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Chapter Two: Approaches to Ethics

Introduction

- there are only three basic kinds of prescriptive moral theories: **teleological** theories, **deontological** theories & **virtue-based** theories

2.3. Normative Ethics

- Contain theory of obligation, theory of moral value, theory of nonmoral value
- normative theory of obligation goal is **guide** us in the making of **decisions and judgments** about actions in particular situations
- **Offers** theories or accounts of the **best way to live** by evaluate actions in a systematic way
- Includes ethical theories or approaches such as:
 - ✓ Utilitarianism
 - ✓ Deontology
 - ✓ virtue ethics
 - ✓ principlism
 - ✓ narrative ethics
 - ✓ feminist ethics

2.3.1. Teleological Ethics (Consequentialist)

- referred as —the **end justifies the means**

- stress that the **consequences of an action** determines the morality or immorality of a given action
- action is judged as right or wrong, moral or immoral depending on **what happens because of it**
 - **teleological theory**
 - the basic or ultimate **criterion or standard** of what is morally right, wrong, obligatory, etc., is the **non-moral value** that is brought into being
 - an **act is right** if and only if it or the rule under which it falls produces, will probably produce, or is intended to produce at least as **great a balance of good over evil** (comparative amount of good produced)
 - the moral quality or value of actions, persons, or traits of character, is **dependent on the comparative nonmoral value of what they bring about** or try to bring about
 - the **morally good dependent on the nonmorally good**
 - In order to know whether something is right, ought to be done, or is morally good, one must first know what is **good in the nonmoral sense** and whether the thing in question promotes or is intended to promote what is good in this sense.
 - Teleologists have often been:
 - ❖ **Hedonists** - identifying the **good with pleasure and evil with pain**, and concluding that the right course or rule of action is that which produces at least as **great a balance of pleasure over pain** as any alternative would
 - there is one and only one basic or ultimate **right-making characteristic**, namely, the **comparative value**

(nonmoral) of what is, probably will be, or is intended to be brought into being

- Teleologists differ on the question of whose good it is that one ought to try to promote:

1. Ethical egoism

- ✓ one is always to do what will promote his own greatest good
- ✓ an act or rule of action is right if and only if it promotes at least as great a balance of good over evil for him
- ✓ This view was held by Epicurus, Hobbes, and Nietzsche

2. Ethical universalism/ utilitarianism

- ✓ the ultimate end is the greatest general good
- ✓ an act or rule of action is right if and only if it is, or probably is, conducive to at least as great a balance of good over evil in the universe as a whole as any alternative would be
- ❖ utilitarians Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill are hedonists, but some utilitarians are not hedonists, for example, G. E. Moore and Hastings Rashdall, and so have been called "Ideal" utilitarians
- ❖ It would also be possible, of course, to adopt teleological theories intermediate between ethical egoism and utilitarianism
- ❖ pure ethical altruist might even contend that the right act or rule is the one that most promotes the good of other people

➤ Deontological theories

- deny what teleological theories affirm
- principle of maximizing the balance of good over evil, no matter for whom, is either not a moral criterion or standard at all, or, at least, it is not the only basic or ultimate one
- assert that there are other considerations that may make an action or rule right or obligatory besides the goodness or badness of its consequences -- certain features of the act itself other than the value it brings into existence
- example: the fact that it keeps a promise, is just, or is commanded by God or by the state

2.3.2. Egoism: Ethical and psychological Egoism

1) Ethical Egoism

- focus on the consequences of actions because believe that those consequences justify actions
- Although theory is indeed Consequentialist, it does not qualify as utilitarian, because it doesn't have the common good as its ultimate end
- It is a normative theory about how we ought to behave that advocates egoism as a moral rule
- The theory implies that we ought to be
 - ✓ Selfish
 - ✓ self-interested
- Example, case: Good Samaritan stopped to help a man whose car had broken down on the freeway. The man shot and killed the Samaritan, stole his car.

- Although most people would admire the Good Samaritan for what he did the ethical egoist would say that, the Samaritan did the wrong thing
- For ethical egoism there is **only one rule. Look after yourself**
- Ethical egoist insisted that if you don't **take advantage of a situation**, you are foolish
- It **twisted version of the Golden Rule** (Do un to others as you would have them do unto you).
 - ✓ It is rewriting of the Golden Rule, because, obviously, it is not always the case that you will get the same treatment from other that you give to them
 - ✓ The **Golden Rule usually emphasizes others, but for the ethical egoist it emphasizes the self**
- **argument** for ethical egoism **follows immediately from the theory of psychological egoism**: If I am psychologically programmed to act only in my own best interest, then I can never be obligated to perform altruistic
 1. **We all always seek to maximize our own self-interest** (definition of psychological egoism)
 2. **If one cannot do an act, one has no obligation to do that act**
 3. **Altruistic acts involve putting other people's interests ahead of our own** (definition of altruism)
 4. **But, altruism contradicts psychological egoism and so is impossible** (by premises 1 and 3)
 5. **Therefore, altruistic acts are never morally obligatory** (by premises 2 and 4)

- suggests that other people's interests are of no importance
 - ✓ from the moral point of view, only one's own welfare counts, and others' does not

Notice

- Ethical egoism does not forbid one to help others, or require one to harm others/ deliberately neglect their interests
 - If you might advance your own interests by helping others, then by all means help others but only if you are the main beneficiary
- Ethical egoism does not say that one ought always to do what is most pleasurable, or enjoyable
 - It suggests that one should do what will be of long term benefit to one self like exercising, eating healthy food
 - It acknowledges that one's own self-interest may occasionally require pain or sacrifice

2) Psychological Egoism

- The main argument that has been used as a basis for ethical egoism is a psychological one, an argument from human nature.
- ethical egoism has generally presupposed what is called psychological egoism -- that each of us is always seeking his own greatest good - whether this is conceived of as pleasure, happiness, knowledge, power, self-realization, or a mixed life

- one always seeks one's own advantage or welfare, or always does what he thinks will give him the greatest balance of good over evil
- "self-love" is the only basic "principle" in human nature
- "ego-satisfaction" is the final aim of all activity or that "the pleasure principle" is the basic "drive" in every individual
 - ❖ we must recognize this fact in our moral theory and infer that our basic ethical principle must be that of self-love

Notice

- ✓ one cannot logically infer an ethical conclusion from a psychological premise
- ✓ if human nature is as described, it is simply unrealistic and even unreasonable to propose that we ought basically to do anything but what is for our own greatest good
- ✓ psychological argument for ethical egoism is at least reasonable, even if it is not logically compelling

2.3.3. Utilitarianism: Producing the best consequences

- That action is best, which procures the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers
- Unlike ethical egoism, utilitarianism is a universal teleological system.
- It calls for the maximization of goodness in society—that is, the greatest goodness for the greatest number—and not merely the good of the agent

Note this points:

- ✓ A more promising strategy for solving dilemmas is that of definite moral rules.
- ✓ Principles are important in life
 - Example: if you act on the principle of keeping promises, then you adhered to a type of moral theory called deontology
- ✓ In consequentialist ethics the **center of value is the outcome or consequences of the act**
 - Example: example, a Teleologists would judge whether lying was morally right or wrong by the consequences it produced

Utilitarianism Types

Classic Utilitarianism

- In our normal lives we use utilitarian reasoning all the time
- seeds of utilitarianism were sewn by the ancient Greek philosopher **Epicurus**:
 - ✓ he stated that “**pleasure is the goal that nature has ordained for us**; it is also the standard by which we judge everything good.”
 - ✓ his theory focused largely on the **individual’s personal experience of pleasure and pain**
 - ✓ he advocated a **version of ethical egoism**
- Nevertheless, Epicurus inspired a series of eighteenth-century philosophers who emphasized the notion of general happiness—that is, the pleasing consequences of actions that impact others and not just the individual
- classical expressions of utilitarianism, though, appear in the writings of two English philosophers and social reformers:
 - Jeremy Bentham
 - John Stuart Mill

Jeremy Bentham: Quantity over Quality

- main features of utilitarianism, both of which Bentham articulated:
 - The **consequentialist principle** (or its **teleological** aspect):
 - ✓ rightness or wrongness of an act is determined by the goodness or badness of the results that flow from it
 - ✓ the **end counts**
 - ✓ end justifies the means
 - The **utility principle** (or its **hedonic** aspect)
 - ✓ the only thing that is good in itself is some specific type of state (for example, pleasure, happiness, welfare)
- **Hedonistic utilitarianism**
 - views **pleasure** as the **sole good** and **pain** as the only **evil**
 - act is right if it either brings about **more pleasure** than pain or **prevents pain**
 - an act is wrong if it either brings about **more pain** than pleasure or **prevents pleasure** from occurring
 - **hedonic calculus**:
 - ✓ scheme for **measuring pleasure and pain**
 - ✓ **quantitative score** for any pleasure or pain experience is obtained by summing the **seven aspects of a pleasurable or painful experience**, which are:
 - **intensity**
 - **duration**
 - **certainty**
 - **nearness**
 - **fruitfulness**

- purity
 - extent
- ✓ Adding up the amounts of pleasure and pain for each possible act gives **hedons** (units of happiness).
- ✓ The amount of hedons would enable us to decide which act to perform
- In Bentham's utilitarianism,
 - there is only **one principle** to apply: Maximize pleasure and minimize suffering
 - morality really is about reducing suffering and promoting benevolence
 - It is **scientific**: Simply make quantitative measurements and apply the principle impartially

John Stuart Mill: Quality over Quantity

- Bentham's successor, John Stuart Mill, sought to distinguish happiness from mere sensual pleasure
- His version of the theory is often called **eudaimonistic utilitarianism**
 - ✓ from the Greek **eudaimonia**, meaning "happiness"
- eudaimonistic utilitarianism
 - defines **happiness in terms of**
 - certain types of higher-order pleasures or satisfactions
 - minimal suffering
 - **two types of pleasures:**
 1. **lower, or elementary**
 - **eating, drinking, sexuality, resting**, and sensuous titillation
 - the lower pleasures are more **intensely gratifying**

- lead to pain when overindulged in

2. higher

- high culture, scientific knowledge, intellectuality, and creativity
- higher pleasures tend to be more long term, continuous, and gradual
- higher, or more refined, pleasures are superior to the lower ones: “It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied
 - The point is: the quality of the higher pleasures is better
- what is better pleasure? The formula:
 - Happiness is not a life of rapture; but moments made up of
 - ✓ few and transitory pains
 - ✓ many and various pleasures, with a decided predominance of the active over the passive
 - ✓ foundation of the whole
 - not to expect more from life than it is capable of bestowing.
- Mill is clearly pushing the boundaries of the concept of “pleasure” by emphasizing higher qualities such as
 - knowledge, intelligence, freedom, friendship, love, and health
 - In fact, his litmus test for happiness really has little to do with actual pleasure and more to do with a non-hedonic cultivated state of mind

Act- And Rule-Utilitarianism

- two classical types of utilitarianism:

- Act-utilitarianism

- ✓ an act is right if and only if it results in as much good as any available alternative
- ✓ act-utilitarians, such as Bentham
- ✓ practical problem with act-utilitarianism
 - First: we cannot do the necessary calculations to determine which act is the correct one in each case, for often we must act spontaneously and quickly
 - Second: it seems to fly in the face of fundamental intuitions about minimally correct behavior

- Rule-utilitarianism

- ✓ An act is right if and only if it is required by a rule that is itself a member of a set of rules whose acceptance would lead to greater utility for society than any available alternative
 - ✓ Human beings are rule-following creatures
 - ✓ we don't have time to decide which action produce more utility so we need a more specific rule that passes the test of rational scrutiny
- Utilitarianism might be construed as offering a three-step action formula for action:
 1. I must project the consequences of each alternative option open to me (e.g., taking different kinds of actions or taking no action)

2. Calculate how much happiness, or balance of happiness over unhappiness, is likely to be produced by anticipated consequences of each action or none.
3. Select that action which, on balance, will produce the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people affected

The Strengths of Utilitarianism

- It has three very positive features

➤ First

- it is a single principle, an absolute system with a potential answer for every situation: Do what will promote the most utility!
- have a simple, action-guiding principle that is applicable to every occasion

➤ Second

- utilitarianism seems to get to the substance of morality
- Rather it has a material core: we should promote human (and possibly animal) flourishing and reduce suffering
- It has two virtues:
 - ✓ First: It gives us a clear decision procedure in arriving at our answer about what to do
 - ✓ Second: it appeals to our sense that morality is made for people and that morality is not so much about rules as

about helping people and alleviating the suffering in the world

➤ **Third**

- it is particularly **well suited to address the problem of posterity**—namely, why we should **preserve scarce natural resources for the betterment of future generations**
- utilitarians have one overriding duty: to **maximize general happiness**
- As long as the quality of life of future people promises to be positive, we have an obligation to continue human existence, to produce human beings, and to take whatever actions are necessary to ensure that their quality of life is not only positive but high

Criticism of Utilitarianism

standard objections to utilitarianism

Problems with Formulating Utilitarianism

- The first set of problems occurs in the very **formulation** of utilitarianism: “The **greatest happiness for the greatest number.**”
- Notice that we have **two “greatest” things** in this formula: “happiness” and “number.”
- Whenever we have two variables, we **invite problems of determining which of the variables to rank first** when they seem to conflict

- should we worry more about total happiness or about highest average?

The Comparative Consequences Objection

- it seems to require a superhuman ability to look into the future and survey a mind-boggling array of consequences of actions
- we normally do not know the long-term consequences of our actions
- life is too complex and the consequences go on into the indefinite future.

The Consistency Objection to Rule-Utilitarianism

- An often-debated question about rule-utilitarianism is whether, when pushed to its logical limits, it must either become a deontological system or transform itself into act-utilitarianism
- it is an inconsistent theory that offers no truly independent standard for making moral judgment
- Imagine that following the set of general rules of a rule-utilitarian system yields (x) hedons (positive utility units) However, We could always find a case where breaking the general rule would result in additional hedons without decreasing the sum of the whole
 - ✓ It would seem that we could always improve on any version of rule-utilitarianism by breaking the set of rules whenever we judge that by doing so we could produce even more utility than by following the set

The No-Rest Objection

- According to utilitarianism, one should always do that act that promises to promote the most utility
- But there is usually an infinite set of possible acts to choose from
- Following utilitarianism, I should get little or no rest, and, certainly, I have no right to enjoy life when by sacrificing I can make others happier. Peter
 - ✓ For example, when I am about to go to the cinema with a friend, I should ask myself if helping the homeless in my community wouldn't promote more utility

The Publicity Objection

- It is usually thought that moral principles must be known to all so that all may freely obey the principles
- But utilitarians usually hesitate to recommend that everyone act as a utilitarian, especially an act-utilitarian, because it takes a great deal of deliberation to work out the likely consequences of alternative courses of action
- Thus, utilitarianism seems to contradict our requirement of publicity.

The Relativism Objection

- people accuse rule-utilitarianism of being relativistic because it seems to endorse different rules in different societies
- But this is not really conventional relativism because the rule is not made valid by the community's choosing it but by the actual situation

Criticism of the Ends Justifying Immoral Means

- utilitarian ends might justify immoral means
- There are many dastardly things that we can do in the name of maximizing general happiness: deceit, torture, slavery, even killing off ethnic minorities
- The general problem can be laid out in this argument:
 1. If a moral theory justifies actions that we universally deem impermissible, then that moral theory must be rejected
 2. Utilitarianism justifies actions that we universally deem impermissible.
 3. Therefore, utilitarianism must be rejected

The Lying Objection

- William D. Ross has argued that utilitarianism is to be rejected because it leads to the counterintuitive endorsement of lying when it serves the greater good
- If it turned out that lying really promoted human welfare, we'd have to accept it. But that's not likely. Our happiness is tied up with a need for reliable information (that is, truth)

The Justice Objection

- Utilitarian suggest that we should reconsider whether truth telling and personal integrity are values that should never be compromised
- The situation is intensified, though, when we consider standards of justice that most of us think should never be dispensed with

- ✓ imagine that you are a utilitarian physician who has five patients under your care. All need different kind of organ transplant.
 - Through a utility-calculus, you determine that, without a doubt, you could do the most good by using a healthy man organs to save your five other patients.
- ✓ This **careless views of justice** offend us
- The very fact that utilitarians even consider such actions— that they would **misuse the legal system** or the medical system to carry out their schemes—seems frightening
- **Justice is just one more lower-order principle within utilitarianism.**
- Judgment calls like these highlight utilitarianism's difficulty in handling issues of justice

Generally

- utilitarianism is a moral theory which takes into account how the consequences of an act will affect all the parties involved
- The **fundamental principle of utilitarianism is the principle of utility**
 - ✓ morally right action is the one that produces the best overall consequences with regard to the utility or welfare of all the affected parties.
 - ✓ Jeremy Bentham's: right act or policy is the one that causes 'the greatest happiness of the greatest

number' – that is, maximize the total utility or welfare of the majority of all the affected parties

Altruism

- In altruism an action is right if the **consequences of that action are favorable to all except the actor**
- psychological altruism:
 - we have an **inherent psychological capacity to show benevolence to others**
 - Psychological altruism holds that all human action is necessarily other centered and other motivated
- Altruists are people who:
 - ✓ act so as to increase **other people's pleasure**
 - ✓ They will act for the sake of someone else **even if it decreases their own pleasure and causes themselves pain**
- differentiate egoistic and altruistic desires
 - One's desire is egoistic if (and only if) it concerns (what one perceives to be) the **benefit of oneself and not anyone else**
 - one's desire is altruistic if (and only if) it concerns (what one perceives to be) the **benefit of at least someone other than oneself**
- Altruists reject the theory of psychological egoism and argue instead that humans are instinctively benevolent.
 - ✓ instinctive benevolence is the feature of our human nature which is the basis of our altruistic moral obligations

2.3.4. Deontological Ethics (Non- Consequentialist)

- rightness or wrongness of moral action is determined, at least partly with reference to formal rules of conduct rather than consequences or result of an action
- It is referred as “the means justifies the end”
- In many respects, deontological moral theory is diametrically the opposite of utilitarianism
 - ✓ It is a duty based and according to this theory, the consequences or results of our action have nothing to do with their rightness or wrongness
- It is coined as “deontics”
- It emphasis on the intentions, motives, moral principles or performance of duty rather than results
- German philosopher Samuel Pufendorf, classified dozens of duties under three headings:
 1. Concerning our duties towards God
 - there are two kinds:
 - I. a theoretical duty to know the existence and nature of God
 - II. a practical duty to both inwardly and outwardly worship God.
 2. Concerning our duties towards oneself
 - There are two sorts:
 - i. duties of the soul, which involve developing one's skills and talents
 - ii. duties of the body, which involve not harming our bodies
 3. Concerning our duties towards others

a. Absolute duties

- absolute duties, which are **universally binding** on people
- three sort
 - avoid wronging others
 - treat people as equals
 - promote the good of others

b. Conditional duties

- involve various types of agreements
- the principal one of which is the duty is to **keep one's promises**

The Divine Command Theory

- **ethical principles:**
 - ✓ are simply the **commands of God**
 - ✓ derive their **validity from God's** commanding them
- Without God, there would be no universally valid morality
- analyze the DCT into three separate theses:
 1. **Morality originates with God**
 2. **Moral rightness** simply means “**willed by God,**” and **moral wrongness** means “**being against the will of God.**”
 3. Because morality essentially is based on divine will, not on independently existing reasons for action, **no further reasons for action are necessary**
- four propositions:
 1. Act A is wrong if and only if it is contrary to the command of God

2. Act A is right (required) if and only if it is commanded by God
 3. Act A is morally permissible if and only if it is permitted by the command of God
 4. If there is no God, then nothing is ethically wrong, required, or permitted
- an act is right in virtue of being permitted by the will of God, and an act is wrong in virtue of being against the will of God

Rights Theory

- Most generally, a "right" is a justified claim against another person's behavior
- **Correlativity** of rights and duties: Rights and duties are related in such a way that the rights of one person imply the duties of another person.
- **John Locke:**
 - ✓ argued that the laws of nature mandate that we should not harm anyone's life, health, liberty or possessions
- **Thomas Jefferson:**
 - ✓ United States Declaration of Independence authored by Thomas Jefferson recognizes three foundational rights
 - Life
 - Liberty
 - pursuit of happiness
 - ✓ Jefferson and others rights theorists maintained that we deduce other more specific rights from

these, including the rights of property, movement, speech, and religious expression

- four features traditionally associated with moral rights

❖ Rights are

1. **Natural** - not invented or created by governments
2. **Universal** - do not change from country to country.
3. **Equal** - rights are the same for all people, irrespective of gender, race, or handicap.
4. **Inalienable** - one cannot hand over his/her rights to another person

Kant's Categorical Imperative

Recall deontology

- ✓ **Not consequences** which determine the rightness or wrongness of an act, but, rather, the **intention** of the person who carries out the act
- ✓ The **emphasis is on the correctness of the action**, regardless of the possible benefits or harm it might produce
- ✓ There are **some moral obligations** which are **absolutely binding, no matter what consequences are produced**

The Categorical Imperative

- Kant's **duty-based theory** is emphasizes a single principle of duty
- There is a more **foundational principle of duty** that encompasses our particular duties. It is a **single, self-evident principle of reason** that he calls the "**categorical imperative**"
 - ✓ different from **hypothetical imperatives** that hinge on some **personal desire** that we have
 - ✓ which means best achieve our ends

- For example, “If you want to get a good job, then you ought to go to college.”
 - ✓ categorical imperative simply **mandates an action, irrespective of one’s personal desires**, such as “You ought to do X.”
- Kant emphasizes the idea of **good intention**
 - **nothing was good in itself except a “good will”**
 - Intelligence, judgment and all other facets of the human personality are perhaps good and desirable, but only if the will that makes use of them is good
 - **Will** - the uniquely human capacity to **act according to the concepts behind laws**, that is, principles presumably operating in nature
- Kant a **will could be good without qualification** only if it always had in view one principle:
 - ❖ **whether the maxim of its action could become a universal law**
- there was **just one command or imperative** that was **categorical**, that is, one that presented an action as necessary of itself, without regard to any other end
- **Kant’s categorical imperative states that we should act in such a way that the maxim or general rule governing our action could be a universal law**
 - ✓ Kant thought that when a moral action is being considered, one should ask the following questions;
 - ❖ what would happen if everyone in the world did this, all the time? And would that be the kind of world I’d like to live in?
- Kant gives at least three versions or formulations of the categorical imperative

- ✓ His categorical imperative is based on the idea that there are certain objective ethical rules in the world
- ✓ **Kant's version** is possibly the most well-known, and relies heavily on his idea that all people are fundamentally capable of reasoning in the same manner and on the same level
- ✓ **Kantianism** focuses more on intent **and action in itself**, as opposed to the consequentialist focus of utilitarianism
- person cannot decide whether conduct is "right," or moral, through **empirical means**. Such judgments must be reached a priori, using **pure practical reason**
 - ✓ Moral questions are determined independent of reference to the particular subject posing them
 - ✓ Kant's theory is hinged by his beliefs on **autonomy** and his formulation of **categorical imperatives**. He believed that, unless a person freely and willingly makes a choice, their action has no meaning (and certainly no moral value)
 - ✓ **Autonomy** - one's own beliefs, independence, and government: acting without regard for anyone else
 - ✓ **Heteronomy** - acting under the influence of someone else
- Kant believed that each individual is rational and capable of making free choices; thereby relies on autonomous thinking
- Kant thought that **every man, if using reason** when looking at moral dilemmas, **would agree with what he called the Categorical Imperative**
- moral proposition that is true must be one that is **not tied to any particular conditions**, including the identity of the person making the moral deliberation/ The **Intent behind the action matter**

formulation of the categorical imperative:

1. The Principle of Universality

- "Act only according to **that maxim** whereby you can at the same time will that it **should become a universal law without contradiction**"
- Kant divides the duties imposed by this formulation into two subsets
 - **Perfect duties**
 - ✓ blameworthy if not met and are the basic requirements for a human being
 - ✓ **not to act by maxims that result in logical contradictions when we attempt to universalize them.**
 - ✓ Example: moral proposition: "**It is permissible to steal**" **would result in a contradiction** upon universalization
 - ✓ **Example of perfect duty** is the avoidance of suicide
 - **Imperfect duties**
 - ✓ do not achieve blame, rather they **receive praise if completed**
 - ✓ they are **circumstantial duties**
 - ✓ Example: cultivating talent
 - ✓ is not as strong as a perfect duty, but it is still morally binding
 - ✓ imperfect duties are those duties **that are never truly completed**
 - perfecting the ability to write and produce works

2. The Principle of Humanity as an End, Never as Merely a Means

- not use humanity of ourselves or others **as a means to an end**

- People, as rational beings, **are ends in themselves and should never be used merely as means to other ends**
- We may use physical things as means, but **when we use people simply as means**, as in **slavery, prostitution, or commercial exploitation, we degrade them and violate their innermost beings as people**
- Example **Suicide would be wrong** since one would be treating his/her life as a means to the alleviation of their misery
- Person has perfect duty **not to use the humanity of themselves or others merely as a means** to some other end

3. The Principle of Autonomy

- we should **consider ourselves to be members in the universal realm of ends**
- every rational being must so act as if he were through his maxim always a **legislating member in the universal kingdom of end**
- Kant presents the notion of the **hypothetical Kingdom of Ends** , We should consider our actions to be of consequence to everyone else in that our actions affect not only ourselves but that of others

main problem with the categorical imperative - its rigidity

- **Example:** It suggest to tell a truth to a potential attacker where a person is found just knowing he/she will harm him and having a relation with the person in attack
- **Morality is simply too complex, too full of exceptions for these theories to ever fully work**

Ross's Prima Facie Duties or Moral Guidelines

- The term **prima facie** means “**at a first sight**” or “**on the surface**”
 - ✓ duties that dictate **what we should do when other moral factors are not considered**

Example:

- An example of a prima facie duty is the duty to keep promises Unless stronger moral considerations override, one ought to keep a promise made
- prima facie duties are duties that generally obligate us; that is, **they ordinarily impose a moral obligation but may not in a particular case because of circumstances**
 - ✓ **actual duty** - action that one ought to perform after considering and weighing all the prima facie duties involved
 - ✓ When faced with a situation that presents conflicting prima facie duties, Ross tells us, the more obligatory, our actual duty. **The actual duty has the greatest amount of prima facie rightness over wrongness**

Example:

- Suppose you observe an elderly neighbor collapse with what might be a heart attack. You are a block away from the nearest phone from which you could call for help. A child’s bike is close at hand and no one but you and the collapsed elderly person is around. One or more duties seem to say "take the bike and go

call for help," while others seems to say "taking the bike is wrong." On the "don't take" side are justice and non-injury (it seems unjust to the owner of the bike and an injury to him or her). On the "take" side lies harm-prevention. It is widely known that people die from heart attacks that are not treated quickly. (Note that this seems to be a case of harm-prevention rather than beneficence in the strict sense.) The solution might be to recognize that in this circumstance, harm-prevention takes priority over what on the surface looks like injustice and injury. So the *actual duty* is probably to take the bike and get help. Besides, it should not be difficult to make up the temporary bike loss to its owner, that is, there might be an *actual duty* of reparation

- W.D. Ross, Ross's list the following **categories of prima facie duties**
 1. **Duties of Fidelity** - duty to keep **promises** and the **obligation not to lie**
 2. **Duties of Reparation** - duty to **make up** for the injuries one has done to others. the duty to **compensate** others when we harm them
 3. **Duties of Gratitude** - duty to **thank** those who help us. Example, I am duty bound to **do all I can help** this individual, who in the past had acted so selflessly toward me.
 4. **Duties of Justice** - one act in such a way that one **distributes benefits and burdens fairly**. Ross himself emphasizes the **negative aspect of this duty**. the duty of

justice includes the duty, insofar as possible, to **prevent an unjust distribution of benefits or burdens**

5. **Duties of Beneficence** - duty to **improve the conditions of others**

6. **Duties of Self-improvement** - to act so as to **promote one's own good**

7. **Duties of Non-maleficence** - duty of non-injury. duty **not to harm others physically or psychologically**

✓ he does insist that we acknowledge and willingly accept the seven categories without argument. His appeal for their acceptance does not rely primarily on reason and argument but on **intuition**

- **Note** - The term "duty" in "prima facie duty" is slightly misleading. The **prima facie duties are understood as guidelines, not rules without exception**. If an action does not correspond to a specific guideline, one is not necessarily violating a rule that one ought to follow. However, not following the rule one ought to follow in a particular case is failing to do one's (actual) duty