

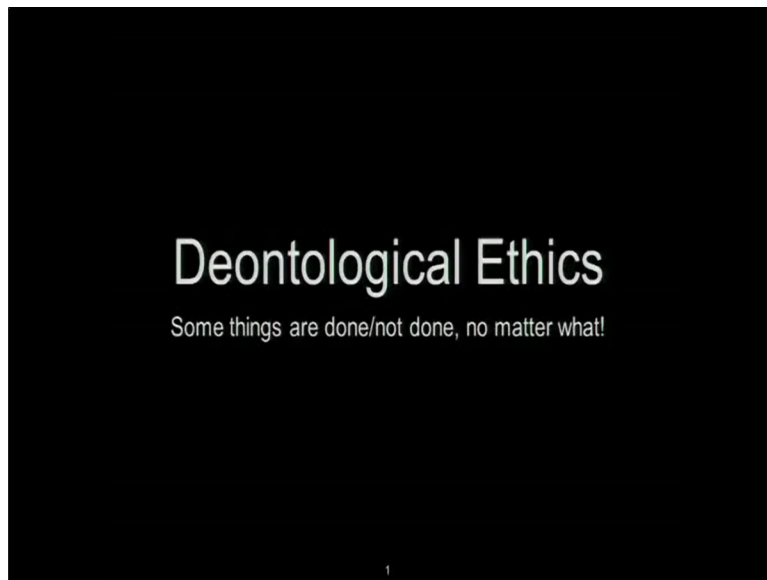
Ethics
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Module No. #01
Lecture No. #07
Deontological Theories - Introduction

Hello, everyone. Today, we are going to talk about, Deontological Ethics. Let me do a brief recapitulation of, what we have talked about, till now. We have talked about, various Moral Theories. We have talked about, Consequentialism, as a classification of Moral Theory. Non-Consequentialism, as a classification of Moral Theories. We will talk about, various Consequentialist Theories, which include Utilitarianism, Hedonism, and Altruism.

Now, today we are going to talk about something, which Philosophers called, Deontological Ethics. Now, Deontological Ethics by itself, is starkly different, in fact contradictory, to what is meant by, Consequential or Teleological Ethics. Deontological Ethics claims, that moral rules are fundamental, that moral notions are fundamental. And, to understand a moral concept, one need not understand it, in terms of nonmoral concepts, or non-moral consequences. Let us look at the slide.

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- Can the prevailing rules and customs be the standard of morality? *No!*
- Is this a justification from the present - things ought to be how they are - what exists is the model of existence? *Rules*
- The moral philosopher now looks for guidelines or norms for establishing a moral framework - would it be rules or attitudes or goals or what else?
- 'Rules' is a term we often here in a moral discussion. Let us now explore rules as a construct for morality - its basis and justifications.
- Let us start with a classification of moral theories - teleological and deontological.

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Now, can the prevailing rules and customs, be the standard of morality. Well, as a beginner, or as an entrench into the society, let us postulate. Well, we find that, there are certain rules and customs, that prevail in the society. Now, can these be the standard. Well. Perhaps, most of us would answer, no, we require a change. The second bullet reads that, is this a justification, from the present. Things ought to be, how they are. And, what exists, is the model of existence.

Now, when we are talking about moral rules, we are talking about something fundamental. How do we arrive at these moral rules, is the immediate fused question with it? But, for the sake of philosophical clarity, we shall distinguish between the rules source, and how do we arrive at it. So, the moral Philosopher, now looks for guidelines and norms, for establishing a moral framework. Would it be rules, or attitudes, or goals, or what else.

What is the frame of reference, of this moral framework, that the Philosopher seeks to establish? Well, till now, we have been talking about Consequentialism, which has made consequences, the frame of reference. Now, rules is a term, we often hear in a moral discussion. Or, let us now explore rules, as a construct for morality, its basis, and its justifications. Let us start with a classification of Moral Theories, Teleological and Deontological. Now, what are Teleological Theories.

A Teleological theory says that, the basic or ultimate criteria, or standard of what is morally right,

wrong, obligatory, etcetera, is the nonmoral value, that is brought into being. Teleologists may variously describe, or define, the nonmoral good. But, what is essential about all these descriptions, or definitions is that, the good is nonmoral. Moral good, and can only be understood, Teleological Theories.

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Teleological theories

- 'A teleological theory says that the basic or ultimate criterion or standard of what is morally right, wrong, obligatory, etc., is the non moral value that is brought into being.' (F, p.14)
- Teleologists may variously describe/define the non moral good but what is essential about all the descriptions/definitions is that the 'good' is non moral. Moral good can only be understood in terms of the non moral good! *Moral good by itself is not fundamental.*
- Teleologists have often (not always) been hedonists - identifying good with pleasure and evil with pain. (Both pleasure and pain being 'natural' concepts)
- Here, the moral 'good' is grounded on the non moral 'good' - can it be otherwise?

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A Teleological Theory says that, the basic or ultimate criteria, or standard of what is morally right, wrong, obligatory, or etcetera, is the nonmoral value, that is brought into being. Now, we have been talking about, moral values and Consequentialism, in Utilitarianism. As also, this is a continuity with its talks about, Teleological values, that any moral concept can be understood, in terms of its nonmoral consequences. So, these claims of right, wrong obligations, and are determined only by the nonmoral consequences, that they bring along.

So, what Teleology is making here, a fundamental assumption is that, well, moral notions are not fundamental, or atomic. Moral notions can be understood, or further reduced to, nonmoral notions. And thereof, they can be understood. Now, coming back to the slide. Teleologists may variously describe, or define, the nonmoral good. But, what is essential about all these descriptions, or definitions is that, the good is non-moral. Moral good can only be understood, in terms of the nonmoral good.

Well, utilitarian too, the moral good can only be understood, in the terms of nonmoral good.

Moral good by itself, is not fundamental. Teleologists have often, although not always, being hedonists, identifying the good with pleasure, and evil with pain. Both, pleasure and pain, being natural concepts. Here, the moral good is grounded, or has its foundations, on the nonmoral good. But, let me post this question to you. Can it be otherwise, can the moral good be fundamental, without being grounded on the nonmoral good.

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The slide is titled "Types of teleological theories (F, 15)". It contains a bulleted list of teleological theories. On the left side, there is a handwritten note "NON MORAL GOODS". Several terms in the list are circled in red: "his own greatest good", "greatest good of the greatest number", "good of other people", and "non-moral-ness".

- Teleologies differ on the question of whose good it is that one ought to try to promote:
 - Ethical egoism holds that one is always to do what will promote his own greatest good
 - Utilitarianism holds that one is always to do what will promote the greatest good of the greatest number
 - Ethical altruism holds that one is always to do what will promote the good of other people
 - Notice that while all the above theories differ in their description of their ultimate good, they stand united on the non-moral-ness of their ultimate good!

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Now, before we talk about, this last question, that I post with you, let us briefly refer to the types of Teleological Theories. Teleologists differ, on the question of whose good, it is that, one ought to try to promote. Ethical Egoism holds that, one is always to do, what will promote his own greatest good. Utilitarianism holds that, one is always to do, what will promote the greatest good of the greatest number. Ethical Altruism holds that, one is always to do, what will promote the good of other people.

Now, notice here that, while all the above theories, differ in their description, of their ultimate good, they stand united, on the non-moralness of their ultimate good. So, be it one's own self, be it the greatest number, or be it others. The difference between the three theories, is in the spread of the agency. But, what is common is that, the good. The good here, the good here, and the good here, are non-moral goods.

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Deontological theories

- Deontological theories contradict teleological theories
- Deontological theories of morality accord the moral property of actions as many times, independent of the non moral consequence they bring along
- Simply put, deontological theories hold that there are fundamental moral claims that **do not** gain their justification by the non moral consequences
- For instance, 'keeping one's commitment' or 'not indulging in unprovoked violence' can be examples of deontological claims when they are prescribed irrespective of the non moral consequences that they might bring along.

Moral claim cannot be reduced or understood in terms of non-moral goods.

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Now, this was a little bit about Teleological Theories. Now, let us look at Deontological Theories. Deontological Theories, contradict or deny, what the Teleological Theories claim. Deontological Theories of Morality, accord the moral property of actions, as frequently, or many times, independent of the nonmoral consequence, they bring along. Simply put, Deontological Theories hold, that there are fundamental moral claims, that do not gain their justification, by nonmoral consequences.

So, what is essentially the claim here, is that, a moral claim cannot be reduced or understood, in terms of nonmoral goods. Now, for instance, certain commitments like, keeping one's commitment, certain oaths, or not indulging in unprovoked violence, or not gambling, can be examples of Deontological claims, when they are prescribed, irrespective of the nonmoral consequences, that they might bring along. Now, let us consider, what the Deontologist is trying to say.

The Deontologist is trying to say, that well, we have assigned moral adjectives, as good and bad. But, on what basis, do you have these classifications. We have these classifications, on the basis of the result, or the nonmoral consequence, or good, that comes along with an act. So, the Teleologists does not find, moral qualities as fundamental. But, the Deontologist does find it, as fundamental. That well, suppose, someone says that, I will not gamble.

Now, this is an oath, or this is a rule, that one commits to, by oneself. Even, if sometimes, the agent is clear that, if she or he indulges in gambling, it will bring him enormous profits, without any losses for sure. Yet, once he is taken an oath, it is a duty, that he has chosen, or she has chosen, to impose on himself or herself. Now, this is what, the Deontologist is saying. That well, that some moral notions, are atomic and fundamental. We need not, or we cannot find its justification, from resulting in nonmoral goods or consequences. Now, let us take a look at the next slide.

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Teleological theories	Deontological theories
<p>① - A moral 'good' is good <u>only because</u> it brings about a non moral good.</p>	<p>① - There can be moral 'goods' that are good irrespective of the non moral consequences they bring about.</p>
<p>② - Teleological theories assume that there is <u>only one basic or ultimate</u> right-making characteristic, namely the comparative non moral value.</p>	<p>- Deontological theories assume that there may be <u>many basic or ultimate</u> right making characteristics.</p>

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Let us look at the differences between, Teleological Theories, and Deontological Theories. This differentiation and elaboration on Teleological Theories, puts Deontological Theories, in proper perspective. Well, as we definitionally, the first point that, a moral good, is a good only, because it brings about, a nonmoral good. Whereas, Deontological Theories claim, that there can be moral good, that are good, irrespective of the nonmoral consequences, that they bring about.

So, the keyword here is, irrespective. That, it is about the relationship between, the moral good, and the moral good. Teleological Theories say that, there is a direct relation. Whereas, here is where, there is a difference between, the two theories. Now, second and remarkably, a more subtle point of distinction is that, Teleological Theories assume, that there is only one basic or ultimate right making characteristic, namely the comparative nonmoral value.

Deontological Theories assume, that there may be many basic, or ultimate right making characteristics. There is only one basic, or ultimate right making characteristic. Now, what is the difference. Now, the crucial difference between, the Teleologists and the Deontologist is coming out to be, the number of foundations of stilts, on which the moral domain stands. Now, the Teleologists is simplistic, has only one highest common factor, which is a determinant of a moral act.

So, that highest common factor is given by, the nonmoral good, that comes along with an act. Whereas, now the Deontologist on the other hand, does not have a single moral good that way, he can have various goods, that there may be various right making characteristics, each of them, being fundamental. So, Deontologist refer to many fundamentals. Whereas, Teleologists refer to only one basic classification.

So, the Teleologists is actually simplifying, the moral frame of reference by, bringing in the assumption, that every pleasure can have a certain common factor. That, there can be, in spite of the enormous differences in pleasures, in moral goods, there is one common factor, which is the nonmoral good, which is common to all the moral goods. And, it is in terms of this nonmoral good, that the moral goods, can be understood. Now, coming back to the next slide.

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The slide is titled "Act - Deontological Theories" and contains the following text:

- Particular judgements are basic and any general rules are to be derived from them, not the other way round.
- Approach to a moral problem: First be clear about the facts and then form a judgement either by intuition (as the intuitionists claim) or by decision (as the existentialists claim)
- Precursor to a 'moral sense' or 'moral faculty' or 'intuition'
- General rules are built from these 'intuited/decided' particular cases, **not the other way round**, primacy to particular judgements; particular judgements are **not** instances of a general moral rule.
- Is each situation unique that no theorization is possible?

Handwritten annotations include:

- A circle around "Particular judgements" in the first bullet point.
- A circle around "intuition" in the second bullet point.
- A circle around "decision" in the second bullet point.
- An arrow pointing from the handwritten note "How one handles problem as lived?" to the word "intuition".
- The word "particularisation" written at the bottom left.
- The number "7" at the bottom center.

We need to talk about, Act Deontological Theories. Now, having mean sufficiently clear about,

what Deontological Theories claim. Let us explore, what are the types of Deontological Theories. Particular judgements are basic, and any general rules are to be derived from them, not the other way round. Approach to a moral problem. First be clear about the facts, and then form a judgement, either by intuition as intuitionists claim, or by decision as the existentialist claim.

Precursor to a moral sense, or a moral faculty, or intuition. General rules are built, from these intuitive decided particular cases, and not the other way round. Primacy to particular judgements. Particular judgements, are not instances of a general moral rule. Is each situation unique, that no theorisation is possible? Now, let us look about in perspective, what the Act Deontological Theory say? The Act Deontologist is trying to put forth, that well, there are no general rules, about morality.

In fact, it is with each particular situation, that we come to know, what is good, and what is not good. That, we know, our moral adjectives, from each particular situation. And, whatever rules that we have, are generalisation from these particulars. It is not that, the rules are primary, and that the instances are inferred, or arrived at, from these general rule. The general Rule is not given, a prior to the particulars.

In fact, the Act Deontologist celebrates particulars, and finds the particulars, as the foundation of the generalisation, that takes place. So, one cannot commit, or one cannot hold, the general rule, or any generalisation, as a more fundamental situation or position, than explaining or understanding the particulars. Now, taking a look back at the slide. We see that well, in this case then, if we agree, that general rules are to be derived from the particulars, and not the other way round, how do we solve? Or, how are particular problem solved?

This is a natural question, that comes to us. Well, this is the approach, to a moral problem. The particular problem solved first, by being clear about the facts, and then form a judgement, either by intuition or by decision. Now, it is here, that the Act Deontologist starts running into rough weather. That perhaps, he is putting the cart before the horse. Because well, what other Deontologist would say, that well, what the Act Deontologists calls intuition or decision, is nothing but a generalisation, or a general theory, that has existed, in the agent's psyche.

Well. But, if the Act Deontologists are to be honoured, they would hold that well, intuition is something fundamental. And, this lays a precursor to a moral sense, or a moral faculty, or intuition. Now, general rules are built from these intuited, decided, particular cases, not the other way round. The primacy to particulars judgements. Particular judgements are not instances of a general moral rule. Now, I leave it with you, to decide that, is such a thing possible. Is each situation, having so many of its particularities, that no theorisation is possible.

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Rule - Deontological Theories

- ...there is a non teleological standard consisting of one or more rules, though these need not be the prevailing ones.' (F.25)
- that there are certain rules that are to be followed, no matter what! The non moral consequence of the rule following is indifferent (far from being a justification) to the moral justification of the rule
- such rules are intrinsically valued - that is, valued/valued for its own sake and not for any consequence.
- exception-less rules? conflict between rules? hierarchy amongst rules - W D Ross' Ethical Rules
- Examples of Rule - Deontological Theories - Kant's moral theory, Divine command theory, Ross' Ethical rules...

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Now, let us look at, Rule Deontological Theories. There is a Non-Teleological standard, of one or more rules, though these need not be the prevailing ones. What, author of the referred book, Ethics by William Frankena is saying, as displayed on from page number 25, that there is a Non-Teleological standard, consisting of one or more rules, though these need not be the prevailing ones. So, Frankena's claims is that well, there is a Rule governed standard. But of course, we need not hold that the current rules are the, epitome of rules to be made.

But, that there are, rules are possible. That, there are certain rules, that are to be followed, no matter what. The nonmoral consequence of the Rule following, is indifferent to the moral justification of the rule. So, there is something about this rule, which is to be followed, no matter what. And, that the nonmoral consequence of the Rule following is indifferent, far from being a justification, to the moral justification of the rule. Such rules are intrinsically valued. That is,

valued for its own sake, and not for any consequence.

Now, let us talk about, what these Rule Deontologists are saying. Well, the Rule Deontologists are saying that well, there are rules. Rules, which are fundamental. And, with which, the moral explanation ends. That, seek no justification from the nonmoral consequences, or nonmoral features, surrounding this notion. The Rule Deontologists would say, that the Rule may not be the ones, it may not be the rules, or the moral dicta or rules, that we are talking about, which are in prevalence today.

But, that in principle, a Rule as possible, which is a fundamental display, of the moral notion. Now, they call these rules as, intrinsically valuable. These rules, which are valuable for themselves, and are completely indifferent, to what they bring about. Now, let us think of it. Are there some problems, with these kind of rules base system? Now, please keep in mind, that we are not talking about, the content of any rule. We are talking about, genetic problems or solutions, that occur with a general Rule following tendency, or a Rule following attitude.

Now, if rules are taken as fundamental and their justifications, so rules become the governing blocks. A classical example would be, say, the Divine Command Theory, as it is known. That is, rules are to be followed, are to be obeyed, as divine command. So, that the divine commands are rules, which are worth being followed, irrespective of the consequences, they bring along. Now, what about exception to rules. Now, a Rule Deontology would say, that there would be no exceptions, to the rules.

The rules are to be followed, and not with the Utilitarian justification. Let me make clear the difference between, Rule Utilitarianism, and Rule Deontology. Rule Utilitarianism, justify the rules, from a long-term benefit, or a long-term advantage that comes along, as a consequence. But, Rule Deontologists, find justification of the rules in themselves, that the rules themselves are, displays of foundation blocks of morality.

So, there lies the crucial difference between, Rule Consequentialist, or Rule Utilitarians, and Rule Deontologists. Now, some of the problems, that we face, could be at right at the beginning

level. That well, is not too much of Rule following, going to hamper, or disrespect our agency, as human agents are bind particular situations. Then, it just becomes a mechanical application of Rule. Say, if there is a Rule like, thou shall not lie, or thou shall not steal.

Then well, I just have to be clear about, if I am rule governing, rule following person, then I just have to be clear, that well, this is a lie, and I shall not utter it. Sometimes, when I utter a lie for the greater good, it would simply be wrong. Because, it is a violation of rule. So, does rules are capture, or moral canvas. Well, another difficulty with rules, that we find is that, what if there are a conflict between rules. Now, each of these rules are given a fundamental status. Now, what if there is a conflict between these rules.

Now, I see that well, there is a Philosopher called William De Ros, which we will be talking about. Now, Ros tries to explain away these difficulties, by maintaining a hierarchy, in the rules to be followed. We will talk about it, when we talk in detail. Now, the next theory, that we talk about would be, Kant's Moral Theory. And, we will also be talking about Ros Ethical rules. The Divine Command Theory, is also an example of Rule Deontology.

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Immanuel Kant's Moral Theory
(a paradigm case of rule deontology)

- Kant's objective: To find a rational grounding for the moral domain. And, the moral domain constitutes one's sense of duty indifferent to the consequences.
- Kant's understanding is that by virtue of being rational beings we become moral beings too. The moral call is binding and self-imposed.
- He does not start with freedom of the will, instead puts forth that we experience moral choice, and therefore we are free!
- Kant discards empirical evidence/practices as a ground for morality - an 'ought' or normative claim can never be logically arrived at, from an 'is' or factual claim.

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Now, Immanuel Kant's Moral Theory, a paradigm case of Rule Deontology. Now, let me introduce, Immanuel Kant to you. Now, Immanuel Kant is a profound Philosopher of the modern days. Kant has very significant contribution to philosophy, and philosophy of morals. The entire

tradition of rationalism in morality, owes its credit in the modern era, to Immanuel Kant. Now, let me share some interesting biographic details of Kant.

Now, Kant was living in a town. And, he spent his entire life in his town, feeling never the need to leave the town, as ever. It is said that, he was so regular about his works, that people in the streets, could time their clocks on watches, depending on the position, where Kant was in this time of the day. So, Kant has been a phenomenal figure, in the modern day philosophy. And, we will be only slightly, moderately discussing, Kant's Moral Theory.

Because, by itself, it is an enormous area, which perhaps took him more than a decade, to come up with. And, it still takes scholars, a lot of time to comprehend Kant's theory, in its totality. Okay. Now, let us come back to the slide. What are Kant's objectives. Now, Kant wants to find, a rational grounding, for the moral domain. And, the moral domain constitutes, one's senses of duty, indifferent to the consequences. Now, let us look at this.

Kant was in a time, when the hold of religion, in day-to-day life, in a modern day world, was quite high. Kant also saw that well, the prevailing rules, customs, and morality, were some things perhaps, he could not agree in totality with. He wanted to make, moral philosophy, independent of the empirical sources, evidences, that come along with, moral philosophy. So, Kant's great effort was, to make a moral philosophy, grounded on rationality and reason.

Now, that seems to be alarming. How can, something like value, something like right and wrong, have anything to do with, rationality, or reason. Perhaps, at the face we find that, they are too contradictory, or opposing, or to feel, which has nothing to do with each other. Now, Kant tries to, well, find that foundation. When, we are all looking for frame of references, to build a moral framework, Kant finds it in Rationalism.

Kant's understanding is that, by virtue of being rational beings, we become moral beings. And, the moral call is binding, and self-imposed. He does not start with the freedom of the will instead, puts forth that we experience moral choice, and therefore we are free. Kant discards empirical evidence practices, as a ground for morality. An ought, or normative claim, can never

be logically arrived at, from an is, or a factual claim. Now, what is Kant saying.

Kant is saying that well, by virtue of being a moral being, that we are having the ability to make moral choices. This gives us the justification, that we have free will. Because, in most of the philosophies, that we would come across, we would assume free will, to arrive at moral choice. That, free will as a necessary condition, to arrive at moral choice. Rather, Kant puts it the other way round. That, we experience moral choice, is fundamental, and is an evidence, of their being free will.

So, Kant tries, has laid such great importance, on free will, on an moral choice. Now, looking at the slide. Kant discards empirical evidences practices, as a ground for morality. So remember, we are talking about Kant, trying to stay away from the contamination, of the unreliable empirical evidence and practices, as a ground for morality. What Kant also was greatly influenced by, was this Philosopher called David Hume. Who showed that well, we cannot infer, we cannot logically arrive at an ought claim, from an is claim.

If you remember, an ought claim was something we arrived at, as a normative claim. An is claim, is a factual claim. So, well, the standard way we approach morality is where, that this is the way things are. And so, this is how, it should be. Well, philosophically, there is a big divide between, how things are, and how things should be. And, it does not take too much of reflection, to find out that, there is no logical way. Perhaps, of inferring, what an ought is, from an is.

Look at the world around. Now, if we have a description of affairs. If there is corruption all around us. Does that mean, that is how things ought to be. Definitely not. So, how things are, do not give a ground to, for prescription, or to bring about, how things should be. Kant takes this very seriously. And therefore, tries to cleanse his moral philosophy, of all empirical content.

So, in fact, Kant's moral philosophy, is empty in a nature, that it gives you a format, a structure. It does not give you the content of the moral claim. It gives you a formula, it gives you a structure, by which, one should arrive at, what is morally sound. Now, with this, we will start discussing, the Moral Philosophy of Immanuel Kant, in detail.