



培文书系·社会科学系列



Ethics: Theory and Practice

伦理学：理论与实践

[美] 雅克·蒂洛 著

Jacques P. Thiroux

第 8 版



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Preface

First of all, I want to thank all of the students and professors for having enough faith in me and my book to find it useful and usable. The book has been in print now for 25 years! Quite a feat for any text, much less one on ethics. I am very proud and grateful to all of you for making it so.

I have tried to make the book more relevant, more all-inclusive, and more up to date each time I have revised it. This has not always been easy because of the times in which we live—the war with Iraq, terrorism, including the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, the Enron situation, and stem cell research, to name a few.

I hope this book continues to be useful, and I welcome any suggestions, which may be sent to Prentice Hall.

Special thanks to Ross Miller, Kimberly Daum, and all of the reviewers who have helped by suggesting changes and appropriate up-dates. As we approach a possible war with Iraq, ethics continues one of our most important endeavors. We must continue debating the issues, allowing for dissent and using the best ethical reasoning we can bring to the difficult problems of the twenty-first century.

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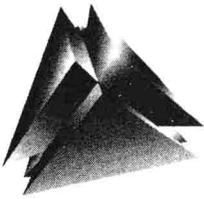
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CHAPTER

1



WHAT IS MORALITY?

Objectives

After you have read this chapter, you should be able to

1. Define *philosophy* and explain the relationship of ethics to it.
2. Define key terms concerning ethics or morality.
3. Explain the various approaches to the study of morality.
4. Understand what morality is and how it differs from aesthetics, nonmoral behavior, and manners.
5. Understand to whom morality applies.
6. Have some idea of where morality comes from.
7. Distinguish between morality and the law.
8. Distinguish between morality and religion.
9. Understand why human beings should be moral.

What Is Philosophy and Ethics' Relationship to It?

Philosophy literally means love of wisdom, the Greek words *philia* meaning love or friendship, and *sophia* meaning wisdom. Philosophy is concerned basically with three areas: *epistemology* (the study of knowledge), *metaphysics* (the study of the nature of reality), and *ethics* (the study of morality), which will be our major concern in this book.

Epistemology deals with the following questions: What is knowledge? What are truth and falsity, and to what do they apply? What is required for someone to actually *know* something? What is the nature of perception, and how reliable is it? What are logic and logical reasoning, and how can human beings attain them? What's the difference between knowledge and belief? Is there anything such as "certain knowledge"? From time to time throughout this book, epistemological questions will be discussed, especially in Chapter 4, which deals with absolutes and truth.

Metaphysics is the study of the nature of reality, asking the questions: What exists in reality and what is the nature of what exists? Specifically, such questions as the following are asked: Is there really cause and effect in reality, and if so, how does it work? What is the nature of the physical world, and is there anything other than the physical, such as the mental or spiritual? What is the nature of human beings? Is there freedom in reality or is everything predetermined? Here again, we will deal with some of these questions throughout the book, but especially in Chapter 4—are there any absolutes or is everything really relative?—and Chapter 5, is there any such thing as freedom, or are all things in reality predetermined?

Ethics, our main concern, deals with what is right or wrong in human behavior and conduct. It asks such questions as what constitutes any person or action being good, bad, right, or wrong, and how do we know (epistemology)? What part does self-interest or the interests of others play in the making of moral decisions and judgments? What theories of conduct are valid or invalid, and why? Should we use principles or rules or laws, or should we let each situation decide our morality? Are killing, lying, cheating, stealing, and sexual acts right or wrong, and why or why not?

As you can see, these three areas are related and at times overlap, but each one is worthy of concentrated study in itself. The major concern in this book, as its title suggests, is ethics, and before going any further, it is important to define some key terms used in any discussion of ethics or morality.

Key Terms

Ethical, Moral, Unethical, Immoral

In ordinary language, we frequently use the words *ethical* and *moral* (and *unethical* and *immoral*) interchangeably; that is, we speak of the ethical or moral person or act. On the other hand, we speak of codes of ethics, but only infrequently do we mention codes of morality. Some reserve the terms *moral* and *immoral* only for the realm of sexuality and use the words *ethical* and *unethical* when discussing how the business and professional communities should behave toward their members or toward the public. More commonly, however, we use none of these words as often as we use the terms *good*, *bad*, *right*, and *wrong*. What do all of these words mean, and what are the relationships among them?

Ethics comes from the Greek *ethos*, meaning character. *Morality* comes from the Latin *moralis*, meaning customs or manners. Ethics, then, seems to pertain to the individual character of a person or persons, whereas morality seems to point to the relationships between human beings. Nevertheless, in ordinary language, whether we call a person ethical or moral, or an act unethical or immoral, doesn't really make any difference. In philosophy, however, the term *ethics* also is used to refer to a specific area of study: the area of morality, which concentrates on human conduct and human values.

When we speak of people as being moral or ethical, we usually mean that they are good people, and when we speak of them as being immoral or unethical, we mean that they are bad people. When we refer to certain human actions as being moral, ethical, immoral, and unethical, we mean that they are right or wrong. The simplicity of these definitions, however, ends here, for how do we define a right or wrong action or a good or bad person? What are the human standards by which such decisions can be made? These are the more difficult questions that make up the greater part of the study of morality, and they will be discussed in more detail in later chapters. The important thing to remember here is that *moral*, *ethical*, *immoral*, and *unethical*, essentially mean *good*, *right*, *bad*, and *wrong*, often depending upon whether one is referring to people themselves or to their actions.

Characteristics of Good, Bad, Right, Wrong, Happiness, or Pleasure. It seems to be an empirical fact that whatever human beings consider to be good involves happiness and pleasure in some way, and whatever they consider to be bad involves unhappiness and pain in some way. This view of what is good has traditionally been called "hedonism." As long as the widest range of interpretation is given to these words (from simple sensual pleasures to intellectual or spiritual pleasures and from sensual pain to deep emotional unhappiness), then it is difficult to deny that whatever is good involves at least some pleasure or happiness, and whatever is bad involves some pain or unhappiness.

One element involved in the achievement of happiness is the necessity of taking the long- rather than the short-range view. People may undergo some pain or unhappiness in order to attain some pleasure or happiness in the long run. For example, we will put up with the pain of having our teeth drilled in order to keep our teeth and gums healthy so that we may enjoy eating and the general good health that results from having teeth that are well maintained. Similarly, people may do very difficult and even painful work for two days in order to earn money that will bring them pleasure and happiness for a week or two.

Furthermore, the term *good* should be defined in the context of human experience and human relationships rather than in an abstract sense only. For example, knowledge and power in themselves are not good unless a human being derives some satisfaction from them or unless they contribute in some way to moral and meaningful human relationships. They are otherwise nonmoral.

What about actions that will bring someone some good but will cause pain to another, such as those of a sadist who gains pleasure from violently mistreating another human being? Our original statement was that everything that is good will bring some person satisfaction, pleasure, or happiness of some kind, but this statement does not necessarily work in the reverse—that everything that brings someone satisfaction is necessarily good. There certainly are "malicious pleasures." 问: www.ertongbook.com