Chapter Ten – Ethics What Will it Be: Truth or Consequences?

Roots of Wisdom
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Chapter Review

The Issue Defined

Teleological Theories

• ethics formulated in terms of consequences; an action is right or wrong because of what results

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• ethics formulated in terms of consequences; an action is right or wrong because of what results

Deontological Theories

• ethics formulated in terms of adherence to duty or obligation; an action is right or wrong if it follows the path of duty, regardless of the consequences

- Natural Law Theory
 - Morality understood as being stable and inhering in the natural order of things (e.g., ethics emerging out of a regard for life as inherently sacred or for human beings as inherently dignified)

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 - Morality understood as being stable and inhering in the natural order of things (e.g., ethics emerging out of a regard for life as inherently sacred or for human beings as inherently dignified)
- Interest View
 - The moral status of someone or something established on the basis of their having interests; i.e, claims can be made upon us on the basis of someone or something being concerned about what becomes of them

Virtue Ethics

• Morality understood in terms of the formation of the actor; one acts on the basis of the kind of person one wants to become (e.g., reasonable, caring)

• Virtue Ethics

• Aristotle understood virtue as arising from our uniquely human ability to reason — to discover the moral virtues and practice them in order to cultivate the habits of character that lead to moderation

• Virtue Ethics

• Confucius understood that acquiring the habits of a virtuous character was necessary for creating social stability and human flourishing; he advocated a "womb to tomb" course in virtue, beginning in the home

• Virtue Ethics

• Modern virtue theorists mistrust reason as a reliable guide to virtuous behavior and hold as an ideal the caring self, rather than the rational self; the question to ask is: what would my ideal caring self do?

Asian and African Ethical Theories

- Buddhist Ethical Theories
 - Actions evaluated in terms of resulting karma, which can have an impact on the continuing ignorance – and thus suffering – of both the actor and the acted upon
 - Take the web of interconnectedness as a given

Asian and African Ethical Theories

- African Ethical Theories
 - Frequently humanistic and communitarian in character
 - Take for granted the irreducible dignity of the human person

Human Freedom: How Much Do We Have?

- Determinism
 - Persons cannot be held accountable; actions are the result of causes beyond the control of the actors

Human Freedom: How Much Do We Have?

- Existentialism
 - Human beings are radically free and thus profoundly accountable

Human Freedom: How Much Do We Have?

- Restorative Justice
 - Understands forgiveness as integral to a resolution of past affronts all human beings share a linked fate; both dehumanization and reconciliation affect the entire community

Issues in Human Freedom

Cloning, genetic engineering, the status of a fetus, the demands of friendship, and international responsibility as examples of frontiers in human accountability

Environmental Ethics

- Greek legacy of a human/nature split prompts corrective responses
- Ecocentrism puts the ecosystem first and assumes the intrinsic value of the natural world
- Ecofeminism links the dominance of women by men and the dominance of the environment by humans and challenges both systems of domination

Key Terms

- Ethics
- Normative ethics
- Metaethics
- Teleological
- Deontological ethical theories
- Categorical imperative
- Natural Law Theory
- Sacredness of human life
- Interest view
- Moral status
- Virtue ethics
- Ethic of care
- Karma
- Life principle

- Golden rule
- Silver rule
- Syntropy
- Hard determinism
- Soft determinism/conpatibalism
- Existentialism
- Atheistic existentialism
- Bad faith
- Excusability
- Restorative justice
- Ubuntu
- Ecocentrism
- ecofeminism