

Human Arenas
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ARENA OF VALUES



Morality Strives to Precede Society But Fails

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Abstract

Morality, without a shadow of doubt, is one of the most controversial topics in the history of social sciences. Although, at its core, it is conceptualized as a set of principles which distinguish right from wrong, through ebb and flow, it has been molded in various frameworks which attempted to account for the nature and essence of it. Yet, no definition has been proposed which could stand up to criticism. Looking over the tumultuous history of morality, the present paper makes an attempt to bring to the fore the major stances on morality within philosophy and social sciences. Adopting a critical standpoint, the writers defy the attempts to provide a comprehensive definition of the concept. In the meantime, a path worth taking is proposed, i.e., a critical investigation of the effects of making actors cognizant of the results of their moral actions on their future conceptualization of morality as well as undertaking of moral actions.

Keywords Morality · Definition · Conceptualization · Context · Action

Introduction

What is this thing called morality? Is it possible to provide a consensual answer to this question or as Nietzsche once said a moral system valid for all is basically immoral? (1886/2009). Is it even appropriate to pose this question and venture an answer? What is the basis of morality? Should it be, as Kant believed, reason or, as Schopenhauer put, compassion? Is morality a single entity or Russell was right when he claimed that “there are two kinds of it: one that we preach, but do not practice, and another that we practice, but seldom preach” (Russell, 1928/2004, p. 84)? Should moral principles become conventions or as Charlotte Bronte believed (1847/2011), conventionality is not the same as morality? Was Oscar Wilde right when he defined morality as “simply an attitude we adopt towards

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people we personally dislike” (1899/2000, p.42)? Is morality simply an offset of feelings in line with Hemingway’s belief that what is moral is what you feel good after, and what is immoral is what you feel bad after (1932/1999, p.6)? If yes, is it accurate that we become moral when we are unhappy, as Marcel Proust once wrote (1919/1998)? Does morality know any boundaries or we should agree with Freud that not only men are more moral than they think, but they can be far more immoral than they can imagine (1923)? Is morality an offspring of religion or vice versa? Is it possible that humans have always got it wrong by trying to cherish the concept as something extraordinary and valuable? In that case, was Henry Adams (1862/1999) to the point when he called it “a private and costly luxury” (p.281)?

Morality is as old as philosophy itself. Although major disputes surrounding the subject have remained unsettled, it permeates every aspect of humans’ lives. Along history, various definitions through different frameworks have been proposed, trying to explain the nature of morality, what it constitutes, and how it is evolved in humans. Despite of all the attempts, the controversies surrounding the concept have remain unresolved mainly because it is very hard to define; “there is something which goes on in the world which it is appropriate to give the name “morality.” Nothing is more familiar; nothing is more obscure in its meaning” (Frankena, 1973, p.13).

Truth be told, there have actually never existed unanimous answers for the questions regarding the nature and essence of morality. Nevertheless, two points seem to be the outcome of the ongoing debates: firstly, it is unrealistic to expect complete agreement on the matter, and secondly, morality is concerned with the idea of right and wrong or good and bad. Therefore, it is fathomable why so many theories have been presented to unravel the mysteries of morality, but at times, they have ended in sharp contrast with each other. Even though, moral theories aim at describing, explaining, and justifying morality, the definition of the concept varies across time and person. Due to the nature of most concepts in humanities and social sciences, this problem has actually inflicted many human-related theories. The reason is that without proper consensual and comprehensive conceptualization of the target concept, no matter the amount of rigor and genius in the theories, they would wind up clashing with each other.

It is necessary to emphasize that the present article is a theoretical workout that suggest new ways of approaching moral issues. According to Moghaddam (2005, p. 1), working out is using “creativity to construct pictures that show the world in a new way” so that the main concern is “the big picture and broad ideas, rather than the details of experience.” Working in, on the contrary, sticks to empirical evidence; “the researcher develops an explanation, always working back in toward the hard evidence that was the point of departure” (Moghaddam, 2005, p. 1). The most prominent characteristic of theoretical workouts is that they are broad in scope because they deal with the concepts in the most general sense. However, once they are laid out, it is easy to draw empirical questions and hypotheses to check out in real-life situations.

Morality in Hindsight

Morality is such a broad concept with an extensive literature that it is not possible to include all theories and ideas addressing it in a single study. Almost all great philosophers and thinkers have something to say about morality which differs from that of their predecessors. For the purpose of this study, the general trends of approaching morality

are presented without trying to present all the nuances that exist in the literature. Generally speaking, morality has been treated in two broad senses: descriptive and normative. Whereas morality in its descriptive definition refers to certain codes of conduct put forward by a society or a group (such as a religion), or accepted by an individual for her own behavior, normatively, it refers to a code of conduct that, given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational persons (Gert & Gert, 2017). Despite the fact that moral principles are strikingly complicated, competing frameworks have been proposed for the conception of moral issues. As a result, various theories have emerged through the ages in the need to evaluate the morally relevant features of an action. A moral theory, as a subsection of normative ethics, tries to describe, explain, and justify morality (Audi, 2015). In broader terms, moral theories, whatever their specific content, address questions about what is right and wrong, what is obligatory or impermissible and the like (Jacobs, 2008).

Throughout centuries, various frameworks were put forth to encompass moral issues which resulted in three main perspectives: virtue-centered ethics, deontological ethics, and consequentialism. The first approach is primarily concerned with moral character conveying that virtues such as friendship, courage, and honesty are the center of a well-lived life (Hursthouse & Pettigrove, 2018). Deontological ethics, sometimes called duty-based, fall within a domain of moral theories which “stress that each of us has certain duties – actions that we ought or ought not to perform – and that acting morally amounts to doing our duty, whatever consequences might follow from this” (Warburton, 2013, p. 39). Finally, Consequentialist accounts of moral theory are outcome-based in the sense that whether an action is right or wrong depends on the outcome of that action (Mulgan, 2001).

Simply put, the debate over moral issues has always come to a simple question, i.e., what is the best thing to do? Although this question is fundamentally addressed within the realm of normative ethics, from a meta-ethical outlook, different positions can be adopted on the issue. Moral monism suggests that “to all true questions there must be one true answer and one only, all the other answers being false” (Berlin, 1998, p.14). Moral pluralism supports the existence of many different moral values (Graham & Haidt, 2012). However, in spite of its significance, there are people who deny the whole entity of a truly universal moral system. Moral relativists adopt the view that there are no universal moral standards and no absolute guidelines for right and wrong that could apply to all cultures at all times; instead, the truth value of moral codes are relative (Driver, 2006). Lastly, moral nihilism, bluntly at odds with the former standpoints, claims there are no valid moral principles (Audi, 2015).

Ancient Period

Although there were some pre-Socratic thinkers who addressed the issues which fall under morality such as Anaximander, Euripides, Heraclitus, and Parmenides, the deciding philosophical deliberation over ethics started with Socrates as he turned his attention to down-to-earth issues and how humans are to be in this world. For him, as Buckingham (2011) pointed out, virtue was not relative. Rather, he insisted that such concepts are absolute and applicable to all humans around the world. In his line of thought, evil was conceptualized as lack of wisdom and knowledge. In effect, he equated virtue with knowledge and concluded that “there is only one good: knowledge; and one evil: ignorance” (Buckingham, 2011, p. 48). Socrates’ most dedicated disciple, Plato, laid moral theory at the heart of his philosophy. His main concern was determining and providing clear definitions for abstract moral values such as justice and virtue. Plato was arguing for an ideal form of the things in

the world, either moral concepts or physical objects, of which we have innate knowledge. The belief in this ideal form was, in fact, like that of his beloved mentor, a refutation of the notion that right and wrong are relative.

Whereas Plato searched for the conception of abstract Forms in the higher otherworldly realms, Aristotle believed they reside here on Earth. He refuted Plato's theory of Forms by proposing that the essential form of things is inherent in each instance of that thing and what exists in the material world is not just an imperfect copy of it. In Aristotle's ethics, rational excellence is an end in itself since in order to be virtuous the agent needs to conform to what wisdom and knowledge dictates. A virtuous person has the habit of "hitting the mean" (Driver, 2001, p. 6) as the situation requires and the best way to develop good habits is to practice them. In other words, nature disposes human beings to accept virtue and habit is one way to help them develop virtues. Then, for instance, the habit of doing just deeds will help the person to be just.

Epicurean moral theory came forth when the philosophical thoughts of Aristotle and Plato had reached their pinnacle. While the former ideas mostly involved pondering over virtue and virtuous life, Epicurus mulled over the goal of life and took the view that pleasure, if correctly understood, will coincide with virtue (Parry, 2014). He argued that pleasure and pain are the roots of good and evil. Epicurus' hedonistic theory posits that humans should trust their feelings of pleasure and pain. Pleasure, in his view, is the only thing that is intrinsically valuable and should be deemed as the main criterion for all actions (Bergsma et al., 2008). The Epicurean theory is known as ethical hedonism in the history of ethics (Mitra, 2015) since he took the view that pleasure is not just about bodily pleasure.

Stoicism, the main Hellenistic school of Philosophy, developed in parallel with Epicureanism. According to the stoic doctrine, humans were given a rational soul with which they can exercise free will. Nonetheless, no one is forced to look for ways to practice good life; instead, man is free to choose whether to put aside the things over which he has little control, or to remain apathetic to pain and pleasure, poverty and wealth. Indeed, for the stoic philosopher, reason became the true model for human existence and virtue was the inherent feature of the world (Saunders, 2019). They considered virtue as the most lasting thing in life which included justice, moderation, courage, and general excellence of character (Kingsley, 2016). By and large, nature plays a pivotal role in the ethical theories of Hellenistic period; however, for stoics, it takes off as a central organizing principle which appears in their formula for the final end: living in accordance with nature (Shaw, 2019).

Modern Morality

There is an exposition that ancient ethics does not completely veil what today falls under the heading of morality. Whereas the main concern for the ancient philosophers was the agent's life, modern morality focused on the agent's act. There are two salient ethical approaches under the heading of modern morality: Kantian ethics and utilitarianism.

Kant's ethics revolves around the notion of the authority of reason. He argued that all moral concepts origin completely a priori in reason in the sense that all moral concepts and principles, as well as their application, can be known through reason alone, needless of consulting experience, behavior, or customs; they are applicable and known merely by virtue of being rational (Rosen et al., 2018). Moral philosophy of Kant is deontological or duty-based so that he scorned sympathy if it did not flow from a sense of duty (Niebuhr, 1932). Therefore, what stands out in Kant's philosophy is that the motive of an action,

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i.e., the intention behind it, is more important than the action itself or the consequences it brings about. The intentions or the principle behind any action in Kant's ethics is described as the maxim which, in more thorough terms, can be defined as a subjective rule or policy of action that says what you are doing and why (Rohlf, 2018).

Utilitarianism, a descendant of consequentialism, is one of the most significant and outstanding approaches to normative ethics which rests its core idea on the consequences of the actions; in other terms, the central idea in utilitarianism holds that "the morally right action is the action that produces the most good" (Driver, 2014, para.1). In a general sense, utilitarians believed that the main purpose of morality is to improve life by enhancing the amount of good things such as pleasure and happiness and reducing the amount of painful things such as pain and unhappiness. To this end, they defied the moral codes that are dictated by customs, traditions, or even given by leaders or supernatural beings; instead, they argued what makes an action moral is its positive contribution to human beings (Nathanson, 2019).

Morality After Modernity

In the course of nineteenth century, Nietzsche began a sustained attack on morality and religion. He was also famous for criticisms of "conventional philosophical ideas and social and political pieties associated with modernity" (Anderson, 2017, para.1). His philosophy was an invitation to challenge the issues which were widely accepted as they seemed to be in accordance with the common sense. Three linked ideas were specifically the target of his uncompromising criticism of Western philosophy, namely, the idea of man and human nature, the idea of God, and the ideas about morality or ethics (Buckingham, 2011). He disparaged the presumed idea that humanity is born with an innate moral sense and that there exists an objective truth and ideal standards which can be used to regulate the human's ideas or actions (Spinks, 2003).

Nietzsche ascribed the modern human nihilistic entrapment to the invented concepts such as morality, truth, evil, and good, and his doctrine of perspectivism was in tandem with the rejection of the objective truth. Among those who followed his footsteps, two names stand out: Derrida and Foucault who, inspired by Nietzsche's views, sought to unveil the mysteries of the truth. Despite adopting different approaches, Derrida and Foucault shared a concern about the constraints that the world places on individuals and that these constraints arise primarily in the categories by means of which they conceptualize themselves and the world (May, 2005). To decipher the origins of the constraints, Derrida resorted to linguistic deconstruction as he believed that limitations stem from the structure of language (e.g. 1976, 1978). Foucault, as well, believed the individual is constituted as subject of knowledge, power, and discourse but he argued that the oppression is of a historical origin (e.g. 1972, 1980).

Morality in Social Sciences

Sociology

The study of morality is an interdisciplinary enterprise. Not only has it been a primary concern in philosophy but also it was considered a main aspect of human relations from the dawn of social sciences (Hitlin, 2013). The social aspects of morality have been studied under the rubric of the sociology of morality which can be defined as

“the sociological investigation of the nature, causes, and consequences of people’s ideas about the good and the right” (Abend, 2008, p. 87).

Emile Durkheim was the first one who adopted a scientific approach in studying morality as a social phenomenon. Negating the a priori moral concepts or abstract logical reasoning to construct ethical systems, Durkheim argued moral phenomena are conditioned both socially and historically. In his view, moral principles are created for each society in accordance with its existential needs; therefore, when analyzing moral phenomena, the socio-historical context of the moral system they are operating in must be taken into account; otherwise, great harm is done to society (Carls, 2019). In Durkheim’s thinking, morality and law are “species of the single genus” (Karsenti, 2012, p. 22). This might explain his theory that “morality was a reflection of the organization of society and bound it together” (Hitlin & Vaisy, 2013, p. 52).

Weber took a rather contradictory standpoint as he believed empirical realities cannot be reduced to laws (Weber, 1949/2011). Whereas Durkheim studied the society as a whole, Weber sought to study the individual action (Giddens & Sutton, 2017). Opposing the natural approach to social sciences, he relied on hermeneutics as his methodology to understand social phenomena. In other terms, for Weber, hermeneutics was a tool to “understand actors, interaction, and indeed all of human history” (Ritzer, 2008, p. 117). Furthermore, he believed that knowledge is the outcome of the “competition between perspectives” (Palonen, 2004, p.278). Applying this belief to social sciences, he argued the moral world is one of value-rationality and the competing claims of historical ideas” (Hitlin & Vaisy, 2013, p. 52). All in all, Weber’s epistemological view of ethics was influenced by Kant (Sung Ho, 2017). However, in his view, moral action was never apart from the society. By developing an ideal type of morality, he tried to assign a role to society in which it provides “an objectification of grand ideas and moral codes in the form of a collective entity that people could believe in” (Stone, 2010, p. 133).

Regarding morality and society, Adam Smith linked the two through economy, stating that “economic transactions were inextricably bound up with moral sentiments” (Hitlin & Vaisey, 2013, p. 52). He further claimed that “the market is a mechanism of morality and social support” (Weinstein, 2019, para. 3). From another viewpoint, morality is primarily a reflection of structure of society including its class system (Sayer, 2010). As Walzer put it “morality is always potentially subversive of class and power” (1989, p. 22). This idea stems from Marx’s suspicion of morality. Not only did Marx believe morality to be an autonomous realm independent of religion (Wood, 2004), but he saw it as a form of ideology or a social system which was historically contingent and tied up within class domination (Hitlin & Vaisy, 2013). The Marxist moral theory of truth is materialistic and based on the individuals’ drives toward the satisfaction of their needs (Ferri, 2011). In brief, “the moral truth of social beings is necessarily linked to socio-personal needs and that system, which satisfies them. This social structure, as of now, has to be historically achieved” (Ferri, 2011, p. 24).

The moral theory of Habermas, which came to be known as discourse ethics, is a recent development social theory which seems more apt for the contemporary societies where pluralistic notions of the good are encountered by the individual and the moral agents try to act on the basis of publically justifiable principles (Cherem, 2019). Following the Kantian line of thought, Habermas viewed morality as a set of unconditional moral obligations that regulate interaction among persons (Bohman & Rehg, 2017). Accordingly, he believed the task of moral theory is to reinforce the unconditional force of such obligations as impartial dictates of practical reason would hold for an autonomous agent in a similar situation; however, one main point of difference with Kant was

his engagement with discourse and thence his dialogical approach to practical reason (Bohman & Rehg, 2017).

Psychology

The field of psychology also hosted several studies which contributed to putting forward different theories regarding the development of morality. The unit of analysis in moral psychology is different from the sociology of morality. Moral psychology as an interdisciplinary field draws on both the empirical resources of the human sciences and the conceptual resources of philosophical ethics to investigate “human functioning in moral contexts, and asks how these results may impact debate in ethical theory” (Doris et al., 2017, para.1). Alternatively stated, it is the “study of the development of the moral sense—i.e., of the capacity for forming judgments about what is morally right or wrong, good or bad” (Duignan, 2017, para.1).

In the psychological arena, Freud is assumed to be the first theorist who gave an explanation of how morality is developed in an individual. The whole query started with the notion of conscience which was elaborated by Freud (Killen & Smetana, 2008). He theorized that the superego within the psyche performs the moral functioning (Sagan, 1988). As he believed, the superego which is the critical level of conscious awareness grapples with the ego to stop children from doing things they should not do; moreover, it is allied with the sense of conscience and aims to hold up the self to high moral and social standards (Thurschwell, 2000). In sum, for Freud, morality is “driven by unconscious motives and feelings, which are then rationalized with publicly acceptable reasons” (Haidt, 2012, p.817).

While Freud’s main concern was the relationship between child and parents, their emotions, and guilt, Piaget mainly focused on peer relationships, cognition, justice, and reflection (Killen & Smetana, 2008). Piaget’s cognitive development theory (1923/2015) suggested that a child grows into adulthood going through several developmental stages within which the child learns by doing instead of instruction. To come up with how moral principles develop in children, Piaget (1932/2007) observed them playing games and designated two stages of development: heteronomous morality and autonomous reality. In the first stage, children regard morality as obeying the rules which are imposed from the outside and they cannot be changed. Whereas, in the autonomous stage, which is also called moral relativism, children recognize that morality is not an absolute entity of right or wrong and that it depends on intentions rather than consequences.

Piaget’s ideas set the stage for the emergence of other developmental theories. Kohlberg (1971), endorsing Kant’s rationalistic theory of ethics, expanded Piaget’s two moral stages to three levels, namely, pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. Either one of these levels consists of two stages and signifies moral growth in individuals from early childhood all through adolescence.

Kohlberg considered moral maturity as moving from concrete interest to general principles; furthermore, he took the universal principle of justice as the highest claim of morality (Griffin, 2012). Although Kohlberg’s theory of moral development gathered momentum at the time and was empirically tested (e.g. Colby et al., 1983), it could not escape criticism. Gilligan’s ethics of care (1982) arose in response to Kohlberg’s assertion that women are deficient in moral reasoning. She refuted the deficiency of women’s moral reasoning; instead, she proposed men and women differ in the way they reason. She claimed “women’s moral judgment is more contextual, more immersed in the details of relationships and

narratives” and “sensitivity to others, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and peacemaking all reflect interpersonal involvement” (Griffin, 2012, p. 443). Even with all the criticism, Kohlberg’s theory of moral development gained ground since it, as put by Haidt (2013), slayed two dragons of behaviorism and psychoanalysis and modified the world in which psychology and education are studied today. Furthermore, it made it possible for researchers “to look inside the black box of the mind and study moral reasoning” (Haidt, 2013, p. 282).

These queries, based on cognitive-developmental approach, were attempts to map out how the individuals advance to higher stages of moral thinking. Although the cognitive-rationalistic approach to morality was very influential, it could not afford explanations for every aspect of moral reasoning and moral judgment. These limitations inspired a new outlook on the issue which tried to explore the role of emotions in moral psychology. This social-psychological standpoint adopts the view that the situational factors that influence the resolution of moral quandaries should be taken into account whereas the question of moralization should be dropped (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010).

The theory of moral foundations is a social psychological theory which posits that humans’ moral reasoning is done based on innate, modular foundations (Haidt & Graham, 2007; Haidt & Joseph, 2004). Whereas other titans of moral psychology were unanimous in claiming that morality is not innate (Haidt, 2013), moral foundations theory adopts a nativist approach claiming that “that knowledge about such issues as fairness, harm, and respect for authority has been built into the human mind by evolution” (Haidt & Joseph, 2004, p. 55). It is worth mentioning that the innateness of the domains does not mean that they are necessarily immutable. The theory originally proposed that five innate moral foundations are responsible for moral judgment: care, fairness, authority, loyalty, and purity (with liberty as the potential sixth one) (Graham et al., 2013; Haidt, 2012). Each one of these systems is responsible for judging different acts to be morally wrong. For instance, the care system intuitively judges hurting other people as immoral, and so is the case about lying, cheating, incest, etc. All in all, this theory holds that evolution in fact can provide explanations on how this way of reasoning has been cultivated in human’s mind (Graham et al., 2013).

Discussion

Asking the question “what is morality?” is problematic in itself. Defining morality as “something that is” or trying to capture the nature of the concept implies an attempt to conceptualize it regardless of all the other influential factors regarding human life and actions. In other words, answering the question inevitably leads to a frozen definition which strives to precede society and people. This is actually the problem inherent in all attempts at defining such concepts through an analytical ontology outlook which needs to be addressed (e.g. Fathabadi et al., 2020). This outlook, in pursuing “what there is” as the ontological endeavor prominent in analytical philosophy, inevitably moves toward fixity of meaning for the concept. Conversely, morality like many other human-related concepts exists like a living organism and goes through changes and modifications across society, time, and person.

Morality is as distant as it gets from being a straightforward concept. In a descriptive sense, for instance, there is a need to specify what set of principles are considered moral since what is moral in one society may not count ethical in another. In the meantime, morality in a normative sense implies that there is a code of conduct accepted by anyone who has certain intellectual and volitional conditions, which always includes being

rational. Moreover, even if all people in a society agreed upon a single definition for morality (as both descriptive and normative takes on morality propose), it does not mean that their interpretations and implementations of morality would coincide.

All three frameworks put forth to encompass moral are unrealistic in the amount of rigor they will be able to achieve. The virtue-centered ethics does not actually have the requirements of a valid scientific framework as it is concerned with some virtues deemed to be moral, and does not move further than that. Deontological ethics solely focus on acting according to one's duties in society which, it presupposes, leads to being moral. The problem is who defines these duties and how can one assure that the prescribed duties pave the way for morality (even if it was a consensual concept). The Consequentialist accounts are actually more close to providing a systematic framework but fall short at the end since the outcome of the actions must be judged based on some principles which do not consensually exist.

Appropos of the discussed issues, Nietzsche's (1886/2009) relativistic assertion that "a moral system valid for all is basically immoral" seems to be in accord. Nonetheless, this apparent pertinence can be refuted since the assertion can easily clash with what it represents, i.e., relativism. First of all, there has never existed a valid-for-all system to check whether it is immoral or not. But, of course, in an attempt to criticize the essentialist stance, the sentence tries to send a message through a hypothetical scenario. Yet again, it fails because if morality is relative so would be being immoral. In simple terms, a valid-for-all moral system does not exist, but if it did, there would be no grounds on which one could call it immoral, because both are relative. Thus providing such system is impossible and so is its refutation.

All the other provided answers to the questions in the beginning by various intellectuals are presenting knowledge which is not wrong per se and each depicts one specific perspective among many. The problem is that none of them presents the whole picture, and they are not, except Kant, actually trying to do so. Regardless of whether Kant's solution would work or not, it is not possible to try it because, as the history of humanity has proven, making humans stick to reason and reason alone in any aspect is not going to happen. After all, people are at least as much emotion as they are reason.

Concluding Remarks

This article does not suggest the total eradication of the concept of morality as it is too important and critical to be just dismissed. One way or another, whether they can explain it or not, every human being has a sense of morality which affects his/her actions. It would be worthwhile to study human behaviors from a moral perspective without trying to impose certain rules and principles on them. If one digs deep enough, every human being has something to say in order to justify his/her behavior from a moral perspective.

Talking about undertaken behavior rarely, if ever, has turned out to be harmful for humans. This type of investigation is useful to glean the various definitions people have or think they have for morality to understand how they justify their behaviors in relation to their definitions and to find out whether what they say conform with what they do. Last but not least, it is actually helpful to make them recognize the result of their actions because as Foucault once said, "people know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do; but what they do not know is what they do does" (cited in Dreyfus & Rainbow, 1983, p.187).

Put another way, a good way to deal with moral issues is to make people face the effects of what they do, not just on other people but on themselves too. The effects of moral actions on other people have been regularly addressed by scholars of consequentialist orientation. The effects of moral actions on the actors have also, implicitly and explicitly, been described and dealt with by psychologists and psychoanalysts. What is suggested here is to study the effects of making actors cognizant of the results of their moral actions on their future conceptualization of morality and undertaking of moral actions.

Although humans have the ability to reflect on the effects of their moral actions, they are more likely to resort to various kinds of self-justification (Aronson, 2018). Self-justification is a powerful process in human mind that can easily nullify the real effect humans' reflection on their moral actions might have had without it. To sum up, regarding moral issues, making people face the impact of their actions on others and themselves is the path worth taking especially after they have faced a moral dilemma.

The advance of science and technology has actually made it easy for people to keep track of the changes in their own mentalities and behaviors. Sometimes, even a simple review of the posts one has shared on social media years ago can make one surprised by the amount of changes noticeable in the person throughout time. People might be asked to record a video or audio, if writing in a diary is too much of a burden, for future use. One can record the first file defining one's own definition of the concept, and record other files every time a moral issue or dilemma presents itself. The files may include the reaction(s) of the person to the issue, the behavior(s) undertaken, the feeling(s) instigated by it, the probable justification(s) for the undertaken course of action, etc. It actually is a simple and useful way for people to keep track of their moral growth and modifications and the effects of different factors such as their reaction to previous moral issues on their mentality. The files alongside their analysis can also be used for educational purposes to discuss the effects of previous moral actions on the undertakers and others, alongside the validity, reliability, and consequences of justifications.

Declarations

Ethical Statements There was no participant involved in this study.

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