

Mateo, Alberto Nel R.  
OOB

## Chapter 7: The Categorical Imperative

Amazon Reference: <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/>

Quote:

"Rational nature exists as an end in itself."

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn about the essence of categorical imperative to morality.

Review:

This chapter focuses on the concept of Categorical Imperative. This principle states that "Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." In analyzing the principle at the first glance, it is a law which is an objective principle that should be done and also valid to all rational beings. It is different from maxim which is a subjective principle that has practical rule determined by its subject. Therefore, it is a rule where the subject acts unto it. As analysis go in depth, we can place some examples that might help us more understand the main point of the categorical imperative.

In the reading, it has given four examples to demonstrate if those things are to be considered as a universal law. First is that when committing suicide because of misfortunes in life. It can be for the reason that person want to shorten his/her hardships with his love for himself. But this contradicts itself to which you won't end your life if you love it. Thus it can't be a universal law of nature. Next is borrowing money even you know that you can't pay it back. It surely can't become a universal law because it violates the very meaning of promise. Third is having talent but doesn't want to use it. It is also can't become a universal law for it is necessary on a rational being to develop all the powers he has since it could eventually help him. The last is the sort of indifference in which you won't bother to put attention on people struggling on hardships that he can help. It is true that it can become a universal law because of showing good will and sympathy. But it is also to conflict in itself because there could be many instances where hope and sympathy is needed. If this kind of nature will always comes from his own will, it would make him gets all hope that we wants for himself leading to too much dependencies on others.

In order to conclude this principle, Kant uses the formula of means and ends. It defines means as the ground for an action whose possible result is an end. End, on the other hand is the thing that serves the will as a subjective ground of its self-determination. Thus considering this formula, we can derive the categorical imperative as follows: "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end".

What I have learned:

- Difference of maxim and law.
- Means and Ends
- Two forms of categorical imperative

Integrative Questions:

- What is the first form of Categorical Imperative?
- What is a law?
- What is a maxim?
- What are Means and Ends?
- What is the second form of Categorical Imperative? (The one in accordance to the formula of means and ends)

Chapter 8: Happiness and Virtue

Amazon Reference: <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/>

Quote:

"The life of the man who is active in accordance with virtue will be happy."

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn how happiness is connected to virtues.

Review:

In this chapter, Aristotle states that all humans seek happiness. In this statement, he has a different view of happiness than how principle of utility defines it. He says that happiness is an activity of the soul in accordance to virtue. In this reading, Aristotle separate virtue in two kinds. These are the moral and intellectual virtue. Moral virtue is a state of character that is in the middle of vice of excess and deficiency. Intellectual virtue on the other hand is the one that produces the most perfect happiness and it is found in the activity of mind through reason or meditation.

The reading has identified happiness as the final end of human deeds. It is for the reason that it is chosen for itself and not for something else. This happiness though, is not about pleasure but more on virtuous activity. In order to understand this definition of happiness, we must know the nature of virtue itself. Virtue is the mean of the excess and deficiency of two vices. An example of is pleasure and pain, which are both extremes on its ends as vices. We can conclude that temperance could be their mean or intermediate. It's because an excess of it would be self-indulgence and its deficiency would be in a form of insensible. Thus in the context of virtue, there must be excess and deficiency. But this thing doesn't always meet the standard. It's for the reason that some actions may not have excess and deficiency like war. Unlike the other kind which is more of the contemplative way. It is the intellectual virtue. This focuses on the reason of human beings which is not like the moral ones that needs some equipment to do so. Thus it turns to be the perfect source of happiness in consideration with the supernatural beings like gods. It's because we don't expect them to act in accordance to those virtues of acts. Therefore, for us humans, we also need some things in order to become self sufficient because our nature is not suited

for contemplation alone. Thus, what we need is the mean of moral virtue and the perfect intellectual virtue in order to act according to it and be able to live happy.

What I have learned:

- Nature of Virtue
- Happiness is a virtuous activity
- Both kinds of virtues is needed for humans to act upon it.

Integrative Questions:

- What is happiness according to Aristotle?
- What is a virtue?
- What are the two kinds of virtue?
- What kind of virtue is the one that depends on some external equipment?
- What kind of virtue do humans need in order to act through it?

Chapter 9: The Nature and Value of Rights

Amazon Reference: <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/>

Quote:

"Stand up like men."

What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn about the importance and value of rights in our world.

Review:

This chapter explains how human beings are in need of rights and its value to us. In order to illustrate on what would be the difference if humans don't have rights, Joel Feinberg allows us to imagine a world which is almost identical to what we have except for one thing. This one thing is the rights. He called this imaginary world as Nowheresville. In this imaginary world, we can see that it may somehow be appealing to our senses but if we try to diagnose it further, we may see something which still lacks in this world. This may have all good things that is also present in our world like duties, personal desert and sovereign monopoly of rights but it still doesn't make any relevance at all. It is for the reason that people on that world doesn't have rights. Now we may ask that why rights are morally important to us? Feinberg give some few key points in order to stress this out.

First of all, in Nowheresville, people can't claim something that is due to them. What they have is only the feeling of gratitude when it is given to them and nothing when it is not. This claim is a kind of it in which we make sure that people would listen to us. That kind of thing is not present in the Nowheresville. Next and the last is that, when people have rights, they can somehow gain significance in the world where they live. It makes us capable of having the feeling of being equal to with other people fundamentally. Thus, we can gain at least the minimum of self-respect because

of respect for the rights we have. That is called "human dignity". That is one of the most important things that a human must have which is not present in our imaginary world which truly makes sense.

What I have learned:

- Rights has moral importance
- Human dignity is absent in the Nowheresville
- Human dignity makes people a potential creator of claims

Integrative Questions:

- What is Nowheresville?
- What is lacking in Nowheresville?
- How rights do become morally important?
- What kind of claim do rights gives us?
- What is Human dignity?