

Deontology

- Moral judgments must satisfy two considerations:
 - 1) Moral judgments must be justified with good reasons.
 - 2) Moral judgments must be impartial.

What about feelings

- Moral issues generate strong opinions and feelings. This is a sign of moral interest but also an impediment to impartial judgment.
- Strong feeling for or against a person or issue could camouflage the truth.
- For example, at some point of time, people believed that caste system in India was due to one's past karma.

Morality is about arguments

- Morality entails rational debate.
- Moral judgments are not of the form “I like coffee.”
- When a person says that something is morally wrong then justification is necessary.
- As a first step, facts surrounding the moral issue have to be established.

Impartiality

- Morality demands that each individual be given equal status.
- There is no good reason for treating people differently.
- (Rejecting Brad Pitt for the role of Michael Jordan in a movie is not discrimination.)
- The requirement for impartiality is a safeguard against arbitrariness.

A Conscious moral agent

- One who acts on reason
- One who gives equal weight to the interests of each individual
- One who carefully analyzes facts
- One who critically evaluates one's own arguments and convictions
- One who does not blindly follow moral tenets

Are there universal moral rules

- No society condones lying and murder.
- A society where people freely kill each other would implode.
- Similarly, a society that encourages lying will also be a dangerous society.

Harry Truman & Elizabeth Anscombe

- In 1945, when Truman became the President after F.D. Roosevelt's death, he knew nothing about the nuclear experiments. Presidential advisers told him that in order to subdue Japan, the US needed to drop atom bombs on a couple of cities in Japan.
- Truman was reluctant at first because of the non-combatant casualties that would cause. Roosevelt had also condemned non-combatant deaths in strongest terms “inhuman barbarism.”

Truman's decision

- Truman finally came around to the use of atom bomb convincing himself about the need to end hostilities swiftly.
- Truman told Stimson that the bombing was to achieve purely military and strategic victory and must minimize civilian casualties.
- Truman, after signing the order, said: “I slept like a baby.”

Anscombe

- Anscombe was 20 when World War II was beginning. She objected to Britain joining the war citing civilian casualties that would follow
- Anscombe was a Catholic and opposed abortion, contraception and also war.
- In 1956, Truman was honored with a Doctorate by Oxford University. Anscombe protested this honor as Truman was responsible for the obliteration of two cities.

Anscombe

- According to Anscombe, there are somethings that cannot be done. “For men to choose to kill the innocent as a means to their ends is always murder.”
- “It is noticeable that none of these philosophers displays any consciousness that there is such an ethic, which he is contradicting: it is pretty well taken for obvious among them that a prohibition such as that on murder does not operate in the face of some consequences.

Anscombe

- But of course the strictness of the prohibition has as its point that you are not be tempted by fear or consequences.”
- Anscombe's deontological argument is based on divine commandments.
- Immauel Kant based his arguments on reason.
- Moral judgments are categorical. One cannot escape moral obligations.

The Categorical Imperative

Immanuel Kant

- Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.
- Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only.