

## Chapter 22, Normative Ethics: Deontology

**Kant** – see notes in the text

### Egoism

#### 1. Psychological egoism:

- a) **empirical account** – psychological theory of human motivation and behaviour
- b) but if true, **any theory that calls upon us to do s/thing not in our interests = unworkable** – not even an ethical theory
- c) if true, there **must be no evidence of altruism** – but psychological egoists can never know enough about our motives to exclude it
- d) **pseudo-scientific theory** – protects itself against falsification – no evidence is allowed to count against it – defin of 'human' precludes falsification

#### 2. Ethical egoism:

- a) if the egoist reasons that 'Everyone ought to maximize their own interests and disregard those of others' this = a case of **inconsistent willing**  
i.e. the principle itself ensures I will not maximize my own self-interest and nor will anyone else
- b) **if he does persuade them to act as he does himself = no longer an ethical principle**  
– **imposs to promulgate it as a universal law** – everyone else must have equal reason for maximizing the egoist's own interests disregarding their own
- c) **Alternative = individual egoism**: each person's interests to be of absolute value to themselves alone – **but then this fails as a universal principle**

**Altruism** – see structure in notes and the distinction between selfishness/self-interest and between interests/desires

### Hume/Rousseau

#### 1. Hume:

– **moral feelings** give us:

- a) **direct access to what is right**
- b) the **motivation** to pursue it
- c) and are **natural and universal**:  
– tell us what are ultimate values or ends grounded in pleasure and pain

#### 2. Rousseau:

- a) **Conscience** – powerful moral feelings – with its own kind of divine reason
- b) **Natural moral feelings** = source of answers to the most important moral problems
- c) **Self-love and moral goodness have same goals** – ensure our preservation
- d) **Problems**:
  - (i) **how do we know our conscience/feelings = right** + when they disagree whose conscience = right? – no means of settling the disagreement
  - (ii) **feelings often contradict** between people and within one person  
e.g. Dresden
  - (iii) when we say something is wrong **we are talking about the act not about our feelings** about it
  - (iv) these seem to be **feelings provoked by a prior judgement about** whether the act was right

## Chapter 22, Normative Ethics: Deontology continued

### Female Ethics

There are not only male and female ethics, but we should be deeply concerned about the male ethic with all its aggression and violence.

#### 1. An essentialist argument?

– but we can never divorce individuals from their environment to distinguish between that which is caused by socialization and that which = natural

#### 2. Are the differences the result of social influence – culturally specific perspectives – with women's perspective systematically devalued?

Gilligan a) Male ethics =

- (i) rights, abstract principles, impartiality, obligs/duties like social contract
- (ii) justice and fairness = ultimate value
- (iii) conflicts resolved by rearranging values into a hierarchy

b) Female ethics =

- (i) conflicts of responsibility
- (ii) moral problems = about relationships involving complex emotions and feelings
- (iii) solutions lie in bonding and the ethics of care
- (iv) moral understanding = situational/contextual
- (v) key to understanding morality = emotional/personal relationships which involves ≠ impersonal reason, but sympathy and identification with feelings and needs of others  
– caring relationships leading to fulfilment

#### 3. Problems:

a) If assumption = there is a real difference based on common expce of the way men and women reason, there can always be found exceptions

- (i) therefore can some values be described as masculine and others feminine?
- (ii) but Kuhn = only systematic exceptions rob us of confidence in inductive generalizations

b) Jean Grimshaw – difference might = a difference in ethical priorities rather than a difference in how they reason

c) Virginia Held – doubts about claim that there is a coherent set of distinctly female values:

- (i) all claims about women = divided by class, race and sexual orientation
- (ii) values – always influenced by culture and situation
- (iii) different times therefore difference in experiences

4. Continuum – with so-called male values at one end and female values at the other – with individuals plotted somewhere along it?

#### 5. Foundations/relativism:

a) Alison Jaggar – feminists = naturalists therefore no foundations, just different styles of moral thinking

b) One principle that trumps all others?

– search for foundations might lie in combining the two approaches