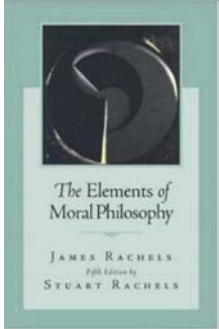


The Elements of Moral Philosophy – Rachels & Rachels



- Well-written summary of important philosophies
- Clear (and honest) arguments
- Good balance between theory and practical examples

What is morality?

- No general consensus on the definition
- It is a matter of consulting reason – is there the best reason for doing something while giving equal weight to the interests of each individual who will be affected by what one does.
- Morality reason should not rely on individual feelings – could be influenced by some factors such as selfishness, prejudice and cultural conditioning.

The challenge of cultural relativism

- **Different cultures have different moral code** -what is **thought** right within one group may be utterly opposed to the members of the other group
- **Cultural differences argument** – Even the premise is true the conclusion might be false because in some society people believe in one thing but in other society people believe differently.

Chapter 3: Subjectivism in ethics

- There are no facts, people simply think in different ways
 - No right or wrong, our moral opinions are based on our feelings
 - Started as an idea that "Moral is a question of feelings not facts"
 - The theory was criticized and developed to what it is now, in a two step process
- Simple subjectivism: If someone says something is morally correct it implies only that this someone likes it. "Everyone is all ways right"
 - Emotivism: The moral language are not used to put forward facts, it is used to affect people and there actions

Chapter 4: Is religion a necessary foundation for moral?

- Priests are often thought of as moral experts
 - "Common sense" is that moral and religion are inseparable
- 1 The divine command theory:
 - God puts up how we should live, what rules we should obey
 - Moral right or wrong is what God says
 - 2 Natural theology:
 - Everything in nature has a purpose
 - How things should be, right or wrong..
 - The right actions are the actions with the best reasons

Ethical Egoism

- **Defination:** *All persons ought to act from their own self-interest! (Human nature)*
- **Conclusion:**
 - *Acting in one's self-interest very often benefits others*
 - *The egoist is affected by many more events than one would first think.*
 - *If the egoist is to choose what is in his own interest, then he must have the personal freedom to choose*

4

Social Contract

- State of nature
- Social Contract Theory
- Two choices:
 - *Government (the state)*
 - *No government (state of nature)*
- Government, of course!
- Give up liberty, to receive security

5

Chapter 7: The Utilitarian Approach

A.The revolution in Ethics

18th and 19th centuries:

French revolution; ruin of Napoleon Empire; the revolution of 1848 (liberty, equally, fraternity); America after civil war; slavery in western civilization; industrial revolution – restructuring of society as well as ethics

Theory proposed by David Hume (1711 – 1776), Given definitive formulation by Jeremy Bentham (1748 – 1832) , John Stuart Mill (1806 – 1873).

Jeremy Bentham -The principles of Moral and Legislation proposed "The Principle of Utility" – requires that when we have a choice between alternative actions or social policies we must choose the one that has the best overall consequences for everyone

John Stuart Mill in his book Utilitarian (1861) – according to the greatest happiness principle – the ultimate end, with reference to and for the sake of which all other things are desirable (own good or other people), is existence exempt as free as possible from pain, and as rich as possible in enjoyment.

Simple rule of morality should judge right or wrong depending on whether Human end action would cause more happiness or unhappiness

Euthanasia
 Examples: Mr Donnelly as his three brothers to kill him- youngest brother shot Mr Donnelly to death.
 Religion doctrine- according to moral tradition, Mr Donnelly's brother did wrong.
 Utilitarian doctrine- killing him would escape from misery be morally right.

Treatment of Nonhuman Animals

Christian tradition- let human to use animals for any purpose (eat, skins for cloth, amusement in zoos etc.

Utilitarians- Human and nonhuman are equally entitle to moral concern.

Most important aspect is whether there experiencing suffering, happiness and unhappiness – not mistreating

Claim that humans more intellectual than animal- human are able to take pleasure in things that nonhumans cannot enjoy

Chapter 8 The Debate over Utilitarian

The arguments from anti-utilitarian

Is Happiness the only thing that matters?
 -"1" What things are good?
 -"2" What action are right?
 Utilitarian answer: "2" refer "1"
 Right actions the ones that produce the most good, good only happiness!!

Happiness is desirable, and the only thing desirable, as an end also known Hedonism.

Are Consequences All that Matter?

Some other metter is also important determine right or wrong action, then utilitarian would be ignore at it very foundation.

Are there absolute moral rules?

- Rules without exception – can it be accepted?
- Some rules are thought to be the best solution (or action) regardless that other might thought it was the worst one – other words → violating an absolute rules

Respect of Person

- Immanuel Kant – *“Human being value is above all price”*
- Utilitarianism – *“Punishment is an evil”*
- Kant’s Retribuivism – rejected Utilitarian’s idea
 1. Punishment due to committed crimes
 2. Punishment proportionately to the level of crime (including capital punishment)

Do women and men think differently about Ethics?

1. It remains unclear whether women and men really think differently. But it seems certain that even if they do think differently, the differences will not be on the fundamental values.
2. The difference in moral thinking could be like that: women might typically be more attractive to a caring perspective, even though not every women is more caring than every men.
3. the account for such differences: the different social roles and some sort of intrinsic connection between being a female and having an ethics of caring.

The virtues

1. virtues are traits of character that are good for people to have.
2. Aristotle: virtues are important because the virtuous person will fare better in life. It will conduct our lives well.
3. the major virtues are mandated not by social convention but by the basic facts about our common human condition.
