level bank employees (the same ones who were later fired, as if the scam were entirely their fault) were being ruthlessly pressured into illicit cross-selling that generated millions of dollars in fees and new accounts while stuffing the Wells Fargo reputation box — all of which contributed to pumping up the value of Stumpf's stock holdings, right? He was getting a bigger piece of the pie than he was entitled to.

What about the whistle-blowers at Wells Fargo who were fired for communicating their doubts about the morality and legality of the toxic culture at the bank and who now can no longer get a job in the banking industry?

These situations are distributive justice issues because the underlying conditions which make them possible impact the distribution of benefits and burdens in society. That is why some U.S. senators think Wells Fargo should be investigated by the Labor Department for criminal violations, and the board of directors should be dismantled in order to repair the breach to the social contract. Some board members have been forced to resign and caps were placed on the bank's allowable assets growth in order to get the bank back to fairness.

Wells Fargo also violated the basic rights of their customers that stem from the social contract. The bank infringed on its customers' right to privacy and freedom to determine their own lives without interference, stole from them, and misled them with lies that violated their right to the truth from a supposedly trustworthy financial institution. It violated the right to free speech of the workers who complained about this unethical practice and their right not to be retaliated against for doing the morally correct thing. And what about the harm to those 5300 terminated workers who were, at least in part, victims of a toxic corporate culture? Unfortunately, Wells Fargo is a good example of how things can go very wrong for a company when the basic principles of morality and social justice are ignored among top managers.

But there was also the other story about the Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative. This philanthropic gesture exemplifies the best aspects of the Ethics of Care. It reflects a more human side of the social contract. Sure, the social contract means that we should not rob, cheat, or steal from others, and that we should strive to achieve social justice, but it also means more than that. It means that it is in our own best interest to be concerned for and contribute to the welfare of others who are also a part of the social order created and sustained by the social contract, and to be responsive to their needs. ***Caring for others is the way in which the social contract and distributive justice are nurtured, strengthened and sustained.*** Let's take a closer look at a variety of distributive justice perspectives. See where you stand.

The scope of distributive theories and principles

The governance framework that each society has — its laws, institutions, policies, etc. — results in different distributions of benefits and burdens across members of the society. These economic frameworks are the result of human political processes and they constantly change

across societies and within societies over time. The structure of these frameworks is important because the economic distributions resulting from them fundamentally affects your life and mine and everyone's.

Arguments about which frameworks and/or resulting distributions are morally preferable constitute the topic of *distributive justice*. Principles of distributive justice are therefore best thought of as providing moral guidance for the political processes and structures that affect the distribution of economic benefits and burdens in societies, like how should we structure the tax code so that it is fair, how extensively should the poor be helped, etc.

1. Egalitarian distributive principles

One of the simplest principles of distributive justice is that of strict, or radical, equality. The principle says that every person should have the same level of material goods and services. The principle is commonly justified on the grounds that people are morally equal and that equality in material goods and services is therefore the best way to actualize this moral ideal in practice. Sounds good at first glance, but….

Even with this ostensibly simple principle some of the difficult specification problems of distributive principles can easily be seen. *The two main problems are the construction of appropriate indices for measurement (the index problem), and the specification of time frames as to when equality should be measured.* Because there are numerous proposed solutions to these problems, the 'principle of strict equality' is not a single principle but a name for a group of closely related principles. [Note: This range of possible specifications occurs with all the common
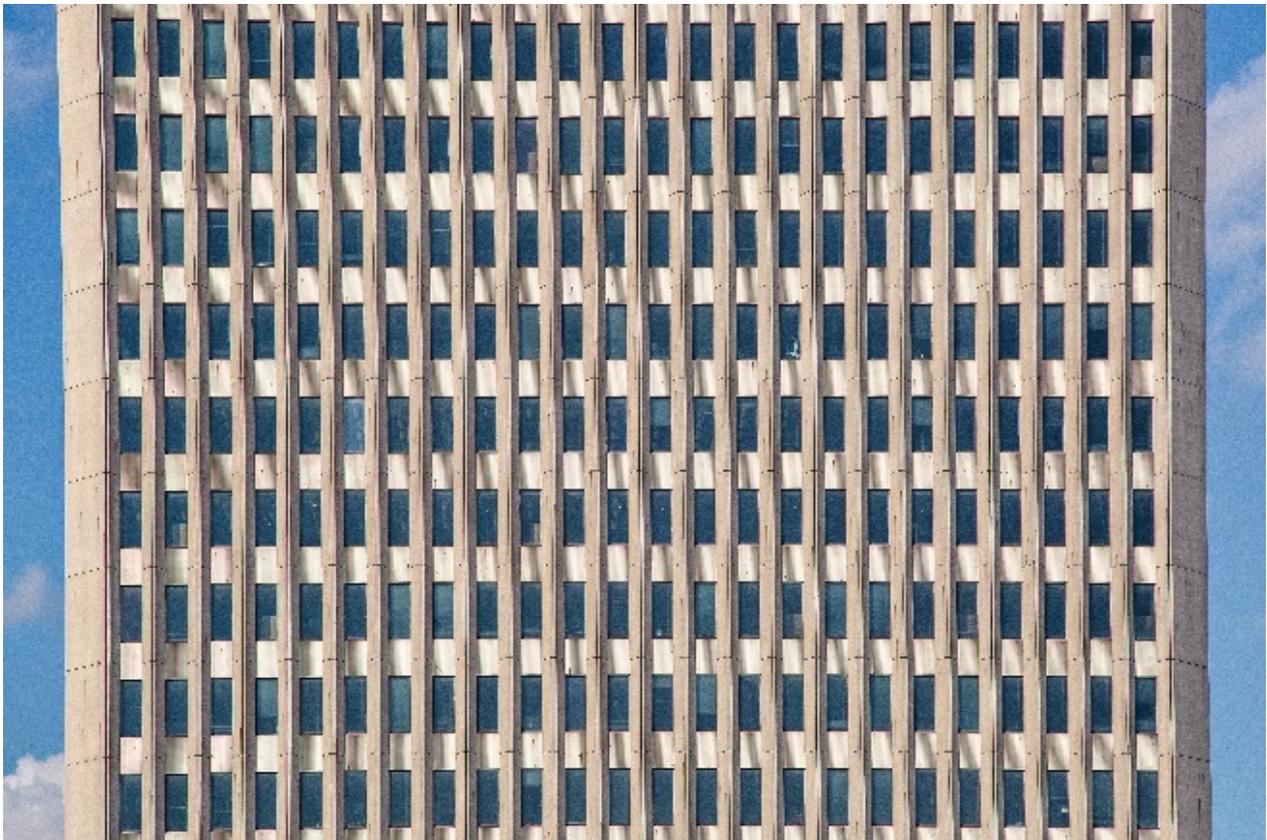
principles of distributive justice that we are considering here, which constitute an extensive field of knowledge.]

2. Rawls: Real equality but favor the disadvantaged

Since we already looked at Rawls' theory of justice above, let me just mention here the special importance of Rawls' Difference Principle. In the context of Rawls' liberty principle where everyone is to have maximum liberty and rights comparable to others, the difference principle asserts that if there are to be any inequalities in the social and economic distribution of goods, this inequality should satisfy two conditions: (a) it should be attached to positions to which everyone has equal opportunity; and (b) it should be the greatest benefit to the least advantaged members of society.

The main moral motivation for the Difference Principle is similar to that for strict equality: equal respect for persons. Indeed, the Difference Principle materially collapses to a form of strict equality under empirical conditions where differences in income have no effect on the work incentive of people. The overwhelming economic opinion is that in the foreseeable future the possibility of earning greater income will bring forth greater productive effort, although income is not the only source of work incentive and some research would suggest that income is not the best source of work incentive compared to internal sources of motivation like "job satisfaction."

3. Luck and equality of opportunity

The distribution of material goods and services is not the only economic distribution which is important to people. The distribution of opportunities is also important. As noted in the previous section, John Rawls conjoined his Difference Principle with a principle of equality of opportunity. Endorsement of some form of equality of opportunity is very prevalent among distributive justice theorists and, indeed, among the general population, especially when combined with some form of *market distributive mechanism*.

Equality of opportunity rules out discrimination on grounds such as a person's race, ethnicity, age or gender. What is the underlying problem with a society lacking formal equality of opportunity? The concern seems to be rooted in the belief that traits such as a persons' gender or race are elements over which people have no control. Thus, a society in which people's race or gender have fundamental effects on their lifetime economic prospects treats people unfairly, which is unjust. In such societies, whether people were born as the favored gender or race, and thus favored economically, would simply be a matter of *luck,* pure chance. Rawls' claim is that structuring a society so that this 'natural lottery' has such fundamental effects on people's lives is immoral. This is especially true because we have the option to structure it another way, with a system of formal equality of opportunity.

The foregoing is relatively uncontroversial, but even with formal equality of opportunity, there will remain many factors over which people have no control, but which will affect their lifetime economic prospects, such as whether a person's family can afford to purchase good quality educational opportunities or health care. These influences children are exposed to are a matter of their luck (for better or worse) in the 'social lottery'. Shouldn't the mechanisms for the distribution of the goods of society take this natural lottery into account? What do you think?

4. Utilitarian-oriented principles

Welfare-based distributive justice principles are motivated by the utilitarian idea that what is of primary moral importance is the level of welfare that people attain or fail to attain. Advocates of welfare-based principles view the concerns of other theories — material equality, the level of primary goods of the least advantaged, resources, desert-claims, or liberty — as concerns that are derived from welfare. Such concerns are only valuable in so far as they affect welfare, so that all distributive questions should be settled entirely by how the distribution affects welfare guided by the Utilitarian principle of the greatest welfare (good) for the greatest number.

However, there are many ways that welfare can be used in answering these distributive questions, so welfare-theorists need to specify what welfare function they believe should be maximized. The welfare functions proposed, consequences, vary according to what will count as welfare and the weighting system for that particular form of welfare. Not only what the consequences are for a particular distribution but the weight of those consequences for welfare must be taken in account. What counts as a "good" for one person might not be what counts as a good for someone else. How should such preferences for goods or welfare be calculated? Enshrining such preferences in clear policy is a difficult task.

5. Who deserves what? Desert-based theories

One complaint against the welfare approach to distributive justice is that it ignores, and in fact cannot even make sense of, claims that people *deserve* certain economic benefits as a result of their actions. And it is insensitive to the arbitrary infliction of harm on a few for the benefit of many, a common desert-based complaint against a 'rich tax', for example. The complaint is often motivated by the concern that various forms of welfare in practice treat people as mere containers for well-being, rather than purposeful beings in their own right, responsible for their actions and creative in their environments.

The different desert-based principles of distribution differ primarily according to what they identify as the *basis for deserving*. While Aristotle proposed virtue, or moral character, to be the best desert-basis for economic distribution, contemporary desert theorists have proposed desert-bases that are more practically implemented in complex modern societies. Most contemporary desert theorists have pursued John Locke's lead in this respect. Locke argued that people deserve to have those items that are produced by their own hard work, the products (or the value thereof) being a fitting reward for their effort. Locke's underlying idea was to guarantee to individuals the fruits of their own labor and industry. This position would also need to account for the claims of equality of opportunity outlined above.

Most contemporary proposals for what should count as a basis for desert fit into one of three broad categories:

- **Contribution**: People should be rewarded for their work activity according to the value of *their contribution to the good of the social order*.

- **Effort**: People should be rewarded according to the effort they expend in *their work activity.*

- **Compensation**: People should be rewarded according to *the costs they incur in their work activity*, like professional/college education, training, experience, stressfulness of job, etc.

According to contemporary desert theorists, people freely apply their abilities and talents, in varying degrees, to socially productive work. People come to deserve varying levels of income by providing goods and services desired by others. Distributive systems are just insofar as they distribute incomes according to the different levels earned or deserved by the individuals in the society for their productive labors, efforts, or contributions.

Contemporary desert-principles all share the value of contributions that raise the standard of living collectively, **'the social product'**, such as some social media platforms. Under each principle, only activity directed at raising the social product will serve as a basis for deserving distributive rewards, such as income and social position.

6. Libertarian distributive principles

Libertarians often argue that because just patterns of distribution can only follow from the just actions of individuals, no arbitrarily determined and structurally imposed distribution patterns are needed. How about if we just eliminate the tax code altogether? That would suit libertarians.

Libertarian **entitlement theory** generally includes reference to the *principles of justice in acquisition and transfer*. The principle of justice in transfer is the least controversial and is designed to specify fair contracts while ruling out stealing, fraud, etc. The principle of justice in acquisition is more complicated and more controversial.

The principle of justice in acquisition is meant to govern the gaining of exclusive property rights over the material world. Entitlement theory, similar to some desert-based theory, takes its inspiration from Locke's idea that everyone 'owns' themselves and, by mixing one's labors with the world, self-ownership can generate ownership of some part of the material world, as we saw above.

Libertarians usually advocate a system in which there are exclusive property rights, with the role of the government restricted to the protection of these property rights. These property rights commonly rule out taxation for purposes other than raising the funds necessary to protect property rights.

The obvious objection to this claim is that it is not clear why the first people to acquire some part of the material world should be able to exclude others from it (and, for instance, be the land owners while the later ones become the wage laborers). In response to this objection, libertarian theorists follow Locke in recognizing the need for a qualification on just acquisition. According to the ***Lockean Proviso***, mentioned above, an exclusive acquisition of the external world is just, if, after the acquisition, there is "*enough and as good left in common for others."* One of the main challenges for libertarians has been to formulate a morally plausible interpretation of this **sustainability** proviso.

7. Feminism and distributive justice

There is no one feminist conception of distributive justice. Social justice theorists who name themselves feminists defend positions across the political spectrum. Hence, feminists offer distinctive versions of all the theories considered so far as well as others. One way of thinking about what unifies many feminist theorists is an interest in *what difference, if any, the practical experience of gender makes to the subject matter or study of social and distributive justice.* How

different feminists answer this question distinguishes them from each other and from those alternative distributive principles that most inspire their thinking.

One phrase or motto around which a whole range of feminists have rallied, however, marks a significant break with Enlightenment liberalism: "**the personal is political**." Feminists have offered a variety of interpretations of this motto, many of which take the form of a critique of liberal theories. Mill was crucial in developing the liberal doctrine of limiting the state's intervention in the private lives of citizens. Many contemporary feminists have argued that the resulting liberal theories of justice have fundamentally been unable to accommodate the injustices that have their origins in this 'protected' private sphere of the home, such as spousal abuse, unequal pay for women, and lack of real and equal opportunity.

Feminist critique has also been a primary source of inspiration for the broader multicultural critique of liberalism that is reflected in the existential-phenomenological approach guiding the formation of this text. The liberal commitments to government neutrality and to a protected personal sphere of liberty, where the government must not interfere, have been primary critical targets.

Morality & Legality

Ethics and the law are not identical in the scope of their interests. Typically, the law tells us what we are prohibited from doing or what we are required to do with clear, specific parameters, like speed limits. It is said that the law sets minimum standards of tolerable behavior while ethics sets maximum standards, which seems unnecessarily cryptic to me. Morality is certainly a much broader domain than legality. Moral controversies, like abortion and gay marriage, always precede

and are finally settled to some extent, practically speaking, by the enactment or decree or precedent of law—which does not resolve the moral question. There is often sharp disagreement about the interpretation of the law in new circumstances. Justices of the Supreme Court, and other multiple-judge courts, are often divided in their opinions and interpretations of the law, for example.

The law, insofar as it impacts business, changes over time as it imposes broader or narrower obligations in relation to business activity, such as with directors' duties and the loosening of regulations under the current administration in Washington. Yet legal duties and ethical duties do not always correspond. Something may be legal, like capital punishment or abortion, but some may consider it to be morally unacceptable. And we may consider something morally acceptable, like smoking pot, for example, but it may not be legal. Or it could be legal in one place but not another, as with marijuana laws. But morality does not work that way. Numerous multinational companies are facing a public backlash for not paying adequate tax. While this may not have been

an illegal activity at the time, it is considered wrong by many from a moral perspective and has thus motivated congress to get to work passing laws to make sure it stops. Often, the law must play catch-up with morality.

In other instances, what has long been viewed as a morally acceptable thing to do may have been made illegal in an effort to change cultural practices that disadvantage or endanger certain groups. In India, seeking, giving or accepting a dowry is now illegal, and child marriage has been outlawed in many jurisdictions. Laws are often enacted after there has been moral outcry and public deliberation of the issue.

Also, throughout history we also have instances of "civil disobedience" where laws that are considered unjust are disobeyed in an effort to change them, illustrating *the broader range of morality than the law*. This occurred with civil rights activist **Rosa Parks**, for example, whose civil disobedience—refusing to sit at the back of the bus--brought about the beginning of the end of racial segregation laws in the United States.

A key issue to consider in relation to morality and the law is whether the law is adequate as a guide for your personal/professional life.

Ethics provides our moral intelligence with guides about what is the right thing to do in all aspects of life, while the law generally provides more specific rules about limits or what is forbidden, so that societies and their institutions can be maintained. But the law does not tell us what to do in relation to many of the dilemmas and decisions that we must make in our everyday life. While we think obeying the law is an important basis for role models in our life, we consider other traits such as benevolence and empathy as more important in characterizing someone as a good person. And, from an entrepreneurial perspective, disrupting existing law with an innovative platform can be thought to be revolutionary, even virtuous, as with Uber, Airbnb, Amazon, etc.

There is increasing demand for businesses of every scale to be good (i.e. moral) corporate citizens. The law has not only a *letter*, but also a *spirit*, which demands a commitment to morality and social justice. Doing what you have the right to do – as in doing something that is not illegal – is not always identical to doing what is right. That goes for both natural and legal "persons." Our pluralist society is becoming increasingly intolerant of businesses, like Wells Fargo and Volkswagen, and Amazon that may not be doing anything against the technical letter of the law but are utterly failing to fulfill its spirit.

A Brief Overview of Chapter 8

Chapter 8 focuses on rational theories and the principles generated by those theories that are commonly used by you and me and everyone to judge the justice of social/political policy questions. These moral theories focusing on social justice guide the production of laws, rules, policies, ordinances, etc. for the governance of society, both in regard to its own proper structure and also its function of justly distributing the benefits and burdens among members of the society founded upon a social contract.

The two articles below that were in the news recently illustrate the everyday, existential applicability of the somewhat abstract Social Contract and Distributive Justice theories we studied. They conform generally to the Ethics of Justice moral orientation. It is important to know about these theories, but it is more important that you should learn where you stand regarding such social justice perspectives and issues than it is for you to become an expert in the theories or issues themselves. In Chapter 9 we will look at the social/political order from the perspective of the Ethics of Care.

Austria's 'Burqa Ban' law comes into force *AP* **Oct 1, 2017**

Glitches in new tax code help some, harm others 2/24/2018

How does Austria's (and, recently, Sri Lanka's) new 'Burqa Ban' law square with Social Contract theory? Is this law just? Is it fair? Remember that Locke argued that freedom is an inalienable right of everyone in the state of nature (prior to government), including my freedom to dress the way I want to dress. Thus, any limitations of that natural freedom for the sake of social/political harmony must be justified by reason.

Again, we saw that under Rawls' Liberty Principle – which everyone in the "Original Position" would certainly agree is a fair principle or rule upon which society should be founded – under this principle everyone is entitled to the maximum amount of freedom compared to everyone else's freedom. Austria's Burqa Ban law is a restriction of that natural freedom for one isolated group. Is that fair?

From a social contract point of view, then, this restriction would have to justify itself as necessary in order to achieve some greater social justice good, as a Utilitarian might argue, such as safety for the masses. What might that greater good be? How would social welfare be impacted? On the other hand, a deontologist might make an argument from a religious freedom perspective that you should have a right to cover your face in public if you choose to do so based on religious custom,

which is what is being restricted. Should religious freedom trump safety concerns? What do you think? Should the Lone Ranger be allowed to wear his mask in public? One of the most important instruments for achieving distributive justice in our society is, obviously, the tax code. If you are dying from liver failure, of course, the fairness of the mechanism for the distribution of donor livers in our society will naturally be of greater concern to you. They are both examples of distributive justice mechanisms.

As such, justification for the establishment of any provisions or changes to provisions within these distributive justice mechanisms will have to resort to one or the other theoretical perspectives that we looked at in this chapter. Changes to distributive justice mechanisms always result in winners and losers regarding whatever is up for distribution, and that is true whether it is income, entrance to Harvard, or donor livers at stake.

There was certainly a lot of wrangling from all sectors of the Distributive Justice theoretical landscape before a tax reform bill ever finally made it to the President's desk. And there is still a lot of disagreement about tax reform today….

You should be familiar with the various types of distributive justice perspectives presented in this chapter, but not for the sake of those perspectives themselves. Rather, as you read about the various perspectives you should try to ascertain where you stand regarding achieving distributive justice in our society and which theories support your view. Are you more of an egalitarian than a libertarian? Or, what? And in good Stoic fashion don't forget to address the critical problems with wherever you fall on the Distributive Justice spectrum. Don't fall prey to 'confirmation bias'—seeing only what evidence supports your position.

Remember that *all the different theoretical perspectives on distributive justice have the common shortcoming of lacking clear, concrete, universally accepted existential specificity or how the theory should be implemented and work in practice.* Talking the talk is one thing. Actively walking the walk is another.

For example, it is fine if you want to be an egalitarian, but then you must coherently address the index and time questions regarding that theoretical orientation. If you are more of a "get what you deserve" type, then, to be coherent, you must clarify what you think should be used to specify "desert" (what you deserve) and why? Contribution? Effort? Compensation? Or, what?

The same thing for all the distributive justice perspectives we looked at, including the feminist critique of past accounts of distributive justice which, it is claimed, did not take into account the value of women's work, especially in the home (caring for family – the personal is political) but also at professional work outside the home (Google pay discrimination, etc.).

Finally, you should have a clear idea of the relationship between morality and legality.

FURTHER READING

[A Belief in Meritocracy Is Not Only False: It's Bad for You](#)

PRACTICE

TERMS TO KNOW
- Social justice
- Social contract
- Thomas Hobbes
- John Locke
- State of nature
- John Rawls
- John Stuart Mill
- Instrumental mechanism
- Law of nature
- Property
- Justice as fairness
- Veil of ignorance
- Original position
- Liberty principle
- Difference principle
- Morality and legality
- Distributive Justice

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What is social justice?

2. Why are social justice issues important for all members of society?

3. What would you say is the most important social justice issue facing our society today? What do you think should be done about it?

4. Why do we need social justice theories?

5. How does Hobbes' understanding of human nature from the perspective of psychological egoism and instrumental mechanism inform his theory of the social contract?

6. What is the state of nature and what role does it play for Hobbes and Locke in their respective social contract theories?

7. Why does Hobbes think that a strong monarchical government is best?

8. How does Locke's view of human nature differ from that of Hobbes?

9. What is the importance of private property in Locke's theory of the social contract?

10. What is the difference between Locke and Hobbes about where the power to govern society should arise from?

11. How did Rawls construct a thought experiment from Hobbes' idea of the "state of nature" that he then used heuristically to determine the basic principles by which the rules and policies that constitute and govern society should be formed?

12. How does the story about John Stumpf at Wells Fargo illustrate some of the basic aspects of the social contract by their breach?

13. How does the story about the Zuckerbergs illustrate an Ethics of Care orientation to the social contract?

14. What is the relationship between morality and the law? Which do you think is more fundamental? Which do you think is most important?

REFLECTION EXERCISES

A. After reading about social contract theory in this chapter, how do you see that you are connected to the social order by virtue of the social contract? How do you feel about learning that you are contractually connected to all the other people who are also part of the social order? Does this have any personal meaningfulness to you in your life or is it just abstract theories? Do you have any personal sense of the social contract in your life?

B. Which theory of human nature, the one espoused by Thomas Hobbes or that by John Locke, makes more sense to you personally as coherently representing how things really are with people? Are people in the state of nature more like what Hobbes thinks or more like what Locke thinks? What do you think?

C. How do you feel about the current situation of wealth and income inequality in our nation and in the world? Do you think this is all that much of a problem or just a reflection of

how it has always been between the rich and the poor? Would you like to be among the fabled one percent? Why or why not?

D. How important do you think it is to achieve sustainability as a general way of life? Is this a meaningful goal for you? Why or why not?

E. Where do you stand in terms of your relationship to the two standards of behavior: law and morality? Which of these standards really and in fact guides your personal behavior? If you find yourself in a conflict between these two sources of guidance, which way are you most likely to go?

F. There was a story in the news the other day about a fella who was arrested for speeding while taking his pregnant wife, in active labor, to the hospital? Was it fair to arrest him? Whly or why not?

SCENARIO EXERCISE

Sale of Sand to the Saudis: What should Joe do?

Joe Raymond's position as sales manager for Granite Rock and Sand was in jeopardy and he was feeling stressed. His unit had been low performer in terms of sales for the last seven quarters. Joe's supervisor, VP Tom Haws, told Joe that he had through the next quarter to pull his unit out of last place. Haws also told Joe that Joe would have to be replaced if the improvement did not occur.

Joe and his wife had just purchased their first home and were looking forward to raising a family. But with their mortgage payments totaling $1,200 per month, the loss of Joe's salary would mean the loss of their home.

Following Tom's warning, Joe began interviewing candidates for a vacant sales position in his unit. Joe had conducted three interviews when the final candidate, Jessica Morris, arrived. During the interview with Morris, Joe learned that she was the victim of a layoff by a competitor, Silt, Sand and Such. Joe was not terribly impressed with Morris, even though she was qualified and had experience. But just before she left, Morris opened her briefcase and offered Joe a sheet of paper bearing the name of an official in the Saudi Arabian government.

Morris explained: "When I was with Silt, Sand and Such, we started a program for finding innovative markets for our products. You know, we wanted to tap markets no one had never thought of. After a lot of research, we discovered that Saudi desalinization plants need a particular type of sand they don't have over there, but we have here. We're the only firm that knows about this. If you hire me, I can see the sale through for Granite."

Joe asked, "Did you sign a non-disclosure agreement with Silt, Sand, and Such?"

"Yes, but the non-disclosure was directed at specific sifting techniques developed by SSS," Jessica said, "but there was nothing specific regarding market research, and since SSS has not signed a deal with the Saudis…."

Morris added: "Look, I need this job. You need your sales up. Could be a win-win here. Think about it and call me."

After Morris left, Joe sat in his office and felt his problems were solved. A sale of sand to the Saudis would get his unit out of the dog house, and he could pay his mortgage. But would it be right to hire Jessica in order to get the Saudi account? After all, the market research that located the Saudis was done while Jessica was an employee at SSS. Was it morally right to use this inside info even though there was no specific clause in the non-disclosure agreement about market research? Isn't market research the property of the firm that produces it? Wasn't this really like stealing from SSS? What about company loyalty? And what about possible long-run repercussions for Joe?   So....

What should Joe do?

CHAPTER 9
SOCIAL JUSTICE:
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OTHER

Introduction

In September 2016, Ahmad al Faqi al-Mahdi, a member of an al-Qaida-linked West African terrorist organization, was found guilty and sentenced to prison for nine years and fined $2.7 million by the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, for committing a war crime that was also a crime against all of humanity. Al Mahdi, a former teacher, oversaw the 2012

damage and destruction of historic mausoleums and other UNESCO World Heritage sites in the Malian desert city of Timbuktu. Why did he direct his followers to do this? Because these national architectural treasures were somehow an affront to his religious beliefs. But, in the end, Al Mahdi pled guilty and expressed remorse and regret for his irremediable crime. Watch the video below.

The trial and conviction of al-Mahdi was a landmark accomplishment in more ways than one. It reflected the connection between cultural treasures that are the rightful inheritance of all people (humanity) and an international willingness to back up that moral claim with concrete political and legal action. This just action by the court reflects not only an Ethics of Justice but also an Ethics of Care.
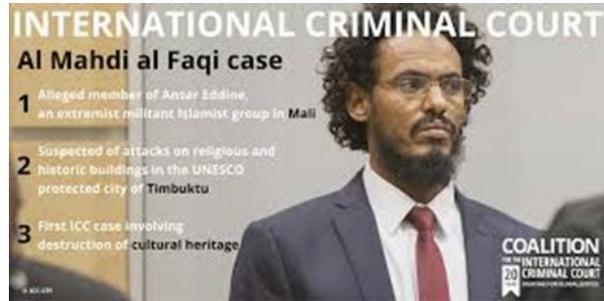
VIDEO: Al Madi pleads guilty (0:54)

As members of the human community, we care about these historical artifacts that were destroyed because they are crucial to our sense of collective and individual human identity. This administration of justice for a human rights crime leveled against the integrity of the social contract was a first for the International Criminal Court, and the first conviction handed down by the court to a Muslim extremist.

There is also another, brighter side to this story. Behind the rightful prosecution of a crime that was directly harmful to humanity, there is a story about what it means to care that is worth noting. This story within a story reflects, in its own way, a positive contribution to the general social welfare of everyone.   The prosecution at al-Mahdi's trial had the benefit of a new technology.   The dynamic spatial analytic and visualization technology by which the evidence of destruction in Timbuktu was presented to the court utilized a
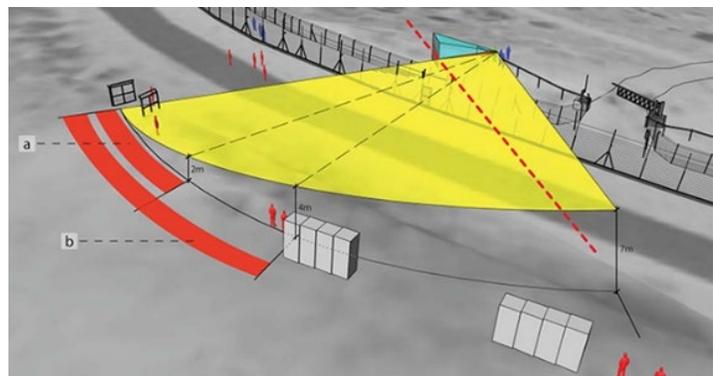
digital platform developed by Situ Research, a New York firm, with a grant from the MacArthur Foundation.   This spatial analytic technology allowed for a graphically vivid and an in-depth simulation of just how extensive the damage had been to the historical sites in Timbuktu, making the true assessment of the crime vividly available to the court, which is part of the global responsibility mission of Situ Research.
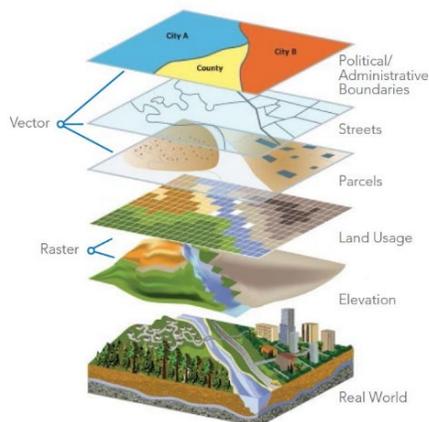
What the whole picture of this story shows, then, is how a generous act of philanthropy resulted in the development of a new technology which was used to bring an international human rights criminal activity into the light of justice. Takeaway? Everyone has an interest in seeing that justice is served everywhere. As Martin Luther King, Jr. put it: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." The trial and conviction of al-Mahdi is a good, if unfortunate, illustration of the inseparable connection between the focus of the previous chapter of this text, social justice as fairness, and the focus of the present one, social responsibility for the Other.

A community of care

Issues of justice, as we have seen already, do not exhaust the field of moral concern. Before the need for justice comes upon the scene, people already care for one another and we care about the world in which we live. We care about the social order for the well-being it provides for all of us. This web of caring relations is an important source of your and my personal value orientation in relation to other people, communities, organizations, institutions and the cosmopolitan world at large.

In addition to the rational application of the principles of justice within the rational economy of an Ethics of Justice, the social order is also – and more fundamentally – a community of individual persons who care, all of whom desire to live the best possible life, all of whom have the same human rights as everyone else. **Every human being participates in a moral cosmopolitan web of mutuality and responsibility that is more fundamental than any other community to which we belong. It is the origin of the possibility of all other society. It is our birthright moral community.**

How important is this web of interpersonal relations? Your individual personal identity, always a work in progress, is formed out of a pre-conscious responsiveness to and caring for others before you even know this response-ability exists, as the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas articulates (See Chapter 4). This is happening all the time for every one of us, right now. This should not be too surprising, since research shows that there are many situational influences on our sense of self that we are not aware of as they are happening. As Sam Sommers put it in *Situations Matter*: "Your emotions, your identity, your sense of how you're getting along in life – none of this self-knowledge emerges in the privacy of strictly internal processes. All of it is influenced by and even dependent on information gleaned from those around you." [25] (See Chapter 7) This "gleaning" or influence of moral parameters from others around you is a response born of love before you know it.

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[25] Sommers, Sam. *Situations Matter*

The clear fact of how we are impacted by situational influences in the mostly unconscious 'construction' of ourselves brings to mind the words of **Thich Nhat Hahn**, the Vietnamese Buddhist monk who teaches and writes about mindfulness: "We are here to overcome the illusion of our separateness." I agree.
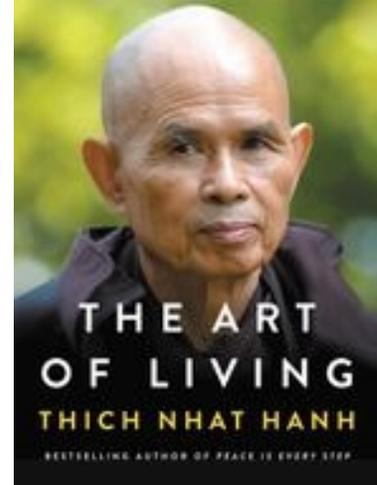
Following the lead of this idea in the present chapter, we will investigate the underpinnings and elasticity of this web of moral responsibility in which we all live and participate consciously and pre-consciously every day in a variety of inter-related practices, and which we can think of as a *community of care*.

Whereas the primary orientation of the Ethics of Justice is cognitive and rational, the primary relation within an Ethics of Care is affective, emotional and intuitive. In the present chapter we will investigate this affective, inter-subjective relatedness through the overlapping moral perspectives of Egoism, Altruism, Philanthropy, Cosmopolitanism, and Human Rights theory.

The focus of this chapter

This final chapter of *Intro to Ethics* highlights the way in which moral values bind all human beings together in a web of intersubjective relations and practices from which we each derive our sense of who we are as a person, our moral identity and sense of self. Participation in this community of care comes with moral obligations and responsibilities.   We are all automatically and pre-consciously responsive to others. We are all moral beings.

If you accept the theory of Human Rights, more or less as it is depicted by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, you will see that this automatically and presumptively puts you, me, and everyone else in a moral community of interpersonal caring that is prior to and the origin of the everyday social order in which we live.

It makes more sense to think of the social/political order being configured out of this universal and intersubjective, pre-conscious moral matrix to which we always already belong than it does to think that the social/political order could somehow create, 'from scratch,' as it were, our moral orientation. Human beings do not start out morally neutral, like a moral *tabula raza* or blank slate, and then have be taught or imbued with morality. That is an untenable and unjustifiable notion. Current research with infants suggests otherwise. Six-months-old infants already show clear signs of moral preference, perhaps 'learning' this responsiveness *in utero* (See Chapter 2). Morality seems to be innate to humans and perhaps to other animals as well.

In other words, morally speaking, we are all in this together, truly, from the start and probably from before the start. And we are not in it together as a mere

collection of separate objects forming a group, but as a _sociality_ in which who we are is essentially bound up with a 'connection' of responsiveness to others, a moral responsibility _for_ others that is more fundamental than even our responsibility for ourselves. This understanding of our basic relationship with others from the perspective of Care is summed up in the idea of altruism, as we will see below.

The **cosmopolitan** idea of a moral community to which we all belong as a birthright brings up the interesting question of whether our moral obligation is the same toward those who are close to us as it is to those who are far away. I don't have any difficulty accepting the idea that I belong to a moral community embracing all of humanity that is more fundamental than any other community to which I belong, but I still find myself caught up in a struggle between my head and my heart when I follow out Peter Singer's argument using the Drowning Child scenario, presented below. I _think_ that proximity (nearness) or distance should not make any difference to my moral obligation, but I _feel_ that it does. I am curious as to how you might respond to Singer's thought experiment.

The Drowning Child scenario exposes the idea that situations, context, and proximity all matter regarding my value orientation and moral responsiveness. Lacking a lot of local, affective context for the fact of a child starving on the other side of the world, I feel differently and respond differently than if the child were near at hand, sitting across from me as I eat my lunch. Why should proximity make a difference in my response? **Should I not care as much for a starving child on the other side of the world as for one who is on the other side of my lunch table?**

With less _emotional context_ regarding the child on the other side of the world — like being willing to pull the lever to divert the runaway trolley but not being willing to push another human being to his death off a bridge to accomplish statistically the same end — I feel less moved to help the distant child with whom I have less of an emotional connection. **Distance lessens our felt moral response by eliminating some of the non-rational context, but does it lessen our moral obligation?** I will confess that after seeing photos and videos of starving children in third world countries, I was more moved by my emotional response to act philanthropically and donate to a charity that would help them than I was just merely knowing about their plight.

Priority of self or others?

Egoism and altruism

Ethical egoism is the moral doctrine that everyone should act so as to promote his or her own interests exclusively. In contrast to psychological egoism, ethical egoism makes a claim about how people *should* behave rather than how they do behave.

Perhaps the most notable advocate of egoism is the philosopher Ayn Rand. She argued that the pursuit of your self-interest should always be your primary goal because this is the way you take care of your moral self and cultivate self-esteem. That seems reasonable enough. So, how did egoism get such a bad name?

Ayn Rand on the value of selfishness (2:46)

Professor Ayn Rand agrees that ethical egoism is often equated with selfishness, the disregard of others' interests in favor of one's own interests. However, ethical egoism cannot be coherently equated with mere selfishness, according to Rand, because it is often in one's self-interest to help others or to refrain from harming them. Besides, focusing on the moral development of your self is also intrinsically beneficial to others, since, if you are striving to "be all that you can be" you will also be most helpful to others. As Shakespeare put it: "This above all to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." So, ethical egoism does not equate to mere selfishness.

Rand argues that it would be absurd to claim that a husband who spends a fortune to cure his wife of an illness does so entirely on her behalf, since his generosity also doing something for himself. Likewise, for an ethical egoist the egoistic motivation to engage in altruistic behavior to help family members and friends is based on one's personal connection, their moral closeness to them and the distress that would be caused by their misfortune or suffering. So, here is an apparently **altruistic motivation born of egoism**. This reveals a basic ambiguity in these ideas. Altruism (putting the good of the other before my own good) can be born of an egoistic motive, since I want to feel good about helping others?

The kinds of deeds we perform for our friends and loved ones are not, generally, what we would do for everyone. Rand describes such apparently altruistic or generous actions as a kind of reward which people must 'earn' by means of their virtues or blood relations. Such altruistic actions are not automatically granted to mere acquaintances or strangers. Complete strangers are not 'worthy' of this special form of altruistic treatment. Nevertheless, Rand does advocate showing all people a "generalized respect and good will" which basically amounts to non-intervention and

good manners. We should avoid arbitrarily doing harm to others, but our duties to aid them are minimal and increasingly optional their relational distance from us increases.

Although ethical egoism has some appeal (especially in its ability to smoothly reconcile morality and self-interest), the theory has been almost universally rejected as an unacceptable and inadequate moral theory by ethical theorists. Without a fundamental orientation to others, moral egoism falls prey to solipsism, the primacy of self-interest and bleak relativism.

One of the most basic criticisms against ethical egoism is that ethical egoists typically misrepresent altruism, thinking that any form of self-sacrifice necessarily reflects negative self-attitudes. If you embrace altruism, egoists claim, you are also embracing low self-esteem and a lack of concern for yourself and consequent disrespectful attitude toward others who are focused on egoistically caring for themselves.   This line of reasoning results in a nightmare view of existence where the altruist looks like a big loser, giving away everything he or she has to the poor and needy while ending up poor and needy themselves. Why should I cause myself to suffer in order to relieve the suffering of others? This is the position expressed by Ayan Rand in the above video. Check it out.

But, in this criticism, ethical egoists do not consider the benefits to self from helping others because they are blind to them. **Benefits flow from altruistic acts but the benefit is not the chief reason *for* the act.** Egoists recognize altruism only as an impediment to their individual goals. Thus, egoists live in a world of utterly separate individuals, condemned to be free but unable to get together, reflecting Sartre's existential idea that "hell is other people" (Chapter 4).

Is altruism really egoism in disguise? (1:22)

This egoist bias seems to be due to the fact that ethical egoists overlook a vast amount of compelling and irrefutable data that shows how human beings are fundamentally connected to and in need of one another, just as we are also in need of the natural world, including animals and wilderness, for the configuration and maintenance of a meaningful self and a meaningful life with others. Altruism isn't an option; it's the natural human way of life, according to this view. Thus, here, once again, you can see the importance of how you understand human subjectivity. Is ethical egoism truly as health oriented and positive as Rand makes it out to be? What do you think?

We saw earlier that egoism is reflected in all of the levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs up to and including self-actualization since the focus is on satisfying *my* needs. But, at the very top of Maslow's hierarchy, it is altruism that calls us to self-transcendence as an ultimate goal of life, putting the good of the other person before my own good; putting the actualization of the other

person before my own self-actualization. Paradoxically, altruistically looking past my own self-actualization to the good of the Other is at the same time *self*-actualizing in turn. Rand has a hard time understanding why anyone would want to engage in such altruism for someone they didn't love, and she doesn't think it is possible to love everyone. What reasonable explanation is there for acting altruistically? Is altruism merely egoism turned inside-out? Is acting altruistically possible at all? Is it possible to love everyone?

Why do people act altruistically?

Everyday life is filled with small acts of altruism … from the guy at the grocery store who kindly holds the door open for you as you rush in from the parking lot, to the woman who gives twenty dollars to a homeless man even though it is an act of kindness that nobody will ever know about. News stories often focus on grander cases of altruism, such as the person who dives into an icy river to rescue a drowning stranger or the generous donor who gives millions of dollars to a charitable cause. While we may be all too familiar with altruism, social psychologists are interested in understanding why it occurs. What inspires and motivates acts of apparent selfless kindness? What motivates people to risk their own lives to save a complete stranger?

Altruism is best understood as one aspect of what social psychologists refer to as ***prosocial behavior***. Prosocial behavior refers to any action that benefits other people, no matter what the motive or how the giver benefits from the action himself or herself. Remember, however, that pure altruism would involve true selflessness. Is this possible? While all altruistic acts are prosocial, not all prosocial behaviors are altruistic. For example, we might help others for a variety of reasons such as guilt, obligation, duty, or even for rewards. Psychologists have suggested several different explanations for why altruism exists.

- o *Biological Reasons*: Kin selection is an evolutionary theory that suggests that altruism towards close relatives occurs in order to ensure the continuation of shared genes. The more closely the individuals are related, the more likely people are to help.
- o *Neurological Reasons*: Neurobiologists have found that when engaged in an altruistic act, the pleasure centers of the brain become active.

- *Social Norms Reasons:* The norm of reciprocity, for example, is a social expectation in which we feel pressured to help others if they have already done something for us
- *Cognitive Reasons*: While the definition of altruism involves doing for others without expectation of return, there may still be cognitive incentives that are not obvious. For example, you might help others to unconsciously relieve your own distress or because being kind to others upholds your view of yourself as a kind, empathetic person.

The underlying reasons behind altruism as well as the question of whether there is truly such a thing as "pure" altruism are two issues hotly contested by philosophers and social psychologists. Do we ever engage in helpful actions for truly altruistic reasons? Are there always hidden benefits to the self that guide our supposedly altruistic behaviors?

Existential-phenomenological considerations

From a strictly rational point of view, there is some confusion between altruism and egoism, since what looks like altruism from one perspective can also be construed as a kind of egoism from another because we derive pleasure from self-sacrifice and helping others. But from an existential phenomenological perspective I think there is less confusion in actual practice. What cannot be determined reflectively with precise cognitive categories, can nevertheless be known tacitly, intuitively and immediately.

Altruistic actions feel differently to me than what I would call egoistic actions, and I have no problem in actual situations telling the difference subjectively between these two. Selfish actions always *feel* like I am focusing on 'me, me, me' while altruistic actions *feel* like I am doing something based on what I think is good for somebody else rather than myself (like helping my buddy move his furniture when I feel like I would rather be river surfing), even if it has the unintended double effect of making me feel good to help my friend as well. It is your motive that counts, your intention.

This is like the question about determining your motive or intention that we came across when studying the deontological or duty approach to moral reasoning. It may be rationally difficult to clearly distinguish my motives for a particular act, yet I can feel which is stronger intuitively fairly clearly and almost immediately, as if I had an internal accountant along the lines of moral sentiment theory who just knows intuitively when you haven't given enough of yourself or haven't gotten enough for yourself. Like in the good ol' runaway trolley exercise. If you push the lever to divert the trolley in order to save four people, even though one will die, that is morally justifiable. But if you divert the trolley, not primarily to save the four people, but intentionally to kill the one person because you owe him a lot of money, then that would be morally wrong. Same action, different motive.

The big question is not deciding whether I am acting egoistically or altruistically, but deciding, when it comes right down to it, just how egoistic and/or altruistic I want to be. I am willing to help others, for sure, to volunteer and donate to charitable organizations; but only up to

a point. It is the determination of that all-important but cognitively elusive "point" at any given time in my everyday life that may fluctuate non-rationally on an ***egoism/altruism moral continuum scale***. Sometimes I am more one way rather than the other. The egoism/altruism continuum is not a black or white phenomenon. It is always a matter of more or less.

One way that helps me to know for sure whether I am acting altruistically is when I perform a helpful action secretly and avoid the "payback" of recognition, since altruism and the expectation of return are mutually exclusive. However, even then I must admit to a secret, egoistic pleasure at my secretly acting in such a 'purely' altruistic way whenever I do that. So, it seems the egoistic/altruistic ambiguity is unavoidable.

The Drowning Child scenario below will help to give you some perspective on just how altruistic or egoistic you are. Let's take a look.

Philanthropy: knowing when enough is enough

[Peter Singer](#) is a well-known contemporary Utilitarian moral philosopher who is interested in what he calls "[effective altruism](#)" and "[strategic philanthropy](#)." In the brief article below, Singer articulates his basic utilitarian argument for why people who can afford it should donate to charities such as [Oxfam](#) to help save the lives of starving children in far off places. This brings up the question between **strict and moderate cosmopolitanism** discussed in more detail below. If you believe you have a moral obligation to save the life of a child that you see is drowning in a pond on your way to work with little cost to yourself, why do you not have a similar obligation to save the life of a dying child in a distant land? **Why is geographical distance or proximity (closeness) a meaningful ethical consideration when it comes to your moral obligation?** [Use the "Philosophy Experiments" hot link on the next page for an interactive version of this thought experiment.]

Peter Singer: The Drowning Child and the Expanding Circle

To challenge my students to think about the ethics of what we owe to people in need, I ask them to imagine that their route to the university takes them past a shallow pond. One morning, I say to them, you notice a small child has fallen into the water and appears to be drowning. To wade in and pull the child out would be easy but it will mean that you get your clothes wet and muddy, and by the time you go home and change you will have missed your first class.

I then ask the students: do you have any obligation to rescue the child? Unanimously, the students say they do. The importance of saving a child so far outweighs the cost of getting one's clothes muddy and missing a class, that they refuse to consider it any kind of excuse for not

saving the child. Does it make a difference, I ask, that there are other people walking past the pond who would equally be able to rescue the child but are not doing so? No, the students reply, the fact that others are not doing what they ought to do is no reason why I should not do what I ought to do.

Once we are all clear about our obligations to rescue the drowning child in front of us, I ask: would it make any difference if the child were far away, in another country perhaps, but similarly in danger of death, and equally within your means to save, at no great cost – and absolutely no danger – to yourself? Virtually all agree that distance and nationality make no moral difference to the situation. I then point out that we are all in that situation of the person passing the shallow pond: we can all save lives of people, both children and adults, who would otherwise die, and we can do so at a very small cost to us: the cost of a new CD, a shirt or a night out at a restaurant or concert, can mean the difference between life and death to more than one person somewhere in the world – and overseas aid agencies like Oxfam overcome the problem of acting at a distance.

Philosophy experiments

CLICK ON THE ABOVE LINK TO ACCESS AN INTERACTIVE VERSION OF 'THE DROWNING CHILD'

At this point the students raise various practical difficulties. Can we be sure that our donation will really get to the people who need it? Doesn't most aid get swallowed up in administrative costs, or waste, or downright corruption? Isn't the real problem the growing world population, and is there any point in saving lives until the problem has been solved? These questions can all be answered: but I also point out that even if a substantial proportion of our donations were wasted, the cost to us of making the donation is so small, compared to the benefits that it provides when it, or some of it, does get through to those who need our help, that we would still be saving lives at a small cost to ourselves – even if aid organizations were much less efficient than they actually are.

I am always struck by how few students challenge the underlying ethics of the idea that we ought to save the lives of strangers when we can do so at relatively little cost to ourselves. At the end of the nineteenth century W. H. Lecky wrote of human concern as an expanding circle which begins with the individual, then embraces the family and 'soon the circle... includes first a class, then a nation, then a coalition of nations, then all humanity, and finally, its influence is felt in the dealings of humans with the animal world'. On this basis, the overwhelming majority of my students seem to be already in the penultimate stage – at least – of Lecky's expanding circle.

There is, of course, for many students and for various reasons a gap between acknowledging what we ought to do, and doing it; but I shall come back to that issue shortly.

Our century is the first in which it has been possible to speak of global responsibility and a global community. For most of human history we could affect the people in our village, or perhaps in a large city, but even a powerful king could not conquer far beyond the borders of his kingdom…. 'Charity begins at home' made sense, because it was only 'at home' – or at least in your own town – that you could be confident that your charity would make any difference.

Instant communications and jet transport have changed all that. A television audience of two billion people can now watch hungry children beg for food in an area struck by famine, or they can see refugees streaming across the border in search of a safe place away from those they fear will kill them. Most of that huge audience also have the means to help people they are seeing on their screens. Each one of us can pull out a credit card and phone in a donation to an aid organization which can, in a few days, fly in people who can begin distributing food and medical supplies. Collectively, it is also within the capacity of the United Nations--with the support of major powers--to put troops on the ground to protect those who are in danger of becoming victims of genocide.

Our capacity to affect what is happening, anywhere in the world, is one way in which we are living in an era of global responsibility. But there is also another way that offers an even more dramatic contrast with the past. The atmosphere and the oceans seemed, until recently, to be elements of nature totally unaffected by the puny activities of human beings. Now we know that our use of chlorofluorocarbons has damaged the ozone shield; our emission of carbon dioxide is changing the climate of the entire planet in unpredictable ways and raising the level of the sea; and fishing fleets are scouring the oceans, depleting fish populations that once seemed limitless to a point from which they may never recover. In these ways the actions of consumers in Los Angeles can cause skin cancer among Australians, inundate the lands of peasants in Bangladesh, and force Thai villagers who could once earn a living by fishing to work in the factories of Bangkok.

In these circumstances the need for a global ethic is inescapable. Is it nevertheless a vain hope? Here are some reasons why it may not be.

We live in a time when many people experience their lives as empty and lacking in fulfilment. The decline of religion and the collapse of communism have left only the ideology of the free market whose only message is: consume, and work hard so you can earn money to consume more. Yet even those who do reasonably well in this race for material goods do not find that they are satisfied with their way of life. We now have good scientific evidence for what philosophers have said throughout the ages: once we have enough to satisfy our basic needs, gaining more wealth does not bring us more happiness.

Consider the life of Ivan Boesky, the billionaire Wall Street dealer who in 1986 pleaded guilty to insider trading. Why did Boesky get involved in criminal activities when he already had more money than he could ever spend? Six years after the insider-trading scandal broke, Boesky's estranged wife Seema spoke about her husband's motives in an interview with Barbara Walters for the American ABC Network's 20/20 program. Walters asked whether Boesky was a man who craved luxury. Seema Boesky thought not, pointing out that he worked around the clock, seven days a week, and never took a day off to enjoy his money. She then recalled that when in 1982 Forbes magazine first listed Boesky among the wealthiest people in the US, he was upset. She assumed he disliked the publicity and made some remark to that effect. Boesky replied: 'That's not what's upsetting me. We're no-one. We're nowhere. We're at the bottom of the list and I promise you I won't shame you like that again. We will not remain at the bottom of that list.'

We must free ourselves from this absurd conception of success. Not only does it fail to bring happiness even to those who, like Boesky, do extraordinarily well in the competitive struggle; it also sets a social standard that is a recipe for global injustice and environmental disaster. We cannot continue to see our goal as acquiring more and more wealth, or as consuming more and more goodies, and leaving behind us an even larger heap of waste.

We tend to see ethics as opposed to self-interest; we assume that those who make fortunes from insider trading are successfully following self-interest--as long as they don't get caught--and ignoring ethics. We think that it is in our interest to take a more senior better-paid position with another company, even though it means that we are helping to manufacture or promote a product that does no good at all, or is environmentally damaging. On the other hand, those who pass up opportunities to rise in their career because of ethical 'scruples' about the nature of the work, or who give away their wealth to good causes, are thought to be sacrificing their own interest in order to obey the dictates of ethics.

Many will say that it is naive to believe that people could shift from a life based on consumption, or on getting on top of the corporate ladder, to one that is more ethical in its fundamental direction. But such a shift would answer a palpable need. Today the assertion that life is meaningless no longer comes from existentialist philosophers who treat it as a shocking discovery: it comes from bored adolescents for whom it is a truism. Perhaps it is the central place of self-interest, and the way in which we conceive of our own interest, that is to blame here. The pursuit of self-interest, as standardly conceived, is a life without any meaning beyond our own pleasure or individual satisfaction. Such a life is often a self-defeating enterprise. The ancients knew of the 'paradox of hedonism', according to which the more explicitly we pursue our desire for pleasure, the more elusive we will find its satisfaction. There is no reason to believe that human nature has changed so dramatically as to render the ancient wisdom inapplicable.

Here ethics offer a solution. An ethical life is one in which we identify ourselves with other, larger, goals, thereby giving meaning to our lives. The view that there is harmony between ethics and enlightened self-interest is an ancient one, now often scorned. Cynicism is more fashionable than idealism. But such hopes are not groundless, and there are substantial elements of truth in the ancient view that an ethically reflective life is also a good life for the person leading it. Never has it been so urgent that the reasons for accepting this view should be widely understood.

In a society in which the narrow pursuit of material self-interest is the norm, the shift to an ethical stance is more radical than many people realize. In comparison with the needs of people going short of food in Rwanda, the desire to sample the wines of Australia's best vineyards pales into insignificance. An ethical approach to life does not forbid having fun or enjoying food and wine; but it changes our sense of priorities. The effort and expense put into fashion, the endless search for more and more refined gastronomic pleasures, the added expense that marks out the luxury-car market--all these become disproportionate to people who can shift perspective long enough to put themselves in the position of others affected by their actions. If the circle of ethics really does expand, and a higher ethical consciousness spreads, it will fundamentally change the society in which we live."

Moral Cosmopolitanism
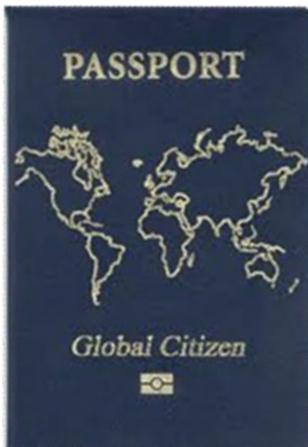
The word 'cosmopolitan' derives from the Greek word *kosmopolitês* ('citizen of the world'). The term has been used to describe a wide variety of important views in moral and socio-political philosophy. There is moral and political cosmopolitanism. **The core understanding shared by all <u>political</u> cosmopolitan views is the idea that all human beings, regardless of their political or national affiliation, are (or can and should be) *citizens in a single interpersonally connected community*.** Different versions of cosmopolitanism envision this community in different ways, some focusing on political institutions, and others focusing on shared markets or forms of cultural expression. Moral cosmopolitanism argues that all human beings belong to one moral world. We will focus on **moral cosmopolitanism.**

In most versions of cosmopolitanism, the universal community of world citizens functions as a positive ideal. But a few versions exist in which it serves primarily as a reactionary or revolutionary ground for denying the existence of special obligations to local forms of political organizations. If I am a citizen of the world, why should I have to pay local taxes? *Moral cosmopolitanism* generally rejects such a reactionary interpretation in terms of a more blended view of the relation between the individual and the state, with the cosmopolitan emphasis clearly

on the side of the individual. Versions of cosmopolitanism also vary depending on the notion of citizenship they employ, including whether they use the notion of 'world citizenship' literally or metaphorically.

The philosophical interest in moral cosmopolitanism lies in its value-oriented challenge to commonly recognized ideological preferences for fellow-citizens, the local state, nationalistic attitudes, parochially shared cultures, kin relations, etc., a challenge to move from more of an egoistic moral value orientation to more of an altruistic moral value orientation, as reflected in Singer's Drowning Child scenario above. ***Strict or pure cosmopolitanism*** argues that our moral duties are the same regardless of distance, proximity, or kinship. ***Moderate cosmopolitanism*** argues that proximity matters. We have greater moral responsibility for those closest to us, and less moral duty to those who are distant. Where do you stand on this issue?

In addition to moral and political forms of cosmopolitanism, there has emerged an *economic form of cosmopolitan* theory out of liberal, Enlightenment thinking. The free trade advocated by eighteenth-century anti-mercantilists, people like Adam Smith, was developed further into the ideal of a global free market.   This cosmopolitan idea involved a world in which tariffs and other restrictions on foreign trade would be abolished, and in which the market, not the government, takes care of the needs of the people. Current nationalistic movements are a reaction to this economic cosmopolitanism that favors things like "open borders."

Against mercantilism (a kind of government protected economy) and government influence in the market with tariffs and taxes and regulations, cosmopolitan economists argued that it is more advantageous for everyone involved if a nation imports those goods which are more expensive to produce domestically, and that the abolition of protectionism would benefit everyone. If other nation states were to gain from their exports, they would reach a higher standard of living and become even better trading partners, because they could then import more, too.

As national governments are mostly focused on the national economy and defense, from an expanding, neoliberal, cosmopolitan point of view, their future role will be at most auxiliary. The freer the global market becomes, the more the role of the states will become negligible. This is already taking place with hugely rich and powerful multinational corporations like Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, etc. operating in the international market and who are capable of politically, economically, and legally out-maneuvering national governments.

The International Criminal Court, introduced at the beginning of this chapter, should be mentioned here again as representative of an innovative form of cosmopolitanism, although it has yet to show that it is able to effectively manage multinational corporations. The Court has, however, made it possible for individuals to bring lawsuits against foreign states. The ICC itself represents an extension of a long trend in international law to do away with the principle of the absolute subjection of individuals to the national state and to strengthen the status of individuals overall. Individuals are now the bearers of certain rights under international law, and they can be held responsible for crimes under international law in ways that cut through the shield of state

sovereignty, as we saw with the conviction of al-Mahdi for the destruction of World Heritage sights in Timbuktu.

Finally, moral philosophers and moralists in the wake of eighteenth-century cosmopolitanism have insisted that we human beings have a duty to aid fellow humans in need, regardless of their citizenship status. There is a history of international relief efforts (International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, famine relief organizations like Oxfam, etc.) in the name of the reduction of human suffering and without regard to the nationality of those affected.

In addition, because cosmopolitan duty is not restricted to duties of beneficence but also requires justice and respect, cosmopolitan values and principles have often been invoked as a motivation to oppose slavery and apartheid, and to defend the emancipation of women—values grounded in an Ethics of Care that are also supported by the universal idea of human rights.

Human Rights

Human rights have been defined as basic moral guarantees that people in all countries and cultures have simply because they are persons. Calling these guarantees "rights" suggests that they attach to individuals who can invoke them; that they are of high priority; and that compliance with them is mandatory rather than discretionary globally.

Human rights are frequently held to be universal in the sense that all people have and should enjoy them, and to be independent in the sense that they exist and are available as standards of justification and criticism, whether or not they are recognized and implemented by the legal system or political officials of a country.

One way to look at the moral doctrine of human rights is to view it as aiming at identifying the fundamental prerequisites for each human being to lead a minimally good life, such as rights against torture and rights to health care.

This aspiration has been enshrined in various declarations and legal conventions issued during the past fifty years, initiated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and perpetuated by, most importantly, the European Convention on Human Rights (1954) and the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (1966). Together these three documents form the centerpiece of a moral doctrine that many consider to be capable of providing the contemporary geo-political order with what amounts to an *international bill of rights*.

However, the doctrine of human rights does not aim to be a fully comprehensive moral doctrine. An appeal to human rights does not provide us with a fully comprehensive account of morality per se. Human rights do not, for example, provide us with criteria for answering such questions as whether telling lies is inherently immoral, or what the extent of one's moral obligations to friends and lovers ought to be. **What human rights primarily aim to identify is the basis for determining the shape, content, and scope of fundamental, public moral norms and policies that reflect a certain**

understanding of moral human nature. *Human rights aim to secure for individuals the necessary conditions for leading a minimally good life within the ideal construct of the best possible life.*

Public authorities, both national and international, are identified as typically best placed to secure these conditions and so, the doctrine of human rights has become, for many, a first port of moral call for determining the basic moral guarantees all of us have a right to expect, both of one another but also, primarily, of those national and international institutions capable of directly affecting our most important interests.

The doctrine of human rights aspires to provide the contemporary, allegedly post-ideological, geo-political order with a common framework for determining the basic economic, political, and social conditions required for all individuals to have the possibility of living the good life. While the practical efficacy of promoting and protecting human rights is significantly aided by individual nation-states' legally recognizing the doctrine, the ultimate validity of human rights is characteristically thought of as not conditional upon such recognition. The moral justification of human rights is thought to precede considerations of strict national sovereignty.

An underlying aspiration of the doctrine of human rights is to provide a set of legitimate criteria to which all nation-states universally should adhere. Appeals to national sovereignty should not provide a legitimate means for nation-states to permanently opt out of their fundamental human rights-based commitments.

Thus, the doctrine of human rights is ideally placed to provide individuals with a powerful means for morally auditing the legitimacy of those contemporary national and international forms of political and economic authority that confront us and claim jurisdiction over us. This is no small measure of the contemporary moral and political significance of the doctrine of human rights.

For many of its most strident supporters, the doctrine of human rights aims to provide a fundamentally legitimate moral basis for regulating the entire contemporary geo-political order.

A Brief Overview of Chapter 9

Reflection on the ideas of egoism, altruism, and prosocial behavior is important because it brings up one of the most fundamental questions we can ask about human beings: How should we understand what it means to be a human being?

Should human beings be understood to be essentially self-oriented, separate from and in competition with one another, focused primarily on self-interest and achieving a good life for themselves within a framework of justice? Or should human beings be thought of as being essentially concerned with the good of others over my own good, an altruistic orientation of care for others that is prior to self-interest? Is that how we should understand what it means to be a human being? Or, are these two perspectives both a part of what it means to be a human being? If so, in what relation? What do you think? Where do you stand?

This chapter and the previous chapter bring into relief the fundamental importance of the Ethics of Care and the Ethics of Justice. They show that the relation in which we view justice and care is important. It seems that Care is more fundamental than Justice. Justice will never happen if nobody cares.

Regarding the social injustice of wage theft, for example, Marianne Levine in her article "[Behind the minimum wage fight, a sweeping failure to enforce the law](#)" claims that things like making it easier for victims to get pre-judgment liens against offending employers and requiring employers who are repeat offenders to put up "wage bonds," along with hiring more investigators of wage theft claims, would be helpful to stopping this widespread illegal practice. But she adds, insightfully, none of this will happen if nobody cares:

*Tools like prejudgment liens and wage bonds might help workers recover their wages, but, advocates insist, they won't be effective without a stronger commitment from states. For states to do a better job enforcing wage and overtime laws, **they must first demonstrate that they care enough to devote the manpower necessary** (emphasis added). Until they do that, advocates say, the nation's wage-and-hour laws will be followed only when employers feel like doing so.*

Care and Justice come into play when trying to understand the relation of egoism and altruism. There is both a positive and a negative way of viewing egoism, each with its own set of complications. Negatively, egoism is a selfish focus on me first over everyone else. On the other hand, Ayn Rand makes a good case for viewing egoism as a positive focus on caring for yourself, developing self-esteem and a sense of self-worth in a process of self-actualization.

To give yourself away altruistically without getting anything in return, Rand argues, could leave you morally depleted and in need of support yourself. What good is that, she asks? And even a positive self-focus can deteriorate in practice into narcissistic self-absorption, social insensitivity, and a lack of empathy for others. This is perhaps more likely to happen if the person has the underlying belief that human beings are basically selfish. From such a belief position, being selfish is justified by the belief that others are acting selfishly also. The egoist overlooks the essential value of the Other for my own self-creation and is thus left stranded in the existential condition.

Moral egoism and altruism should not be thought of as a black and white issue. Distinguishing between the positive and negative versions of egoism in actual, everyday practice can be difficult. Sure, I think I should donate to a worthy cause or act prosocially to some degree, but to what degree? Exactly how much? how often? to whom? at what cost to myself? in what form? These are specific moral determinations that will require some reflection and deliberation in order to arrive at concrete, actionable answers.

Again, following more of a trajectory of Care, Moral Cosmopolitanism argues that all human beings participate in a moral community. This fundamental, pre-conscious participation is reflected, for example, in the affirmation of Human Rights as a birthright. Children have a Right to Play, for example. All children. No child anywhere should ever be deprived of this right. That is the power of the moral bond shared by all humans, reflected in Human Rights Theory. But how strong is that bond? Is it stronger for those we love than for strangers? Or should our moral responsiveness be the same for all? How far does our obligation to support the rights of others extend? Are you a strict or moderate cosmopolitan? What about those children in Africa whose childhood is lost mining for gold that gets sent west for high-end jewelry? How important is proximity to Care?

This chapter has looked at how your personal moral value orientation arises out of and is shaped by a non-rational, affective, caring responsiveness to others within the everyday web of situations, practices and relationships that constitute your existential life in the social order. We approached this reflection through the

prism of egoism, altruism, prosocial behavior, moral cosmopolitanism and Human Rights theory.

PRACTICE

TERMS TO KNOW

- Ethical egoism
- Altruism
- Philanthropy
- Moral cosmopolitanism
- Political cosmopolitanism
- Strict cosmopolitanism
- Moderate cosmopolitanism
- Human Rights
- Moral human rights
- Political human rights
- Legal human rights
- Philanthropy
- Drowning Child scenario
- Ayn Rand
- prosocial behavior
- Peter Singer
- Expanding circle of care

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What is the significance of the trial and conviction of al-Faqi al-Mahdi for the Timbuktu destruction of World Heritage sites and how does it reflect, from two different perspectives, the Ethics of Justice and the Ethics of Care?

2. The social order can be viewed as a political order, as we saw in the last chapter. What does it mean to view the social order as a community of care

3. How does ethical egoism view the nature and purpose of human beings?

4. Is ethical egoism equivalent to selfishness?

5. How does Rand construe egoism in a positive manner, and altruism in a negative light?

6. In what way do egoists sometimes misrepresent altruism?

7. What reasons does social psychology provide for explaining why people sometimes act altruistically?

8. Whereas it can be difficult to determine egoistic actions from altruistic actions in a clear and objective way, phenomenology offers a different approach which seems to avoid this ambiguity to some extent. How would a phenomenologist approach an understanding of the difference between egoism and altruism?

9.What is the "negative state relief model" approach to understanding altruistic behavior and how does that differ from the empathy-altruism hypothesis?

10.How would you summarize Peter Singer's argument in "The Drowning Child" and how compelling do you find this argument to be?

11.How does moral cosmopolitanism differ from political cosmopolitanism?

12.Where do you fall in terms of the cosmopolitan distinction between strict and moderate?

13.Why is the doctrine of human rights not effective as a complete moral theory?

14.On what basis does the doctrine of human rights aspire to offer geo-political moral guidance?

15.How strongly do you subscribe to the doctrine of human rights yourself?

REFLECTION EXERCISES

Morality and the Law

DIRECTIONS: The two articles below, each in its own profoundly unfortunate way, should provide something of value for you if you read it and take a few moments to reflect on your experience. It should give you the chance to experience for a moment where you stand in terms of the relationship between morality and the law in actual everyday practice. What difference does it make to you to view these reports from the perspective of the Ethics of Justice, on the one hand, and the Ethics of Care, on the other? Try actively evaluating the two stories below from each of these perspectives. What kind of a responses do you have? How important do your responses feel to you? How important do you think this issue is in general? What is the difference between your thoughts and feelings on the matter? Want to exercise your perceptual powers? Try sharing these stories and your responses to them with a friend and see if your friend agrees with you. Clarify the difference.

IN THE NEWS…

Teens filmed, mocked and laughed while man slowly drowned

July 20, 2017 – Fox News - Florida Today, FL

Authorities in Florida say that a group of teenagers recorded the drowning of a disabled man last week — and did nothing to help as they made fun of his struggles.

Jamel Dunn, 32, of Cocoa, drowned in a retention pond July 9. His body was recovered July 14, two days after his fiancé reported him missing. Late last week, a friend of Dunn's family came across the video on social media and forwarded it to authorities in Brevard County.

In the video, which was published by the Florida Today newspaper Thursday, the teens can be heard laughing at Dunn as he splashes futilely in the water and screams for help.

"Get out the water, you gonna die," yells one, while another yells, "ain't nobody fixing to help you, you dumb (expletive)." As Dunn disappears under the water, one of the teens says, "Oh, he just died."

Investigators say none of the teens — all between 14 and 16 years old — called 911 to report Dunn's drowning or tried to help the man.

"They just laughed the whole time," Cocoa Police Department spokeswoman Yvonne Martinez told Florida Today. "He was just screaming ... for someone to help him."

Police said the teens were identified and questioned by detectives, but it's unlikely they will face charges, since they were not directly involved in Dunn's death.

The Brevard County State Attorney's Office called the video a "tragedy" and said the teens had "no moral justification" for not attempting to help Dunn.

Mining money goes missing in Congo

July 20, 2017 Johannesburg — The Globe and Mail

In one of Africa's poorest countries, more than $750-million (U.S.) in mining revenue disappeared before it could reach the national treasury, an investigation has found.

The money from mining companies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was diverted over a three-year period, with much of it siphoned off by politically connected insiders at opaque tax agencies, according to a report by Global Witness, an independent research group.

The findings are significant for Canadian mining companies, which have been major investors in Congo and have given millions of dollars in payments to official agencies and state enterprises in the country.

Under new federal laws, Canadian mining and energy companies must disclose all payments to all levels of governments at home and abroad. Those disclosures, most of them released this year for the first time, show that Canadian companies have paid many millions of dollars to Congolese agencies.

Toronto-based Banro Corp., for example, disclosed on May 30 that it had paid $10.8-million in taxes, fees and royalties in Congo last year, while Vancouver-based Ivanhoe Mines Ltd. disclosed that it had paid about $6.3-million in taxes and fees in the country last year. Banro operates gold mines in Congo and Ivanhoe is developing copper and zinc mines.

"Testimony and documentation gathered by Global Witness indicates that at least some of the funds were distributed among corrupt networks linked to President Joseph Kabila's regime," the report says.

In a statement, Pete Jones, senior campaigner at Global Witness, said: "Congo's mining revenues should be helping to lift its people out of poverty, but instead huge sums are being siphoned away from the public purse and into unaccountable agencies headed up by people with

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ties to political elites. Some of the transactions we've looked at paint a picture of these agencies as a cash machine for Kabila's regime."

Congo, one of the biggest countries in Africa, is also among the poorest. It is ranked 176 out of 188 countries in the latest United Nations Human Development Report, with 77 per cent of its population surviving on less than $2 a day. More than 40 per cent of its children have stunted growth because of malnutrition. Roads, hospitals and schools are poorly funded and often in terrible condition.

Yet at the same time, Congo has vast mineral resources, attracting huge investments from foreign companies because of its low production costs and high-quality minerals. It is the biggest copper producer in Africa, and it produces 60 per cent of the world's cobalt. Up to $10-billion worth of copper and cobalt is extracted and exported from Congo every year, yet only 6 per cent of this revenue is reaching the national budget, the Global Witness report says.

In total, foreign mining companies are paying more than $1-billion annually in taxes, royalties and other payments in Congo, but a large fraction goes missing, the report says. "Year after year, Congo is losing out on a fortune."

Looking at data from 2013 to 2015, the report estimates that $753-million in Congo's mining revenue did not reach the national treasury. Instead it was held back by state-owned mining companies and national tax agencies, which did not explain what they did with the money.

In addition, a further $570-million over three years was paid to small government agencies and a provincial tax agency that failed to account for the funds. This means that 30 to 40 per cent of annual mining payments in Congo are never reaching the national treasury, the report says.

One of the main reasons is an obscure law that allows Congo's national tax agencies to hold back a portion of mining revenues for their own use. "What happens to this money is unclear," Global Witness says in the report.

"The agencies are secretive and often headed by powerful individuals with close professional or personal ties to the Prime Minister's office or to the Presidency. The opacity around the withheld funds makes this system highly susceptible to corruption."

The tax agencies are also permitted to issue penalties to mining companies for tax violations and keep a proportion of the fines, which can be enormous amounts. This encourages "predatory behavior" and corruption at the agencies, the report says.

Another key reason for the disappearing revenue is the state mining company, Gécamines, headed by a close ally of Mr. Kabila. While it provides little to the national treasury, and its employees often go for months without salaries, Gécamines has handed out millions of dollars in cash in suspect transactions to unknown persons, the report says.

In 2014 and 2015, for example, it says the state company earned more than $514-million in revenue from the mining sector, including payments from foreign mining companies, yet it transferred less than $37-million to the government.

Foreign mining companies that pay multimillion-dollar amounts in Congo should use their influence to persuade the official agencies and state companies to become more transparent and publish audited annual accounts, the report says.

SCENARIO EXERCISE

What should Tony do?

Tony, a data analyst for a major casino, is working after normal business hours to finish an important project that must be ready the following morning. He realizes that he is missing some key data that had been wrongly sent to his coworker Robert. He could get the data from Robert tomorrow but then he would look bad for mismanaging the data flow and not having the project ready to present.

A few days ago, Tony had inadvertently observed Robert typing in his password for his pc, and so he decides to go ahead and log into Robert's computer and resend the data to himself thinking no one will ever know. Upon doing so, however, Tony sees an open email regarding gambling bets Robert placed over the last several days from work with a local sports book. All employees of the casino are expressly forbidden to engage in gambling activities to avoid any hint of conflict of interest. Robert could be fired for his violation of the casino's gambling policy.

Tony knows he should report Robert to their supervisor but then he would have to admit to violating the company's information technology regulations regarding privacy for logging into Robert's computer without permission, for which Tony could possibly get fired. Even if he warns Robert to stop his betting, he would still have to reveal the illicit source of his information to Robert, which would be embarrassing, and hypocritical Tony feels; and he could not be sure Robert would stop gambling anyway.

What should Tony do?

APPENDIX 1

Types of Ethics

Most ethicists agree that there are three types of ethics or ethical inquiry: meta-ethics, descriptive ethics, and normative ethics.

Meta-ethics, as the name suggests, is interested in reflecting upon the nature of ethics itself. What is the proper nature or function of ethics, for example? What is the meaning or significance of ethical language? Is a rational approach to ethics possible? What we are doing right now in this first chapter, reflecting on the nature and practice of ethics, is a meta-ethical exercise.

Descriptive ethics is a form of empirical, usually experimental research into the moral values of groups of people, often undertaken by moral psychologists. In other words, this is the division of philosophical or general ethics that involves the observation of the moral decision-making process with the goal of describing the observed phenomena, such as the observed and replicable results of controlled experimentation. Those working on descriptive ethics research usually aim to uncover people's beliefs about such things as the values and principles they hold, or about which actions they think are right and wrong. Moral psychologists engaged in descriptive ethics might want to know which characteristics of moral agents are considered virtuous through empirical observation and analysis. Chapter 2 will look more closely at the realm of descriptive ethics in moral psychological research.

Normative ethics will be the primary focus of our concern in *Entrepreneurial Ethics*. Normative ethics is the branch of philosophical ethics that investigates the set of questions that arise when we think about the question "how should I act, morally speaking?" Normative ethics is distinct from meta-ethics because it examines standards—norms—for the rightness and wrongness of actions, while meta-ethics studies the meaning of moral language and the metaphysics of moral 'facts'. Normative ethics is also distinct from descriptive ethics, as the latter is an empirical investigation of people's moral beliefs. To put it another way, descriptive ethics might be concerned with determining what proportion of people believe that killing is always wrong, while normative ethics is concerned with whether it is morally correct to hold such a belief. Hence, normative ethics is sometimes said to be *prescriptive*, rather than *descriptive*.

There are many different areas of human activities and interests where normative ethical principles are applied to particular moral questions, such as bioethics, medical ethics, legal ethics, environmental ethics, computer ethics, professional ethics, business ethics, etc. Normative ethical principles are derived from moral philosophical theories.

Moral Theories

When examining the sources of various normative moral theories and perspectives, a distinction is often made among deontological and teleological perspectives, Virtue Ethics, and Rights theory.

Deontological … Deontology (from the Greek *deon*, meaning "duty") refers to an ethical theory or perspective based on duty or obligation. A deontological, or duty-based, theory is one in which specific moral duties or obligations are seen as self-evident from a rational perspective, having intrinsic value in and of themselves and needing no further justification. To act from duty is to act from rational moral rules or laws or maxims that rational individuals determine and propose to themselves as the rational justifications for their actions. Moral actions are evaluated on the basis of inherent rightness or wrongness rather than consequences. This means doing what is right because it is the right thing to do. Any other motivation would not have moral merit. Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy is the classic example of duty ethics.

Teleological … In contrast to both Virtue Ethics and Deontology, teleological moral theories (from the Greek *telos*, meaning "goal" or "end") describe an ethical perspective that argues that the rightness or wrongness of actions is based solely on the goodness or badness of their consequences. In a strict teleological interpretation, actions are morally neutral when considered apart from their consequences. Utilitarianism and Ethical Egoism are examples of teleological theories.

Virtue Ethics … Virtue Ethics is currently one of three major approaches in normative ethics. It may, initially, be identified as the one that emphasizes the habitual, rational practice of virtuous actions. The goal of the practice of virtue is the development of the moral character of the practitioner, in contrast to the approach that emphasizes acting from a determination of duty or law (deontology), or the approach that emphasizes the consequences of actions (consequentialism) as the source of moral certitude.

Natural and Human Rights … The rights approach to morality involves a broad range of theories and perspectives. Generally, it can be divided into two main categories:

A. *Liberty*: right to something a right-holder cannot be prevented from holding, such as to speak freely or follow a particular belief, and
B. *License*: right to do something which is otherwise illegal, such as to sell liquor or drive a powered vehicle.

Other, more specific, categories of rights include the following:

1. *Alienable*: rights that can be taken away or transferred, such a property rights.
2. *Inalienable*: rights that cannot be taken away or transferred, such as right to justice or privacy.
3. *Civil*: rights that accrue to all citizens of a country, such as rights to equality, good governance, and justice.
4. *Entitlement*: rights that specify what their holders would receive, such as an office holder's rights, or beneficiary's rights under a trust.
5. *Human*: rights that belong to every member of humanity, such as rights to education, equity, fair-play, free association.
6. *Natural*: rights that can neither be bestowed by a government nor abrogated by it, such as rights to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness.
7. *Prima facie*: rights absolute in normal circumstances but which may be taken away in extraordinary situations, such as right to life annulled by a death penalty.

Rational moral theories such as those listed above are important because they produce moral principles which can be used to support the making of rational moral decisions in particular situations. For example, the teleological moral theory called "utilitarianism" arrives at its fundamental moral principle which states that we should always act in such a way that our actions produce the greatest good for the greatest number of sentient beings. You could then use this principle to argue against the practice of, say, animal vivisection for research, for example, arguing that the pain and suffering of the animal outweigh all other consequences. Oddly enough, however, another person could use the same moral principle derived from the same moral theory to argue in favor of a contrary position, asserting that the positive consequences outweigh the negative. Both arguments could be rational and valid (no logical errors) in their evidence and reasoning for their position, but the two arguments may not be equally compelling in everyday practice to everyone universally. Animal Rights activists, using teleological arguments, seem to be winning the day. Morally based restrictions on live animal experimentation have increased in recent years.

Idealism

Idealism is a broad philosophical term that generally refers to the belief that experience is primarily a mind-dependent phenomenon. This position leads to the skeptical conclusion that it is not possible to know with certitude that our mental events (phenomena) have a material substrate independent of the appearance. Kant, for example, distinguished between two dimensions of things in his philosophy called Transcendental Idealism: *noumena* and *phenomena.* Noumena are things-in-themselves, how things are exactly. But noumena can never enter into our conscious perceptual experience, even if they somehow 'give rise to' that perception. *Phenomena* are things (like tables and cars) as they appear to you in your perceptual experience; appearances. All perceptual experiences are experiences of phenomena, never noumena. Thus, nobody can know the absolute truth (noumena) of any matter, but only their own perspective (phenomenon) of it. More about this in our consideration of phenomenology below.

Realism

Realism is another broad philosophical term that refers to the general belief that your inner experiences of the world are mental representations of actually existing macroscopic objects existing separate from your perception 'out there' in a three-dimensional world and which we experience through our senses. These macroscopic objects themselves are ontologically separate and distinct from your mental representations of them in your experience. They are believed to continue to exist even when you are not perceiving them.

Questions about the plausibility of realism, as with idealism, cuts across many disciplines, including ethics, aesthetics, science, mathematics, semantics, and the everyday world of macroscopic material objects and their properties. Although it would be possible to accept (or reject) realism or idealism across the board, it is more common for philosophers these days to be selectively realist or non-realist in regard to different topics. Thus, it would be perfectly possible to be a realist about the everyday world of macroscopic objects and their properties, but a non-realist about aesthetic and moral values which could be thought to be ideal. In addition, it is misleading to think that there is a straightforward and clear-cut choice between being a realist and a non-realist about a particular subject matter. It is rather the case that one can be more-or-less realist or idealist about any particular subject matter, which can complicate moral deliberation.

Rationalism

Rationalism, very generally, indicates a reliance on reason and cognition as the only reliable source of human knowledge. Rationalism offers a naturalistic alternative to appeals to religious accounts of human nature and moral conduct, although reason also has been thought of as a "divine spark" animating human corporeality, a kind of microchip off the old (divine) block. From this religious perspective, reason is a natural aspect of humans but also an aspect that connects us to divine reason which is absolute (God). Rationalism thus involves a kind of top-down model of knowing: first comes the rationally determined theory and then experience is constrained, understood and configured to fit in with the theoretical model, or, generally, something is thought to be wrong with the experience or judgment. Kant's duty ethics exemplifies a moral rationalism.

In ordinary usage, the term rationalism is mostly intended to mean a basic sense of respect for reason or to refer to the idea that reason should play a large role in human life, especially in terms of moral deliberation and decision-making, and that we should be able to give reasons that explain and justify our actions, beliefs and ideas. Rationalism is often understood as being opposed to empiricism, especially as an approach to research in ethics.

Empiricism

Empiricism asserts that knowledge arises only through sense experience. It involves a set of philosophical positions that emphasizes the role of beliefs and behaviors that can be objectified, experimented with, and measured. Empiricism contrasts with rationalist philosophical positions that emphasize the role of innate ideas, a priori knowledge or speculation. Some philosophers sought to integrate empiricism with rationalism, conceiving that knowledge is constituted by the necessary working together of pre-existing rational concepts in the mind and intuited sensuous experience gained through the senses. By themselves, the senses would not know what they are sensing. And by itself, the mind would have nothing to give shape and form to knowing.

In the philosophy of science, empiricism refers to an emphasis on those aspects of scientific knowledge that are closely related to the objectification and scientific measurement of behavior, especially as formed through deliberate experimental arrangements. It is generally taken as a fundamental requirement of the scientific method that all hypotheses and theories must be tested against observations of the natural world, rather than relying on intuition or revelation. Hence, science is considered to be methodologically empirical in nature.

Empirical Method Versus Experimental Method

The empirical method is generally meant as the collecting of a large amount of data upon which to base a theory or derive a conclusion in science. It is part of the scientific method, but is often mistakenly assumed to be synonymous with the *experimental method*. Learning from the normal "trial and error" of everyday life is a good example of how the empirical method works, and illustrates how it is similar to but different than the experimental method in science.

The empirical method is not sharply defined and is often contrasted with the precision of the experimental method. In an experiment, the different "trials" are strictly manipulated so that an inference can be made as to causation of the observed change that results.

This contrasts with the empirical method of aggregating naturally occurring data seeking the emergence of sense from the data. The empirical method is a close cousin to the philosophical 'method' of research called phenomenology.

Exercise: Imagine you wanted to investigate Company X. Here are three possible approaches to doing that. One way would be to assess the company's performance through an analysis of past financial reports. A second way might be to set up a competition with other companies and see how well the company performs. A third way might be to get a job at the company in order to experience the company first-hand. Match these three approaches to getting to know a company with the general research orientations of empiricism, rationalism and phenomenology.

Skepticism

The practice of taking a skeptical attitude toward knowledge claims that are outside of our immediate, verifying experience, has been around for a long time. And for good reason.

Skepticism sometimes is considered to be a bad thing when the skeptic is viewed as being unsure, wishy-washy, out of the loop, or afraid to take a stand. But a little skepticism, understood as questioning what we do not know for sure about ourselves and our world, is a good thing developmentally, and a necessary thing phenomenologically. A little skepticism is necessary for generating wonder without falling into error. Skepticism is the probing tip of the source from which we investigate and question ourselves about what we are doing and question our knowledge about what we are believing to be true.

A certain level of skepticism is an important and necessary part of our approach to making good moral decisions. It also reveals the limitation of reason to achieve absolutely certain moral judgments. The recognition and practice of skepticism should therefore lead to a reduction in existential anxiety since the practicing skeptic can now let go of the pressure to be absolutely certain about everything he or she does, since skepticism is critical of such absolutes. Skepticism helps us to see and focus on what is within our power and to let go of what is not.

Pyrrho (c. 300 BCE) was one of the greatest skeptics who ever lived. He was an ancient Greek philosopher who was well-known for his arguments in favor of a thoroughgoing skepticism about all knowledge claims, including moral knowledge claims. Pyrrho held that nothing can be known with certitude about the hidden essence or true nature of things. He held this because he thought that every theory can be opposed by an equally sound contradictory theory. At a later date, this same idea would emerge in Immanuel Kant's notion of the "Antinomies of Reason" where he shows the inability of reason to clearly demonstrate things like the existence of God or the reality of freedom because both the theories in support of such things and their contradictories are equally plausible. Reason cannot prove the existence of God, the reality of freedom, or the immortality of the soul. Neither can it prove these not to be true. Consequently, as the ancient Greek philosopher Pyrrho suggested, we must neither accept nor reject any theories as true, but, rather, we should skeptically *suspend judgment* (epochē) in all matters that are not indisputably clear and distinct—which is not much, if anything at all. Pyrrho thought there were existential benefits to doing this.

This suspension of judgment, called *epochē,* which meant "bracketing" or putting something out-of-play, was said by Pyrrho to lead to *ataraxia*—tranquility of spirit,

unperturbedness in challenging situations, being calm, cool, and collected when everyone else around you is freaking out. Practicing the "epochē" was also a key virtue for the Greek Stoic school of philosophy, as we will see in our investigation of Stoicism down the road. All in all, *ataraxia* is not a bad skill to possess generally, but especially in the high-pressure business world, don't you think?

As you might expect from someone who was a master of *ataraxia*, Pyrrho's fame was primarily a result of his exemplary *agogē* (way of living), though there are differences of opinion about what that way of life actually was. Here again, we can see how the practice of philosophy for the ancient Greeks was intimately and thoroughly connected to striving existentially to actually practice living the best possible life.

I don't know what you think, but I agree with the skeptics that we cannot have absolute certitude about the truth or correctness of our moral judgments, and so we should reject absolute moral claims as unfounded. However, universal and absolute moral tenets such as "Do no harm," or "The Golden Rule" (Do unto others as you would have done to yourself.) are commonly accepted as general moral rules from within the contextual framework of the situated, interrelated practices that constitute your everyday, existential world.

From a practical, situated point of view, we still must make moral judgments and we cannot always retreat into Pyrrho's suspension of judgment because moral judgments often force themselves upon us and we simply cannot avoid making them. Refusing to make a moral judgment is itself a moral judgment. We must make moral judgments, but we should definitely be skeptical of claims to certain knowledge of ultimate moral foundations. So, even though we feel very strongly about our moral position regarding the death penalty, for example, we should also recognize that there is no rational way to prove either the position for or against the death penalty with absolute certitude.

While we should not expect absolute confirmation of the correctness of our moral judgments, we will see in coming chapters that we are nevertheless always working, however consciously, on our moral value orientation, challenging ourselves and adjusting our values and beliefs continuously as we enter into and are responsive to new relations, new situations, new ideas, new circumstances, new people, new points of view, new professional orientations, etc. – new experiences that are each original, unique, and unrepeatable. And, these experiences are uniquely your experiences and yours alone. How could one moral principle possibly encompass such diversity? Hence the need for a *pluralist* approach: employing as many moral theories and perspectives as makes sense in any given situation, in order to see that situation as clearly as possible and thus make the best possible moral judgment.

We will see in coming chapters that the rich web of our everyday, situated interpersonal experiences—more so, perhaps, than abstract moral theories and philosophical principles—is the primary way that we orient ourselves morally in the world, especially before we have fully taken over this job for ourselves. Yet, immersed in that situated web of daily practices influencing our moral value configuration, we nevertheless do not thereby escape the influence of the traditional moral theories. These 'tried and true' moral theories have, over the years and centuries, become integral to the cultural underpinnings of that rich web of our everyday experience, structuring it, and are thus indispensable for your rational moral deliberation and moral value configuration.

A similar positive and productive interpretation could be made for emotivism, insofar as it shows the limitations of a purely rational approach to moral reasoning and deliberation.

Emotivism and the Fact/Value Problem

Emotivism argues that all assertions of the form "One should do X" are basically just expressions of strong feeling because they cannot be determined to be true or false and are not objectively verifiable. From a strictly logical analysis of language, it is not hard to see that this is true. But it is only true within a field that is presumed to be thoroughly rational. But, as I am arguing in this text, the field of ethics is not bounded by a strict rationality, but rather by a much more fluid "bounded rationality" that is influenced by non-rational elements.

For emotivists, prescriptive or normative statements are understood to be merely descriptive statements of how one feels about something. And since there is no rational foundation for moral reasoning, there is also no way to determine the truth or falsity of any felt moral judgments. What follows from this has come to be known as the "fact/value" or "is/ought" problem in moral philosophy. It goes like this: from the fact of how things are it is impossible to determine how they *should or ought* to be. But, from the existential-phenomenological approach to ethics being developed in this text, the is/ought problem is only a problem within the strictest rational understanding of ethics.

Emotivism is based on linguistic analysis of impersonal moral language, not what real people think, mean, feel, hope for, etc. In actual practice, we do make moral judgments, certainly, and some moral judgments and the reasons for them are better (more persuasive, convincing, clearer, more coherent, etc.) than others; more reasonable = based on or justified by reasons. Feeling strongly is a reason, however reliable. Not all reasons have the same value. False beliefs, passion, or wrong-headed ideas can inhibit reasoning. Reason does not always function in a black and white or scientific manner, but often in shades of gray, gradations of meaning, or on a continuum of better and worse, especially where morality is concerned.

Feelings can be important evidence and can be used to "weigh" the choice of what to do in a kind of quasi-reasoning manner. We can imagine how it would feel to do something and then reflect on our experience and use it as evidence in rational deliberation. As I said, to be rational can be thought generally to mean to be able to give reasons based on evidence for what you are doing or have done, even though your reasons will never be reasons enough. Giving reasons is often a description of our motives. "I did X because I have always felt strongly that there was a need for X…." In this somewhat more organic and messy understanding of everyday morality from the bottom up, moral reflection, deliberation, and judgment are possible, even though this process is not entirely rational from a strictly logical perspective.

APPENDIX 2

Ways of knowing

Over the centuries many attempts have been made to classify knowledge, and different fields have focused on different dimensions of the knowledge phenomenon. This has resulted in numerous classifications and distinctions based in philosophy, psychology, cognitive science and sometimes reflected in religious belief.

Two types of knowledge are usually defined: explicit and tacit knowledge. The former refers to codified knowledge, such as that found in documents, while the latter refers to non-codified and more often personal/experience-based knowledge. In practice, all knowledge is likely a mixture of tacit and explicit elements rather than being one or the other. However, in order to understand knowledge, it is important to define these theoretical opposites.

Some researchers make a further distinction and talk about "embedded knowledge." By distinguishing embedded knowledge, a clear distinction is drawn between knowledge embodied in people and knowledge embedded in processes, organizational cultures, routines, and other structured, habitual regularities, etc

Tacit Knowledge

Tacit knowledge was originally defined by chemist-turned-philosopher Michael Polanyi in a book entitled *The Tacit Dimension*.[26] Polanyi's work has been influential ever since. Tacit knowledge is not easy to define. It is sometimes referred to as an automatic kind of 'know-how' and refers to intuitive, hard-to-define knowledge of what to do or how to resolve or manage a problem, etc. that is largely experience-based, organic, 'felt' in a particular situation rather than calculatingly worked out, but largely unconscious. Because of this, tacit knowledge is often context dependent and remains personal and necessarily 'private' in nature.

Tacit knowledge is lodged in the "can-do" of the body, the way the hands of the seasoned mechanic know just how much to tighten a bolt without need of a torque wrench or the way the body of a ballerina, after much practice, moves without conscious thought. It is hard to communicate our tacit moral knowledge because it functions at the intuitive and pre-conceptual level. You simply know what the right thing is to do but don't know how you know it exactly. It is deeply rooted in embodied action, habitual and professional practices, and pre-conscious corporeal engagement. We will be exploring this pre-conceptual level of tacit 'experience' from a moral perspective throughout the chapters of *Entrepreneurial Ethics* since this level of knowing is where our practical moral wisdom abides but also where biases and prejudices lurk in the shadows.

Tacit knowledge is often regarded as being the most valuable source of knowledge, and the most likely to lead to breakthroughs and new visions within the business organization. Research has shown that the lack of focus on tacit knowledge in organizations leads directly to the reduced capability for innovation and sustained competitiveness. The same could be said about a lack of focus on tacit knowledge for individual persons

Here is how you can get a glimpse into how tacit knowledge works. Imagine trying to write an article that would accurately convey how you are able to instantly 'read' facial expressions. It should be quite apparent that it would be near impossible to convey your intuitive understanding gathered from years of experience and practice. Virtually all practitioners rely on this type of immediate, intuitive tacit knowledge. An IT specialist, for example, will often troubleshoot a problem based on her experience compressed into unconscious tacit knowledge and intuition. But it would be very difficult for her to codify her knowledge into an explicit document

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[26] Polanyi, Michael. *The Tacit Dimension.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

that could convey her know-how effectively to a beginner with little hands-on experience. This is one reason why experience in a particular field is so highly regarded in the job market.

You will come to see that much of your moral functioning takes place at the tacit level, even after you have made the effort to make it conscious. The moral value configuration that you have absorbed into the immediacy of your lived mind/body in a structured hierarchy of moral values is something that you have been 'working' on tacitly since you were a child, mostly without realizing it. You are so familiar with your moral value schema by now, it is so close to who you are, that you are rarely aware of consciously 'accessing' it in order to make a moral decision in a particular situation. It just happens, as if to you, not by you. You make the decisions you must make and "feel" with some level of confidence or another that your decision is correct. But you may likely have a much more difficult time trying to say explicitly how you were able to make that decision, what moral principles you used to justify it, etc. That is how tacit moral knowledge works. Once realizing this, you can begin to mine the wisdom of your extensive tacit moral knowledge in the form of in-sights and understandings that are the signs of expansion and broadening of those consciousness horizons, the moral enlightenment that we were talking about earlier and that you can expect to occur as you work through this text. You should keep a journal of your insights as you do so; a journal of self-discovery. It will enhance the process

Although it is worth knowing something about explicit and embedded knowledge, I am most interested in the way tacit knowledge comes into play in moral decision-making. Nevertheless, here is a brief overview of these other two knowledge forms.

Explicit Knowledge

Explicit knowledge is formalized and codified, and is sometimes referred to as "know-what." It is, therefore, fairly easy to identify, store, and retrieve. This is the type of knowledge that is most easily handled by knowledge management systems, which are very effective at facilitating the storage, retrieval, and modification of documents and texts. From a managerial perspective, the greatest challenge with explicit knowledge is similar to information. It involves ensuring that people have access to what they need; that important knowledge is stored; and that the knowledge is reviewed, updated, or discarded.

Many theoreticians regard explicit knowledge as being less important than tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is considered simpler in nature and does not contain the rich experience base of "know-how" that can generate lasting competitive advantage. Although this is changing to some limited degree with big data mining, quantum computing and deep neural learning algorithms, knowledge management initiatives driven by technology have often had the flaw of focusing almost exclusively on explicit knowledge. In fields such as IT, for example, there is often a lack of a more sophisticated definition of what constitutes knowledge. Explicit knowledge is found in: databases, memos, notes, documents, etc.

Making your tacit moral value configurations conscious or explicit is one of the goals of our ethical investigations and a good practice to develop overall in your life.

Embedded Knowledge

Embedded knowledge refers to the knowledge that is locked in processes, products, culture, routines, artifacts, or structures. Knowledge is embedded either formally, such as through a management initiative to formalize a certain beneficial routine, or informally as the organization uses and applies the other two knowledge types.

The challenges in managing embedded knowledge vary considerably and will often differ from embodied tacit knowledge. Culture and routines can be both difficult to understand and hard to change. Formalized routines on the other hand may be easier to implement and management can actively try to embed the fruits of lessons learned directly into procedures, routines, and products.

Due to the difficulty in effectively managing embedded knowledge, firms that succeed may enjoy a significant competitive advantage. Embedded knowledge is found in: rules, processes, manuals, organizational culture, codes of conduct, ethics, products, etc. It is important to note, that while embedded knowledge can exist in explicit sources (i.e. a rule can be written in a manual), the knowledge itself is not explicit, i.e. it is not immediately apparent why doing something this way is beneficial to the organization.

APPENDIX 3

Emotion and Ethical Thinking

So far, we have seen that an almost exclusive focus on rational thinking in the history of moral philosophy resulted in an overvaluation of pure reasoning in ethics and a de-valuation of non-rational factors. Modern social psychology has corrected that overvaluation to some degree by demonstrating how non-rational aspects of human subjectivity come into play and are important in moral deliberation, judgment, and action. Our best moral judgments reflect the existential inseparability of the rational and non-rational aspects of human beings, especially in concrete, situated, everyday life engagements. The ancient philosophical debate about whether ethics is primarily a matter of reason or emotion has spilled over into psychology where there is much current discussion about the nature of ethical thinking. Bottom line: moral judgments, like all our judgments, always involve both rational, non-rational, emotional, and situational/contextual aspects, since we are whole, situated beings and not made up of parts. All moral responsiveness is wholistic.

How can you do the right thing? People are sometimes told: "Be rational, not emotional!" Such advice seems to presume as true the widespread assumption that reason and emotion are opposites. This opposition is particularly acute in ethics, where philosophers and psychologists have long debated the relative roles in moral thinking of abstract, theoretical inference and emotional intuitions. This debate concerns both the descriptive question about how people actually do think when they are making moral judgments and the normative question of how they should think, especially for psychologists like Piff who blend description with prescription.

Adjudicating this debate requires an evidence-based theory of emotions that mediates between two traditional theories: the cognitive appraisal view that takes emotions to be judgments about the accomplishment of one's goals, and the physiological perception view that takes emotions to be reactions to changes in one's body. Phenomenological analysis is in a position to do this since it shares in both the cognitive appraisal view and the physiological view by focusing on subjective experience, the locus of both. The cognitive appraisal view is compatible with the potential rationality of emotion, because the truth or falsity of judgments can be evaluated emotionally. On the other hand, the physiological perception view puts emotions on the non-rational side, since bodily reactions are not susceptible to reason, in the typical sense of being able to give reasons for their occurrence. But these need not be in opposition

The brain is capable of simultaneously performing both cognitive appraisal and bodily felt perception; emotional consciousness results from this combination. If the integrated view is correct, we can see how emotions can be both rational (helping to evaluate and assess) and visceral, providing non-rational evidence and motivations to act. Some emotions are beautifully rational, such as love for people who add great value to our lives, whereas other emotions can be more motivated by non-rational energies, such as attachment to abusive partners.

Ethical judgments are often highly emotional, when people express their strong approval or disapproval of various acts. Whether they are also rational depends on whether the cognitive appraisal that is part of the emotional judgment is done well or badly, a skill which can be cultivated through emotional intelligence training, as we saw. Emotional judgments can be flawed by many factors, such as ignorance about the actual consequences of actions and neglect of relevant goals, such as taking into account the needs and interests of all people affected. Adam Smith, the father of modern, free market capitalism, is sometimes taken as preaching a gospel of strict self-interest, but his work on moral sentiments emphasized the need for ethics to be based on beneficent sympathy for other people, as we will see in more detail below. Hence, the emotions involved in ethical thinking can be rational when they are based on careful consideration of a full range of appropriate goals, including altruistic ones. Ideally, this consideration should mesh with a visceral reaction that provides a motivation to act well and correct injustices.

It seems clear that successfully navigating difficult moral situations requires both thinking and feeling. This ambiguous straddling of the rational and non-rational can be viewed from an evolutionary perspective where certain emotions are thought to have been naturally selected for their rational contributions to the creation and maintenance of social reality.

The Four Moral Emotions

When viewed from an evolutionary perspective, emotions can be distinguished by those that serve the future interests of the individual and those that serve the future interests of the group or society. This also brings into relief the connection between emotion and action. One reason emotions are useful is that they get us to react quickly in response to danger. Although our rational (as opposed to emotional) minds do a lot to keep us at the top of the food chain, rational thinking is sometimes too slow for handling a threat (e.g. fighting a tiger). Sometimes, we need to react more quickly--and our basic emotions, like fear and surprise, help us do that.

But, of course, supplying speedy reactions to tigers is not the only use of emotion. Some recent research on emotion has focused not just on issues of an individual's self-defense, but on the larger social value of emotions. Emotions evolved--the thinking goes--not just to protect people, but to bind communities. After all, we all have a better chance at survival if the species works as a team, rather than battling it out to mutual extinction. In turn, emotions are useful because they seal a Social Contract, a system of ethics that protects the species--not just individuals--into the future, which will be investigated in a later chapter.

Of course, our 'hottest' or most animalistic emotions are usually more self-serving than communal. These 'hot', animalistic emotions, often called the "basic" emotions, are the emotions that Paul Ekman famously first labeled in the 1960's, in his work with tribes in Papua New Guinea. These are the emotions that show on faces across all cultures, and they are thought to be biologically determined. We share most of these basic emotions with animals. They are often listed as the following six: *anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, and surprise.*

These basic emotions help individuals more directly than they help groups. Take surprise, for example. Surprise, from an evolutionary vantage point, is a basic emotion that allows us to avoid what's unexpected and dangerous. If I turn the corner and bump into a tiger (or my unpaid landlord or my boss when I'm skipping work), my heartbeat increases and my muscles tense. I move quickly to avoid the danger. Surprise triggers a fight or flight response--which is more self-serving than group-serving. Similar analogies can be made for most of the basic emotions.

But recent research on emotion has shifted the traditional focus away from the 'basic' emotions to another set of emotions which are thought to be more distinctly human. Focus has turned to the 'self-conscious' emotions, which are sometimes also referred to as *moral, social or higher-order emotions.* Moral emotions are the emotions that an organism can only feel if it has a highly developed sense of self-reflection. Usually, the 'self-conscious' emotions are listed as these four: *guilt, shame, embarrassment, and pride.*

Researchers tend to cite two requirements for being able to experience these higher emotions. One: The person needs to be capable of subjective "position-taking," of knowing how her behaviors would affect or be perceived by others. Two: She needs the ability to imagine how the reception of her behavior would reflect back on her character. For example, the fear you can feel in an interview (heart beating fast, voice constricting, palms sweating) is a basic emotion. But the shame that might set in as you leave ("Why do I interview so poorly?!") is a self-conscious, higher emotion. *The self-conscious emotion is the one that arises from understanding how others see us.* It influences future behavior. If you are ashamed after an interview, you might take a class in public speaking or ask for input from your friends ("What kind of person do I seem like to you?"). The self-conscious and other-oriented emotion binds us back to others--to their expectations, ideas, potential evaluations of us, etc.

For another example, let's consider anger again. The anger you might feel at having your wallet snatched is a basic emotion. But if you write a letter to the editor or your representative arguing for new laws addressing local crime, that's pride, a self-conscious emotion. Then you are striving to establish your morals in relation to the thief and the community. Self-conscious

emotions are emotions in which you imagine, perhaps pre-reflectively, your conformity or nonconformity to society's norms.

All our emotions work with amazing coordination really--like a symphony. One emotion can trigger another, to keep us in balance with the group. For instance, a heavy tendency for joy, anger, and pride might tilt a woman toward a career in business. She might feel strongest when finding investment deals and making money, closing deals. In this, she scores big points for individual preservation. She gets rich. But, in time—especially if she's screwed over some clients, for example--the feelings of guilt and shame might also set in. That would be a good thing for the social contract. Influenced by her guilt about how others might judge her, she might shift her behavior--giving to charity, mentoring some kid, working to protect society, changing her ways. Some might say she's acting altruistically "for the wrong reasons," but guilt is undoubtedly "right" when we think of the social contract it serves. In this way, our emotions serve both to propel the individual and to protect the larger group that affords every individual safety. Emotions are our rubber bands for propelling individual (and group) gain while protecting the society in which gain happens.

The evolutionary perspective accepts the view that emotions are hard-wired into our corporeal being from birth, socially reinforced and thus, to some extent, susceptible to alteration, grooming, and change. Moral sentiment theory, developed by numerous theorists during the same time that Darwin's evolutionary ideas were being widely discussed, takes a similar position with more of a theoretical, philosophical point-of-view. Yet, the two perspectives are compatible and tend to bring ethics and morality away from abstract and theoretical discussions to more of a focus on the moral corporeality.

Can Ethics be Taught?

There is a ton of research that demonstrates that college-age students are particularly interested in learning about and upgrading their personal morality, and that they undergo significant development toward principled moral reasoning during their collegiate experience. A recent report on how the college experience affects students put it this way:

> The reasons why postsecondary education may facilitate growth in principled moral reasoning are not completely clear. However, numerous researchers suggest that part of the explanation may be that college provides a relatively challenging and stimulating environment that leads students to overhaul and rethink the fundamental ways in which they form moral judgments. College may do this in large measure because it encourages students to think about the larger social context of history, institutions, and broad intellectual and cultural trends—many of which involve moral and ethical issues. Consistent with such an explanation is evidence reported from one study which shows that academic perspective-taking (that is, exposure to broad perspectives concerning intellectual or social issues) is a strong predictor of advanced levels of moral reasoning among college students.[27]

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[27] Pascarella, Ernest T. and Terenzini, Parrick T. *How College Affects Students*. San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 2005, vol. 2/349.

Clearly, morality can develop and educative interventions can cultivate this development to some degree. Unfortunately, however, you wouldn't know about such research if your reading was limited to newspaper reports and opinions about the effectiveness of ethics education. For example, in a recent editorial "Does an 'A' in Ethics Have any Value?" (WSJ 2/6/2013), the *Wall Street Journal* announced that college ethics courses are more or less useless because ethics cannot be taught. Few academic scholars would turn to the *Wall Street Journal* as a learned expert on the teaching of ethics. We have already seen in previous chapters that broad generalizations about ethics generally come with a lot of unclarified presumptions that are merely glossed over by armchair philosophers to appeal to conventional sensitivities and interests, or maybe to sell newspapers. Nevertheless, the issue raised by the *Wall Street Journal* is worthy of some reflection: Can ethics be taught?

The issue is an old one. Almost 2500 years ago, the philosopher Socrates—as described by his student, Plato—debated this important question which was central to the practice of philosophy. What good is the practice of philosophy if we are unable to develop as moral persons? Plato rendered Socrates' position very clear: Ethics consists of knowing what we ought to do, and such knowledge can be taught; to know the good is to do the good, Plato taught. But, we have already seen that some care should be taken in what we mean, exactly, when we use that elusive verb "to know." Plato had a special way of understanding that term since the kind of knowing he is talking about has mystical overtones where the knower becomes one with the 'known', a kind of cognitive/spiritual inter-penetration or exchange by which you are naturally transformed by the enlightening knowledge experience. Therefore, by knowing the good in this ecstatic and somewhat mystical sense, you will be automatically transformed by that experience such that you naturally do the moral good that you have come to know like you know yourself.

Most psychologists today, with different reasons in mind no doubt, would agree with Socrates that morality is learned to some degree, and therefore can be taught, cultivated, and developed. But simply knowing the good, in the normal sense of this term, is not the same as actually doing the good. Nevertheless, psychologists generally agree that moral consciousness and action develops over time and therefore can be taught, practiced, and learned. Contemporary research in the field of moral development during the last half century supports this position fairly consistently, even though it does not make clear how this should be brought about.

Dramatic changes in value orientation and configuration often occur in young adults in their 20s and 30s in terms of the basic problem-solving strategies they use to deal with moral issues in their everyday lives. These changes are linked to fundamental changes in how a person perceives themselves, society, and his or her role in society. The extent to which change occurs has been associated with the number of years of formal education (college or professional school). Deliberate educational attempts (formal curriculum) to influence awareness of moral problems and to influence the reasoning or judgment process have been demonstrated to be effective in some cases, but not in others. Numerous studies indicate that a person's behavior is influenced by his or her moral perception and moral judgments, forming a large body of research in support of the idea that morality develops and can be positively influenced by education

APPENDIX 4

Pragmatism: social self-development

The formulation of classical American pragmatism occurred from around 1850 to 1950 when the perspectives of its major proponents took shape, but it represents a spirit and vitality that is in an ongoing process of expanding application today. The attempt to get at the significance of pragmatic philosophy has been long, complex, and inconclusive. Because of initial confusion about the meaning and import of pragmatism, interest in it began to wane in philosophical circles. That is changing.

In recent years, interest in pragmatism has been growing rapidly from two interrelated directions. *First*, it is becoming recognized that pragmatism, though coming along prior to what is considered mainstream philosophy today, anticipated many of its problems and dilemmas, and offers a framework for moving beyond some of the impasses that these problems pose. *Second*, it is becoming evident that pragmatism has a unique relevance for engaging and understanding the everyday life of the existential individual, including social and cultural issues, moral values and the processes and goals that guide our actions. This is particularly true in regard to the formation of the moral self in the social relation between the individual and the community.

The Individual and the Community

Sometimes, the terms that we use quite frequently are so much taken for granted that we never stop to consider what they really mean. The terms *individual,* or *self,* or *person* are examples of this phenomenon. However, the view of the self that you hold has serious implications for many issues relating to ethics, as we have seen. Consequently, pragmatism is also concerned with the question concerning whether the self is a separate, "atomic," discrete entity, or, by its very nature, a part of a social process.

The view that entirely separate or atomic individuals exist and have moral claims apart from any associations except those they choose to form for their own purpose was the philosophical basis for the French and American revolutions. Many contemporary views of the social contract are rooted in the atomistic presuppositions of Locke and other social contract theorists of the Enlightenment rationalist tradition. This is what I refer to as the modernist view of the self or modernist subjectivity. These presuppositions are also the basis for understanding the nature of the corporation as a voluntary association of individuals and are at the heart of the neoliberal view of capitalism, which will be taken up in a later chapter of the text.

The pragmatic view of the self as an integral aspect of an ongoing social process is a radically different way of understanding the self from the liberal, atomistic view. According to the pragmatic, integrated view, in the adjustments and co-ordinations needed for cooperative action in a social context, *human organisms take the perspective or the attitude of others in the development of their moral conduct*. In this way there develops the common normative content that provides a community of moral meaning, such that communication can take place because there is now a socially or situationally determined basis of understanding. Without this shared meaning, people in a society have no way of understanding each other; in fact, it could be said that no society exists unless there is some common content. Yet there could be no individuals without the social order.

The moral self, from a pragmatic or process perspective, comes about through responsive awareness of one's role in a social context. It involves the ability to be aware of oneself as an acting agent within the context of other acting agents. Not only can selves exist only in relationship to other selves, but no absolute line can be drawn between our own self and the selves of others, since our own self develops only insofar as others enter into our experience. The origins and foundation of the self are social or intersubjective; the self is not a given that constitutes the basic building block of society as in atomic individualism. This pragmatic view is close to Levinas' view, described below, except for one important difference that makes all the difference. The pragmatic view seems to begin with a mysterious collection of isolated individuals (who are not yet selves) who just appear on the pragmatic scene and then become selves through social interaction (which is somehow already an interaction of selves that haven't been produced yet—a little strange), but does not account for exactly what the 'self' is that is interacting socially prior to the emergence of the self formed from that interaction. Levinas's existential-phenomenological approach will resolve this empirical conundrum.

For pragmatism, a person consists of a creative, ongoing interplay between the individual and social domains, and in this way freedom of the self lies in the proper relation between these two domains. Freedom does not lie in opposition to the restrictions of norms and authority but in a self-direction, which requires the proper dynamic interaction of these two dimensions within the self. Thus, freedom does not lie in being unaffected by others and by one's past but in the way one uses one's incorporation of "the other" in novel decisions and actions. While a self or a person is not an isolatable individual apart from a social process, a self or person does have its own unique individuality, which is in an ongoing process of development.

The moral growth and development of our self incorporates an ever more encompassing, sympathetic understanding of varied and diverse social interests, pragmatists claim, thus leading to social tolerance not as an infringement on one's self, but as an expansion of self. To enrich and expand the community is at once to enrich and expand the individuals involved in ongoing community interactions.

A true community, by its very nature incorporating ongoing practices, processes and a pluralism of perspectives requiring ongoing growth or integrative expansion, is far from immune to hazardous pitfalls and wrenching clashes, but these provide the material for such ongoing development. What needs to be cultivated in a society is the motivation, sensitivity, and imaginative vision needed to change irreconcilable factionalism into a growing pluralistic community. The deepening required for this growth does not negate the use of intelligent inquiry, but rather opens it up, frees it from the products of its past, from rigidities and abstractions, and focuses it on the dynamics of concrete human existence.

In some of the management literature today, there is growing interest in what is called "pragmatic irrationality" in management decisions. This is based on the emerging understanding that moral decisions are not based on the weighing of abstract, "objective," instrumentally calculative alternatives, that the process of reasoning in concrete situations is not understandable merely as the application of abstractly grasped principles, nor can it be subjected to step-by-step analysis. What is imperative instead in management decision-making, it is held, is something akin to the 'irrationality' of emotional intelligence and tacit knowledge and practical wisdom that cannot be examined or understood by traditional rational methods of examination. Which is where the practice of phenomenology comes into the picture, as we will see

The pragmatic view of self-formation and development offers more evidence for the view that a broader understanding of rationality is needed to reconfigure modernist rationality into a more fluid and relational rationality. The process view of self-formation presented here, like phenomenology and existentialism, does not disregard or destroy reason but brings it down to earth. What has been 'destroyed' is only the belief in the exclusive role of reason to provide access to truth and value. Reason, brought down to earth, is concrete, imaginative, and deepened to operate within 'messy', everyday possibilities that have been liberated from the confines and rigidities of abstract rules and procedural steps for reaching a moral decision about something. Yet, there remains an important place for calculative, rational thinking in ethical deliberations of the moral subject, which we will take up in the next chapter.

Because pragmatism starts at the empirical level with the empirical self already in some social relation to the community that will, ambiguously, produce it, the empirical self seems to just appear upon the social scene in some state of potentiality or readiness to be completed by social interaction, without any account for how this occurs. This is due to the naïve realist orientation of pragmatism connected to a realm of 'given' empirical objects which themselves are unaccounted for, an epistemological problem which is resolved elegantly by the phenomenological approach.

Notes On The Practice Of Phenomenology

Husserl articulated three cognitive/perceptual movements or re-orientations that would be necessary in order for you to take up the perceptual 'position' of the 'phenomenological attitude', three cognitive self-orientations or phases of the process that Husserl called 'reductions' which a person would assume or undergo in order to put the ideas of phenomenology into actual practice.

The first step out of the naïve, natural attitude ("natural attitude" = the everyday consciousness of commonplace realism) and into the phenomenological attitude is through the narrow door of the e*pochē,* as Husserl referred to it, the bracketing or suspension of belief in and judgment about whatever is beyond your clear and distinct knowledge, understanding, and experience—a move Husserl borrowed from the Greek skeptics we met in chapter one. To believe in something as if it were in our experience when in fact it is not actually a part of our experience would be a "prejudice" (a *pre-judgment* or decision made in advance of the experiential evidence and thinking that is supposed to lead to the decision) barring the way to true understanding and successful practice.

The suspension of judgment about what we do not know clearly and distinctly is the "skeptical" or purifying moment of phenomenology. It is not a denial of the possibility of knowledge but an unwillingness to make knowledge claims when there is insufficient evidence for the claim. In keeping with this, we should practice speaking carefully in accord with this restricted but truthful perspective. For example, someone might say to a child: "You are a bad boy!" But, actually, there are no 'bad boys', only boys doing things that some people consider bad. Therefore, you should not say to your child "Bobby, you are bad boy for doing that!" since, first of all, the term "bad" is essentially unclear but also because the claim intends to say something about Bobby's fundamental nature or essence which is not part of the parent's experience of "Bobby." Psychologists call this a "fundamental attribution error," attributing the cause of Bobby's behavior to unverifiable inner mechanisms rather than verifiable, external, situational factors. A more phenomenological way of referring to what is happening, while staying strictly within my experience would be to say: "Bobby, what I perceive you doing is unacceptable to me and I am feeling upset about it."

The most fundamental and widespread of the perceptual prejudices, according to Husserl, is the belief in a three-dimensional, independently existing, material world apart from consciousness. In fact, this belief, though widely and commonly held as certain knowledge, is unjustifiable experientially, as the whole history of skepticism has made clear. Yet, despite the abundant evidence putting into doubt any certain knowledge of a three-dimensional, material world existing apart from and independent of consciousness, people continue to go on talking about "reality" and "the real world" as if it *is* immediately clear to everyone that there *is* a real, independent, material world existing apart from consciousness that is immediately available to us through our perception and mental representations, just as we continue to say the sun "rises" when we know this is not true. Suspending my judgment about the real existence of a material world apart from my consciousness does not change my sentient experience of the world at all, and I still have complete access to that experience of a sensual, external, three-dimensional world to investigate. Instead of saying incorrectly that the sun is setting, I could say the earth is turning toward night. Sometimes, just adding the words "appears to be" to a description can make all the difference. All you have done is to bracket a prejudicial belief from your thinking. Nothing else changes.

Prejudices, biases, and delusions are numerous and often well-camouflaged in everyday perceptual consciousness, as we saw in Chapter 2. The practice of overcoming perceptual prejudices takes a lifetime of phenomenological engagement such that this practice would become a *way of life*—a key dimension of the "ethical" moment of phenomenology since the practice of overcoming prejudices is also the practice of developing virtue. It is easier to talk about overcoming perceptual prejudices than it is to actually overcome them. Why? These prejudices support values, beliefs, interpretations, and other practices that a person desires more than they desire to see the truth. Some people seem to have a vested interest in the delusional belief that some boys or girls are just born bad, for example, and will not give up this prejudice easily because it perhaps has some kind of (dysfunctional) payoff for them.

In the final analysis, what you are left with after you perform the first phenomenological 'reduction' of your belief in a material world apart from your perception, is your pure subjective experience without an added belief of there being an objective correlate to that experience, which doesn't change your experience at all but focuses you in on your experience itself (which is immediately available to you) rather than on a supposed objective correlate to your experience (which is not available to you). Your subjective experience alone is the deep, rich, and ever-changing source of all your personal moral value configurations.

The second strategic movement of Husserl's phenomenological practice is another 'reduction' or re-framing of your experiences to be understood now as *phenomena*. This is to understand that what we perceive is not an objective, three-dimensional reality apart from us (although it feels that way), but phenomena, appearances, how things look and appear *to us* in our experience of them, in all their sensual fullness. The way things appear to me is the *phenomenon*. I see a chair, but I don't actually experience the chair in itself. I experience the chair as it appears to me. Upon reflection I know this appearance to be a phenomenon. We can describe these perceptual phenomena and inspect them insofar as we experience them, in great detail, in fact, without ever ascribing to them any absolute reality beyond our perception, which doesn't mean they are not connected to any reality at all. But the only evidence we have is our intuited experience. So, if your description stays true to your intuited experience, what you assert, Husserl

believed, will be true or at least without falseness. For example, I can tell you with complete certitude that this is the way I interpret Husserl about this. No doubt about it.

The third movement out of naïve realism and into the phenomenological attitude is the somewhat controversial reduction of phenomena to essences; the refinement of our perceptual experience through reflection, articulation, and more description until the common element of similar experiences is discovered; what-it-is that makes that phenomenon the kind of thing it is; the definition of the thing sought in description; determining what a thing is; the 'whatness' of a thing; like trying to distill the essential element from various experiences of joy or sadness in order to determine or approximate what joy or sadness *is* in itself for me, even though this "in-itself-ness" cannot enter into my experience with any fullness. Think of trying to adequately describe in words the most awe-inspiring experience you ever had, or the face of the one you love. What description would do it justice? Some things leave us ultimately speechless, or overflowing with endless speech!

People often take for granted that they know *what* is happening and go straightaway to trying to determine *why* it is happening. "Why/because" always takes you down the rational, analytic road. But phenomenological consciousness focuses more on seeing what is happening clearly, fully and without prejudice; and, where many disagree, to see what is essentially true among the various disagreements. Determining the essences of things (what a thing is or what is happening) requires an infinite task of questioning and articulation, a task which approaches its goal without ever getting there, so that the seeking of truth itself becomes a way of life and lifelong practice. This is certainly true with ethics and is one reason phenomenology is especially appropriate for ethical investigation.

The overall commitment to seeing clearly what is happening is how I understand phenomenology to be a practical way of life, and not merely an impersonal method that can be applied to reality at arms' length in a supposedly objective, detached manner. Rather, the practicing phenomenologist is both the investigator and the 'thing' investigated; and the thing investigated is changed by the investigation, energizing a new perspective on the life situation. It is this recursive learning spiral toward ever deeper enlightenment that is the "way" in the idea of phenomenology being a way of life.

One problem for phenomenology is accounting for inter-subjectivity. If what we have available to us is only our own experiences, it becomes problematic to account for inter-subjectivity and how we are able to relate to others in a 'common' world. How phenomenology might avoid solipsism and the absolute separateness of subjective consciousness is a question Husserl struggled with to the end but was unable to resolve. This would also be a problem for Sartre's free, existential subjectivity whose primary connection with others is viewed as a contest for dominance and control. But Emmanuel Levinas, a student of Husserl's and friend of Sartre's— whom I had the pleasure of meeting in person for a delightful interview on Easter Sunday afternoon, 1989, in Paris—offers a solution to his mentor's solipsistic problem: *subjectivity understood as responsive inter-subjectivity.* A connection with the otherness of Others before we know it.

Duty ethics

Questions about the sameness and difference at play between rationalism and empiricism from a moral perspective that we touched on earlier in the text, come to the fore in a

comparison of the deontological, duty approach to ethics and the teleological, utilitarian approach to ethical reasoning. As we have seen, empiricism holds to the belief that knowledge arises only from verifiable observation, as is illustrated by the work of psychologists Kohlberg and Piff, for example, deriving their psychological moral knowledge from actual observations of persons' actions and behavior. Like those empirical psychologists, Mill is also an empirical philosopher who believed that utilitarian theory is derived from observations of how persons use a sort of cost-benefit analysis of the consequences of moral situations when making moral judgments in practice every day in the real world.

Rationalists, on the other hand, are people who think that the mind alone can generate ideas and knowledge. Do we really need any empirical experiments to figure out that a square peg won't fit into a round hole, or is a reflection on the idea sufficient? But, the empiricists insist, where did those ideas of "round," "square," and "peg" come from if not from intuited empirical experiences that were then configured into meaningful reflective understanding by application of rational categories of understanding to the raw sensible intuitions? The rationalist responds: But certain basic ideas may simply be innate, the basic categories of understanding, for example, since these surely could not have arisen *out of* sensible experience when they were needed to be in place already in order to recognize sense experience *as* sense experiences. And so the debate has raged on between the rationalists and the empiricists about how we know what we think we know.

Kant attempted to set the record straight on the matter once and for all with a kind of compromise: we need *some* sensible intuitions or 'raw' sensible experience in order to generate rational knowledge, but intuited sense experience alone is unknowable without rational cognitive appraisal or understanding. To paraphrase Kant: reason without sensation is lifeless; sensation without reason is blind. ("Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.")

Pure sensible intuition is the way the world is given to your senses pre-consciously before you have any conscious, reflective knowledge of what any 'thing' is, since, prior to the operation of our linguistically structured understanding (concepts) on our sensible intuitions, there is nothing. Since our categories of understanding are linguistically structured, nothing can exist outside of language. This is why it is impossible for us linguistically saturated human beings to know what a dog's pre-linguistic sensible intuitions or 'experiences' of the 'world' are like, just as it is impossible for us to reflectively know our own pre-linguistic sensible intuitions before understanding has conceptualized them within a linguistic framework, basically like trying to remember how you experienced the world when you were three months old, which we can't do since our world at that time was not linguistically structured. It was … well, I don't know. Nothing exists outside of language. We cannot think what is prior to the very possibility of being thought.

The Runaway Trolley

Some theorists assert that our moral judgments and actions concerning other human beings *personally*, like putting your hands on the large person and pushing them physically off the bridge, are different, more constrained and careful, than moral judgments regarding non-human actions like pulling a lever. In practice, in the scenario situation, we experience this constraint emotionally as a reluctance to push the large person off the bridge.

In other words, emotion seems to play a large part in supposedly rational moral decision-making. Your different emotional experience with the two trolley scenarios represents inculcated

or culturally conditioned theoretical moral value perspectives and principles that are accessed intuitively and used to make a judgment.

If you pay close attention, you can *feel* the difference in your motive and perception of consequences when it changes as you imaginatively switch between the challenge of the lever situation and the somewhat different challenge of the footbridge situation. Feels okay to most people to pull the lever. Doesn't feel okay to most people to push the person off the bridge. That tells you all you need to know right there; but it doesn't tell you everything.

It is as if our emotions have been educated about moral theories, so that our immediate emotional moral responses serve to enact or express the orientations of those theories without our having to think about it or know how we did it, or even that we did it. Emotional willingness to pull the lever is as immediate as the emotional unwillingness to push the person. This is how our emotions 'think'. But they couldn't think unless they had been inculcated with the framework of the moral theories they reflect. The question of whether the emotions merely transmit moral judgments or are the moral judgments themselves, is still an open question.

Thus, the runaway trolley scenario provides a salient experience of how emotions comport with rational moral judgments. In fact, the runaway trolley is both a thought experiment and an "emotions experiment." Look at how you felt about pulling the lever, for example. Of course, in existential actuality, the whole situation would be feeling suddenly highly emotional. A runaway trolley! Lives at stake! My adrenalin would suddenly be surging! I'm pretty sure I would pull the lever but I would also be feeling terrible about the poor worker who gets killed right in front of me by the speeding train. Splat! OMG! Not a pretty sight. I can just feel how I would be freaking out emotionally, shocked that all this was suddenly happening rather than feeling pleased with myself for saving four lives by pulling a lever that resulted in one death.

And then on the bridge, again the sudden freak-out when I realize the racing trolley is driverless and on a doomsday trip. It suddenly and spontaneously flashes through my mind that I could push the big person over the side to stop it … an idea I instantly reject, not because I coolly apply Kant's idea of the categorical imperative or Mill's hedonic calculus of consequences, but because it instantly *feels* so repugnant, disgusting, and deplorable to do such a thing that I feel and know instantly in my whole body that I will not push the person off, no matter how many lives it would save.

This reflection on the runaway trolley indicates to me that my moral emotions must be 'thinking' intuitively from a deontological or consequentialist moral perspective that must have been inculcated pre-reflectively into my moral value orientation by conditioned strategies from childhood and reinforced culturally for it to function so automatically now. Much conventional emotional moral reasoning must, ultimately, be grounded in deontological or teleological moral principles of one kind or another since these have become so fused with the value structure of Western culture and societies.

In the final analysis, you can see from your own experience that, if you, like most people, responded differently to the two moral situations involved in the runaway trolley thought experiment, it is probably because you immediately felt differently about the two situations and, whether you realized it or not, your emotional response would in all likelihood have tracked the two rational moral theories presented in this chapter. This suggests how acting rationally can be

productively integrated into our emotional responsiveness. We coolly and reflectively configure our moral values, yet, once configured, they are deployed in a hot intuitive flash of feeling.

But, what is the difference between the two situations in the runaway trolley scenario that gives rise to the two different moral responses expressed emotionally, since the two trolley scenarios have a similar basic structure and outcome. Why do most people respond differently? Why are we not consistent utilitarians across the two runaway trolley situations? Some recent neuroscientific and cross-cultural research using the runaway trolley scenario as a probe has attempted to answer that question.

APPENDIX 5

No character or personality

Gilbert Harman[28]

As a recent introductory textbook in social psychology remarks,

there is surprisingly little consistency in people's friendliness, honesty, or any other personality trait from one situation to other, different situations.

. . . [W]e often fail to realize this, and tend to assume that behavior is far more consistent and predictable than it really is. As a result, when we observe people's behavior, we jump to conclusions about their underlying personality far too readily and have much more confidence than we should in our ability to predict their behavior in other settings.

These conclusions are uncontroversial and a similar account can be found in almost any recent textbook in social psychology. Such conclusions are supported by a very large amount of disparate evidence.

These conclusions and the evidence for them have significant implications for business ethics. In an extremely interesting and useful account Robert Solomon notes that one implication is that "We need less moralizing [about character] and more beneficent social engineering." But, while praising an important new book that elaborates the philosophical implications of the results of social psychology, written by the philosopher John Doris, Solomon defends a version of business Virtue Ethics and criticizes what I call the "fragmentation of character."

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28 Harman, Gilbert. "No Character or Personality." Business Ethics Quarterly, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Jan., 2003), pp. 87-94.

In this note, I want to suggest that Solomon underestimates the force of the threat to his version of business Virtue Ethics and I want to say a bit more about how the evidence from social psychology implies such "fragmentation."

Psychology and Folk Psychology

It is uncontroversial that there is usually a difference between the study of ordinary conceptions of a given phenomenon and the study of the phenomenon itself…. We distinguish between the study of how people conceive of God from the study of theology itself. We distinguish between the study of doctors' views about good medical treatment and an investigation into what sorts of treatment are actually effective…. In the same way, there is a clear conceptual difference between what people generally think about character and personality and what is actually the case; the study of what people think about character and personality is part of the study of folk psychology and is not the same as a study of character and personality….

Furthermore, whether or not there is a matter of fact about what is right or wrong, it is obvious that many moral judgments presuppose matters of fact. To belabor the point, if I say you were wrong to hit Bob in the nose, I presuppose that in fact you hit Bob in the nose and, if you did not, I am mistaken. Similarly, if I say that you have a certain virtuous character, I presuppose that you have a character. Perhaps, as Solomon believes, it is not a matter of fact whether such a character is virtuous. But it is a matter of fact whether you have that character, and whether there are character traits at all….

What Is the Fundamental Attribution Error?

The librarian carried the old woman's groceries across the street. The receptionist stepped in front of the old man in line. The plumber slipped an extra $50 into his wife's purse. Although you were not asked to make any inferences about any of these characters, chances are that you inferred that the librarian is helpful, the receptionist rude, and the plumber generous. Perhaps because we do not realize the extent to which behavior is shaped by situations, we tend to spontaneously infer such traits from behavior.

Psychologists refer to this tendency as "correspondence bias" or "the fundamental attribution error." It is a bias toward explanations in terms of corresponding personality traits, the error of ignoring situational factors.

Having once attributed a trait to a given person, an observer has a strong tendency to continue to attribute that trait to the person even in the face of considerable disconfirming evidence, a tendency psychologists sometimes call "confirmation bias," a bias toward noting evidence that is in accord with one's hypothesis and toward disregarding evidence against it.

Even in a world with no individual differences in character traits or personality traits, people would still strongly believe that there were such differences, as long as they were subject to the fundamental attribution error and to confirmation bias. True, it is "obvious" that, some people have different character and personality traits than others. But our finding this fact so obvious is predicted by our tendency to the fundamental attribution error whether or not there are such differences.

Subtle Situational Effects

Minor and seemingly irrelevant differences in the perceived situation sometimes make significant differences to what people do.

Imagine a person making a call in a suburban shopping plaza. As the caller leaves the phone booth, along comes Alice, who drops a folder full of papers that scatter in the caller's path. Will the caller stop and help before the only copy of Alice's magnum opus is trampled? In an experiment, the paper-dropper was an experimental assistant or "confederate." For one group of callers, a dime was planted in the phone's coin return slot; for the other, the slot was empty. The results are that, of 16 callers who found a dime, 14 helped and 2 did not; of 25 who did not find a dime, 1 helped and 24 did not. Finding a bit of change is something one would hardly bother to remark on in describing one's day, yet it makes the difference between helping and not.

Whether or not a theology student stops to help someone who seems to be having a heart attack may depend on how much of a hurry the student is to accomplish a comparatively trivial goal, as reported in the "Good Samaritan" study by Darley and Batson, in 1973. Whether someone in a waiting room will go to the aid of another person who seems to have fallen off a ladder in the next room may depend on whether there is another person in the waiting room who seems unconcerned with the apparent fall or not.

In the Milgram (1974) obedience experiment, subjects were led by gradual steps to do something they would never have done straight away, namely to administer very severe electrical shocks to another person. The gradualness of the process with no obvious place to stop seems an important part of the explanation why they obeyed a command to shock the other person in that experiment although they would not have done so if directly ordered to give the severe shock at the very beginning.

Similarly, if you are trying not to give into temptation to drink alcohol, to smoke, or to eat caloric food, the best advice is not to try to develop "willpower" or "self-control." Instead, it is best to follow the situationist slogan, "People! Places! Things!" Don't go to places where people drink! Do not carry cigarettes or a lighter and avoid people who smoke! Stay out of the kitchen!

When you learn that a certain seminary student walked right past someone who seemed to be having a heart attack, actually stepping right over the person, you tend to think of the student

as incredibly callous and not that he was simply being influenced by the fact that he was in a hurry to accomplish a goal….

No one supposes that these two experiments, taken by themselves, show that there are no character traits. What they show is that aspects of a particular situation can be important to how a person acts in ways that ordinary people do not normally appreciate, leading them to attribute certain distinctive actions to an agent's distinctive character rather than to subtle aspects of the situation….

Free Will and Responsibility

Solomon worries that in the rejection of the sort of character and personality traits that are accepted in ordinary moral thinking and in his version of Virtue Ethics, something extremely important can get lost.... It is the idea that one can and should resist certain pressures, even at considerable cost to oneself, depending on the severity of the situation and circumstances. That is the very basis on which Virtue Ethics has proven to be so appealing to people in business.

This is clearly a different issue. Of course, people can and should resist such pressures and we should encourage them to do so. But the point has nothing to do with whether people have character traits. As Solomon would certainly agree, even a person without relevant character traits can and should resist.

Solomon worries about the philosophical consequences of denying the existence of character, because that would be to go "over to causal and statistical explanations of behavior instead of a continuing emphasis on character, agency, and responsibility." But people do not need character traits in order to have agency and responsibility.

Conclusion

Aristotelian style Virtue Ethics shares with folk psychology a commitment to broad-based character traits of a sort that people simply do not have. This does not threaten free will and moral responsibility, but it does mean that it is a mistake to base business ethics on that sort of Virtue Ethics.

Victims of circumstance? A defense of Virtue Ethics in business

Robert C. Solomon[29]

Business ethics is a child of ethics, and business ethics, like its parents, is vulnerable to the same threats and challenges visited on its elders. For many years, one such threat (or rather, a family of threats) has challenged moral philosophy, and it is time it was brought out in the open

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[29] Solomon, Robert C. "Victims of Circumstances? A Defense of Virtue Ethics in Business." Business Ethics Quarterly, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Jan., 2003), pp. 43-62.

in business ethics as well. It is a threat that is sometimes identified by way of the philosophical term, "determinism," and though its status in the philosophy of science and theory of knowledge is by no means settled, it has nevertheless wreaked havoc on ethics. If there is determinism, so the argument goes, there can be no agency, properly speaking, and thus no moral responsibility. But determinism admits of at least two interpretations in ethics. The first is determination by "external" circumstances, including pressure or coercion by other people. The second is determination within the person, in particular, by his or her character. In the former case, but arguably not in the latter, there is thought to be a problem ascribing moral responsibility.

The argument can be readily extended to business ethics. Versions of the argument have been put forward with regard to corporations, for instance, in the now perennial arguments whether corporations can be or cannot be held responsible. One familiar line of argument holds that only individuals, not corporations, can be held responsible for their actions. But then corporate executives like to excuse their actions by reference to "market forces" that render them helpless, mere victims of economic circumstances, and everyone who works in the corporation similarly excuses their bad behavior by reference to those who set their agenda and policies. They are mere "victims of circumstances." They thus betray their utter lack of leadership. Moreover, it doesn't take a whole lot of research to show that people in corporations tend to behave in conformity with the people and expectations that surround them, even when what they are told to do violates their "personal morality." What (outside of the corporation) might count as "character" tends to be more of an obstacle than a boon to corporate success for many people. What seems to count as "character" in the corporation is a disposition to please others, obey superiors, follow others, and avoid personal responsibility.

…David Hume and John Stuart Mill suggested that an act is free (and an agent responsible) if it "flows from the person's character,"3 where "character" stood for a reasonably stable set of established character traits that were both morally significant and served as the antecedent causal conditions demanded by determinism. Adam Smith, Hume's best friend and the father of not only modern economics but of business ethics too, agreed with this thesis. It was a good solution. It saved the notions of agency and responsibility, was very much in line with our ordinary intuitions about people's behavior, and it did not try to challenge the scientific establishment. So, too, a major movement in business ethics, of which I consider myself a card-carrying member, is "Virtue Ethics," which takes the concept of character (and with it the related notions of virtue and integrity) to be central to the idea of being a good person in business. Among the many virtues of Virtue Ethics in business, one might think, is that, as in Hume and Mill, it would seem to keep at bay the threat of situational ("external") determinism.

…But I have mixed feelings about the empiricist solution. On the one hand, it seems to me too weak. It does not account (or try to account) for actions "out of character," heroic or saintly or vicious and shockingly greedy behavior, which could not have been predicted of (or even by) the subject. And it does not (as Aristotle does) rigorously hold a person responsible for the formation of his or her character. Aristotle makes it quite clear that a wicked person is responsible for his or her character not because he or she could now alter it but because he or she could have and should have acted differently early on and established very different habits and states of character. The corporate bully, the greedy entrepreneur, and the office snitch all would seem to be responsible for not only what they do but who they are, according to Aristotle's tough criterion.

Character consists of such traits as honesty and trustworthiness that are more or less resistant to social or interpersonal pressures. But character is never fully formed and settled. It is always vulnerable to circumstances and trauma. People change, and they are malleable. They respond in interesting and sometimes immediate ways to their environment, their peers and pressures from above. Put into an unusual, pressured, or troubled environment, many people will act "out of character," sometimes in heroic but more often in disappointing and sometimes shocking ways. In the corporate setting, in particular, people joke about "leaving their integrity at the office door" and act with sometimes shocking obedience to orders and policies that they personally find unethical and even downright revolting.

These worries can be taken care of with an adequate retooling of the notion of character and its place in ethics, and this is what I will try to do here. But my real worry is that in the effort to correct the excesses of the empiricist emphasis on character, the baby is being thrown out with the bath toys. Both Harman and Doris argue at considerable length that a great deal of what we take as "character" is in fact due to specific social settings that reinforce virtuous conduct. To mention two often-used examples, clergy act like clergy not because of character but because they surround themselves with other clergy who expect them to act like clergy. So, too, criminals act like criminals not because of character but because they hang out with other criminals who expect them to act like criminals....

So, too, in business ethics, there is a good reason to be suspicious of a notion of character that is supposed to stand up to overwhelming pressures without peer or institutional support. I would take Harman's arguments as a good reason to insist on sound ethical policies and rigorous ethical enforcement in corporations and in the business community more generally, thus maximizing the likelihood that people will conform to the right kinds of corporate expectations. Nevertheless, something extremely important can get lost in the face of that otherwise quite reasonable and desirable demand. It is the idea that a person can, and should, resist those pressures, even at considerable cost to oneself, depending on the severity of the situation and circumstances. That is the very basis on which Virtue Ethics has proven to be so appealing to people in business. It is the hope that they can, and sometimes will, resist or even rise up against pressures and policies that they find to be unethical.

So, whatever my worries, I find myself a staunch defender of character and the indispensability of talk about character in both ethics and business ethics.

Some of my concern with this issue is personal. Like most conscientious people, I worry about my integrity and character, what sorts of temptations and threats I could and would withstand. I feel ashamed (or worse) when I give into those temptations and humiliated when I succumb to (at least some of) those threats. I am occasionally even proud about those temptations and threats I have withstood. Philosophically ("existentially"), I worry about how we view ourselves when the balance of accounts is shifted over to causal and statistical [empirical] explanations of behavior instead of a continuing emphasis on character, agency, and responsibility. Will that give almost everyone an excuse for almost everything?

And, professionally, I have made something of a reputation for myself as a "virtue ethicist" in business ethics, in the twisted tradition of Aristotle and Nietzsche, and Virtue Ethics requires a solid notion of character. But not a fixed and permanent notion of character. To be sure, many writers about the virtues, perhaps betraying their own insecurity, tend to describe good

character and integrity in terms of rock and stone metaphors, suggesting that the truly virtuous person is capable of standing up against anything.

But I for one never said that Virtue Ethics requires a strong sense of autonomy, the ability to cut oneself off from all influences and pressures from other people and institutions and ignore one's personal "inclinations" and make a decision on the basis of one's "practical reason" alone. On the contrary, I have argued that one's inclinations (one's emotions, in particular) form the essential core of the virtues. And one's emotions are largely reactive, responsive to other people and the social situations in which one finds oneself. Virtue Ethics need not, and should not, deny any of this.

The "New Empiricism" Virtue Ethics and Empirical Science

…I have long been an advocate of cooperation between moral philosophy and the social sciences in business ethics. I think that the more we know about how people actually behave in corporations, the richer and more informed our moral judgments and, more important, our decisions will be. In particular, it is very instructive to learn how people will behave in extraordinary circumstances, those in which our ordinary moral intuitions do not give us a clue. All of us have asked, say, with regard to the Nazi disease in Germany in the Thirties, how we would have behaved; or how we would behave, think, and feel if we worked for a tobacco company. But even in an ordinary corporation (which is not the same as a university in which there is at least the illusion of individual autonomy and "academic freedom"), the question of "obedience to authority" comes front and center.

Thus, an experiment like the Milgram experiment is shocking precisely because it does not seem to presuppose any extraordinary context. Milgram's experiment, which would certainly be prohibited today, has to do with subjects inflicting potentially lethal shocks to victim-learners (in fact the experimenter's accomplices). Even when the victim-learners pleaded for them to stop, the majority of subjects continued to apply the shocks when ordered to do so by the authorities (the experimenters). One could easily imagine this "experiment" being confirmed in any corporation.

…It seems to me that what the Milgram experiment shows—and what subsequent events in Vietnam made all too painfully obvious—was that despite our high moral opinions of ourselves and our conformist chorus singing about what independent individuals we all are, Americans, like Germans before them, are capable of beastly behavior in circumstances where their practiced virtues are forced to confront an unusual situation in which unpracticed efforts are required. In the Milgram experiment as in Vietnam, American subjects and soldiers were compelled by their own practiced dispositions to follow orders even in the face of consequences that were intolerable. Obedience may not always be a virtue….

…But one third of the subjects in the Milgram experiment did quit. And those who did not were indeed confused. Is there no room for character in a complete explanation?

The other often-used case for "lack of character" is the case of the "good Samaritan," designed by Darley and Batson. Seminary students, on their way to give an assigned lecture (on "the good Samaritan") were forced to confront a person (an accomplice of the experimenter) on their way. Few of them stopped to help. It is no doubt true that the difference between subjects and their willingness to help the (supposed) victim can be partially explained on the basis of such transient variables as the fact that they were "in a hurry." And it is probably true

as well that people who were religious or who were about to talk on a religious topic of direct relevance to the experience did not act so differently as they would have supposed. But does it follow that character played no role? I would say that all sorts of character traits, from one's ability to think about time and priorities to one's feelings of anxiety and competence when faced with a (seemingly) suffering human being all come into play. Plus, of course, the sense of responsibility and obligation to arrive at an appointment on time, which once again slips into the background of the interpretation of the experiment and so blinds us to the obvious.

As in the Milgram experiment, how much is the most plausible explanation of the case precisely one that the experimenters simply assume but ignore, namely the character trait or virtue of promptness, the desire to arrive at the designated place on time? It is not lack of character. It is a conflict of character traits, one practiced and well-cultivated, the other more often spoken of than put in practice. Theology students have no special claims on compassion. They just tend to talk about it a lot. And as students they have had little opportunity to test and practice their compassion in ways that are not routine.

Conclusion: In Defense of Business Virtue Ethics

Virtue Ethics has a long pedigree, going back to Plato and Aristotle, Confucius in China, and many other cultures as well as encompassing much of Medieval and modern ethics—including, especially, the ethics of Hume, Adam Smith, and the other "Moral Sentiment Theorists." But we would do well to remind ourselves just why virtue and character have become such large concerns in the world today—in business ethics and in politics in particular. The impetus comes from such disparate sources as the Nuremberg trials and American atrocities in Vietnam, teenage drug use and peer pressure, and the frequently heard rationalization in business and politics that "everyone is doing it." The renewed emphasis on character is an attempt to build a personal bulwark (call it "integrity") against such pressures and rationalizations and to cultivate virtues other than those virtues of unquestioning obedience that proved to be so dominant in the Milgram experiments and in Vietnam atrocities such as My Lai.

Nevertheless, I share with Harman a concern that Virtue Ethics and talk about character is being overused and abused. Too often preachers of the virtues praise (in effect) their own sterling personalities without bothering to note how little there has been in their lives to challenge their high opinion of themselves. Too often, people are blamed for behaving in ways in which, given the situation and their personal backgrounds, it is hard to see how they could have acted or chosen to act otherwise. In contemporary politics, in particular, the renewed emphasis on character is prone to bullying and even cruelty, for example, as way of condemning the victims of poverty and racial oppression for their behavior and insisting that such people "boot-strap" their way to respectability.

Then again there are those who consider it a virtue to say, "virtue is necessary"; but at bottom they believe only that the police are necessary….

If we are to combat intolerance, encourage mutual forgiveness, and facilitate human flourishing in contexts plagued by ethnic hatred, for instance, there is no denying the need for mediating institutions that will create the circumstances in which the virtues can be cultivated. Closer to home, the cultivation of the virtues in much-touted moral education also requires the serious redesign of our educational institutions. And much of the crime and commercial dishonesty in the United States and in the world today is due, no doubt, to the absence of such designs and character-building contexts….

APPENDIX 6

The Everyday Ethics of Workplace Lies[30]

David Shulma

In the aftermath of savage human actions, we often ask, "Who could do such a thing?" We agonize over people's capacity to do evil to others and we hope we can uncover and control whatever forces can turn people into monsters. Our culture usually explains wrongdoing by segregating responsibility-we hold "bad" individual actors culpable and fault to a lesser extent the larger society from whence wrongdoers come. This separation of individual and group flatters society by allowing us to displace blame to individuals while disregarding ways in which social groups bear some responsibility.

The capacity to do wrong is a collective act. It takes more than one per- son to produce harmful acts ranging from the ultimate crime of genocide to white-collar, occupational safety, and environmental crimes, even if one or two individuals .at the top are the initiators. When we spotlight only the most egregious individual offenders, we risk neglecting social contexts that make committing offenses possible. Understanding these obscured contextual forces is critical for answering a general question that the sociologist Everett Hughes (1984) posed, which, to paraphrase, is: How can people do wrong and still view themselves as 'good' people?

There is an important difference between the organizational underlife explored in this book an organization's potential criminal underworld. But the aspects of the workplace that encourage and tolerate deception as an everyday mechanism of social interaction at work may represent important micro-sociological features of workplaces that help in carrying out and rationalizing more serious deviant activities. Are the mechanics of rationalizing everyday deception useful in understanding criminal wrong-doing in the workplace?

In chapter 3 I explored how workplaces enable people to justify lying for work-related purposes without viewing themselves as being immoral. Examining a similar process in informal deceptions is useful for learning about lying and criminal behavior. Organizational culture does influence misconduct. Exactly how does it do so? In this chapter I examine a range of rationalizations in the workplace for informal deception-- the sources of an everyday ethics that favors workplace lying--and suggest some connections between the source of those rationalizations and their potential role in perpetrating misconduct.

That people use a range of preemptive and post-hoc excuses and justifications to avoid or to repair a spoiled identity is well established. However, what must be elaborated further is the organization's contribution to those accounts. The distinction here is

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[30] Shulman, David. *From Hire to Liar: The Role of Deception in the Workplace*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008, pp. 144-147.

between an individual's motive and the opportunities and encouragement that an organization provides to pursue that motive

Consider three managers who are caught embezzling. One might embezzle to fund a gambling addiction, another to seek revenge against the employer, a third because of greed . The individual motives vary. What is analytically relevant, however, is that all three had the problem of having to subvert some set of social controls to commit the act. They had to feign trustworthiness so that co-workers did not notice anything out of the ordinary, and written records had to be vulnerable to fraud.

I suggest that organizations inevitably have structural and cultural blind spots in their social control, in part because casual deceptions are so important in an organization's dramaturgical infrastructure. This infrastructure allows productive deceptions and possibly permits people to act on and rationalize much more serious offenses and opportunities to subvert social controls.

In the introduction I introduced the term "ethical disengagement" to describe a process through which people neutralize ethical mores _so that they can engage in deceptive actions. This category references the moral reasoning that surrounds workplace deception. Routine organizational operations permit an everyday ethics that both encourages and mitigates deception. What is crucial about this ethical disengagement is that it reflects an underlying social organization of irresponsibility. By blaming only individual bad actors, ethical disengagement is often perceived as being the product of faulty moral decision-making by individuals, while the underlying social organization of irresponsibility is overlooked.

There are many sound reasons for this attribution. First, individuals do decide to carry out wrongdoing and are culpable for doing so. Second, responsibility is often viewed in individual terms. We prefer to reduce social complexity in criminal offenses to single actors, which is what our system is set up to adjudicate. Neo-Marxist theorists, on the other hand, view the amoral individual model as promoting a false idea of who the real economic criminals are--exploitative capitalists and the capitalist system. By focusing on frequently apprehended individual offenders, systematic economic pillaging by rich elites receives less attention. We should try to reveal an underlying system whereby workplace cultures can subtly encourage the rationalization of misconduct.

To that end, I suggest analyzing ethical disengagement as a process that is sponsored by informal organizational culture and norms. Individual excuses and justifications are a symptom of an underlying set of organizational mechanisms that allow both individuals and organizations to detach themselves from adverse moral assessments of deception. These mechanisms of ethical disengagement exist to preserve individual workers and the organization's "identities" as ethical. I believe that these systems of ethical disengagement are often mundane and apply mostly to slightly questionable behaviors. However, these stable systems of ethical disengagement may escalate into propping up an organizational culture of misconduct that is an important and understated accomplice in explaining workplace crime.

Jackall (1980, 59) argues that bureaucratic administration influences moral consciousness by "making the moral classification of right and wrong irrelevant and replacing it with the technical classifications of correct and incorrect, logical and illogical,

efficacious and non-efficacious." Bureaucratic organizations stress pursuing rational goals and administration, which may produce a tunnel vision that substitutes an imperative of productivity for a responsibility to the general "good." The danger here is that workers, on their own initiative, will fastidiously follow unethical or illegal means of accumulating profits while remaining concertedly blind and callous to the possible negative consequences of those means.

The tendency to emphasize rational efficiency can diffuse responsibility further by allowing people to make "efficiency" culpable for any questionable activities that are required on the job. The use of "legality" as a default account by private detectives is an illustration. Jackall (1980, 58) concludes that bureaucracies invite deceit because "managers and officials come to internalize the bureaucratic morality, based on the rational/technical ethos and on the compartmentalization of actions from their consequences."

As the bureaucratic ethos makes clear, ethical implications are also not immediately apparent when they are subordinated to technical ends. Gioia (1992, 137) notes about the Pinto, "The person who decides to let the assembly line use substandard cord in the fabrication of radial tires is not thinking of the accidents that the decision could cause, but simply keeping the assembly line moving." Further, keeping one's job is a strong incentive. As Vandiver (1982, 138) recalled, in his experience of faked AD7 airbrake tests, workers' livelihoods depended on following orders. As he succinctly notes, "Your conscience doesn't pay your salary."

At the extreme end of a nightmarish spectrum for the bureaucratic ethos lies Kelman and Hamilton's analysis (1989) of the three dimensions of or-ganizational culture that contributed to the My Lai massacre, which can be applied to the workplace: ***authorization****,* which imposes a structure of authority on workers and a dictum in which obedience requires not asking questions of authority; ***routinization****,* in which tasks are compartmentalized and actors focus on a job's details rather than its meaning; and ***dehumanization****,* in which organizational influences lead workers to see an organization's targets as less than human and deserving of little consideration.