

Glossary

Absolutist: A normative moral theory is absolutist, rather than relativistic, when it suggests that an action is wrong (or right) in all circumstances, without exception. For example, murder might be thought to be absolutely wrong, irrespective of any circumstances.

Act-centred: A normative moral theory that associates moral rightness/wrongness with actions (e.g. **Utilitarianism**).

Active euthanasia: If a person is actively euthanised it means that their death was caused by external intervention rather than natural causes, most likely through a lethal injection or the voluntary swallowing of a deadly cocktail of drugs.

Act Utilitarianism: See **Consequentialism**.

Agápē: Greek word meaning “love”. Refers to the love of God for humans and humans for God. The “highest” form of love. *Agápē*, as discussed by Fletcher, is an *attitude* and not a feeling, one which does not expect anything in return and does not give any special considerations to anyone.

Agápē calculus: Introduced by Fletcher. The claim that we ought to always act so as to bring about the most *love* for the most people.

Agent-centred: A normative moral theory that associates moral rightness/wrongness with people (e.g. Virtue Ethics).

Agent-Neutrality: The view that moral decisions should be made without special weighting being given to personal feelings.

Anal stage: The second stage of Freud’s **Psychosexual Development Theory** roughly from one and a half to three years old. Pleasure is gained through *controlling going to the toilet*. This stage is about gaining control of one’s body, and it starts with controlling the bladder and bowels (being potty trained).

Antinomianism: The term introduced by Fletcher which says that morally an agent can do whatever he or she wants in a situation.

Anti-Realism: Simply the denial of **Realism**. Anti-realists deny the existence of any mind-independent, objective, moral properties.

Apparent good: Introduced by Aquinas when discussing his Natural Law Theory. An apparent good is when a **secondary precept** is out of line with the **Natural Law** so we are not morally required to follow it.

A priori: Knowledge gained through reason alone, without needing to test/experience the world.

A posteriori: Knowledge gained as a result of experience of the world.

Attitudinal Hedonism: The theory of **well-being** which holds that what makes a life go well is entirely determined by the amount of pleasure a person experiences where pleasure is understood as an *attitudinal state* (i.e. *taking pleasure in* something) rather than a sensation. Fred Feldman is a defender of this view.

Belief: A psychological state. If you believe something, then you take that something to be true.

Biting-the-bullet: The argumentative strategy of simply accepting an apparently awkward conclusion as a non-fatal implication of a theory.

“Boo/hurrah” theory: See **Emotivism**.

Categorical Imperative: Kant’s supreme principle of morality. Using this we can work out how we ought to behave. It is a command (imperative) which should be followed irrespective of the consequences (categorical).

Categorical Imperative 1: Universalization: “...act only according to that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law”.¹

Categorical Imperative 2: Means and ends: “So act that you use humanity, in your own person as well as in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means”.²

Categorical Imperative 3: Kingdom of ends: “...every rational being must so act as if he were through his maxim always a lawmaking member in the universal kingdom of ends”.³

Cognitivism, Psychological: Not to be confused with **Realism**. It suggests that when we make moral claims of the form “murder is wrong” or “helping others is right” we are giving voice to our **beliefs**, rather than our **non-belief states** such as emotions.

1 I. Kant, *Moral Law*, p. 15.
 2 *Ibid.*, p. 66.
 3 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Cognitivism, Semantic: Not to be confused with **Realism**. It suggests that when we make moral claims of the form “murder is wrong” or “helping others is right” our claims can be true or false (what philosophers call **truth-apt**).

Conscience (Aquinas): For Aquinas conscience is morally neutral, it simply “bears witness”, and it is a “sign-post” to what is right and wrong. It is *not* a source of moral knowledge. This means that for Aquinas conscience is *fallible*. He calls it the “application of knowledge to activity”.

Conscience (Freud): For Freud the conscience is the form that the **super-ego** takes in addressing the ego. This understanding of “conscience” can be thought of as synonymous with the “guilty conscience”.

Consequentialism: A normative moral theory that states that the moral value of an action is determined wholly by the consequences of that action (e.g. **Act Utilitarianism**).

Demandingness objection: A challenge to **Utilitarianism**. If it is not the case that pleasure needs to be merely promoted but actually *maximised at all opportunities*, then an extremely high bar is set.

Deontological: A normative moral theory that focuses on *duty* rather than outcomes.

Direct Duties: Used in discussion of Kantian ethics. Direct Duties are those duties arrived at via a formulation of the **Categorical Imperative**.

Dispositions: In respect of Virtue Ethics, dispositions are tendencies in our psychology. For example, I may have the disposition to be angry if someone steals from me, or the disposition to be forgiving if someone steals from me.

Divine Command Theory: The metaethical view that what is right/wrong is what is commanded/forbidden by God.

Divine Law: Introduced by Aquinas as part of his Natural Law Theory. The Divine Law is discovered through *revelation*. Divine laws are those that God has, in His grace, seen fit to give us and are those “mysteries”, those rules given by God which we find in scripture; for example, the ten commandments.

Doctrine of Double Effect (DDE): Introduced by Aquinas in *Summa Theologica*. If an act fulfils four conditions then it is morally acceptable. If not, then it is not. The first is that the act must be a good one; the second is that the act must come about before the consequences; the third is that the intention must be good; the fourth, it must be for serious reasons.

Ego: On of the three parts of the mind according to Freud. The “ego” polices the *id* to allow a person’s social interaction in the world.

Electra complex: In Jungian psychoanalysis, the name given to the unconscious desire experienced by girls to have a sexual relationship with their fathers, and consequently being in competition with their mothers.

Emotivism: A metaethical theory. A form of **Psychological Non-Cognitivism** that holds that moral judgements are expressions of the speaker’s emotions rather than a description of anything. This is not to be confused with subjectivism or relativism (sometimes referred to as the “boo/hurrah” theory).

Empirical: A method for gaining knowledge that requires sense-experience and interaction with the world as studied by science.

Epistemology: The philosophical study of knowledge. Questions might include, “What is knowledge?”; “Can we know something *a priori*”? “What can we know?”

Eternal Law: Introduced by Aquinas when discussing his Natural Law Theory. God’s rational purpose and plan for *all things*. The Eternal Law is part of God’s *mind* it has always, and will always, exist. The Eternal Law is *not* simply something that God decided at some point to write.

Eudaimonia: The Aristotelian idea of “the good life”; best translated as “flourishing”.

Euthanasia: The act of seeking to provide a good death for a person who otherwise might be faced with a much more unpleasant death (see also **voluntary/non-voluntary** and **passive/active euthanasia**).

Euthyphro dilemma: A challenge to **Divine Command Theory** (DCT). Introduced by Plato in his dialogue *Euthyphro*, it suggests there are two questions you can ask about DCT, but each answer that can be given is problematic. The questions: (i) is something good *because* God commands it. Or (ii) does God command it *because it is* Good.

Felicitic Calculus: See **Hedonic Calculus**.

Guilt: Freud uses this term to refer to the feeling that arises when our conscience requires certain things from us which we fail to achieve.

Golden Mean: In Virtue Ethics, the morally virtuous middle way between the vices of excess and deficiency.

Good will: The Kantian idea of our specific will which is good through its willing *alone* rather than what it effects or accomplishes.

Harm principle: John Stuart Mill's principle that: "The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant".⁴

Hedonic Calculus: Jeremy Bentham's way of calculating the pleasure/pain associated with a possible future action.

Hedonism: A theory of **well-being** which hold that improves a person's life is entirely determined by the amount of pleasure that person experiences; no other factors are relevant at all.

Higher and lower pleasures: Distinction made by Mill between the quality of pleasure. Higher pleasures are those pleasures of the intellect brought about via activities like poetry, reading or attending the theatre. Lower pleasures are animalistic and base; pleasures associated with drinking beer, having sex or lazing on a sun-lounger.

Humean Theory of Motivation: The view that motivation only arises when a **belief** combines with an appropriately related desire — where desire takes the lead role. Further it is the view that beliefs and desires are distinct mental states such that a belief cannot entail a desire.

Hume's fork: Hume divided knowledge into two camps — knowledge gained from relations of ideas and knowledge gained from matters of fact.

Hypothetical Imperative: A command that applies to someone only because of the desires/wants of the agent, e.g. you ought to go for a run *if* you *want* to get fit.

Id: One of the three parts of the mind according to Freud. *Id* is the collection of our primal drives, e.g. the basic desires for food, sex, drink and is the oldest part of the mind. The *id* cannot be properly formalized or understood and Freud likens it to chaos.

Indirect Duties: Discussed in relation to Kantian ethics. A duty we owe to X (for example, animals, the environment) is in fact a duty we owe to humans. E.g. we have an indirect duty towards animals because if we treat animals badly then we will not uphold our duties towards humans.

4 J. S. Mill, *On Liberty*, <http://www.econlib.org/library/Mill/mlLbty1.html>

Intrinsic: Something is intrinsically good if it is essentially or necessarily good, just in and of itself; it does not rely on anything else for it to be good.

Intuitionism: A view in moral **Epistemology** that holds that there is at least one moral **belief**, and possibly many, that are self-evidently justifiable. This does not rule out other ways of justifying moral claims, nor does it mean that intuitionists believe judges to be infallible.

Invincible ignorance: From Aquinas. Ignorance that cannot be overcome through the use of reason. Doing something wrong when they *could not* have known better.

“Is/ought” gap: The supposed problem of deriving an “ought” (prescriptive) claim from a (descriptive) claim.

Latency stage: The fourth stage in Freud’s **Theory of Psychosexual Development**, roughly from six to the onset of puberty. At this stage sexual desire is repressed. There are no new sexual desires formed. Girls play with girls in order to learn the role of a girl and boys play with boys in order to learn about the role of boys.

Legalism: Term used by Fletcher to refer to a system of ethics such that someone in that system “blindly” observes moral rules without being sensitive to the situation.

Maxim: A general principle or rule upon which we act.

Mature genital stage: Fifth and final stage of Freud’s **Theory of Psychosexual Development**.

Moral Error Theory: Combination of **Semantic Non-Cognitivism**, **Anti-Realism** and the **Truth-maker Theory of Truth**. The conclusion is that *all* moral claims that we make are *systematically and uniformly false*.

Natural Law: Introduced by Aquinas when discussing his Natural Law Theory. When humans act in accordance with their purpose/function of reason then they act according to the Natural Law (see **primary precepts** and **secondary precepts**).

Naturalism, Realism: The view that moral properties exist and are as natural as those properties discussed and examined in the sciences.

Naturalistic Fallacy: According to G. E. Moore, the idea that moral properties can be reduced to natural properties. Moore believes that one commits the naturalistic fallacy by claiming that goodness = pleasure/happiness/preference satisfaction.

Nihilism: Associated with theories that try to eliminate values. For example, Moral Error Theory can be labelled nihilistic because it denies the existence of any moral values in the world.

Non-belief state: A psychological state that is not related to taking something to be true. It is typically thought to be a non-descriptive or non-representational state. For example, an emotional state such as joy, or anger.

Non-Cognitivism, Psychological: When we make moral claims of the form “murder is wrong” or “helping others is right” we are not giving voice to our **beliefs**, we are rather expressing our **non-belief states** such as emotions.

Non-Cognitivism, Semantic: When we make moral claims of the form “murder is wrong” or “helping others is right” our claims are *neither* true nor false. They are not **truth-apt**.

Non-Naturalism: The view that if moral properties exist they could not show up on the scientific picture of what exists.

Non-voluntary euthanasia: Non-voluntary euthanasia occurs when a decision regarding premature and merciful death is made for one person by another person, because the person to be euthanised is unable to make a decision for themselves.

Normative: A normative moral theory is a theory designed to provide guidance for how to behave/live.

Neurosis: Term used by Freud to refer to when the **super-ego** fails to deal correctly with the **id**. In particular, when the pleasure principle is repressed.

Objective List Theory: A theory of **well-being** which hold that what makes a life go well is determined by a list of items (e.g. loving relationships, meaningful knowledge, autonomy).

Oedipus complex: In psychoanalysis, the name given to the unconscious desire of a child to have a sexual relationship with a parent of the opposite sex; most likely this is expressed as a boy’s sexual attraction to his mother.

Open Question Argument: Put forward by G. E. Moore. It attacks naturalist realist positions in Metaethics. It holds that *if* moral *properties* (e.g. goodness) are natural properties (e.g. pleasure) then moral terms (e.g. “goodness”) must be synonymous with natural terms (e.g. “pleasure”). However, it is always an open question — the answer is not obvious to us — to ask whether a moral term means the same as a natural term. This means that moral terms are *not* synonymous with natural terms. This means that moral properties cannot be identical with natural properties.

Oral stage: First stage in Freud’s **Theory of Psychosexual Development**, from birth to about one and a half. This stage is where babies get pleasure through putting things in their mouth, pleasure in biting, chewing and sucking.

Palliative care: “If you have an illness that can’t be cured, palliative care makes you as comfortable as possible, by managing your pain and other distressing symptoms. It also involves psychological, social and spiritual support for you and your family or carers. This is called a holistic approach, because it deals with you as a “whole” person”.⁵

Paradox of Tragedy: Also known as the paradox of negative emotions. Not a genuine paradox. The oddity that in real life negative emotions are not desired whereas in other contexts, such as horror films, roller-coasters, dramas they *are* desired.

Passive euthanasia: Passive euthanasia occurs when a person is allowed to die due to the deliberate withdrawal of treatment that might keep them alive.

Persistent Vegetative State (PVS): A state of being in which a person is biologically alive, but shows no sign of psychological interaction with the world. The state is labelled persistent when it is unlikely this condition will alter through any treatment.

Phallic stage: Freud’s third stage in his **Theory of Psychosexual Development**; roughly from three to six years. It is about discovering one’s genitals, and importantly that they are different in men and women. This stage is where Freud thinks we develop the **Oedipus**, and the **Electra complex**. A problem moving through this stage will cause problems with intimacy in later life.

Phronesis: From Aristotelian ethics referring to “practical wisdom”. Arguably the most important virtuous disposition or character trait.

Pleasure Principle: Idea put forward by Freud. This is the claim that what identifies and unifies the drives of the *id* is the avoidance of pain and pursuit of pleasure.

Preference Utilitarianism: A non-hedonistic version of **Utilitarianism**. The greatest good for the greatest number *cannot* be reduced to pleasure in either raw or higher forms. Instead, what makes a life go better for a person is entirely determined by the *satisfaction of their preferences* (e.g. defended by Peter Singer).

⁵ NHS definition, <http://www.nhs.uk/Planners/end-of-life-care/Pages/what-it-involves-and-when-it-starts.aspx>

Prescriptivism: A metaethical theory claiming that our moral utterances express more than just emotional approval and disapproval. Instead, our moral utterances express a subjective prescription for others to act in accordance with our moral judgments (e.g. Hare).

Prima Facie: “On first impression/look” or “At first glance/appearance”.

Primary Precepts: Introduced as part of Aquinas’s Natural Law Theory. They are overarching *general rules*. They are *absolute* and binding on all rational agents. His examples are: protect and preserve human life; reproduce and educate one’s offspring; know and worship God; live in a society.

Principle of Charity: An argumentative strategy of granting one’s opponent to be rational and giving the strongest interpretation of their argument.

Principle of Utility: The principle that an action is moral if and only if it leads to the greatest good for the greatest number. Associated with **Utilitarianism**.

Problem of Parity: A challenge to **Utilitarianism**. Utilitarianism does *not* allow you to give *extra moral weight* to the life of a loved one (see **Agent-Neutrality**).

Queer: The idea of J. L. Mackie, associated with Moral Error Theory. Something is queer if it is utterly unlike any other existing property/entity.

Ratio: Aquinas’s term for the reason that helps discover the Natural Laws.

Realism: The view that moral properties exists independently of human beings and can be located in the world.

Relativistic: A normative moral theory is relativistic, rather than absolutist, when it allows that an action can be moral in one situation but immoral in another situation. For example, the morality of stealing might be thought to be relative to the situation in which stealing takes place.

Real Good: Introduced by Aquinas when discussing his Natural Law Theory. A real good is when a **secondary precept** is accordance with the **Natural Law** and consequently we are morally required to follow it.

Rule-Utilitarianism: The view that should create a set of rules that, if followed, would produce the greatest amount of total happiness (e.g. defended by John Stuart Mill). See also, **Strong** and **Weak Rule Utilitarianism**.

Sanctity of Life: The idea that life holds absolute value, very likely justified by the idea that life is God-given.

Secondary Precepts: Introduced by Aquinas when discussing the Natural Law Theory. Secondary precepts are *not generated by our reason* but rather they are imposed by governments, groups, clubs, societies etc. Examples, might include: do not drive above 70mph on a motorway; do not kidnap people; always wear a helmet when riding a bike; do not hack into someone’s bank account.

Semantic: Semantic concerns are concerns about words and their meanings; it relates to a focus on language and meaning.

Speciesism: Term introduced by Peter Singer. The claim that treating non-human animals differently from humans based purely on the arbitrary fact that they are from one species rather than another is morally wrong. Singer takes it to be morally equivalent to treating another person differently based on a difference in gender (sexism) or in race (racism).

Straw-man: A straw-man argument is an argument phrased deliberately in its weakest form, so that it is easy to defeat. Straw-men arguments allow a person to avoid arguing with a difficult objection on “level ground”.

Strong Rule Utilitarianism: Guidance from the set of rules that, if followed, would promote the greatest amount of total happiness must *always* be followed.

Super-ego: One of the three parts of the mind according to Freud. The super-ego is the voice of authority issuing prohibitions, inhibitions and moral constraints.

Synderesis: Term introduced by Aquinas. Synderesis is *not* the same as conscience but is the innate ability of the mind (a *habit of the mind*) to apprehend the eternal/Divine laws.

Teleological: A teleological normative theory is one concerned with consequences (e.g. **Utilitarianism**).

Teleologist: Someone who holds that every object has a final cause/goal/end/purpose.

Telos: For Aristotle, *telos* is the purpose of something.

Theory of Psychosexual Development: Developed by Freud. A theory of sexual development from birth to death: includes the oral, anal, phallic, latency and mature genital stage.

Thought-experiment: A hypothetical situation — often fantastical — used to highlight and challenge the intuitions we have on various topic. E.g. Judith Thomson's "the transplant surgeon" (see Chapter 1).

Truth-apt: If a claim is truth-apt then it is *capable* of being true or false. N.B. the claim may never be true but it could still be capable of being true or false. This above explanation of the meaning of the phrase "truth-apt" is itself truth-apt, for example.

Truth-maker Theory of Truth: A claim is true *if and only if* some feature of the world, such as properties, makes it true.

Tyranny of the Majority: A challenge to **Utilitarianism**. It seems that Utilitarianism is open to cases where the majority are morally required to exploit the minority for the greater good of maximising total pleasure.

Utility: A term used by utilitarians to refer to the pleasure/pain/preference satisfaction associated with of a particular action.

Utilitarianism: See **Consequentialism**.

Verification principle: The principle that states that if a sentence is not analytic or potentially empirically verifiable then it is *meaningless*.

V-rules: Introduced by Rosalind Hursthouse. She suggests that Virtue Ethics provides guidance in the form of "v-rules". These are guiding rules of the form "do what is honest" or "avoid what is envious".

Vincible ignorance: From Aquinas. Ignorance that can be overcome through the use of reason. Doing something wrong when one *ought to* have known better.

Virtue: A morally correct character disposition or trait, as opposed to a character disposition or trait that represents a moral vice.

Voluntary euthanasia: Voluntary euthanasia occurs when a person chooses someone to terminate their life in order to avoid future suffering.

Weak Rule Utilitarianism: Guidance from the set of rules that, if followed, would promote the greatest amount of total happiness *can be ignored in circumstances where more happiness would be produced by breaking the rule*.

Well-being: The measure of how well a life is going, for the person whose life it is.