

1. An ethical theory:
 - a. moves beyond our moral intuitions and systematize them.
 - b. is universal: I act on this M (rule)—as should everyone. That is what it *means* to be [morally] good/ right/a duty/ obligatory...
 - c. must be adequate to all three poles of ethical action (and none is!)
2. The question that drives normative ethical thinking: “What ought [x] DO in this situation?” The question for meta-ethics: How do I justify that answer? An ethical theory is an attempt to offer a comprehensive answer to the question of what it is that makes an action morally good or bad, obligatory or impermissible.
3. Teleological theories: “consequentialism” (gr: *telos*=end)
 - a. An action is right or wrong depending upon the (non-moral) value it brings into being. That value is the standard by which we judge acts.
 - b. In this situation, act X is right because it produces consequence Y for Z. So I should do X; and so should any/everyone in a similar situation.
 - What is Y? eg: happiness; security; pleasure/pain; power; knowledge, self-realization, spiritual perfection...
 - If it is pleasure: hedonic consequentialism
 - Who is Z? If it is the agent: egoistic consequentialism.
 - If it is the general good: universalist consequentialism
 - c. Utilitarianism: Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill
 - Principle of utility: the moral end (goal, *telos*) of all we ought to do is to produce the greatest possible balance of good over evil (pleasure over pain) in the world as a whole.
 - d. Act v. rule: The principle of utility can be applied either to decide in particular situations/cases (=act utilitarianism) --or to determine which rules we as a collective should adopt/obey for our greatest advantage (=rule utilitarianism).
 - Difference between act and rule utilitarianism: the consequences of particular acts are taken into consideration in act utilitarianism; but in rule utilitarianism, once a **rule** has been accepted as of great social utility, you obey it, regardless of the consequences in specific situations.
 - Fundamental rule: justice
4. Deontological theories: right action (gr. *deon*=duty, obligation)
 - a. The rightness/wrongness of an act does not depend upon the circumstances or its consequences. Some actions have the same moral valence regardless.
 - b. Categorical imperative: act only upon that M which I as a rational agent can consistently will to be a universal law.
 - You can't consistently will to universalize 'murder'—because that is (by definition) unjustified killing. Or “lying” —because to lie is to affirm something you know to be false as if you thought it true
 - c. Second formulation: always act so as to treat humanity—either yourself or others—always as an end, never as a means. To treat someone as an end is to presuppose, accept, that h/s like me, a moral agent in h/h own right, with goals, aims and projects—not a mere instrument to my own purposes.
 - [cf. 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you...']
 - d. autonomy: what it is to be a moral agent. Moral maturity is to figure out for yourself what it is your duty to do, and to direct yourself according to what you figure out. (gr. *Auto* = self; *nomos* = law: to be a lawgiver for yourself)
5. Virtue-ethics: focuses not on right actions, but on what makes an agent morally good.
 - E.g.: habitual action in accordance with the mean (=virtue) in all areas of life
 - a. tradition that begins with Aristotle (and has been raided by all other theories)
 - b. actions derive their value from their relationship to virtues: the assumption is that a morally and intellectually virtuous man will be able to SEE in a given situation what the appropriate response should be. (=moral intuitionism?)
 - c. Professional ethics is an agent centered ethic.