

Snazzlefrag's Ethics in America DSST Study Notes

Contact: <http://www.degreeforum.net/members/snazzlefrag.html>

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Divine Command Theory: (Type of Moral Objectivism) All moral obligations originate from God

Two Variations:

1. Actions are right/wrong in spite of God's commands
2. God's commands make things right/wrong

Problems: Not everyone believes in God, Determining what God's law consists of.

Prophets: Condemn oppressors, comfort the victims (Nathan condemns David for act of injustice)

Biblical Justice = Retributive (eye for an eye)

Augustine: Theologian/Philosopher - Happiness is the basis for philosophy. Happy = grow in knowledge of God

Moral Objectivism: Moral judgements are either objectively true or objectively false

Existentialist: No universal rules for right/wrong. Full freedom to make own choices...responsibility, risk

Theistic Existentialism: God created us, then left us on our own. Atheistic Existentialism: No God

Forfeiture: Can kill in self-defense or when person has threatened another's life (forfeit own right to life)

Covers war and capital punishment but not suicide or invasion of innocent countries.

Epictetus: (Stoic) Happiness attained by living a virtuous life. The only evil is vice. Virtue = good for all

Fundamental Rule: Some things control, others not. Understand this = inner peace, external effectiveness

3 Areas of Study: Disciplines of Assent, Desire, Action (Against casual sex/extra-marital sex)

Natural Law: All species have inherent nature, typical characteristics for each species.

Critique: Nature can't provide moral guidance because Nature doesn't always equal good/right.

Aquinas: (13 Century) God's will/morality is based on reason. Natural Law = inherent guide to God's Eternal Law

Look at the result of the act to determine if it is good or evil. Action = good if promotes purpose of God.

Social Contract Theory: Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke. H=War, R=Peaceful, L=Freedom but with moral boundaries

Hobbes: (17 Century) Social Contract Theory = self-interest. Natural State = constant war. Need government.

Must obey laws of the state to maintain social harmony.

Virtues such as modesty and equity promote Social Harmony. But serve self-interest of individuals.

Locke: Since humans can reason, they can deduce the Natural Laws, and have responsibility to enforce them.

In nat state, Hobbes anarchy avoid because indivs can reason and prosecute those who break nat law

Our ideas/knowledge are limited because derived from experience (Primary & Secondary Elements)

Individual property can be obtained through investment of labor.

Indivs consent to government but retain right to revolt. Majority Rule. Gov't must protect private property

Rousseau: (18 Century) Influenced US Revolution. Social Contract breached = revolution.

Kant: Hypothetical and Categorical Imperatives. Universal Law = test if we want the rule to apply to everybody. If so = moral

Cat Imp makes us act in moral way, Hyp Imp = remove desire, remove imperative...so conditional, not binding

1) Universal Laws are ABSOLUTE regardless of circumstances = categorical imperative

2) "Respect for Persons". Humans have intrinsic worth. Not just means to an end
Reason is the key to moral judgments. Moral rules are binding on everyone, all the time

When we act, the morality of our action depends on our intentions rather than the results of our action

Only thing that is unconditionally good...is good will/good intentions

Critique: For any action there may be more than one alternative action...Nazis and lying

Rawls: Social Contract - Veil of Ignorance (original position) don't know if law applies to them..so fair!

Economic Inequality would lead to "vice-like behavior" such as envy, arrogance.

Martin Luther King: 60's & 70's. Non-violence. Inalienable right to Justice! God's law higher than civil law.

Emotivism: No moral truths. Moral judgements simply express our feelings...neither true nor false.

Hedonism: Happiness attained by maximized pleasure and minimized pain.

Epicurus: Epicureanism = form of Hedonism but with self-restraint. "greatest good is prudence".

2 types of pleasure and pain: Physical and Mental (learning, music, or fear)

Greatest pleasures attained through life of simplicity and moderation
(tranquility=max pleasure)

Committing injustices sacrifices tranquility to fear of reprisals or being found out.

No afterlife. We just don't exist anymore. We should not fear the gods.

Consequentialists: If good conseq outweigh bad conseq then it is morally right. Use your common-sense.

Deontology: ("duty") Moral = follow rules that govern our moral duties. Motivation must also be pure.

Utilitarianism: Morality = action which benefit the greater good! Lie when needed. Break oath if needed etc.

External Sanctions=punishment, Internal Sanctions=Conscience.

Mill: (Rule Utilitarianism) Greatest Happiness Principle. Right = promote happiness, Wrong if not.

Higher (humans) and Lower Pleasures (animals). Higher involves mental faculties.

Harm Principle: Gov't has moral right to limit freedom if people may harm each other.

People can do whatever they wish as long as they don't hurt others. If aware of risks.

Bentham: (Negative Act Utilitarianism) Act is morally wrong if it reduces overall happiness.

Hedonist Calculus (or Felicific Calculus). Calculate quantity of happiness an action produces.

Negative Act Utilitarianism: Several alternative morally right actions available to choose from.

Act Utilitarianism: The act which brings the greatest increase in overall happiness. Varies with circumstance.

Do not assess moral rightness or wrongness...it depends on each unique case.

Rule Utilitarianism: Follow moral rules, test of total well-being. If conflict then revert to Act Utilitarianism.

Feminist Ethics/Ethics of Care: Revises traditional ethics. Care/love/emotion instead of justice/rule/duty.

Standard Ethics based on non-interference and restrictions on aggression.

Ethic of Care based on mutual interdependence, emotions, cognitive ability to understand.

Gilligan (feminist): Women's decisions based on relationships not abstract concepts.

Jagger (feminist): Ethics = Small account of women's interests/right. Excludes moral conundrums of women.

Defines women as morally underdeveloped. Overvalues male traits. Undervalues female traits.

Kohlberg and Aristotle believe women are morally inferior.

Manning (feminist): Caring person resolves conflict through compromise. Not which rule! Which satisfies all?

Aristotle (psychology): Organized reason, will, personality operates in harmony.

Goal of humans is happiness. Arete=Excellence/Virtue. "Mean"=middle choice action. Not extremes.

Highest good is virtue. If lacking in other goods (friendship), may have trouble choosing virtuous actions

Doctrine of Mean: Actions vary according to circumstances. Mean would = equity for all parties.

Justice is a virtue. Doctrine of Equity. No discrimination. Prudence to choose the right action.

No hard and fast moral rules but some moral laws are absolute/inviolable

(murder/theft).

If person assesses an act before executing it, he can be held accountable for results. Not if coerced.

2 Forms of Justice: Universal (lawful, right, for all) and Particular (distributive, retribution - 2 indivs).

Socrates: People seek happiness. Must have healthy soul to choose virtuous actions which make you happy

Acting viciously makes the soul vicious. Better to suffer injustice (body harm) than inflict one (soul harm)

Nobody acts contrary to what they believe is good. **Virtue is knowledge:** vicious acts = ignorance

People want to act virtuously because they know it is good for them

Without knowledge, people cannot recognize what is good for their soul.

Wrongdoers must therefore be taught what is virtuous rather than be punished.

Unity of Virtues: Person who knows acting virtuous is for his own good will act virtuously in all areas

Personal, social, military, religious...never commit a crime, always obey the laws of the state.

Plato (students of Socrates) "The Republic". Justice needed to live a happy virtuous life.

Ideal Gov't = Ruled by educated who are forced to live in poverty without possessions (not comm, or dem)

Justice is achieved when 3 classes (ruler, soldier, people) perform their duties and live in perfect harmony.

Virtues of the Classes: Rulers, Wisdom - Soldiers, Courage - People, Moderation

3 Souls = Rational (capability to reason), Appetitive (will power/self control), Spirited (our will) > Harmony

Liberty & Freedom: Ideal is a happy medium between slavery and license.

Liberty is achievable by participating in lawmaking and enforcing the laws. Laws must be reasonable.

Thucydides: Peloponnesian Wars. Domestic=social contract, Foreign policy=no contract (strongest state rules).

Individuals are basically selfish and not moderated by moral rules (very cynical of human nature).

Ayn Rand: Highest moral purpose in life is to achieve happiness, through Self-interest
Never sacrifice for others, or sacrifice others for himself.

Critique: We depend on each other. Gov't, Parents, Employers, Teachers.

Hume: (Scottish) Moral actions not guided by reason but by our feelings. Doing good = pleasure.

Virtue driven not by self-interest, but by benevolence and sympathy

Jefferson: Duty of gov't to secure self-evident rights of citizens. People "consent" to be governed.

Aristotle (psychology): Organized reason, will, personality operates in harmony.

Virtue=Second Nature

"Goodness is in the actor, not the action." 'Nicomachean Ethics'.

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Augustine: Theologian/Philosopher - Happiness is the basis for philosophy. Happy = grow in knowledge of God

Humans by nature are **depraved**. Bound by **original sin**.

Aquinas: (13 Century) God's will/morality is based on reason. Natural Law = inherent guide to God's Eternal Law

Look at the result of the act to determine if it is good or evil. Action = good if promotes purpose of God.

Bentham: (Neg Act) Act is morally wrong if it reduces overall happiness. Ethical Hedonism. **CONSEQUENCES!**

Hedonic Calculus (Felicific Calculus). Calculate quantity of **pleasure/pain** an action produces.

Biblical Justice = Retributive (eye for an eye)

Consequentialists: If good conseq outweigh bad conseq then it is morally right. Use your common-sense.

Rightness of an act is determined by the goodness of it's consequences.

Deontology: ("duty") Moral = follow rules that govern our moral duties. Motivation must also be pure.

Right actions are right in themselves. **Not due to consequences.**

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Problems: Not everyone believes in God, Determining what God's law consists of.

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sex/extra-marital sex)

"The Art of Living"

Epicurus: Epicureanism = form of Hedonism but with self-restraint. "greatest good is prudence".

2 types of pleasure and pain: Physical and Mental (learning, music, or fear)

Greatest pleasures attained through life of simplicity and moderation

(tranquility=max pleasure)

Committing injustices sacrifices tranquility to fear of reprisals or being found out.

No afterlife. We just don't exist anymore. We should not fear the gods.

Ethical Egoism. Each person ought to act in his or her own Self-interest. Also see Psychological Egoism.

Existentialist: no universal rules for right/wrong. Full freedom to make own choices...responsibility, risk

Theistic Existentialism: God created us, then left us on our own. Atheistic

Existentialism: No God

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Hobbes: (17 Century) Social Contract Theory = self-interest. Natural State = constant war. Need government.

Must obey laws of the state to maintain social harmony. **DUTY! Psychological**

Egoism

Virtues such as modesty and equity promote Social Harmony. But serve self-interest of individuals.

Human characterized by **Appetites** (attraction to motion) **Aversions** (repulsion from rest)

Self-interest leads to war. So compromise of rights, turn over authority to gov't necessary.

Hume: (Scottish) Moral actions not guided by reason but by our feelings. Doing good = **pleasure**.

Virtue driven not by self-interest, but by **benevolence** and sympathy

Jefferson: Duty of gov't to secure self-evident rights of citizens. People "consent" to be governed.

Kant: **DUTY!** Hyp and Cat Imperatives. Universal Law = test if we want the rule to apply to everybody = moral

Cat makes us act in moral way, Hyp = remove desire, remove imperative...so conditional, not binding

1) Universal Laws are ABSOLUTE regardless of circumstances = categorical imperative

2) "Respect for Persons". Humans have intrinsic worth. Not just means to an end

Reason is the key to moral judgments. Moral rules are binding on everyone, all the time

When we act, the morality of our action depends on our **intentions** rather than the results of our action

Only thing that is unconditionally good...is good will/good intentions

Actions Have Moral Worth = motivation must be **DUTY!** Everyone has duty to help others in need.

Critique: For any action there may be more than one alternative action...Nazis and lying

Locke: Since humans can reason, they can deduce the Natural Laws, and have responsibility to enforce them.

In nat state, Hobbes anarchy avoid because indivs can reason and prosecute those who break nat law

Our ideas/knowledge are limited because derived from experience (Primary & Secondary Elements)

Individual property can be obtained through investment of labor. **DUTY!**

Indivs consent to government but retain right to revolt. Majority Rule. Gov't must protect private property

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CONSEQUENCES!

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People are inclined to be good. Wrong action is because we misunderstand how to be good.

Ideal Gov't = Ruled by educated who are forced to live in poverty without possessions (not comm, or dem)

Justice is achieved when 3 classes (ruler, soldier, people) perform their duties and live in perfect harmony.

"Justice in the state is justice in the individual" **DUTY & VIRTUE!**

Virtues of the Classes: Rulers, Wisdom - Soldiers, Courage - People, temperance

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Liberty is achievable by participating in lawmaking and enforcing the laws. Laws must be reasonable.

Thracymachus (justice is in interest of stronger). Crito (tries to get Socrates to escape)

Prophets: Condemn oppressors, comfort the victims (Nathan condemns David for act of injustice)

Psychological Egoism. The doctrine that all human motivation is ultimately selfish or egoistic.

Rand: Highest moral purpose in life is to achieve happiness, through **Self-interest**

Never sacrifice for others, or sacrifice others for himself.

Critique: We depend on each other. Gov't, Parents, Employers, Teachers.

Rawls: Social Contract - **Veil of Ignorance** (original position) don't know if law applies to them..so fair!

Economic Inequality leads to "vice-like behavior". **Inequality allowed if everyone benefits.**

Rousseau: (18 Century Social Contract) Influenced US Revolution. Social Contract breached = revolution.

Each citizen must accept the law individually. **DUTY!**

Social Contract Theory: Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke. H=War, R=peaceful, L=freedom with moral boundaries

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Without knowledge, people cannot recognize what is good for their soul.

Wrongdoers must therefore be taught what is virtuous rather than be punished.

Unity of Virtues: Person who knows acting virtuous is for his own good will act virtuously in all areas

Personal, social, military, religious...never commit a crime, always obey the laws of the state.

Sophists: Justice is determined by those who have power. "**Might Makes Right**"

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Individuals are basically **selfish** and not moderated by moral rules (very cynical of human nature).

Utilitarianism: Morality = action which benefit the greater good! Lie when needed. Break oath if needed etc.

External Sanctions=punishment, Internal Sanctions=Conscience.

CONSEQUENCES!

Act Utilitarianism: No right or wrong! **Greatest increase in well-being.** Varies case-by-case.

Negative Utilitarianism: (Bentham) **Least amount of Harm.** Minimize Pain. Several alternative options.

Rule Utilitarianism: (Mill) **Follow rules,** test of total well-being. If conflict then revert to Act Utilitarianism.