Moral Reasoning

Values – Morality - Ethics

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I. Introduction.

Moral couch potatoes tend to develop big "but's," as in "I know it's wrong, BUT!" (Marks 8). Have you ever thought about how you make moral decisions? Are all moral decision-making methods equal? If someone is moral, are they also ethical? How can I know that my action is really a moral one? These are just a few of the complex questions that we should ask ourselves. Part of the goal of this booklet is to help you recognize and respond morally to issues and questions that you might encounter in both your private and professional lives. Making the correct moral decision is a complex matter since there are often competing values or values that contradict each other. We normally do not have the luxury of making moral choices outside of the context of family, work, school, or economic and social pressures, so we need tools to help us mediate these competing contexts. This booklet will supply some of these tools.

Many people approach the study of values, morality, and ethics with a lot of doubt. "I always try to do the best; I do nothing wrong." "What's wrong with my morals?" "I attend church regularly," or "I've never been arrested, so why do I need to study philosophy and ethics?" are questions students often ask. These are good questions or observations, and asking someone to systematically study ethics is not implying he or she is immoral. Our values, both moral and nonmoral, were acquired along with our basic language and socialized behaviors when we were young children and come from some very strong traditions that are part of our societies and our cultures. Law, religion, our family, friends, the media and other groups all tell us what we ought to do, but following these more traditional "oughts" does not necessarily constitute a moral life. Just because it is legal, for example, it does not follow that it is moral.

A great number of people, however, do live long and useful lives without ever consciously defining or systematically considering the values or moral rules that guide their social, personal, and work lives. During most of our lives, we simply decided what was right and did it. Our moral decisions were often little more than the proverbial coin toss or approached mostly from self-interest and egoism. Decision and action, however, is the core of moral decision making and most of us already have some practice at it. Being moral is like any art: The more practice and the deeper understanding we have, the better we become. The more in-depth, sustained reflection we require of ourselves, the better "artist" we become. The study of ethics would

seem to be a rather worthless undertaking if decisions about right and wrong did not influence our behavior.

Sometimes, however, we have difficulty deciding what is right and what is wrong. Perhaps our own experience and knowledge are not enough. Perhaps we sometimes do not recognize issues as being moral in nature. Sometimes we recognize moral issues, but do not have sufficient insight into our value system or sufficient information to make a reasoned, informed decision. Sometimes we have conflicting values and have difficulty deciding which is more important. And as difficult as it can be when we are trying to define right and wrong for ourselves, it becomes more difficult when we have to work with other people and their beliefs about right and wrong.

Any good artist or craftsperson have tools for their trade, and this course attempts to give you the tools for ethics and moral reasoning which will enable you to better understand your own moral beliefs and attitudes, how you make moral decisions, and how to work more effectively with others. Part of our commitment is to help you understand the moral implications of your choices, to make more informed moral decisions, to assist in clarifying your moral values and rules involved in your decisions, and to offer you some normative principles and guidelines which will help you arrive at objective and rational moral decisions. To choose one's own values or to make one's own moral decision is to decide to philosophize. The attempt to examine our values and moral rules, to shape and rethink them in the light of one's own experience and the dictates of reason, is a philosophical task. This task is what we call ethics.

Ethics may or may not make you a better person, but it can help you think better about moral and ethical issues. Thinking better about morality and ethics is your goal, but how do these two concepts differ? **Ethics** is the study of morality; it is the study of an individual's or a society's moral rules and guidelines. It deals with morality, but it is not the same as morality. **Morality** consists of the rules and guidelines, the mores, which an individual or a group has about what is right or wrong, good or evil. These rules or guidelines may or may not be ethical, but we do attach great importance to them, and they very often help form our attitudes and guide our actions.

Ethics begins when you systematically reflect on your moral rules or guidelines or the rules and guidelines of your society and ask whether these rules are reasonable or unreasonable and whether good reasons or poor ones support them. *You begin to do ethics when you take the moral rules that you have absorbed from your family, your religion, your society, etc. and evaluate these moral rules through normative ethical standards and analysis.* Through the use of normative ethical theories, we are giving you the tools through which you can analyze your moral rules and guidelines. However, the idea that ethics is just another consideration in decision making, to be weighed in the balance along with economic, legal, and other considerations, is simply mistaken. Ethics should take precedent over other considerations. James Rachels says that ethics is a systematic understanding of the nature of morality and what it requires of us. It is with this definition in mind that we turn to our study of morality and ethics (Rachels 1).

II. Exploring Values, Rules, and Principles

Your **values** (beliefs or attitudes about what is good, right, desirable, worthwhile, etc.) and your **value system** (the ways you organize, rank, and prioritize and make decisions based on your values) provide the foundation from which you make your personal and professional judgments and choices. They are your beliefs about what is important in life. Some values refer to how one should act (for example, to be honest, self-disciplined, kind). Other values refer to what one wants to accomplish or obtain in life (for example, to want a lot of money, security, fame, health, salvation, wisdom). Of course, not all values are moral values.

Your values exist as a complex set of interweaving personal policies or priorities that serve as a guide for decision-making. Values may be based on knowledge, aesthetic considerations, practicality, moral grounds, or on a combination of these. Much of what we value is not concerned with our sense of morality or ethics, so not all values can be called moral ones. Most of us value money, status, personal fulfillment, and freedom, and while these are not immoral values, they are not necessarily moral values. For the sake of our discussions, we will call these nonmoral or instrumental values.

A **moral value**, on the other hand, concerns behavior or actions which affect human well-being. For instance, I believe it is wrong to lie because lying shows disrespect for other people. Notice that this involves both a moral judgment and a moral rule. This is important. "I believe it is wrong to lie" is a moral judgment, and to support this judgment, a reason could be "because lying shows disrespect for other people." All moral judgments must be grounded in a moral rule and moral rules must be defensible or justifiable through the use of a normative ethical theory.

Value conflict occurs when an individual experiences uncertainty about what she really believes or wants or when it is not clear how to rank his or her values. When your moral values conflict, a **moral dilemma** often arises. A dilemma is where you have conflicting or competing values and you can't do both, you must choose – one is, metaphorically speaking, between a rock and a hard spot. When values conflict, as they often do, choices must be made. Ranking or **prioritizing** must be established since this is one of the best ways to help decide what our primary value is and to assist in making a moral judgment. Those values which you consistently

rank higher than others are called your core values. Courses in moral reasoning will help you think better about moral dilemmas, value conflicts, and what your core values might be.

In this course you are asked to analyze the values involved in *your* moral dilemma, moral rule, or moral judgment, while in other courses you may be asked to analyze the values of the different parties involved in the moral controversy you are researching. Remember, in both cases you are looking at a moral dilemma rather than simply a social or cultural issue. Be careful not to confuse the two. The values involved in a moral dilemma are usually both good moral values in which you believe, but both, in a particular case, cannot be ranked the highest value.

Your **moral values** are your beliefs about what is important in life. Some values refer to how one should act (be honest, altruistic, self-disciplined) while other values refer to what one wants to accomplish or obtain in life (a lot of money, fame, a family, friendships, world peace). Because a person cannot "have it all" or "be all things," priorities must be set and choices made. Setting your priorities often leads to **value conflicts**. You may want to be successful in your career, but you may also want a more relaxing lifestyle and more time to spend with friends and family. Here, the value of success may come into conflict with the value of family. This is just one example. Stop reading for a moment, think about and then write down an important value conflict you are currently experiencing in your life. What is the moral dilemma or what is the rock and what is the hard spot? Some examples of moral values are: integrity, respect, caring, justice, civic virtue, fairness, trust, and openness.

Very simply put, to understand and solve a moral dilemma, you must figure out which values are involved in the conflict, prioritize them, and act upon the primary value. The act must be grounded in a moral rule, and the moral rule justified or defended using normative ethical principles that are part of a normative ethical theory.

To direct you in creating your moral rule and, later, in justifying the rule, consider the following. What is the difference between a moral rule and an ethical principle? An example of a moral rule is "one should not lie," whereas an ethical principle could be "one should respect other people." Ethical principles, such as those found in the theories of Kant and Mill, help us justify or defend our moral rules, as well as decide between conflicting moral rules. A **moral rule** is

very specific; it is action guiding. It is a specific guideline for action that justifies or defends our moral judgments and actions in our everyday lives; it tells you what to do in a specific situation. A moral rule doesn't tell you anything about why, in a particular situation, it applies instead of another moral rule. Our moral rules are often the outcome of our religion, social mores, our politics, or our culture.

Ethical principles, on the other hand, do tell you how to decide among competing moral rules, mores, and values, and these types of principles are found in normative ethical theories. Most ethicists maintain that these principles are not relative, but objective; they are universal though not necessarily always absolute (i.e., unchanging). An **ethical principle**, e.g., the Categorical Imperative or the Principle of Utility, is much more general than a moral rule so that it can be used in many different situations to help decide which rule to act on in a specific situation. It isn't general for the purpose of being vague. If you are unclear about what ethical principles are and how they differ from moral rules, please review this with your instructor or raise the question in class. It is important you are clear about this distinction.

In some cases, instead of a moral rule, people offer a value statement. A value statement does not express an "ought" or a "should." A value statement conveys that something has merit or worth, but it doesn't say what should be done; that is, it is not prescriptive or normative. (For example, "human life is sacred" is a value statement and "life" and "sacred" are values for most people.) **Moral rules** are quite specific about what should be done. **Value statements** are not specific about what should be done. Values, as discussed on page four, are general beliefs or attitudes about something we desire or like. Our values very often underlie our moral rules. If my moral rule is "always be honest," then my value is "honesty." Values only express what it is that we believe has value. As in the above case, however, moral judgments and moral rules are often contained within the same sentence. Thus, sentences are often both descriptive (I believe. . .) and prescriptive or normative (you ought to do . . .). **An ethical principle is part of a normative ethical theory** and it is usually an objective, universal statement.

Even though people regularly mix up values, moral rules and ethical principles, we have tried to emphasize the difference. Being a moral person is more than following accepted codes of conduct, whether business, religious, political, or simply holding a belief in the importance of

ethics. It requires our knowing how to make good moral decisions by using ethical standards and critical thinking and being sensitive to the implications of our decisions. The study of ethics requires the ability to do in-depth critical thinking, to evaluate ambiguous and incomplete information, and to have sufficient intellectual skills to implement our moral decisions. Morality has a price, and sometimes we must choose between what we want to be and what we want or desire. Quite often, what we have the right to do is not identical with doing the right thing. There is no one single decision- making procedure that works. All we can do is apply a strategy or a methodology to help guide us.

III. Examples of a Value

I am going to use the University as a model. We are a learning community whose fundamental purpose should be the pursuit and sharing of knowledge. This aim can only be realized if the community is aware of and adheres to clearly established values and goals where the end is personal and academic integrity. The following values could be applied to any situation, such as the workplace.

A. Honesty

An academic community of integrity advances the quest for truth and knowledge by requiring intellectual and personal honesty in learning, teaching, research, and service.

Honesty is the foundation of teaching, learning, research, and service and the prerequisite for full realization of trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Campus policies uniformly deplore cheating, lying, fraud, theft, and other dishonest behaviors that jeopardize the rights and welfare of the community and diminish the worth of academic degrees.

Honesty begins with oneself and extends to others. In the quest for knowledge, students and faculty alike must be honest with themselves and with each other, whether in the classroom, laboratory, library, or on the playing field.

Cultivating honesty lays the foundation for lifelong integrity and learning, developing in each of us the courage and insight to make difficult choices and accept responsibility for actions and their consequences, even at personal cost.

B. Fairness

An academic community of integrity establishes clear standards, practices, and procedures and expects fairness in the interactions of students, faculty, staff, and administration.

Fair and accurate evaluation and assessment is essential in the educational process. Students should expect from their professors and administrators the important components of fairness: predictability, clear expectations, and a consistent and just response. Faculty members

also have a right to expect fair treatment, not only from students, but also from colleagues and their administration.

All campus constituencies have a role in ensuring fairness, and a lapse by one member of the community does not excuse misconduct by another. Rationalizations such as "everyone does it," "the curve was too high," or "I have to maintain my GPA" do not justify or excuse dishonesty.

C. Trust

An academic community of integrity fosters a climate of mutual trust, encourages the free exchange of ideas, and enables all to reach their highest potential.

People respond to consistent honesty with trust. Trust is also promoted by faculty who set clear and rigorous guidelines for assignments and for evaluating student work, by students who prepare work that is honest and thoughtful, and by schools that set clear, consistent, and high academic standards and that support honest and impartial research.

Only with trust can we believe in the research of others and move forward with new work. Only with trust can we collaborate with individuals, sharing information and ideas without fear that our work will be stolen, our careers stunted, or our reputations diminished. Only with trust can our communities believe in the social value and meaning of an institution's scholarship and degrees.

D. Respect

An academic community of integrity recognizes the participatory nature of the learning process and honors and respects a wide range of opinions and ideas.

To be most rewarding, teaching and learning demand active engagement and mutual respect. Students and faculty must respect themselves and each other as individuals, not just as a means to an end. They must also respect themselves and each other for extending their boundaries of knowledge, testing new skills, building upon success, and learning from failure.

Students show respect by attending class, being on time, paying attention, listening to other points of view, being prepared and contributing to discussions, meeting academic deadlines, and performing to the best of their ability. Being rude, demeaning, or disruptive is the antithesis of respectful conduct.

Members of the faculty show respect by such actions as taking students' ideas seriously, providing full and honest feedback on their work, valuing their aspirations and goals, and recognizing them as individuals with dignity.

Everyone must show respect for the work of others by acknowledging their intellectual debts through proper identification and documentation of sources.

E. Excellence

An academic community of integrity strives for excellence by upholding high academic standards in terms of program integrity and course development and requirements. Such a community requires the highest levels of student performance.

Excellence of mind is essential to being a citizen in a global environment and to understanding oneself and one's personal values. High standards allow the students and faculty members to gain a sense of personal dignity and meaning in their accomplishments.

Striving for academic excellence recognizes that learning is a lifelong process and offers the depth and breadth of intellectual and practical skills needed to live as critical and creative thinkers. Administrators, staff, students, and faculty all have the responsibility to ensure that high and proper academic standards are realized.

F. Responsibility

An academic community of integrity upholds personal accountability and depends upon action in the face of wrongdoing.

Every member of an academic community—each student, faculty member, and administrator—is responsible for upholding the integrity of scholarship and research. Shared responsibility

distributes the power to effect change, helps overcome apathy, and stimulates personal investment in upholding academic integrity standards.

Being responsible means taking action against wrongdoing, despite peer pressure, fear, loyalty, or compassion. At a minimum, individuals should take responsibility for their own honesty and should discourage and seek to prevent misconduct by others. Doing the latter may be as simple as covering one's own answers during a test or as difficult as reporting a friend for cheating, as required by some honor codes. Whatever the circumstances, members of an academic community must not tolerate or ignore dishonesty on the part of others. Source: Adapted from The Center for Academic Integrity, OaktonCommunity College

IV. A Moral Reasoning Strategy

Making good moral decisions are difficult, and part of the difficulty is that we do not live in a vacuum. As we discussed in Section I, such decisions are complex and are connected to different contexts. You are being asked to do an ethical analysis as compared to a political, religious, or economic one. Depending upon the course you are enrolled in, your research topic (primarily for the Capstone course) or case study that focuses on your personal moral dilemma or controversial moral issue, the case probably has several possible solutions to your dilemma. For your second essay, it is not so important which moral judgment or moral rule you select (Discovery essay); instead, it is important that you justify, defend, and argue well for your moral position (Justification essay) and that you demonstrate clear and consistent reasoning, as well as critical thinking skills. In making good moral judgments, you must argue for your position (the Discovery essay) using a normative ethical theory (the Justification essay). The key to recognizing an ethical issue is to be able to conceptualize the moral problem correctly in the first place. This is what our Moral Reasoning Strategy attempts to help you do: It is a template that organizes your thoughts in order to generate a decision and then argue for or justify your decision using a normative ethical theory.

Prelude. A good moral reasoner pays close attention to certain rules of thought and has good critical thinking skills. Critical thinking involves certain intellectual traits which people must have in order to think clearly and accurately and thus to make solid moral decisions. While this booklet cannot cover these rules or traits in any detail, let it suffice to say that these traits involve characteristics such as clarity, relevance, consistency, depth, logic, and preciseness.

Paper A. The Moral Dilemma Essay: a statement of the issue.

In this section you are asked to objectively lay out for your reader a moral dilemma you have encountered in your place of employment, in your personal life, or through your scholarly research. If you are not clear what a moral dilemma is, please reread and reflect upon page five above before beginning your essay.

After observing your moral dilemma carefully, your first task is to write a summary of the dilemma, conflict, or case study. Doing so requires simply stating the facts of the case. Your summary **should be no more than approximately two pages and should end with a *clearly stated moral dilemma in the form of a question*.** Be sure you have a moral dilemma rather than simply a social issue or a personal grip. A moral dilemma is not always the same as a moral issue: Something may be a moral issue for society but not a moral dilemma or issue for you, or vice versa. A moral dilemma involves a values conflict. This distinction is especially important in the capstone course. Your summary is simply an accurate description of the situation at hand.

Paper B. The Discovery Essay: A Moral Analysis.

Your Discovery essay should begin with a short restatement of the dilemma. The question often arises as to how one can best morally resolve the dilemma or conflict in question. In the Discovery Essay, as well as your capstone course, Moral Issues in Society, when you are analyzing your moral dilemma, you should notice that your dilemma involves more than your own viewpoint; we cannot be moral isolationists. We must, therefore, find a method of analysis that is acceptable to people of diverse moral positions. Author Vincent Ruggiero proposes three common concerns which many people can agree upon as relevant to various positions: Obligations, Values, and Effects.

1. Significant human action occurs directly or indirectly, in a context of relationships with others. Relationships involve obligations; what should or should not be done. When analyzing a values conflict, one must define what the obligations to the stakeholders in the dilemma/decision are (Ruggiero 90). What are some of the **obligations** involved in your dilemma? These can be obligations to the stakeholders involved or to you, and could be items such as family, economics, personal satisfaction, etc. Every significant human action, whether personal or professional, arises in the context of relationships with other sentient beings. These relationships can be discussed in terms of specific duties and rights or in terms of our obligations to respect the rights of people and animals. Obligations bind us. When we are morally obligated, we must do certain things or avoid doing other things. It is important for our moral decision making to understand

what our obligations are. We must always ask ourselves, "What are the obligations that derive from our relationships or are affected by our conduct?"

2. According to Ruggiero, values are specific concepts that assist us in applying, for example, the principle of respect for persons in our moral judgments (101). Examples of values include the following: fairness, tolerance, compassion, loyalty, forgiveness, amity, and peace. What is the impact of our actions and obligations on our important **values**? Are these values moral or nonmoral? A value is a general belief or an attitude about something we desire or like, whereas an ideal is a morally important goal, virtue, or notion of excellence worth striving for. Clearly, different cultures impart different values and ideals and, equally important, different ways of pursuing them, but what is important for our decision-making is to have a grasp of what values are involved in our situation or dilemma. For example, in our culture we allegedly respect the value of tolerance or compassion. In a like manner, our institutions often express an allegiance to the value of efficiency, productivity, and so forth.

Values often conflict with each other, but at least if we have some understanding of the values involved, we are better able to attempt a resolution of the conflict. We must always ask ourselves what values are at stake or what value a particular action respects or promotes, neglects, or thwarts. This section will be an important part of your essay, so be sure to give sufficient thought to assessing what values are involved in your dilemma.

In you have discovered all the values involved in the moral dilemma, rank your values in order of importance to you. What is the reasoning behind your ranking? Closely review Section II, *Exploring Values, Rules, and Principles*. **Delineating the moral values, ranking them, and explaining them are an important section of your paper and must be included in it**. We must know what we value before we can begin to make an informed moral decision. Your highest-ranking value should be the one that helps define your moral rule or grounds your moral judgment.

3. Any action will normally have an effect or outcome. When analyzing a values conflict or moral dilemma, one should, as far as possible, be aware of the beneficial or harmful effects that result from the action and how it affects the people involved, including of course, the person

performing the action. Are the effects emotional? Physical?
Immediate? Delayed? Obvious? Subtle? Hidden? Intentional? (Ruggiero 112). What are the **effects** of our actions on our obligations or values? A morally aware person must take into account the effects of our obligations, both on others and on what values we hold. We must always ask ourselves the following: What are the effects of alternative courses of action? Who is affected by the action and how? How do these effects compare with those of the alternatives open to us?

What should have priority? Obligations? Values? Effects?

Ruggiero's method identifies three concerns common to almost all ethical systems: obligations, values, and effects. Employing these concerns would be a useful starting point when attempting a resolve a moral dilemma since an action which does not pass scrutiny after the obligations, values, and effects are analyzed will be morally suspect. Stated in a positive way, any action that honors obligations while respecting values and benefiting people can be presumed to be moral.

One should not assume, however, that each concern will be represented equally in each and every moral decision. Sometimes the issue may be largely a matter of obligations; other times, some value may predominate; still other times, consideration of effects may be the overriding concern. These are just guidelines, but a moral individual without some form of moral decision-making procedure is like a sailor without a compass; sooner or later he or she will get lost.

Proposals for resolution of a dilemma or conflict.

Now that you have considered the obligations, values, and effects, what proposals or solutions can be possible resolutions to your moral dilemma? That is to say, what are the possible ways to solve it? You also need to eliminate the unethical options, since these options reduce moral judgments to immoral or nonmoral judgments. As you are brainstorming, pay attention to the following:

a. Be aware of your thinking process and don't always go with your first impressions or the obvious. Think outside the box.

b. Be flexible. Try not to make up your mind before thinking has occurred. Rationalizations are different than reasons; in ethics you deal with reasons.

c. Think critically and creatively. Simply holding an opinion or having a view does not indicate critically and creative thinking. Look outside the box.

d. Do your proposals specifically tell you what you ought to do? Do they give you a variety of options?

Reflective Assessment.

a. Choose your best proposal from the list you just made and then clearly and precisely state your solution to, or judgment of, the dilemma which you raised in Section A. That is to say, what is your moral judgment concerning the resolution of your moral dilemma? You need to clearly and specifically state what your judgment or proposed course of action is.

b. What assumptions are you making with your proposal?

c. What are the implications, both positive and negative, involved in the acceptance of your specific judgment or solution? That is to say, what do you think will happen, morally speaking, if you adopt your proposal? Why do you think it will happen?

d. Conclude with a clear statement of the moral rule and moral judgment involved.

The moral rule is normally only one sentence and is usually action guiding; it must be specific. Your moral rule is also that which grounds your solution or moral judgment. For example, if your moral judgment is "X should have told the truth to Y," your moral rule could be that "X should not lie." It is important that you are clear on this.

e. Is your resolution or moral judgment **directly** defendable by your moral rule?

f. Is your moral dilemma (your initial question) directed by and clearly answered by your moral judgment? State your moral judgment clearly and precisely, being sure to avoid biasing the reader toward your viewpoint.

Final Review.

–*Your Assumptions*

Describe what you know and don't know about your dilemma.

(What assumptions do you have to make?)

–Your Values

a) List and describe the important values in your life.

b) Which are being called on in this situation?

c) Are any of them in conflict with each other in the current situation?

d) How would you rank order them?

e) Why do you rank them in this way?

–Your Obligations

a) Describe what your obligations are in your current dilemma.

b) How would you rank order them?

c) Why do you rank them in this way?

–Proposing Possible Solutions

a) Explore several possible ways (three to five) to solve your dilemma.

b) For each, explain which obligations and values are expressed.

–Choosing Your Solution

a) Name the proposal you are most likely to choose.

b) Is this proposal expressive of your highest values and obligations?

c) Why did you not pick any of the others?

–*Effects*

a) What are the resulting positive effects/consequences/outcomes?

b) What are the negative effects/consequences/outcomes?

c) Do the positives of your proposal outweigh the negatives?

–*Moral Judgment and Rule*

a) Clear state your moral judgment

b) Check to make sure your judgment is a direct response to your dilemma question

c) Clearly state your moral rule which supports your judgment

Discovery Essay Worksheet.

When you submit your Discovery essay, attach to the very end of your essay a sheet of paper with your responses to the following four items. Your responses should be based on, and found within, the Discovery essay. There should be nothing discussed on the worksheet which is not discussed at length in your Discovery essay. The worksheet with my comments on it will need to be submitted with the Justification essay, as well.

a. In one sentence, state your moral dilemma in the form of a question proposed at the end of the first essay and the same dilemma you analyzed in the Discovery Essay.

b. List, and rank in order of importance, all the values that you discussed and analyzed in your Discovery Essay.

c. In one sentence, state your moral judgment. Your judgment should be a direct response to your dilemma.

d. In one sentence, state the moral rule upon which supports your moral judgment.

Paper C. The Justification Essay: An Ethical Analysis

In this section, you are asked to defend, argue for, and justify your moral judgment or your research conclusion using one of the normative ethical theories we have covered this semester. An example of a Justification Essay can be found in this booklet. If you are unclear about the differences between ethical theories, principles, and moral rules, please ask about them, since confusing these terms could result in conceptual difficulties. You are asked to give reasons that are grounded in a normative ethical theory for your moral judgment or moral rule. In your Discovery Essay, you made a **moral judgment** and then carefully considered what the **moral rule** that justifies this judgment would be. In this Justification Essay, you must apply normative **ethical principles** to your judgment, and these principles must all be grounded in a normative **ethical theory**. The justification essay investigates which ethical principles justify the moral judgment that guided your proposal in the discovery essay.

1. In no more than ten sentences, the first paragraph of your Justification Essay should sum up the moral dilemma or conflict you *discovered* in the Discovery Essay, as well as clearly restate your moral rule and moral judgment from your Discovery Essay. You will be justifying, defending, or arguing for your particular moral judgment or rule, so you must be very clear in this review of the critical content of your Discovery Essay.

2. Choose the normative ethical theory (e.g., Utilitarianism, Kantian, etc.) that best defends your moral judgment and then clearly and precisely argue for the validity of your judgment using your selected ethical theory. **This is by far the most important part of this assignment and should make up at least 75% of your paper.**

Normative ethical theories use several principles to help argue for or justify moral rules and judgments. When writing your Justification essay, be sure to utilize these principles (two or

more), as well as the material contained within your books and from your class lectures. When writing your capstone paper, you must defend your conclusion or final proposal using a normative ethical theory. **Remember, you are not just listing principles and simply claiming that they defend your moral rule; you must use the ethical theory (the entire relevant reading and lectures) to argue for your position.** Again, you are using a normative ethical theory to defend or justify your moral judgment or moral rule; you are not using your personal viewpoint, your religious affiliation, or the law. This section is the most important part of your Justification essay.

3. What ethical and/or philosophical objections can be raised about your moral position and the defense of your moral judgment? Be specific. How would you respond to these objections? Have you violated any of the obligations, values, or effects you discovered in your Discovery Essay?

4. Concluding Remarks.

a. Has this process changed your view on your moral judgment? Explain why or why not.

b. What do you want your reader to get out of your moral reasoning exercise?

c. Finally, give a five- to ten-sentence summary of your position.

V. Normative Ethical Theory

A. Moral Vocabulary

1. GENERAL ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS

Foundational values are those concepts or ideas which do not by themselves constitute any one theory but which should be considered as a prerequisite to most satisfactory normative theories. *These values by themselves do not constitute a justification or defense of your position*; that is done through the application of a normative ethical theory.

Consistency: Moral reasons, including moral actions, if they are valid, are binding on all people at all times in all places given the same relevant circumstances.

Impartiality: This principle forbids us from treating one person different than another when there is not a good reason to do so. We set aside our personal interests.

Openness: When examining moral differences between ourselves and other individuals or cultures, we may discover that it is we, not they, who are morally wrong. We must be open to changing our view (Principle of Fallibility, L. Hinman).

Rationality: All legitimate moral acts must be supportable by generally accepted reasons.

Least Harm: When you must choose between evils, choose the least evil.

2. DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

Ethical principles or values are statements of human obligations or duties that are generally accepted and are the expression of normative ethical systems (see Kantian and Utilitarian ethics). The following is a list of commonly recognized definitions, ideas, values, and concepts. A value and a principle are very often interchangeable. For example, I may value "dignity" and have as one of the main operating principles in my life the goal to always treat others with the dignity I desire. The following is not meant to be a definitive list.

Ethics: the conscious reflection on our moral beliefs and attitudes though the use of normative ethical theories (Lawrence Hinman).

Ethical Principle: they are part of a normative theory that justifies or defends moral rules and/or moral judgments. Ethical principles are not contingent upon cultural features such as tradition, religion, or law. For example, a Normative Ethical Principle such as the principle of utility (Utilitarian ethics) or the categorical imperative (Kantian ethics) is not subject to one's subjective viewpoints. Ethics justify or ground morality.

Moral Rule: a specific guideline for action that justifies our moral judgments and actions in our everyday lives. Moral rules tell us what we ought to do and are often established by tradition, religion, laws, etc.

Morality: the rules and guidelines, the mores, which an individual or a group has about what is right or wrong, good or evil.

Mores: the guidelines of a particular society. Mores are often relative to the needs of a particular society or culture (cultural relativism).

Normative Ethics: attempt to answer specific moral questions concerning what people should do or believe. The word "normative" refers to guidelines or norms and is often used interchangeably with the word "prescriptive." Normative ethical theories are Kantian ethics, Virtue ethics, Utilitarian ethics, and so on.

Value: what we choose as worthwhile or believe to have merit, in a general or broad sense. Values should be freely and thoughtfully chosen.

Value System: the ways in which we organize, rank, prioritize, and make decisions based on our values.

Virtues: values turned into actions (Robert Solomon).

B. <u>NICOMACHEAN ETHICS</u> by Aristotle

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http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.html

Book I, chapter 13

Since happiness is an activity of soul in accordance with perfect virtue, we must consider the nature of virtue; for perhaps we shall thus see better the nature of happiness. The true student of politics, too, is thought to have studied virtue above all things; for he wishes to make his fellow citizens good and obedient to the laws. As an example of this we have the lawgivers of the Cretans and the Spartans, and any others of the kind that there may have been. And if this inquiry belongs to political science, clearly the pursuit of it will be in accordance with our original plan. But clearly the virtue we must study is human virtue; for the good we were seeking was human good and the happiness human happiness. By human virtue we mean not that of the body but that of the soul; and happiness also we call an activity of soul. But if this is so, clearly the student of politics must know somehow the facts about soul, as the man who is to heal the eyes or the body as a whole must know about the eyes or the body; and all the more since politics is more prized and better than medicine; but even among doctors the best educated spend much labor on acquiring knowledge of the body. The student of politics, then, must study the soul, and must study it with these objects in view, and do so just to the extent which is sufficient for the questions we are discussing; for further precision is perhaps something more laborious than our purposes require.

Some things are said about it, adequately enough, even in the discussions outside our school, and we must use these; e.g. that one element in the soul is irrational and one has a rational principle. Whether these are separated as the parts of the body or of anything divisible are, or are distinct by definition but by nature inseparable, like convex and concave in the circumference of a circle, does not affect the present question.

Of the irrational element one division seems to be widely distributed, and vegetative in its nature, I mean that which causes nutrition and growth; for it is this kind of power of the soul that one must assign to all nurslings and to embryos, and this same power to full-grown creatures; this is more reasonable than to assign some different power to them. Now the excellence of this seems

to be common to all species and not specifically human; for this part or faculty seems to function most in sleep, while goodness and badness are least manifest in sleep (whence comes the saying that the happy are not better off than the wretched for half their lives; and this happens naturally enough, since sleep is an inactivity of the soul in that respect in which it is called good or bad), unless perhaps to a small extent some of the movements actually penetrate to the soul, and in this respect the dreams of good men are better than those of ordinary people. Enough of this subject, however; let us leave the nutritive faculty alone, since it has by its nature no share in human excellence.

There seems to be also another irrational element in the soul-one which in a sense, however, shares in a rational principle. For we praise the rational principle of the continent man and of the incontinent, and the part of their soul that has such a principle, since it urges them aright and towards the best objects; but there is found in them also another element naturally opposed to the rational principle, which fights against and resists that principle. For exactly as paralyzed limbs when we intend to move them to the right turn on the contrary to the left, so is it with the soul; the impulses of incontinent people move in contrary directions. But while in the body we see that which moves astray, in the soul we do not. No doubt, however, we must none the less suppose that in the soul too there is something contrary to the rational principle, resisting and opposing it. In what sense it is distinct from the other elements does not concern us. Now even this seems to have a share in a rational principle, as we said; at any rate in the continent man it obeys the rational principle and presumably in the temperate and brave man it is still more obedient; for in him it speaks, on all matters, with the same voice as the rational principle.

Therefore the irrational element also appears to be two-fold. For the vegetative element in no way shares in a rational principle, but the appetitive and in general the desiring element in a sense shares in it, in so far as it listens to and obeys it; this is the sense in which we speak of ‘taking account’ of one’s father or one’s friends, not that in which we speak of ‘accounting for a mathematical property. That the irrational element is in some sense persuaded by a rational principle is indicated also by the giving of advice and by all reproof and exhortation. And if this element also must be said to have a rational principle, that which has a rational principle (as well as that which has not) will be twofold, one subdivision having it in the strict sense and in itself, and the other having a tendency to obey as one does one’s father. [paragraph 5]

Virtue too is distinguished into kinds in accordance with this difference; for we say that some of the virtues are intellectual and others moral, philosophic wisdom and understanding and practical wisdom being intellectual, liberality and temperance moral. For in speaking about a man's character we do not say that he is wise or has understanding but that he is good-tempered or temperate; yet we praise the wise man also with respect to his state of mind; and of states of mind we call those which merit praise virtues.

Book II, chapter 1

Section 1. VIRTUE, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral virtue comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name (ethike) is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word ethos (habit). From this it is also plain that none of the moral virtues arises in us by nature; for nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature. For instance the stone which by nature moves downwards cannot be habituated to move upwards, not even if one tries to train it by throwing it up ten thousand times; nor can fire be habituated to move downwards, nor can anything else that by nature behaves in one way be trained to behave in another. Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit.

Again, of all the things that come to us by nature we first acquire the potentiality and later exhibit the activity (this is plain in the case of the senses; for it was not by often seeing or often hearing that we got these senses, but on the contrary we had them before we used them, and did not come to have them by using them); but the virtues we get by first exercising them, as also happens in the case of the arts as well. For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them, e.g. men become builders by building and lyre players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.

This is confirmed by what happens in states; for legislators make the citizens good by forming habits in them, and this is the wish of every legislator, and those who do not effect it miss their mark, and it is in this that a good constitution differs from a bad one.

Again, it is from the same causes and by the same means that every virtue is both produced and destroyed, and similarly every art; for it is from playing the lyre that both good and bad lyre-players are produced. And the corresponding statement is true of builders and of all the rest; men will be good or bad builders as a result of building well or badly. For if this were not so, there would have been no need of a teacher, but all men would have been born good or bad at their craft. This, then, is the case with the virtues also; by doing the acts that we do in our transactions with other men we become just or unjust, and by doing the acts that we do in the presence of danger, and being habituated to feel fear or confidence, we become brave or cowardly. The same is true of appetites and feelings of anger; some men become temperate and good-tempered, others self-indulgent and irascible, by behaving in one way or the other in the appropriate circumstances. Thus, in one word, states of character arise out of like activities. This is why the activities we exhibit must be of a certain kind; it is because the states of character correspond to the differences between these. It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference. [paragraph 10]

Section 2. Since, then, the present inquiry does not aim at theoretical knowledge like the others (for we are inquiring not in order to know what virtue is, but in order to become good, since otherwise our inquiry would have been of no use), we must examine the nature of actions, namely how we ought to do them; for these determine also the nature of the states of character that are produced, as we have said. Now, that we must act according to the right rule is a common principle and must be assumed-it will be discussed later, i.e. both what the right rule is, and how it is related to the other virtues. But this must be agreed upon beforehand, that the whole account of matters of conduct must be given in outline and not precisely, as we said at the very beginning that the accounts we demand must be in accordance with the subject-matter; matters concerned with conduct and questions of what is good for us have no fixity, any more than matters of health. The general account being of this nature, the account of particular cases is yet more lacking in exactness; for they do not fall under any art or precept but the agents themselves

must in each case consider what is appropriate to the occasion, as happens also in the art of medicine or of navigation.

But though our present account is of this nature we must give what help we can. First, then, let us consider this, that it is the nature of such things to be destroyed by defect and excess, as we see in the case of strength and of health (for to gain light on things imperceptible we must use the evidence of sensible things); both excessive and defective exercise destroys the strength, and similarly drink or food which is above or below a certain amount destroys the health, while that which is proportionate both produces and increases and preserves it. So too is it, then, in the case of temperance and courage and the other virtues. For the man who flies from and fears everything and does not stand his ground against anything becomes a coward, and the man who fears nothing at all but goes to meet every danger becomes rash; and similarly the man who indulges in every pleasure and abstains from none becomes self-indulgent, while the man who shuns every pleasure, as boors do, becomes in a way insensible; temperance and courage, then, are destroyed by excess and defect, and preserved by the mean.

But not only are the sources and causes of their origination and growth the same as those of their destruction, but also the sphere of their actualization will be the same; for this is also true of the things which are more evident to sense, e.g. of strength; it is produced by taking much food and undergoing much exertion, and it is the strong man that will be most able to do these things. So too is it with the virtues; by abstaining from pleasures we become temperate, and it is when we have become so that we are most able to abstain from them; and similarly too in the case of courage; for by being habituated to despise things that are terrible and to stand our ground against them we become brave, and it is when we have become so that we shall be most able to stand our ground against them.

Section 3. We must take as a sign of states of character the pleasure or pain that ensues on acts; for the man who abstains from bodily pleasures and delights in this very fact is temperate, while the man who is annoyed at it is self-indulgent, and he who stands his ground against things that are terrible and delights in this or at least is not pained is brave, while the man who is pained is a coward. For moral excellence is concerned with pleasures and pains; it is on account of the pleasure that we do bad things, and on account of the pain that we abstain from noble ones.

Hence we ought to have been brought up in a particular way from our very youth, as Plato says, so as both to delight in and to be pained by the things that we ought; for this is the right education.

Again, if the virtues are concerned with actions and passions, and every passion and every action is accompanied by pleasure and pain, for this reason also virtue will be concerned with pleasures and pains. This is indicated also by the fact that punishment is inflicted by these means; for it is a kind of cure, and it is the nature of cures to be effected by contraries. [paragraph 15]

Again, as we said but lately, every state of soul has a nature relative to and concerned with the kind of things by which it tends to be made worse or better; but it is by reason of pleasures and pains that men become bad, by pursuing and avoiding these- either the pleasures and pains they ought not or when they ought not or as they ought not, or by going wrong in one of the other similar ways that may be distinguished. Hence men even define the virtues as certain states of impassivity and rest; not well, however, because they speak absolutely, and do not say 'as one ought' and 'as one ought not' and 'when one ought or ought not', and the other things that may be added. We assume, then, that this kind of excellence tends to do what is best with regard to pleasures and pains, and vice does the contrary.

The following facts also may show us that virtue and vice are concerned with these same things. There being three objects of choice and three of avoidance, the noble, the advantageous, the pleasant, and their contraries, the base, the injurious, the painful, about all of these the good man tends to go right and the bad man to go wrong, and especially about pleasure; for this is common to the animals, and also it accompanies all objects of choice; for even the noble and the advantageous appear pleasant.

Again, it has grown up with us all from our infancy; this is why it is difficult to rub off this passion, engrained as it is in our life. And we measure even our actions, some of us more and others less, by the rule of pleasure and pain. For this reason, then, our whole inquiry must be about these; for to feel delight and pain rightly or wrongly has no small effect on our actions.

Again, it is harder to fight with pleasure than with anger, to use Heraclitus' phrase', but both art and virtue are always concerned with what is harder; for even the good is better when it is

harder. Therefore for this reason also the whole concern both of virtue and of political science is with pleasures and pains; for the man who uses these well will be good, he who uses them badly bad.

That virtue, then, is concerned with pleasures and pains, and that by the acts from which it arises it is both increased and, if they are done differently, destroyed, and that the acts from which it arose are those in which it actualizes itself- let this be taken as said. [paragraph 20]

Section 4. The question might be asked,; what we mean by saying that we must become just by doing just acts, and temperate by doing temperate acts; for if men do just and temperate acts, they are already just and temperate, exactly as, if they do what is in accordance with the laws of grammar and of music, they are grammarians and musicians.

Or is this not true even of the arts? It is possible to do something that is in accordance with the laws of grammar, either by chance or at the suggestion of another. A man will be a grammarian, then, only when he has both done something grammatical and done it grammatically; and this means doing it in accordance with the grammatical knowledge in himself.

Again, the case of the arts and that of the virtues are not similar; for the products of the arts have their goodness in themselves, so that it is enough that they should have a certain character, but if the acts that are in accordance with the virtues have themselves a certain character it does not follow that they are done justly or temperately. The agent also must be in a certain condition when he does them; in the first place he must have knowledge, secondly he must choose the acts, and choose them for their own sakes, and thirdly his action must proceed from a firm and unchangeable character. These are not reckoned in as conditions of the possession of the arts, except the bare knowledge; but as a condition of the possession of the virtues knowledge has little or no weight, while the other conditions count not for a little but for everything, i.e. the very conditions which result from often doing just and temperate acts.

Actions, then, are called just and temperate when they are such as the just or the temperate man would do; but it is not the man who does these that is just and temperate, but the man who also does them as just and temperate men do them. It is well said, then, that it is by doing just acts

that the just man is produced, and by doing temperate acts the temperate man; without doing these no one would have even a prospect of becoming good.

But most people do not do these, but take refuge in theory and think they are being philosophers and will become good in this way, behaving somewhat like patients who listen attentively to their doctors, but do none of the things they are ordered to do. As the latter will not be made well in body by such a course of treatment, the former will not be made well in soul by such a course of philosophy. [paragraph 25]

Section 5. Next we must consider what virtue is. Since things that are found in the soul are of three kinds- passions, faculties, states of character, virtue must be one of these. By passions I mean appetite, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, friendly feeling, hatred, longing, emulation, pity, and in general the feelings that are accompanied by pleasure or pain; by faculties the things in virtue of which we are said to be capable of feeling these, e.g. of becoming angry or being pained or feeling pity; by states of character the things in virtue of which we stand well or badly with reference to the passions, e.g. with reference to anger we stand badly if we feel it violently or too weakly, and well if we feel it moderately; and similarly with reference to the other passions.

Now neither the virtues nor the vices are passions, because we are not called good or bad on the ground of our passions, but are so called on the ground of our virtues and our vices, and because we are neither praised nor blamed for our passions (for the man who feels fear or anger is not praised, nor is the man who simply feels anger blamed, but the man who feels it in a certain way), but for our virtues and our vices we are praised or blamed.

Again, we feel anger and fear without choice, but the virtues are modes of choice or involve choice. Further, in respect of the passions we are said to be moved, but in respect of the virtues and the vices we are said not to be moved but to be disposed in a particular way.

For these reasons also they are not faculties; for we are neither called good nor bad, nor praised nor blamed, for the simple capacity of feeling the passions; again, we have the faculties by nature, but we are not made good or bad by nature; we have spoken of this before. If, then, the

virtues are neither passions nor faculties, all that remains is that they should be states of character.

Thus we have stated what virtue is in respect of its genus. [paragraph 30]

Section 6. We must, however, not only describe virtue as a state of character, but also say what sort of state it is. We may remark, then, that every virtue or excellence both brings into good condition the thing of which it is the excellence and makes the work of that thing be done well; e.g. the excellence of the eye makes both the eye and its work good; for it is by the excellence of the eye that we see well. Similarly the excellence of the horse makes a horse both good in itself and good at running and at carrying its rider and at awaiting the attack of the enemy. Therefore, if this is true in every case, the virtue of man also will be the state of character which makes a man good and which makes him do his own work well.

How this is to happen we have stated already, but it will be made plain also by the following consideration of the specific nature of virtue. In everything that is continuous and divisible it is possible to take more, less, or an equal amount, and that either in terms of the thing itself or relatively to us; and the equal is an intermediate between excess and defect. By the intermediate in the object I mean that which is equidistant from each of the extremes, which is one and the same for all men; by the intermediate relatively to us that which is neither too much nor too little- and this is not one, nor the same for all. For instance, if ten is many and two is few, six is the intermediate, taken in terms of the object; for it exceeds and is exceeded by an equal amount; this is intermediate according to arithmetical proportion. But the intermediate relatively to us is not to be taken so; if ten pounds are too much for a particular person to eat and two too little, it does not follow that the trainer will order six pounds; for this also is perhaps too much for the person who is to take it, or too little- too little for Milo, too much for the beginner in athletic exercises. The same is true of running and wrestling. Thus a master of any art avoids excess and defect, but seeks the intermediate and chooses this- the intermediate not in the object but relatively to us.

If it is thus, then, that every art does its work well- by looking to the intermediate and judging its works by this standard (so that we often say of good works of art that it is not possible either to

take away or to add anything, implying that excess and defect destroy the goodness of works of art, while the mean preserves it; and good artists, as we say, look to this in their work), and if, further, virtue is more exact and better than any art, as nature also is, then virtue must have the quality of aiming at the intermediate. I mean moral virtue; for it is this that is concerned with passions and actions, and in these there is excess, defect, and the intermediate. For instance, both fear and confidence and appetite and anger and pity and in general pleasure and pain may be felt both too much and too little, and in both cases not well; but to feel them at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right motive, and in the right way, is what is both intermediate and best, and this is characteristic of virtue. Similarly with regard to actions also there is excess, defect, and the intermediate. Now virtue is concerned with passions and actions, in which excess is a form of failure, and so is defect, while the intermediate is praised and is a form of success; and being praised and being successful are both characteristics of virtue. Therefore virtue is a kind of mean, since, as we have seen, it aims at what is intermediate.

Again, it is possible to fail in many ways (for evil belongs to the class of the unlimited, as the Pythagoreans conjectured, and good to that of the limited), while to succeed is possible only in one way (for which reason also one is easy and the other difficult- to miss the mark easy, to hit it difficult); for these reasons also, then, excess and defect are characteristic of vice, and the mean of virtue;

For men are good in but one way, but bad in many. [paragraph 35]

Virtue, then, is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it. Now it is a mean between two vices, that which depends on excess and that which depends on defect; and again it is a mean because the vices respectively fall short of or exceed what is right in both passions and actions, while virtue both finds and chooses that which is intermediate. Hence in respect of its substance and the definition which states its essence virtue is a mean, with regard to what is best and right an extreme.

But not every action nor every passion admits of a mean; for some have names that already imply badness, e.g. spite, shamelessness, envy, and in the case of actions adultery, theft, murder; for all of these and suchlike things imply by their names that they are themselves bad, and not the excesses or deficiencies of them. It is not possible, then, ever to be right with regard to them; one must always be wrong. Nor does goodness or badness with regard to such things depend on committing adultery with the right woman, at the right time, and in the right way, but simply to do any of them is to go wrong. It would be equally absurd, then, to expect that in unjust, cowardly, and voluptuous action there should be a mean, an excess, and a deficiency; for at that rate there would be a mean of excess and of deficiency, an excess of excess, and a deficiency of deficiency. But as there is no excess and deficiency of temperance and courage because what is intermediate is in a sense an extreme, so too of the actions we have mentioned there is no mean nor any excess and deficiency, but however they are done they are wrong; for in general there is neither a mean of excess and deficiency, nor excess and deficiency of a mean.

Section 7. We must, however, not only make this general statement, but also apply it to the individual facts. For among statements about conduct those which are general apply more widely, but those which are particular are more genuine, since conduct has to do with individual cases, and our statements must harmonize with the facts in these cases. We may take these cases from our table. With regard to feelings of fear and confidence courage is the mean; of the people who exceed, he who exceeds in fearlessness has no name (many of the states have no name), while the man who exceeds in confidence is rash, and he who exceeds in fear and falls short in confidence is a coward. With regard to pleasures and pains- not all of them, and not so much with regard to the pains- the mean is temperance, the excess self-indulgence. Persons deficient with regard to the pleasures are not often found; hence such persons also have received no name. But let us call them ‘insensible’.

With regard to giving and taking of money the mean is liberality, the excess and the defect prodigality and meanness. In these actions people exceed and fall short in contrary ways; the prodigal exceeds in spending and falls short in taking, while the mean man exceeds in taking and falls short in spending. (At present we are giving a mere outline or summary, and are satisfied with this; later these states will be more exactly determined.) With regard to money there are also other dispositions- a mean, magnificence (for the magnificent man differs from the liberal man;

the former deals with large sums, the latter with small ones), an excess, tastelessness and vulgarity, and a deficiency, niggardliness; these differ from the states opposed to liberality, and the mode of their difference will be stated later. With regard to honor and dishonor the mean is proper pride, the excess is known as a sort of 'empty vanity', and the deficiency is undue humility; and as we said liberality was related to magnificence, differing from it by dealing with small sums, so there is a state similarly related to proper pride, being concerned with small honors while that is concerned with great. For it is possible to desire honor as one ought, and more than one ought, and less, and the man who exceeds in his desires is called ambitious, the man who falls short unambitious, while the intermediate person has no name. The dispositions also are nameless, except that that of the ambitious man is called ambition. Hence the people who are at the extremes lay claim to the middle place; and we ourselves sometimes call the intermediate person ambitious and sometimes unambitious, and sometimes praise the ambitious man and sometimes the unambitious. The reason of our doing this will be stated in what follows; but now let us speak of the remaining states according to the method which has been indicated.

With regard to anger also there is an excess, a deficiency, and a mean. Although they can scarcely be said to have names, yet since we call the intermediate person good-tempered let us call the mean good temper; of the persons at the extremes let the one who exceeds be called irascible, and his vice irascibility, and the man who falls short an irascible sort of person, and the deficiency irascibility. [paragraph 40]

There are also three other means, which have a certain likeness to one another, but differ from one another: for they are all concerned with intercourse in words and actions, but differ in that one is concerned with truth in this sphere, the other two with pleasantness; and of this one kind is exhibited in giving amusement, the other in all the circumstances of life. We must therefore speak of these too, that we may the better see that in all things the mean is praise-worthy, and the extremes neither praiseworthy nor right, but worthy of blame. Now most of these states also have no names, but we must try, as in the other cases, to invent names ourselves so that we may be clear and easy to follow. With regard to truth, then, the intermediate is a truthful sort of person and the mean may be called truthfulness, while the pretense which exaggerates is boastfulness and the person characterized by it a boaster, and that which understates is mock modesty and the person characterized by it mock-modest. With regard to pleasantness in the giving of amusement

the intermediate person is ready-witted and the disposition ready wit, the excess is buffoonery and the person characterized by it a buffoon, while the man who falls short is a sort of boor and his state is boorishness. With regard to the remaining kind of pleasantness, that which is exhibited in life in general, the man who is pleasant in the right way is friendly and the mean is friendliness, while the man who exceeds is an obsequious person if he has no end in view, a flatterer if he is aiming at his own advantage, and the man who falls short and is unpleasant in all circumstances is a quarrelsome and surly sort of person.

There are also means in the passions and concerned with the passions; since shame is not a virtue, and yet praise is extended to the modest man. For even in these matters one man is said to be intermediate, and another to exceed, as for instance the bashful man who is ashamed of everything; while he who falls short or is not ashamed of anything at all is shameless, and the intermediate person is modest. Righteous indignation is a mean between envy and spite, and these states are concerned with the pain and pleasure that are felt at the fortunes of our neighbors; the man who is characterized by righteous indignation is pained at undeserved good fortune, the envious man, going beyond him, is pained at all good fortune, and the spiteful man falls so far short of being pained that he even rejoices. But these states there will be an opportunity of describing elsewhere; with regard to justice, since it has not one simple meaning, we shall, after describing the other states, distinguish its two kinds and say how each of them is a mean; and similarly we shall treat also of the rational virtues.

Section 8. There are three kinds of disposition, then, two of them vices, involving excess and deficiency respectively, and one a virtue, viz. the mean, and all are in a sense opposed to all; for the extreme states are contrary both to the intermediate state and to each other, and the intermediate to the extremes; as the equal is greater relatively to the less, less relatively to the greater, so the middle states are excessive relatively to the deficiencies, deficient relatively to the excesses, both in passions and in actions. For the brave man appears rash relatively to the coward, and cowardly relatively to the rash man; and similarly the temperate man appears self-indulgent relatively to the insensible man, insensible relatively to the self-indulgent, and the liberal man prodigal relatively to the mean man, mean relatively to the prodigal. Hence also the people at the extremes push the intermediate man each over to the other, and the brave man is called rash by the coward, cowardly by the rash man, and correspondingly in the other cases.

These states being thus opposed to one another, the greatest contrariety is that of the extremes to each other, rather than to the intermediate; for these are further from each other than from the intermediate, as the great is further from the small and the small from the great than both are from the equal. Again, to the intermediate some extremes show a certain likeness, as that of rashness to courage and that of prodigality to liberality; but the extremes show the greatest unlikeness to each other; now contraries are defined as the things that are furthest from each other, so that things that are further apart are more contrary.

To the mean in some cases the deficiency, in some the excess is more opposed; e.g. it is not rashness, which is an excess, but cowardice, which is a deficiency, that is more opposed to courage, and not insensibility, which is a deficiency, but self-indulgence, which is an excess, that is more opposed to temperance. This happens from two reasons, one being drawn from the thing itself; for because one extreme is nearer and liker to the intermediate, we oppose not this but rather its contrary to the intermediate. E.g. since rashness is thought liker and nearer to courage, and cowardice more unlike, we oppose rather the latter to courage; for things that are further from the intermediate are thought more contrary to it. This, then, is one cause, drawn from the thing itself; another is drawn from ourselves; for the things to which we ourselves more naturally tend seem more contrary to the intermediate. For instance, we ourselves tend more naturally to pleasures, and hence are more easily carried away towards self-indulgence than towards propriety. We describe as contrary to the mean, then, rather the directions in which we more often go to great lengths; and therefore self-indulgence, which is an excess, is the more contrary to temperance. [paragraph 50]

Section 9. That moral virtue is a mean, then, and in what sense it is so, and that it is a mean between two vices, the one involving excess, the other deficiency, and that it is such because its character is to aim at what is intermediate in passions and in actions, has been sufficiently stated. Hence also it is no easy task to be good. For in everything it is no easy task to find the middle, e.g. to find the middle of a circle is not for every one but for him who knows; so, too, any one can get angry- that is easy- or give or spend money; but to do this to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive, and in the right way, that is not for every one, nor is it easy; wherefore goodness is both rare and laudable and noble

Book 3, chapter 3

Do we deliberate about everything, and is everything a possible subject of deliberation, or is deliberation impossible about some things? We ought presumably to call not what a fool or a madman would deliberate about, but what a sensible man would deliberate about, a subject of deliberation. Now about eternal things no one deliberates, e.g. about the material universe or the incommensurability of the diagonal and the side of a square. But no more do we deliberate about the things that involve movement but always happen in the same way, whether of necessity or by nature or from any other cause, e.g. the solstices and the risings of the stars; nor about things that happen now in one way, now in another, e.g. droughts and rains; nor about chance events, like the finding of treasure. But we do not deliberate even about all human affairs; for instance, no Spartan deliberates about the best constitution for the Scythians. For none of these things can be brought about by our own efforts.

We deliberate about things that are in our power and can be done; and these are in fact what is left. For nature, necessity, and chance are thought to be causes, and also reason and everything that depends on man. Now every class of men deliberates about the things that can be done by their own efforts. And in the case of exact and self-contained sciences there is no deliberation, e.g. about the letters of the alphabet (for we have no doubt how they should be written); but the things that are brought about by our own efforts, but not always in the same way, are the things about which we deliberate, e.g. questions of medical treatment or of money-making. And we do so more in the case of the art of navigation than in that of gymnastics, inasmuch as it has been less exactly worked out, and again about other things in the same ratio, and more also in the case of the arts than in that of the sciences; for we have more doubt about the former. Deliberation is concerned with things that happen in a certain way for the most part, but in which the event is obscure, and with things in which it is indeterminate. We call in others to aid us in deliberation on important questions, distrusting ourselves as not being equal to deciding. [paragraph 54]

We deliberate not about ends but about means. For a doctor does not deliberate whether he shall heal, nor an orator whether he shall persuade, nor a statesman whether he shall produce law and order, nor does anyone else deliberate about his end. They assume the end and consider how and by what means it is to be attained; and if it seems to be produced by several means they consider

by which it is most easily and best produced, while if it is achieved by one only they consider how it will be achieved by this and by what means this will be achieved, till they come to the first cause, which in the order of discovery is last. For the person who deliberates seems to investigate and analyze in the way described as though he were analyzing a geometrical construction (not all investigation appears to be deliberation- for instance mathematical investigations- but all deliberation is investigation), and what is last in the order of analysis seems to be first in the order of becoming. And if we come on an impossibility, we give up the search, e.g. if we need money and this cannot be got; but if a thing appears possible we try to do it. By 'possible' things I mean things that might be brought about by our own efforts; and these in a sense include things that can be brought about by the efforts of our friends, since the moving principle is in ourselves. The subject of investigation is sometimes the instruments, sometimes the use of them; and similarly in the other cases- sometimes the means, sometimes the mode of using it or the means of bringing it about. It seems, then, as has been said, that man is a moving principle of actions; now deliberation is about the things to be done by the agent himself, and actions are for the sake of things other than themselves. For the end cannot be a subject of deliberation, but only the means; nor indeed can the particular facts be a subject of it, as whether this is bread or has been baked as it should; for these are matters of perception. If we are to be always deliberating, we shall have to go on to infinity. [paragraph 55]

The same thing is deliberated upon and is chosen, except that the object of choice is already determinate, since it is that which has been decided upon as a result of deliberation that is the object of choice. For every one ceases to inquire how he is to act when he has brought the moving principle back to himself and to the ruling part of himself; for this is what chooses. This is plain also from the ancient constitutions, which Homer represented; for the kings announced their choices to the people. The object of choice being one of the things in our own power which is desired after deliberation, choice will be deliberate desire of things in our own power; for when we have decided as a result of deliberation, we desire in accordance with our deliberation.

We may take it, then, that we have described choice in outline, and stated the nature of its objects and the fact that it is concerned with means.

Book 3, chapter 4

That wish is for the end has already been stated; some think it is for the good, others for the apparent good. Now those who say that the good is the object of wish must admit in consequence that that which the man who does not choose aright wishes for is not an object of wish (for if it is to be so, it must also be good; but it was, if it so happened, bad); while those who say the apparent good is the object of wish must admit that there is no natural object of wish, but only what seems good to each man. Now different things appear good to different people, and, if it so happens, even contrary things.

If these consequences are unpleasing, are we to say that absolutely and in truth the good is the object of wish, but for each person the apparent good; that that which is in truth an object of wish is an object of wish to the good man, while any chance thing may be so the bad man, as in the case of bodies also the things that are in truth wholesome are wholesome for bodies which are in good condition, while for those that are diseased other things are wholesome- or bitter or sweet or hot or heavy, and so on; since the good man judges each class of things rightly, and in each the truth appears to him? For each state of character has its own ideas of the noble and the pleasant, and perhaps the good man differs from others most by seeing the truth in each class of things, being as it were the norm and measure of them. In most things the error seems to be due to pleasure; for it appears a good when it is not. We therefore choose the pleasant as a good, and avoid pain as an evil.

**Basic Aristotelian Vocabulary: See course study guide.

C. *Utilitarian Ethics*

UTILITARIANISM by John Stuart Mill (1863), http://www.utilitarianism.com/mill2.htm

Chapter 2: What Utilitarianism Is.

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure. To give a clear view of the moral

standard set up by the theory, much more requires to be said; in particular, what things it includes in the ideas of pain and pleasure; and to what extent this is left an open question. But these supplementary explanations do not affect the theory of life on which this theory of morality is grounded- namely, that pleasure, and freedom from pain, are the only things desirable as ends; and that all desirable things (which are as numerous in the utilitarian as in any other scheme) are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves, or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain.

Now, such a theory of life excites in many minds, and among them in some of the most estimable in feeling and purpose, inveterate dislike. To suppose that life has (as they express it) no higher end than pleasure- no better and nobler object of desire and pursuit- they designate as utterly mean and groveling; as a doctrine worthy only of swine, to whom the followers of Epicurus were, at a very early period, contemptuously likened; and modern holders of the doctrine are occasionally made the subject of equally polite comparisons by its German, French, and English assailants.

When thus attacked, the Epicureans have always answered, that it is not they, but their accusers, who represent human nature in a degrading light; since the accusation supposes human beings to be capable of no pleasures except those of which swine are capable. If this supposition were true, the charge could not be gainsaid, but would then be no longer an imputation; for if the sources of pleasure were precisely the same to human beings and to swine, the rule of life which is good enough for the one would be good enough for the other. The comparison of the Epicurean life to that of beasts is felt as degrading, precisely because a beast's pleasures do not satisfy a human being's conceptions of happiness.

Human beings have faculties more elevated than the animal appetites, and when once made conscious of them, do not regard anything as happiness which does not include their gratification. I do not, indeed, consider the Epicureans to have been by any means faultless in drawing out their scheme of consequences from the utilitarian principle. To do this in any sufficient manner, many Stoic, as well as Christian elements require being included. But there is no known Epicurean theory of life which does not assign to the pleasures of the intellect, of the feelings and imagination, and of the moral sentiments, a much higher value as pleasures than to

those of mere sensation. It must be admitted, however, that utilitarian writers in general have placed the superiority of mental over bodily pleasures chiefly in the greater permanency, safety, uncostliness, etc., of the former- that is, in their circumstantial advantages rather than in their intrinsic nature. And on all these points utilitarians have fully proved their case; but they might have taken the other, and, as it may be called, higher ground, with entire consistency. It is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognize the fact, that some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others. It would be absurd that while, in estimating all other things, quality is considered as well as quantity, the estimation of pleasures should be supposed to depend on quantity alone.

If I am asked, what I mean by difference of quality in pleasures, or what makes one pleasure more valuable than another, merely as a pleasure, except its being greater in amount, there is but one possible answer. Of two pleasures, if there be one to which all or almost all who have experience of both give a decided preference, irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it, that is the more desirable pleasure. If one of the two is, by those who are competently acquainted with both, placed so far above the other that they prefer it, even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent, and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which their nature is capable of, we are justified in ascribing to the preferred enjoyment a superiority in quality, so far outweighing quantity as to render it, in comparison, of small account. (paragraph 5)

Now it is an unquestionable fact that those who are equally acquainted with, and equally capable of appreciating and enjoying, both, do give a most marked preference to the manner of existence which employs their higher faculties. Few human creatures would consent to be changed into any of the lower animals, for a promise of the fullest allowance of a beast's pleasures; no intelligent human being would consent to be a fool, no instructed person would be an ignoramus, no person of feeling and conscience would be selfish and base, even though they should be persuaded that the fool, the dunce, or the rascal is better satisfied with his lot than they are with theirs. They would not resign what they possess more than he for the most complete satisfaction of all the desires which they have in common with him. If they ever fancy they would, it is only in cases of unhappiness so extreme, that to escape from it they would exchange their lot for almost any other, however undesirable in their own eyes. A being of higher faculties requires

more to make him happy, is capable probably of more acute suffering, and certainly accessible to it at more points, than one of an inferior type; but in spite of these liabilities, he can never really wish to sink into what he feels to be a lower grade of existence. We may give what explanation we please of this unwillingness; we may attribute it to pride, a name which is given indiscriminately to some of the most and to some of the least estimable feelings of which mankind are capable: we may refer it to the love of liberty and personal independence, an appeal to which was with the Stoics one of the most effective means for the inculcation of it; to the love of power, or to the love of excitement, both of which do really enter into and contribute to it: but its most appropriate appellation is a sense of dignity, which all human beings possess in one form or other, and in some, though by no means in exact, proportion to their higher faculties, and which is so essential a part of the happiness of those in whom it is strong, that nothing which conflicts with it could be, otherwise than momentarily, an object of desire to them.

Whoever supposes that this preference takes place at a sacrifice of happiness- that the superior being, in anything like equal circumstances, is not happier than the inferior- confounds the two very different ideas, of happiness, and content. It is indisputable that the being whose capacities of enjoyment are low, has the greatest chance of having them fully satisfied; and a highly endowed being will always feel that any happiness which he can look for, as the world is constituted, is imperfect. But he can learn to bear its imperfections, if they are at all bearable; and they will not make him envy the being who is indeed unconscious of the imperfections, but only because he feels not at all the good which those imperfections qualify. It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.

It may be objected, that many who are capable of the higher pleasures, occasionally, under the influence of temptation, postpone them to the lower. But this is quite compatible with a full appreciation of the intrinsic superiority of the higher. Men often, from infirmity of character, make their election for the nearer good, though they know it to be the less valuable; and this no less when the choice is between two bodily pleasures, than when it is between bodily and mental. They pursue sensual indulgences to the injury of health, though perfectly aware that health is the greater good.

It may be further objected, that many who begin with youthful enthusiasm for everything noble, as they advance in years sink into indolence and selfishness. But I do not believe that those who undergo this very common change, voluntarily choose the lower description of pleasures in preference to the higher. I believe that before they devote themselves exclusively to the one, they have already become incapable of the other. Capacity for the nobler feelings is in most natures a very tender plant, easily killed, not only by hostile influences, but by mere want of sustenance; and in the majority of young persons it speedily dies away if the occupations to which their position in life has devoted them, and the society into which it has thrown them, are not favorable to keeping that higher capacity in exercise. Men lose their high aspirations as they lose their intellectual tastes, because they have not time or opportunity for indulging them; and they addict themselves to inferior pleasures, not because they deliberately prefer them, but because they are either the only ones to which they have access, or the only ones which they are any longer capable of enjoying. It may be questioned whether any one who has remained equally susceptible to both classes of pleasures, ever knowingly and calmly preferred the lower; though many, in all ages, have broken down in an ineffectual attempt to combine both.

From this verdict of the only competent judges, I apprehend there can be no appeal. On a question which is the best worth having of two pleasures, or which of two modes of existence is the most grateful to the feelings, apart from its moral attributes and from its consequences, the judgment of those who are qualified by knowledge of both, or, if they differ, that of the majority among them, must be admitted as final. And there needs be the less hesitation to accept this judgment respecting the quality of pleasures, since there is no other tribunal to be referred to even on the question of quantity. What means are there of determining which is the acutest of two pains, or the intensest of two pleasurable sensations, except the general suffrage of those who are familiar with both? Neither pains nor pleasures are homogeneous, and pain is always heterogeneous with pleasure. What is there to decide whether a particular pleasure is worth purchasing at the cost of a particular pain, except the feelings and judgment of the experienced? When, therefore, those feelings and judgment declare the pleasures derived from the higher faculties to be preferable in kind, apart from the question of intensity, to those of which the animal nature, disjoined from the higher faculties, is susceptible, they are entitled on this subject to the same regard. (paragraph 10)

I have dwelt on this point, as being a necessary part of a perfectly just conception of Utility or Happiness, considered as the directive rule of human conduct. But it is by no means an indispensable condition to the acceptance of the utilitarian standard; for that standard is not the agent's own greatest happiness, but the greatest amount of happiness altogether; and if it may possibly be doubted whether a noble character is always the happier for its nobleness, there can be no doubt that it makes other people happier, and that the world in general is immensely a gainer by it. Utilitarianism, therefore, could only attain its end by the general cultivation of nobleness of character, even if each individual were only benefited by the nobleness of others, and his own, so far as happiness is concerned, were a sheer deduction from the benefit. But the bare enunciation of such an absurdity as this last, renders refutation superfluous.

According to the Greatest Happiness Principle, as above explained, the ultimate end, with reference to and for the sake of which all other things are desirable (whether we are considering our own good or that of other people), is an existence exempt as far as possible from pain, and as rich as possible in enjoyments, both in point of quantity and quality; the test of quality, and the rule for measuring it against quantity, being the preference felt by those who in their opportunities of experience, to which must be added their habits of self-consciousness and self-observation, are best furnished with the means of comparison. This, being, according to the utilitarian opinion, the end of human action, is necessarily also the standard of morality; which may accordingly be defined, the rules and precepts for human conduct, by the observance of which an existence such as has been described might be, to the greatest extent possible, secured to all mankind; and not to them only, but, so far as the nature of things admits, to the whole sentient creation.

Against this doctrine, however, arises another class of objectors, who say that happiness, in any form, cannot be the rational purpose of human life and action; because, in the first place, it is unattainable: and they contemptuously ask, what right hast thou to be happy? a question which Mr. Carlyle clenches by the addition, What right, a short time ago, hadst thou even to be? Next, they say, that men can do without happiness; that all noble human beings have felt this, and could not have become noble but by learning the lesson of Entsagen, or renunciation; which lesson, thoroughly learnt and submitted to, they affirm to be the beginning and necessary condition of all virtue.

The first of these objections would go to the root of the matter were it well founded; for if no happiness is to be had at all by human beings, the attainment of it cannot be the end of morality, or of any rational conduct. Though, even in that case, something might still be said for the utilitarian theory; since utility includes not solely the pursuit of happiness, but the prevention or mitigation of unhappiness; and if the former aim be chimerical, there will be all the greater scope and more imperative need for the latter, so long at least as mankind think fit to live, and do not take refuge in the simultaneous act of suicide recommended under certain conditions by Novalis. When, however, it is thus positively asserted to be impossible that human life should be happy, the assertion, if not something like a verbal quibble, is at least an exaggeration. If by happiness be meant a continuity of highly pleasurable excitement, it is evident enough that this is impossible. A state of exalted pleasure lasts only moments, or in some cases, and with some intermissions, hours or days, and is the occasional brilliant flash of enjoyment, not its permanent and steady flame. Of this the philosophers who have taught that happiness is the end of life were as fully aware as those who taunt them. The happiness which they meant was not a life of rapture; but moments of such, in an existence made up of few and transitory pains, many and various pleasures, with a decided predominance of the active over the passive, and having as the foundation of the whole, not to expect more from life than it is capable of bestowing. A life thus composed, to those who have been fortunate enough to obtain it, has always appeared worthy of the name of happiness. And such an existence is even now the lot of many, during some considerable portion of their lives. The present wretched education and wretched social arrangements are the only real hindrance to its being attainable by almost all.

The objectors perhaps may doubt whether human beings, if taught to consider happiness as the end of life, would be satisfied with such a moderate share of it. But great numbers of mankind have been satisfied with much less. The main constituents of a satisfied life appear to be two, either of which by itself is often found sufficient for the purpose: tranquility, and excitement. With much tranquility, many find that they can be content with very little pleasure: with much excitement, many can reconcile themselves to a considerable quantity of pain. There is assuredly no inherent impossibility in enabling even the mass of mankind to unite both; since the two are so far from being incompatible that they are in natural alliance, the prolongation of either being a preparation for, and exciting a wish for, the other. It is only those in whom indolence amounts to

a vice, that do not desire excitement after an interval of repose: it is only those in whom the need of excitement is a disease, that feel the tranquility which follows excitement dull and insipid, instead of pleasurable in direct proportion to the excitement which preceded it. When people who are tolerably fortunate in their outward lot do not find in life sufficient enjoyment to make it valuable to them, the cause generally is, caring for nobody but themselves. To those who have neither public nor private affections, the excitements of life are much curtailed, and in any case dwindle in value as the time approaches when all selfish interests must be terminated by death: while those who leave after them objects of personal affection, and especially those who have also cultivated a fellow-feeling with the collective interests of mankind, retain as lively an interest in life on the eve of death as in the vigor of youth and health. Next to selfishness, the principal cause which makes life unsatisfactory is want of mental cultivation. A cultivated mind – I do not mean that of a philosopher, but any mind to which the fountains of knowledge have been opened, and which has been taught, in any tolerable degree, to exercise its faculties- finds sources of inexhaustible interest in all that surrounds it; in the objects of nature, the achievements of art, the imaginations of poetry, the incidents of history, the ways of mankind, past and present, and their prospects in the future. It is possible, indeed, to become indifferent to all this, and that too without having exhausted a thousandth part of it; but only when one has had from the beginning no moral or human interest in these things, and has sought in them only the gratification of curiosity. (paragraph 15)

Now there is absolutely no reason in the nature of things why an amount of mental culture sufficient to give an intelligent interest in these objects of contemplation, should not be the inheritance of every one born in a civilized country. As little is there an inherent necessity that any human being should be a selfish egoist, devoid of every feeling or care but those which center in his own miserable individuality. Something far superior to this is sufficiently common even now, to give ample earnest of what the human species may be made. Genuine private affections and a sincere interest in the public good, are possible, though in unequal degrees, to every rightly brought up human being. In a world in which there is so much to interest, so much to enjoy, and so much also to correct and improve, every one who has this moderate amount of moral and intellectual requisites is capable of an existence which may be called enviable; and unless such a person, through bad laws, or subjection to the will of others, is denied the liberty to

use the sources of happiness within his reach, he will not fail to find this enviable existence, if he escape the positive evils of life, the great sources of physical and mental suffering- such as indigence, disease, and the unkindness, worthlessness, or premature loss of objects of affection. The main stress of the problem lies, therefore, in the contest with these calamities, from which it is a rare good fortune entirely to escape; which, as things now are, cannot be obviated, and often cannot be in any material degree mitigated. Yet no one whose opinion deserves a moment's consideration can doubt that most of the great positive evils of the world are in themselves removable, and will, if human affairs continue to improve, be in the end reduced within narrow limits. Poverty, in any sense implying suffering, may be completely extinguished by the wisdom of society, combined with the good sense and providence of individuals. Even that most intractable of enemies, disease, may be indefinitely reduced in dimensions by good physical and moral education, and proper control of noxious influences; while the progress of science holds out a promise for the future of still more direct conquests over this detestable foe. And every advance in that direction relieves us from some, not only of the chances which cut short our own lives, but, what concerns us still more, which deprive us of those in whom our happiness is wrapped up. As for vicissitudes of fortune, and other disappointments connected with worldly circumstances, these are principally the effect either of gross imprudence, of ill-regulated desires, or of bad or imperfect social institutions.

All the grand sources, in short, of human suffering are in a great degree, many of them almost entirely, conquerable by human care and effort; and though their removal is grievously slow- though a long succession of generations will perish in the breach before the conquest is completed, and this world becomes all that, if will and knowledge were not wanting, it might easily be made- yet every mind sufficiently intelligent and generous to bear a part, however small and inconspicuous, in the endeavor, will draw a noble enjoyment from the contest itself, which he would not for any bribe in the form of selfish indulgence consent to be without.

And this leads to the true estimation of what is said by the objectors concerning the possibility, and the obligation, of learning to do without happiness. Unquestionably it is possible to do without happiness; it is done involuntarily by nineteen-twentieths of mankind, even in those parts of our present world which are least deep in barbarism; and it often has to be done voluntarily by the hero or the martyr, for the sake of something which he prizes more than his individual

happiness. But this something, what is it, unless the happiness of others or some of the requisites of happiness? It is noble to be capable of resigning entirely one's own portion of happiness, or chances of it: but, after all, this self-sacrifice must be for some end; it is not its own end; and if we are told that its end is not happiness, but virtue, which is better than happiness, I ask, would the sacrifice be made if the hero or martyr did not believe that it would earn for others immunity from similar sacrifices? Would it be made if he thought that his renunciation of happiness for himself would produce no fruit for any of his fellow creatures, but to make their lot like his, and place them also in the condition of persons who have renounced happiness? All honor to those who can abnegate for themselves the personal enjoyment of life, when by such renunciation they contribute worthily to increase the amount of happiness in the world; but he who does it, or professes to do it, for any other purpose, is no more deserving of admiration than the ascetic mounted on his pillar. He may be an inspiriting proof of what men can do, but assuredly not an example of what they should.

Though it is only in a very imperfect state of the world's arrangements that any one can best serve the happiness of others by the absolute sacrifice of his own, yet so long as the world is in that imperfect state, I fully acknowledge that the readiness to make such a sacrifice is the highest virtue which can be found in man. I will add, that in this condition the world, paradoxical as the assertion may be, the conscious ability to do without happiness gives the best prospect of realizing, such happiness as is attainable. For nothing except that consciousness can raise a person above the chances of life, by making him feel that, let fate and fortune do their worst, they have not power to subdue him: which, once felt, frees him from excess of anxiety concerning the evils of life, and enables him, like many a Stoic in the worst times of the Roman Empire, to cultivate in tranquility the sources of satisfaction accessible to him, without concerning himself about the uncertainty of their duration, any more than about their inevitable end.

Meanwhile, let utilitarians never cease to claim the morality of self devotion as a possession which belongs by as good a right to them, as either to the Stoic or to the Transcendentalist. The utilitarian morality does recognize in human beings the power of sacrificing their own greatest good for the good of others. It only refuses to admit that the sacrifice is itself a good. A sacrifice which does not increase, or tend to increase, the sum total of happiness, it considers as wasted.

The only self-renunciation which it applauds, is devotion to the happiness, or to some of the means of happiness, of others; either of mankind collectively, or of individuals within the limits imposed by the collective interests of mankind.

I must again repeat, what the assailants of utilitarianism seldom have the justice to acknowledge, that the happiness which forms the utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct, is not the agent's own happiness, but that of all concerned. As between his own happiness and that of others, utilitarianism requires him to be as strictly impartial as a disinterested and benevolent spectator. In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility. To do as you would be done by, and to love your neighbor as yourself, constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality. As the means of making the nearest approach to this ideal, utility would enjoin, first, that laws and social arrangements should place the happiness, or (as speaking practically it may be called) the interest, of every individual, as nearly as possible in harmony with the interest of the whole; and secondly, that education and opinion, which have so vast a power over human character, should so use that power as to establish in the mind of every individual an indissoluble association between his own happiness and the good of the whole; especially between his own happiness and the practice of such modes of conduct, negative and positive, as regard for the universal happiness prescribes; so that not only he may be unable to conceive the possibility of happiness to himself, consistently with conduct opposed to the general good, but also that a direct impulse to promote the general good may be in every individual one of the habitual motives of action, and the sentiments connected therewith may fill a large and prominent place in every human being's sentient existence. If the, impugners of the utilitarian morality represented it to their own minds in this its, true character, I know not what recommendation possessed by any other morality they could possibly affirm to be wanting to it; what more beautiful or more exalted developments of human nature any other ethical system can be supposed to foster, or what springs of action, not accessible to the utilitarian, such systems rely on for giving effect to their mandates. (paragraph 20)

The objectors to utilitarianism cannot always be charged with representing it in a discreditable light. On the contrary, those among them who entertain anything like a just idea of its disinterested character, sometimes find fault with its standard as being too high for humanity. They say it is exacting too much to require that people shall always act from the inducement of

promoting the general interests of society. But this is to mistake the very meaning of a standard of morals, and confound the rule of action with the motive of it. It is the business of ethics to tell us what are our duties, or by what test we may know them; but no system of ethics requires that the sole motive of all we do shall be a feeling of duty; on the contrary, ninety-nine hundredths of all our actions are done from other motives, and rightly so done, if the rule of duty does not condemn them. It is the more unjust to utilitarianism that this particular misapprehension should be made a ground of objection to it, inasmuch as utilitarian moralists have gone beyond almost all others in affirming that the motive has nothing to do with the morality of the action, though much with the worth of the agent. He who saves a fellow creature from drowning does what is morally right, whether his motive be duty, or the hope of being paid for his trouble; he who betrays the friend that trusts him, is guilty of a crime, even if his object be to serve another friend to whom he is under greater obligations.

But to speak only of actions done from the motive of duty, and in direct obedience to principle: it is a misapprehension of the utilitarian mode of thought, to conceive it as implying that people should fix their minds upon so wide a generality as the world, or society at large. The great majority of good actions are intended not for the benefit of the world, but for that of individuals, of which the good of the world is made up; and the thoughts of the most virtuous man need not on these occasions travel beyond the particular persons concerned, except so far as is necessary to assure himself that in benefiting them he is not violating the rights, that is, the legitimate and authorized expectations, of any one else. The multiplication of happiness is, according to the utilitarian ethics, the object of virtue: the occasions on which any person (except one in a thousand) has it in his power to do this on an extended scale, in other words to be a public benefactor, are but exceptional; and on these occasions alone is he called on to consider public utility; in every other case, private utility, the interest or happiness of some few persons, is all he has to attend to. Those alone the influence of whose actions extends to society in general, need concern themselves habitually about large an object. In the case of abstinences indeed- of things which people forbear to do from moral considerations, though the consequences in the particular case might be beneficial- it would be unworthy of an intelligent agent not to be consciously aware that the action is of a class which, if practiced generally, would be generally injurious, and that this is the ground of the obligation to abstain from it. The amount of regard for the public

interest implied in this recognition, is no greater than is demanded by every system of morals, for they all enjoin to abstain from whatever is manifestly pernicious to society.

The same considerations dispose of another reproach against the doctrine of utility, founded on a still grosser misconception of the purpose of a standard of morality, and of the very meaning of the words right and wrong. It is often affirmed that utilitarianism renders men cold and unsympathizing; that it chills their moral feelings towards individuals; that it makes them regard only the dry and hard consideration of the consequences of actions, not taking into their moral estimate the qualities from which those actions emanate. If the assertion means that they do not allow their judgment respecting the rightness or wrongness of an action to be influenced by their opinion of the qualities of the person who does it, this is a complaint not against utilitarianism, but against having any standard of morality at all; for certainly no known ethical standard decides an action to be good or bad because it is done by a good or a bad man, still less because done by an amiable, a brave, or a benevolent man, or the contrary. These considerations are relevant, not to the estimation of actions, but of persons; and there is nothing in the utilitarian theory inconsistent with the fact that there are other things which interest us in persons besides the rightness and wrongness of their actions. The Stoics, indeed, with the paradoxical misuse of language which was part of their system, and by which they strove to raise themselves above all concern about anything but virtue, were fond of saying that he who has that has everything; that he, and only he, is rich, is beautiful, is a king. But no claim of this description is made for the virtuous man by the utilitarian doctrine. Utilitarians are quite aware that there are other desirable possessions and qualities besides virtue, and are perfectly willing to allow to all of them their full worth. They are also aware that a right action does not necessarily indicate a virtuous character, and that actions which are blamable, often proceed from qualities entitled to praise. When this is apparent in any particular case, it modifies their estimation, not certainly of the act, but of the agent. I grant that they are, notwithstanding, of opinion, that in the long run the best proof of a good character is good actions; and resolutely refuse to consider any mental disposition as good, of which the predominant tendency is to produce bad conduct. This makes them unpopular with many people; but it is an unpopularity which they must share with every one who regards the distinction between right and wrong in a serious light; and the reproach is not one which a conscientious utilitarian need be anxious to repel.

If no more be meant by the objection than that many utilitarians look on the morality of actions, as measured by the utilitarian standard, with too exclusive a regard, and do not lay sufficient stress upon the other beauties of character which go towards making a human being lovable or admirable, this may be admitted. Utilitarians who have cultivated their moral feelings, but not their sympathies nor their artistic perceptions, do fall into this mistake; and so do all other moralists under the same conditions. What can be said in excuse for other moralists is equally available for them, namely, that, if there is to be any error, it is better that it should be on that side. As a matter of fact, we may affirm that among utilitarians as among adherents of other systems, there is every imaginable degree of rigidity and of laxity in the application of their standard: some are even puritanically rigorous, while others are as indulgent as can possibly be desired by sinner or by sentimentalist. But on the whole, a doctrine which brings prominently forward the interest that mankind have in the repression and prevention of conduct which violates the moral law, is likely to be inferior to no other in turning the sanctions of opinion again such violations. It is true, the question, what does violate the moral law? is one on which those who recognize different standards of morality are likely now and then to differ. But difference of opinion on moral questions was not first introduced into the world by utilitarianism, while that doctrine does supply, if not always an easy, at all events a tangible and intelligible mode of deciding such differences.

It may not be superfluous to notice a few more of the common misapprehensions of utilitarian ethics, even those which are so obvious and gross that it might appear impossible for any person of candor and intelligence to fall into them; since persons, even of considerable mental endowments, often give themselves so little trouble to understand the bearings of any opinion against which they entertain a prejudice, and men are in general so little conscious of this voluntary ignorance as a defect, that the vulgarest misunderstandings of ethical doctrines are continually met with in the deliberate writings of persons of the greatest pretensions both to high principle and to philosophy. We not uncommonly hear the doctrine of utility inveighed against as a godless doctrine. If it be necessary to say anything at all against so mere an assumption, we may say that the question depends upon what idea we have formed of the moral character of the Deity. If it be a true belief that God desires, above all things, the happiness of his creatures, and that this was his purpose in their creation, utility is not only not a godless doctrine, but more

profoundly religious than any other. If it be meant that utilitarianism does not recognize the revealed will of God as the supreme law of morals, I answer, that a utilitarian who believes in the perfect goodness and wisdom of God, necessarily believes that whatever God has thought fit to reveal on the subject of morals, must fulfill the requirements of utility in a supreme degree. But others besides utilitarians have been of opinion that the Christian revelation was intended, and is fitted, to inform the hearts and minds of mankind with a spirit which should enable them to find for themselves what is right, and incline them to do it when found, rather than to tell them, except in a very general way, what it is; and that we need a doctrine of ethics, carefully followed out, to interpret to us the will God. Whether this opinion is correct or not, it is superfluous here to discuss; since whatever aid religion, either natural or revealed, can afford to ethical investigation, is as open to the utilitarian moralist as to any other. He can use it as the testimony of God to the usefulness or hurtfulness of any given course of action, by as good a right as others can use it for the indication of a transcendental law, having no connection with usefulness or with happiness.

Again, Utility is often summarily stigmatized as an immoral doctrine by giving it the name of Expediency, and taking advantage of the popular use of that term to contrast it with Principle. But the Expedient, in the sense in which it is opposed to the Right, generally means that which is expedient for the particular interest of the agent himself; as when a minister sacrifices the interests of his country to keep himself in place. When it means anything better than this, it means that which is expedient for some immediate object, some temporary purpose, but which violates a rule whose observance is expedient in a much higher degree. The Expedient, in this sense, instead of being the same thing with the useful, is a branch of the hurtful. Thus, it would often be expedient, for the purpose of getting over some momentary embarrassment, or attaining some object immediately useful to ourselves or others, to tell a lie. But inasmuch as the cultivation in ourselves of a sensitive feeling on the subject of veracity, is one of the most useful, and the enfeeblement of that feeling one of the most hurtful, things to which our conduct can be instrumental; and inasmuch as any, even unintentional, deviation from truth, does that much towards weakening the trustworthiness of human assertion, which is not only the principal support of all present social well-being, but the insufficiency of which does more than any one thing that can be named to keep back civilization, virtue, everything on which human happiness on the largest scale depends; we feel that the violation, for a present advantage, of a rule of such

transcendent expediency, is not expedient, and that he who, for the sake of a convenience to himself or to some other individual, does what depends on him to deprive mankind of the good, and inflict upon them the evil, involved in the greater or less reliance which they can place in each other's word, acts the part of one of their worst enemies. Yet that even this rule, sacred as it is, admits of possible exceptions, is acknowledged by all moralists; the chief of which is when the withholding of some fact (as of information from a malefactor, or of bad news from a person dangerously ill) would save an individual (especially an individual other than oneself) from great and unmerited evil, and when the withholding can only be effected by denial. But in order that the exception may not extend itself beyond the need, and may have the least possible effect in weakening reliance on veracity, it ought to be recognized, and, if possible, its limits defined; and if the principle of utility is good for anything, it must be good for weighing these conflicting utilities against one another, and marking out the region within which one or the other preponderates.

Again, defenders of utility often find themselves called upon to reply to such objections as this- that there is not time, previous to action, for calculating and weighing the effects of any line of conduct on the general happiness. This is exactly as if any one were to say that it is impossible to guide our conduct by Christianity, because there is not time, on every occasion on which anything has to be done, to read through the Old and New Testaments. The answer to the objection is, that there has been ample time, namely, the whole past duration of the human species. During all that time, mankind have been learning by experience the tendencies of actions; on which experience all the prudence, as well as all the morality of life, are dependent. People talk as if the commencement of this course of experience had hitherto been put off, and as if, at the moment when some man feels tempted to meddle with the property or life of another, he had to begin considering for the first time whether murder and theft are injurious to human happiness. Even then I do not think that he would find the question very puzzling; but, at all events, the matter is now done to his hand.

It is truly a whimsical supposition that, if mankind were agreed in considering utility to be the test of morality, they would remain without any agreement as to what is useful, and would take no measures for having their notions on the subject taught to the young, and enforced by law and opinion. There is no difficulty in proving any ethical standard whatever to work ill, if we suppose

universal idiocy to be conjoined with it; but on any hypothesis short of that, mankind must by this time have acquired positive beliefs as to the effects of some actions on their happiness; and the beliefs which have thus come down are the rules of morality for the multitude, and for the philosopher until he has succeeded in finding better. That philosophers might easily do this, even now, on many subjects; that the received code of ethics is by no means of divine right; and that mankind have still much to learn as to the effects of actions on the general happiness, I admit, or rather, earnestly maintain. The corollaries from the principle of utility, like the precepts of every practical art, admit of indefinite improvement, and, in a progressive state of the human mind, their improvement is perpetually going on.

But to consider the rules of morality as improvable, is one thing; to pass over the intermediate generalizations entirely, and endeavor to test each individual action directly by the first principle, is another. It is a strange notion that the acknowledgment of a first principle is inconsistent with the admission of secondary ones. To inform a traveler respecting the place of his ultimate destination is not to forbid the use of landmarks and direction-posts on the way. The proposition that happiness is the end and aim of morality, does not mean that no road ought to be laid down to that goal, or that persons going thither should not be advised to take one direction rather than another. Men really ought to leave off talking a kind of nonsense on this subject, which they would neither talk nor listen to on other matters of practical concern. Nobody argues that the art of navigation is not founded on astronomy, because sailors cannot wait to calculate the Nautical Almanac. Being rational creatures, they go to sea with it ready calculated; and all rational creatures go out upon the sea of life with their minds made up on the common questions of right and wrong, as well as on many of the far more difficult questions of wise and foolish. And this, as long as foresight is a human quality, it is to be presumed they will continue to do. Whatever we adopt as the fundamental principle of morality, we require subordinate principles to apply it by; the impossibility of doing without them, being common to all systems, can afford no argument against any one in particular; but gravely to argue as if no such secondary principles could be had, and as if mankind had remained till now, and always must remain, without drawing any general conclusions from the experience of human life, is as high a pitch, I think, as absurdity has ever reached in philosophical controversy.

The remainder of the stock arguments against utilitarianism mostly consist in laying to its charge the common infirmities of human nature, and the general difficulties which embarrass conscientious persons in shaping their course through life. We are told that a utilitarian will be apt to make his own particular case an exception to moral rules, and, when under temptation, will see a utility in the breach of a rule, greater than he will see in its observance. But is utility the only creed which is able to furnish us with excuses for evil doing, and means of cheating our own conscience? They are afforded in abundance by all doctrines which recognize as a fact in morals the existence of conflicting considerations; which all doctrines do, that have been believed by sane persons. It is not the fault of any creed, but of the complicated nature of human affairs, that rules of conduct cannot be so framed as to require no exceptions, and that hardly any kind of action can safely be laid down as either always obligatory or always condemnable. There is no ethical creed which does not temper the rigidity of its laws, by giving certain latitude, under the moral responsibility of the agent, for accommodation to peculiarities of circumstances; and under every creed, at the opening thus made, self-deception and dishonest casuistry get in. There exists no moral system under which there do not arise unequivocal cases of conflicting obligation. These are the real difficulties, the knotty points both in the theory of ethics, and in the conscientious guidance of personal conduct. They are overcome practically, with greater or with less success, according to the intellect and virtue of the individual; but it can hardly be pretended that any one will be the less qualified for dealing with them, from possessing an ultimate standard to which conflicting rights and duties can be referred. If utility is the ultimate source of moral obligations, utility may be invoked to decide between them when their demands are incompatible. Though the application of the standard may be difficult, it is better than none at all: while in other systems, the moral laws all claiming independent authority, there is no common umpire entitled to interfere between them; their claims to precedence one over another rest on little better than sophistry, and unless determined, as they generally are, by the unacknowledged influence of considerations of utility, afford a free scope for the action of personal desires and partialities. We must remember that only in these cases of conflict between secondary principles is it requisite that first principles should be appealed to. There is no case of moral obligation in which some secondary principle is not involved; and if only one, there can seldom be any real doubt which one it is, in the mind of any person by whom the principle itself is recognized.

(http://www.utilitarianism.com/mill2.htm)

**Basic Utilitarian Vocabulary: principle of utility/greatest happiness principle, acts to increase overall happiness and well-being of the group, consequences, higher/lower goods, considers how many will be effected and to what degree they will be, calculates consequences, assesses outcomes, balances benefits, maximizes utility, minimizes disutility, does not interfere with liberty of others….

D. Kantian Ethics

Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals. By Immanuel Kant.

FIRST SECTION: TRANSITION FROM THE COMMON RATIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF MORALITY TO THE PHILOSOPHICAL**.**
http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/5682/pg5682.html

Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good, without qualification, except a good will. Intelligence, wit, judgment, and the other talents of the mind, however they may be named, or courage, resolution, perseverance, as qualities of temperament, are undoubtedly good and desirable in many respects; but these gifts of nature may also become extremely bad and mischievous if the will which is to make use of them, and which, therefore, constitutes what is called character, is not good. It is the same with the gifts of fortune. Power, riches, honor, even health, and the general well-being and contentment with one's condition which is called happiness, inspire pride, and often presumption, if there is not a good will to correct the influence of these on the mind, and with this also to rectify the whole principle of acting and adapt it to its end. The sight of a being that is not adorned with a single feature of a pure and good will, enjoying unbroken prosperity, can never give pleasure to an impartial rational spectator. Thus a good will appears to constitute the indispensable condition even of being worthy of happiness.

There are even some qualities which are of service to this good will itself and may facilitate its action, yet which have no intrinsic unconditional value, but always presuppose a good will, and

this qualifies the esteem that we justly have for them and does not permit us to regard them as absolutely good. Moderation in the affections and passions, self-control, and calm deliberation are not only good in many respects, but even seem to constitute part of the intrinsic worth of the person; but they are far from deserving to be called good without qualification, although they have been so unconditionally praised by the ancients. For without the principles of a good will, they may become extremely bad, and the coolness of a villain not only makes him far more dangerous, but also directly makes him more abominable in our eyes than he would have been without it.

A good will is good not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition; that is, it is good in itself, and considered by itself is to be esteemed much higher than all that can be brought about by it in favor of any inclination, nay even of the sum total of all inclinations. Even if it should happen that, owing to special disfavor of fortune, or the niggardly provision of a step-motherly nature, this will should wholly lack power to accomplish its purpose, if with its greatest efforts it should yet achieve nothing, and there should remain only the good will (not, to be sure, a mere wish, but the summoning of all means in our power), then, like a jewel, it would still shine by its own light, as a thing which has its whole value in itself. Its usefulness or fruitfulness can neither add nor take away anything from this value. It would be, as it were, only the setting to enable us to handle it the more conveniently in common commerce, or to attract to it the attention of those who are not yet connoisseurs, but not to recommend it to true connoisseurs, or to determine its value.

There is, however, something so strange in this idea of the absolute value of the mere will, in which no account is taken of its utility, that notwithstanding the thorough assent of even common reason to the idea, yet a suspicion must arise that it may perhaps really be the product of mere high-flown fancy, and that we may have misunderstood the purpose of nature in assigning reason as the governor of our will. Therefore we will examine this idea from this point of view.

In the physical constitution of an organized being, that is, a being adapted suitably to the purposes of life, we assume it as a fundamental principle that no organ for any purpose will be found but what is also the fittest and best adapted for that purpose. Now in a being which has

reason and a will, if the proper object of nature were its conservation, its welfare, in a word, its happiness, then nature would have hit upon a very bad arrangement in selecting the reason of the creature to carry out this purpose. For all the actions which the creature has to perform with a view to this purpose, and the whole rule of its conduct, would be far more surely prescribed to it by instinct, and that end would have been attained thereby much more certainly than it ever can be by reason. Should reason have been communicated to this favored creature over and above, it must only have served it to contemplate the happy constitution of its nature, to admire it, to congratulate itself thereon, and to feel thankful for it to the beneficent cause, but not that it should subject its desires to that weak and delusive guidance and meddle bunglingly with the purpose of nature. In a word, nature would have taken care that reason should not break forth into practical exercise, nor have the presumption, with its weak insight, to think out for itself the plan of happiness, and of the means of attaining it. Nature would not only have taken on herself the choice of the ends, but also of the means, and with wise foresight would have entrusted both to instinct. (paragraph 5)

And, in fact, we find that the more a cultivated reason applies itself with deliberate purpose to the enjoyment of life and happiness, so much the more does the man fail of true satisfaction. And from this circumstance there arises in many, if they are candid enough to confess it, a certain degree of misology, that is, hatred of reason, especially in the case of those who are most experienced in the use of it, because after calculating all the advantages they derive, I do not say from the invention of all the arts of common luxury, but even from the sciences (which seem to them to be after all only a luxury of the understanding), they find that they have, in fact, only brought more trouble on their shoulders. rather than gained in happiness; and they end by envying, rather than despising, the more common stamp of men who keep closer to the guidance of mere instinct and do not allow their reason much influence on their conduct. And this we must admit, that the judgment of those who would very much lower the lofty eulogies of the advantages which reason gives us in regard to the happiness and satisfaction of life, or who would even reduce them below zero, is by no means morose or ungrateful to the goodness with which the world is governed, but that there lies at the root of these judgments the idea that our existence has a different and far nobler end, for which, and not for happiness, reason is properly

intended, and which must, therefore, be regarded as the supreme condition to which the private ends of man must, for the most part, be postponed.

For as reason is not competent to guide the will with certainty in regard to its objects and the satisfaction of all our wants (which it to some extent even multiplies), this being an end to which an implanted instinct would have led with much greater certainty; and since, nevertheless, reason is imparted to us as a practical faculty, i.e., as one which is to have influence on the will, therefore, admitting that nature generally in the distribution of her capacities has adapted the means to the end, its true destination must be to produce a will, not merely good as a means to something else, but good in itself, for which reason was absolutely necessary. This will then, though not indeed the sole and complete good, must be the supreme good and the condition of every other, even of the desire of happiness. Under these circumstances, there is nothing inconsistent with the wisdom of nature in the fact that the cultivation of the reason, which is requisite for the first and unconditional purpose, does in many ways interfere, at least in this life, with the attainment of the second, which is always conditional, namely, happiness. Nay, it may even reduce it to nothing, without nature thereby failing of her purpose. For reason recognizes the establishment of a good will as its highest practical destination, and in attaining this purpose is capable only of a satisfaction of its own proper kind, namely that from the attainment of an end, which end again is determined by reason only, notwithstanding that this may involve many a disappointment to the ends of inclination. [paragraph 7]

We have then to develop the notion of a will which deserves to be highly esteemed for itself and is good without a view to anything further, a notion which exists already in the sound natural understanding, requiring rather to be cleared up than to be taught, and which in estimating the value of our actions always takes the first place and constitutes the condition of all the rest. In order to do this, we will take the notion of duty, which includes that of a good will, although implying certain subjective restrictions and hindrances. These, however, far from concealing it, or rendering it unrecognizable, rather bring it out by contrast and make it shine forth so much the brighter.

I omit here all actions which are already recognized as inconsistent with duty, although they may be useful for this or that purpose, for with these the question whether they are done from duty

cannot arise at all, since they even conflict with it. I also set aside those actions which really conform to duty, but to which men have no direct inclination, performing them because they are impelled thereto by some other inclination. For in this case we can readily distinguish whether the action which agrees with duty is done from duty, or from a selfish view. It is much harder to make this distinction when the action accords with duty and the subject has besides a direct inclination to it. For example, it is always a matter of duty that a dealer should not over charge an inexperienced purchaser; and wherever there is much commerce the prudent tradesman does not overcharge, but keeps a fixed price for everyone, so that a child buys of him as well as any other. Men are thus honestly served; but this is not enough to make us believe that the tradesman has so acted from duty and from principles of honesty: his own advantage required it; it is out of the question in this case to suppose that he might besides have a direct inclination in favor of the buyers, so that, as it were, from love he should give no advantage to one over another. Accordingly the action was done neither from duty nor from direct inclination, but merely with a selfish view.

On the other hand, it is a duty to maintain one's life; and, in addition, everyone has also a direct inclination to do so. But on this account the often anxious care which most men take for it has no intrinsic worth, and their maxim has no moral import. They preserve their life as duty requires, no doubt, but not because duty requires. On the other hand, if adversity and hopeless sorrow have completely taken away the relish for life; if the unfortunate one, strong in mind, indignant at his fate rather than desponding or dejected, wishes for death, and yet preserves his life without loving it- not from inclination or fear, but from duty- then his maxim has a moral worth. (paragraph 10)

To be beneficent when we can is a duty; and besides this, there are many minds so sympathetically constituted that, without any other motive of vanity or self-interest, they find a pleasure in spreading joy around them and can take delight in the satisfaction of others so far as it is their own work. But I maintain that in such a case an action of this kind, however proper, however amiable it may be, has nevertheless no true moral worth, but is on a level with other inclinations, e.g., the inclination to honor, which, if it is happily directed to that which is in fact of public utility and accordant with duty and consequently honorable, deserves praise and encouragement, but not esteem. For the maxim lacks the moral import, namely, that such actions

be done from duty, not from inclination. Put the case that the mind of that philanthropist were clouded by sorrow of his own, extinguishing all sympathy with the lot of others, and that, while he still has the power to benefit others in distress, he is not touched by their trouble because he is absorbed with his own; and now suppose that he tears himself out of this dead insensibility, and performs the action without any inclination to it, but simply from duty, then first has his action its genuine moral worth. Further still; if nature has put little sympathy in the heart of this or that man; if he, supposed to be an upright man, is by temperament cold and indifferent to the sufferings of others, perhaps because in respect of his own he is provided with the special gift of patience and fortitude and supposes, or even requires, that others should have the same- and such a man would certainly not be the meanest product of nature- but if nature had not specially framed him for a philanthropist, would he not still find in himself a source from whence to give himself a far higher worth than that of a good-natured temperament could be? Unquestionably. It is just in this that the moral worth of the character is brought out which is incomparably the highest of all, namely, that he is beneficent, not from inclination, but from duty. [paragraph 11]

To secure one's own happiness is a duty, at least indirectly; for discontent with one's condition, under a pressure of many anxieties and amidst unsatisfied wants, might easily become a great temptation to transgression of duty. But here again, without looking to duty, all men have already the strongest and most intimate inclination to happiness, because it is just in this idea that all inclinations are combined in one total. But the precept of happiness is often of such a sort that it greatly interferes with some inclinations, and yet a man cannot form any definite and certain conception of the sum of satisfaction of all of them which is called happiness. It is not then to be wondered at that a single inclination, definite both as to what it promises and as to the time within which it can be gratified, is often able to overcome such a fluctuating idea, and that a gouty patient, for instance, can choose to enjoy what he likes, and to suffer what he may, since, according to his calculation, on this occasion at least, he has not sacrificed the enjoyment of the present moment to a possibly mistaken expectation of a happiness which is supposed to be found in health. But even in this case, if the general desire for happiness did not influence his will, and supposing that in his particular case health was not a necessary element in this calculation, there yet remains in this, as in all other cases, this law, namely, that he should promote his happiness not from inclination but from duty, and by this would his conduct first acquire true moral worth.

It is in this manner, undoubtedly, that we are to understand those passages of Scripture also in which we are commanded to love our neighbor, even our enemy. For love, as an affection, cannot be commanded, but beneficence for duty's sake may; even though we are not impelled to it by any inclination- nay, are even repelled by a natural and unconquerable aversion. This is practical love and not pathological- a love which is seated in the will, and not in the propensions of sense- in principles of action and not of tender sympathy; and it is this love alone which can be commanded.

The second proposition is: That an action done from duty derives its moral worth, not from the purpose which is to be attained by it, but from the maxim by which it is determined, and therefore does not depend on the realization of the object of the action, but merely on the principle of volition by which the action has taken place, without regard to any object of desire. It is clear from what precedes that the purposes which we may have in view in our actions, or their effects regarded as ends and springs of the will, cannot give to actions any unconditional or moral worth. In what, then, can their worth lie, if it is not to consist in the will and in reference to its expected effect? It cannot lie anywhere but in the principle of the will without regard to the ends which can be attained by the action. For the will stands between its a priori principle, which is formal, and its a posteriori spring, which is material, as between two roads, and as it must be determined by something, it that it must be determined by the formal principle of volition when an action is done from duty, in which case every material principle has been withdrawn from it. [paragraph 14]

The third proposition, which is a consequence of the two preceding, I would express thus Duty is the necessity of acting from respect for the law. I may have inclination for an object as the effect of my proposed action, but I cannot have respect for it, just for this reason, that it is an effect and not energy of will. Similarly I cannot have respect for inclination, whether my own or another's; I can at most, if my own, approve it; if another's, sometimes even love it; i.e., look on it as favorable to my own interest. It is only what is connected with my will as a principle, by no means as an effect- what does not subserve my inclination, but overpowers it, or at least in case of choice excludes it from its calculation- in other words, simply the law of itself, which can be an object of respect, and hence a command. Now an action done from duty must wholly exclude the influence of inclination and with it every object of the will, so that nothing remains which

can determine the will except objectively the law, and subjectively pure respect for this practical law, and consequently the maxim that I should follow this law even to the thwarting of all my inclinations. (paragraph 15)

Thus the moral worth of an action does not lie in the effect expected from it, or in any principle of action which requires one to borrow its motive from this expected effect. For all these effects- agreeableness of one's condition and even the promotion of the happiness of others- could have been also brought about by other causes, so that for this there would have been no need of the will of a rational being; whereas it is in this alone that the supreme and unconditional good can be found. The pre-eminent good which we call moral can therefore consist in nothing else than the conception of law in itself, which certainly is only possible in a rational being, in so far as this conception, and not the expected effect, determines the will. This is a good which is already present in the person who acts accordingly, and we have not to wait for it to appear first in the result.

But what sort of law can that be, the conception of which must determine the will, even without paying any regard to the effect expected from it, in order that this will may be called good absolutely and without qualification? As I have deprived the will of every impulse which could arise to it from obedience to any law, there remains nothing but the universal conformity of its actions to law in general, which alone is to serve the will as a principle, i.e., I am never to act otherwise than so that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law. Here, now, it is the simple conformity to law in general, without assuming any particular law applicable to certain actions that serves the will as its principle and must so serve it, if duty is not to be a vain delusion and a chimerical notion. The common reason of men in its practical judgments perfectly coincides with this and always has in view the principle here suggested.

Let the question be, for example: May I when in distress make a promise with the intention not to keep it? I readily distinguish here between the two significations which the question may have: Whether it is prudent, or whether it is right, to make a false promise? The former may undoubtedly be the case. I see clearly indeed that it is not enough to extricate myself from a present difficulty by means of this subterfuge, but it must be well considered whether there may not hereafter spring from this lie much greater inconvenience than that from which I now free

myself, and as, with all my supposed cunning, the consequences cannot be so easily foreseen but that credit once lost may be much more injurious to me than any mischief which I seek to avoid at present, it should be considered whether it would not be more prudent to act herein according to a universal maxim and to make it a habit to promise nothing except with the intention of keeping it. But it is soon clear to me that such a maxim will still only be based on the fear of consequences. Now it is a wholly different thing to be truthful from duty and to be so from apprehension of injurious consequences. In the first case, the very notion of the action already implies a law for me; in the second case, I must first look about elsewhere to see what results may be combined with it which would affect myself. For to deviate from the principle of duty is beyond all doubt wicked; but to be unfaithful to my maxim of prudence may often be very advantageous to me, although to abide by it is certainly safer. The shortest way, however, and an unerring one, to discover the answer to this question whether a lying promise is consistent with duty, is to ask myself, "Should I be content that my maxim (to extricate myself from difficulty by a false promise) should hold good as a universal law, for myself as well as for others? and should I be able to say to myself, "Every one may make a deceitful promise when he finds himself in a difficulty from which he cannot otherwise extricate himself?" Then I presently become aware that while I can will the lie, I can by no means will that lying should be a universal law. For with such a law there would be no promises at all, since it would be in vain to allege my intention in regard to my future actions to those who would not believe this allegation, or if they over hastily did so would pay me back in my own coin. Hence my maxim, as soon as it should be made a universal law, would necessarily destroy itself. [paragraph 18]

I do not, therefore, need any far-reaching penetration to discern what I have to do in order that my will may be morally good. Inexperienced in the course of the world, incapable of being prepared for all its contingencies, I only ask myself: Canst thou also will that thy maxim should be a universal law? If not, then it must be rejected, and that not because of a disadvantage accruing from it to myself or even to others, but because it cannot enter as a principle into a possible universal legislation, and reason extorts from me immediate respect for such legislation. I do not indeed as yet discern on what this respect is based (this the philosopher may inquire), but at least I understand this, that it is an estimation of the worth which far outweighs all worth of what is recommended by inclination, and that the necessity of acting from pure respect for the

practical law is what constitutes duty, to which every other motive must give place, because it is the condition of a will being good in itself, and the worth of such a will is above everything.

Thus, then, without quitting the moral knowledge of common human reason, we have arrived at its principle. And although, no doubt, common men do not conceive it in such an abstract and universal form, yet they always have it before their eyes and use it as the standard of their decision. Here it would be easy to show how, with this compass in hand, men are well able to distinguish, in every case that occurs, what is good, what bad, conformably to duty or inconsistent with it, if, without in the least teaching them anything new, we only, like Socrates, direct their attention to the principle they themselves employ; and that, therefore, we do not need science and philosophy to know what we should do to be honest and good, yea, even wise and virtuous. Indeed we might well have conjectured beforehand that the knowledge of what every man is bound to do, and therefore also to know, would be within the reach of every man, even the commonest. Here we cannot forbear admiration when we see how great an advantage the practical judgment has over the theoretical in the common understanding of men. In the latter, if common reason ventures to depart from the laws of experience and from the perceptions of the senses, it falls into mere inconceivabilities and self-contradictions, at least into a chaos of uncertainty, obscurity, and instability. But in the practical sphere it is just when the common understanding excludes all sensible things from practical laws that its power of judgment begins to show itself to advantage. It then becomes even subtle, whether it be that it chicanes with its own conscience or with other claims respecting what is to be called right, or whether it desires for its own instruction to determine honestly the worth of actions; and, in the latter case, it may even have as good a hope of hitting the mark as any philosopher whatever can promise himself. Nay, it is almost more sure of doing so, because the philosopher cannot have any other principle, while he may easily perplex his judgment by a multitude of considerations foreign to the matter, and so turn aside from the right way. Would it not therefore be wiser in moral concerns to acquiesce in the judgment of common reason, or at most only to call in philosophy for the purpose of rendering the system of morals more complete and intelligible, and its rules more convenient for use (especially for disputation), but not so as to draw off the common understanding from its happy simplicity, or to bring it by means of philosophy into a new path of inquiry and instruction? (paragraph 20)

Innocence is indeed a glorious thing; only, on the other hand, it is very sad that it cannot well maintain itself and is easily seduced. On this account even wisdom- which otherwise consists more in conduct than in knowledge- yet has need of science, not in order to learn from it, but to secure for its precepts admission and permanence. Against all the commands of duty which reason represents to man as so deserving of respect, he feels in himself a powerful counterpoise in his wants and inclinations, the entire satisfaction of which he sums up under the name of happiness. Now reason issues its commands unyieldingly, without promising anything to the inclinations, and, as it were, with disregard and contempt for these claims, which are so impetuous, and at the same time so plausible, and which will not allow themselves to be suppressed by any command. Hence there arises a natural dialectic, i.e., a disposition, to argue against these strict laws of duty and to question their validity, or at least their purity and strictness; and, if possible, to make them more accordant with our wishes and inclinations, that is to say, to corrupt them at their very source, and entirely to destroy their worth- a thing which even common practical reason cannot ultimately call good.

Thus is the common reason of man compelled to go out of its sphere, and to take a step into the field of a practical philosophy, not to satisfy any speculative want (which never occurs to it as long as it is content to be mere sound reason), but even on practical grounds, in order to attain in it information and clear instruction respecting the source of its principle, and the correct determination of it in opposition to the maxims which are based on wants and inclinations, so that it may escape from the perplexity of opposite claims and not run the risk of losing all genuine moral principles through the equivocation into which it easily falls. Thus, when practical reason cultivates itself, there insensibly arises in it a dialectic which forces it to seek aid in philosophy, just as happens to it in its theoretic use; and in this case, therefore, as well as in the other, it will find rest nowhere but in a thorough critical examination of our reason.

**Basic Kantian Vocabulary: according to duty, from duty, perfect and imperfect duties, not motivated by consequences, categorical imperative, principles of ends, disregards personal desires, inclinations and preferences, respects moral law, takes only universalizable actions, makes no exceptions, acts as a rational law- giver, acts out of respect for the dignity of others, sees others as autonomous, rational, decision makers, does not use others, autonomy, self-legislating….

VI. SAMPLE CASE ANALYSIS

The following is a sample essay completed by a student in Moral Reasoning several semesters ago. While not perfect, it is a good example of what a justification of a moral rule would look like. To complete the assignment, you should not try to do your analysis exactly as this student did. In fact, this sample is not given for you to mimic, but rather as a tool to help you understand the assignment and to see how others tackled the assignment. The best source for assistance in understanding how to complete these assignments is your professor.

Sample Justification Essay: Stealing

About six months ago, I was faced with a difficult moral dilemma. I received a check in error from a fragrance company that I do free lance modeling for occasionally. After carefully thinking through the situation, I realized I would feel guilty if I kept the check, that the company would lose money, and other workers could get short-changed on what was owed to them. On the other hand, I would have extra money. While these are all consequences of keeping the check, the strongest argument against doing so is that it is simply wrong-no matter what the consequences are. I decided to return the check because keeping the check would have been stealing. The guiding moral rule in this circumstance was that it is wrong to steal.

The decision to uphold the moral rule that it is wrong to steal can be defended by applying Kantian Ethical Theory. The Categorical Imperative, one of the core principles of Kantian Theory, is as follows: "Act only on that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it would become a universal law" (source) This can be restated in simpler terms as only choose actions that would be morally permissible by all people, at all times, and under all circumstances and that is done out of moral duty (source). Kant argued that moral obligations are categorical in that they are not dependent upon a particular desire; moral obligations define what should be done, regardless of extenuating circumstances (source). Doing one's moral duty because it is one's duty, that is, duty for duty's sake, produces what Kant call the Good Will. Acting from our moral duty as defined by reason is what makes an action moral. While no one would know I kept the check and while I would be giving up some money I could certainly use for my

education, his notion of duty morally mandates that I return the check. I must return the check not because I would feel guilty, but because I cannot consistently universalize my action. There are no situations where I can keep the money because doing so could be a form of stealing plus I would not be acting justly towards the other workers. We should follow categorical imperatives because we are rational people, and once we know what our moral duty is, we must follow.

According to Kant, every rational person must accept the Categorical Imperative. Kant further requires that we consider the motives or intentions of our actions; we must act for the right reasons, or as Kant states, must act out of duty, not from or in accordance with duty. In relation to the commandment to not steal, what would happen if this were not upheld as a moral rule? The consequences would be that whether or not an individual stole would be based upon each person's desires; in other words, it would be a hypothetical imperative. Also, if it were not upheld as a moral law, the result would be a radical diminishing of the concept of honesty. A moral action must not be conditional upon anything, whether it is utilitarian consequences, the desire to be virtuous, or religious commandments.

Let's take, for example, two different people. Amy is hungry. She hasn't eaten in two days. She wants to eat but has no money, and she notices an open convenience store in which the clerk seems to be preoccupied. Should she steal some food, she asks herself? According to categorical imperative, she should not, for she could not will stealing to be a universal law. If stealing was a universal law and if she had food, it would be morally permissible for someone to steal it from her. Therefore, according to the Categorical Imperative, Amy should not steal despite the fact that she has not eaten for two days. If Amy instead applied the hypothetical imperative, she would choose the action, stealing, that fulfilled her desire. Despite the fact that circumstances of varying degrees exist for different people at different times, it cannot be willed by a rational person that stealing should be a universal law. As Kant believes, it would be self-defeating to allow certain actions in certain circumstances. How can this be applied to stealing? If stealing were a universal law, pandemonium would exist, with people never being secure in their belongings and the most physically or intellectually powerful people taking the possessions of less powerful individuals. If Amy stole the food her motive would be self-serving and not universalizable. She would not be acting from her moral duty as a person.

Kant also brings up another good point when he discusses the tendency for people to have the attitude that certain behaviors are not of concern to them. For example, a very rich man with a home security alarm may say he doesn't care if Amy steals from a convenience store. Suppose, however, that Amy had the resources to steal from his home. The man would assuredly not will stealing to be universally acceptable then, even if had willed it to be acceptable beforehand. Kant cautions that we can never be certain of the consequences of our actions. If we steal from someone else because we are hungry, we may feel that this circumstance represents an exception to the universal rule. However, we cannot be certain what chain of reactions our stealing will set off. If we steal from other individuals, they may be starving and then have to steal themselves. They could even be caught in the process of trying to steal and be shot and killed, so it is conceivable that stealing may cause someone to lose his or her life. As Kant argues, we don't know that this result will happen, but we cannot be sure that it won't happen, either. If we follow the maxim to not steal, then we know that good consequences will follow from our action. Even if good consequences do not follow, we are not to blame, according to Kant, because we have done our moral duty.

Moral rules should also meet the minimum conception of morality. The minimum conception of morality requires us to act for the best reasons while giving equal weight to the interests of each individual who will be affected by our conduct. Let's say Amy steals some groceries from Mr. Davis, a customer at HEB. Giving equal weight to the interests of both Amy and Mr. Davis requires that there be a moral rule prohibiting stealing. If there was not such a rule, we are clearly favoring Amy's interests. Who knows if Mr. Davis did not just spend his last twenty dollars on the groceries that Amy just stole? Perhaps now Mr. Davis will be left to starve. Mr. Davis had his rights violated when Amy took what she desired from him. If we equally consider the interests of both Mr. Davis and Amy, we conclude that is not morally permissible to allow stealing. A moral rule that forbids stealing does meet the minimum conception of morality, as discussed during the first week of class.

The second principle of Kantian Theory is as follows: "Act so that you treat humanity never as a mere means to an end but always as an end in themselves." (source) In exploring the Categorical Imperative in relation to the universal rule to not steal, I gave the example of Amy, who was hungry and was contemplating stealing some food. Let's say Amy sees someone come out of the

H. E. B. They have their back turned to her and are loading up their car, so she decides to take one of their bags of groceries. Amy has just used the person that she stole from as a means to an end. She is not treating them as a human being with rights; she is only looking at them in relation to how they can help fulfill her goal, which is getting food. No matter how badly she may need food, according to the principle of ends, we must treat people as ends in themselves.

In my case, not reporting the extra check I received would be treating my employer as a means to my end of increased income. Doing so shows disrespect to both the business and my fellow employees. I want to be treated with respect and so I must universally apply my desire to others. In this case, I find treating people with respect, that is, not as a mere means, can be universalized. The principle of ends does not conflict with the categorical imperative. If one is only performing actions which they can will to be universal laws, then one would not be treating humanity as a means to an end. The two principles are complementary. Any action that would treat humanity as a means to an end would not be willed to be a universal law by a rational person. For example, if Amy shoots Mr. Davis in order to steal his groceries, she is using him as a means to an end. We certainly would not will such an action to be a universal law. Another example is if Amy were to decide to not steal (acting in accordance with willing her actions to be a universal law), she would also be treating Mr. Davis as an end. Treating other individuals as an end, which essentially means respecting their rights, meets the minimum conception of morality. We are considering other's desires and interests equally with our own when we do not view them merely as stepping stones to our goals or desires.

The third principle of Kantian ethics is the principle of Autonomy, which can be stated as: "Every rational being is able to regard himself or herself as a maker of a universal law and everyone who is ideally rational will legislate exactly the same universal principles" (source). The maxim that prohibits stealing could be adopted by all rational persons. Kant singles out those that are not mentally healthy, children, and animals, declaring that they cannot recognize what is rational or irrational. The rest of us can recognize rational principles and thus can ideally create moral law for ourselves and for everyone. The principle of Autonomy is not as clear-cut as the other two principles previously explored. I think what Kant means here is that any one of us can make a universal law-a universal law being a law which all rational people can and should adopt.

Kantian ethics gives a couple of guidelines we should use when making decisions. First, we need to assess what rule we would be following by engaging in a particular act. If we take groceries that are not ours because we are hungry, we are stealing. Then we need to ask ourselves whether we would want everyone to follow this rule. Of course, we would not want anyone to engage in stealing, regardless of the good consequences; so stealing could not be a universal law. Rational people who apply the above two-step logic process to an act of stealing would never will that it be a universal law. This final principle does not conflict with the Categorical Imperative or the Principle of Ends. If we treat people as ends and respect their rights and dignity, we are engaging in actions that not only we would will to be a universal law, but also that other rational people would will to be a universal law. This principle does meet the minimum conception of morality in that the interests of all involved parties are considered as rational beings when they are deciding whether a given act should be adopted universally.

Objections to the maxim to not steal could be that in certain circumstances people need things to survive that they do not have. Kant clearly defends against extenuating circumstances such as this by emphasizing that if we decide to break the moral rule for what we may feel is a justifiable reason, even a universally justifiable reason, we can never really know what consequences can result from our actions, but we do know that stealing is wrong. We must uphold the universal rule to not steal, since doing otherwise would be trading a known bad for a hoped for good. If bad consequences do occur, Kant argues that we are not at fault for these consequences, since we are responsible for acting from our moral duty, not trying to second-guess life. Kant urges us to avoid "the known evil"—in this case stealing—and whatever happens is not our fault, for we have done our moral duty.

This process has not changed my opinion on my moral rule that was discovered in the second essay. I believe just as strongly that one should never steal. In fact, before I read Kant's arguments, I may have myself argued that there are exceptions, like stealing food when starving. However, for every action we take, unknown consequences ensue, and these should not be a part of our moral reasoning process. This is a profound and powerful statement. We can never know with any degree of certainty what will happen and therefore must conduct our actions such that we adhere to the basic tenants of Kantian philosophy.

VII. Core Values and Moral Rules Exercises

Exercise 1

I work with children in their home while their parents are under supervision from Child Protective Services. These children have not had very responsible parenting and often have many unmet needs, emotionally, physically, socially, intellectually, etc. Policy prohibits my talking with these children about sex. The problem is what I should do when one of them asks me to discuss something which agency policy prohibits. If I avoid the conversation, I protect both the agency and myself, yet prevent the client from access to a knowledgeable source of information (myself). If I respond, the child's needs are met, yet I put myself, my job, and my agency at risk.

-The Issue.

What is the moral dilemma? Who is involved? What is their relationship? What are the relevant situational features? What obligations are involved?

-The Values.

What moral values are involved? Are their other types of values, such as economic, political, social, etc., involved, as well? What professional guidelines are relevant?

-Conclusion.

What action or actions should the employee take? What moral rule supports this action or these actions? Are there other types of rules involved-social, political, personal, etc.?

Exercise 2

You know that your co-worker is leaving about fifteen minutes early each day in order to pick up her child from day care and that she has a friend clock her out at 5:00 p.m. The supervisor works from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., so she is not aware of the problem, nor would she be unless

someone informed her. You know this co-worker is having a hard time, both financially and emotionally, since her divorce six months before.

-The Issue.

What is the moral dilemma? Who is involved? What is their relationship? What are the relevant situational features? What obligations are involved?

-The Values.

What moral values are involved? Are their other types of values, such as economic, political, social, etc., involved, as well? What professional guidelines are relevant?

-Conclusion.

What action should the employee take? What moral rule supports this action? Are there other types of rules involved-social, political, personal, etc.?

Exercise 3

Benny knew at least two other students had gotten hold of earlier class projects and were planning to submit them as their own. He also knew that given the nature of the project, it would be very difficult for the professor to discover the cheating. He liked the two students and had become friends with them during the semester. However, he also valued his education and did not want to cheapen it by having others cheapen it through their dishonesty.

-The Issue.

What is the moral dilemma? Who is involved? What is their relationship? What are the relevant situational features? What obligations are involved?

-The Values.

What moral values are involved? Are their other types of values, such as economic, political, social, etc., involved, as well? What academic guidelines are relevant?

-Conclusion.

What action should the student take? What moral rule supports this action? Are there other types of rules involved-social, political, personal, etc.?

Exercise 4

Rating and Ranking of Values: To give you some practice in ranking or prioritizing values, take a moment and rank the values listed below. First, rank them according to how important they are to you using the following scale:

1 = not at all important

2 = a little important

3 = important

4 = very important

5 = extremely important

Values	Ranking 1	Ranking 2
Having a lot of money	_____	_____
Doing a good job on the job	_____	_____
Institutional loyalty	_____	_____
A meaningful job	_____	_____
Getting an education	_____	_____
Having a family	_____	_____
Honesty	_____	_____
Personal salvation	_____	_____
Patriotism	_____	_____
Upholding confidentiality	_____	_____
Contributing to society	_____	_____

Getting a college degree	_____	_____
Helping others	_____	_____
Fairness	_____	_____
Getting an education	_____	_____

Now, for the second ranking, rank these same values in order of most important to least important. In other words, make the most important one "1," next most important "2," then the next one "3," and so on.

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