

**Final Paper****PHI014 B Intro to Ethics I****Due 12/9/2019****6 pages, double-spaced, font size 12**

Choose topics **A**; **B**; or three of **C** topics (one per chapter only). Refer to the ideas and arguments covered in the textbook. Present the argument, test the relevance of the ethical theories of utilitarianism and deontology, critically evaluate it in terms of its intrinsic logic and convincing quality. Comment on its significance to your own experience, or to contemporary ethical concerns. Present your own position and justify it. Use your own examples (from life, literature, film) to support it. To present and discuss your case in terms of the classical ethical theories of utilitarianism and deontology, please use only the theoretical material covered in class this semester and discussed in the textbook McKinnon/Fiala. **Please do not use any other bibliographic material/any other texts of ethical theory.**

**A.1. Contemporary Case.** Write and reflect on your own project in contemporary ethics, one that is of significant interest to you, perhaps related to your own professional area or one that is of critical urgency today.

**B.2. Ethical Self-Evaluation.** Write and reflect on three ethical choices that have influenced your intellectual/professional life in a significant degree. Define your ethical profile according to the classical ethical theory that these choices represent.

**C. Virtue Ethics**

3. Briefly introduce virtue ethics. Compare it with Deontology and Utilitarianism. Present the positive/strong aspects and negative/weak aspects of Virtue Ethics. Compare it with Deontology and Utilitarianism. Are you a virtue ethicist? Why/not? Give examples. Discuss.

4. Present and Discuss virtue in Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics as an excellence and a mean between two vices or forms of excess and lack. Give examples. Discuss.

**Abortion**

5. Using concepts and theories introduced in this chapter, defend your own position about the ethics of abortion. Present the main disputes about the morality of abortion. Evaluate utilitarian and deontological moral arguments about abortion.

Illustrate. Use examples from your own experience, public cases, film, or lit.

6. Present and discuss Judith Jarvis Thomson's defense of abortion vs. Don Marquis anti-abortion position. What is your own position? Justify.

### **Euthanasia**

7. Using concepts and theories introduced in this chapter, defend your own ideas about the ethics of euthanasia. Present the utilitarian and deontological arguments about suicide and killing.

Illustrate. Use examples from your own experience, public cases, film, or lit.

8. Present and discuss J. Gay-Williams anti-euthanasia position or James Rachels' critique of the distinction between active and passive euthanasia.

### **Biotechnology and Bioengineering**

9. Present the current issues in the field and discuss what seems to you the most ethically problematic one: athletic and cognitive enhancement, stem cell research, therapeutic and reproductive cloning, genetic engineering (modern eugenics) and genetic screening, genetically modified plants and animals.

10. Nick Bostrom, In Defense of Posthuman Dignity

### **Economic Justice**

11. Using concepts and arguments presented in this chapter, defend your own theory about economic justice. Present your view of an ideal society. Present the nature of and difference between negative and positive rights. Which according to you, should have priority? Explain.

Illustrate. Use examples from your own experience, public cases, film, or lit.

12. Present and discuss John Rawls's Justice as Fairness vs. Robert Nozick's Distributive Justice

4. Present three morally commendable and morally questionable features of socialism; 2. of Ayn Rand's/Robert Nozick's libertarianism and laissez-faire capitalism.

13. Present and comment on Amartya Sen's and Martha Nussbaum's capabilities theory.

### **Equality and Discrimination**

14. Define discrimination, its different forms, and present the principle of equality vs. justice. Revise current issues (profiling, hate crimes). Explain affirmative action/preferential treatment and apply utilitarian and deontological ethics to evaluate the pros-and cons. State your position. Justify. Illustrate.

15. Present and discuss Anita L. Allen's ethical dilemma and K.A. Appiah's Racisms

ETHICAL CHOICES & PROFESSIONALISM

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### Ethical Choices & Professionalism

Unethical professionals are among the dangerous people in modern society. This is because they have an informational advantage over the rest of the people. Such an asymmetry power when exploited to their advantage is very dangerous in society. Based on that fact, a corresponding sense of responsibility is required to obligate professionals in the direction that best suits client demands and interests in addition to appropriately safeguarding the necessary disclosures as well as securing and protecting client consents in a professional way. Professional ethics usually provide useful ways to identify the moral hazards which enable professionals to discern what is right and wrong. Also, young professionals enter the job market when naïve and inexperienced and require guidance on what is good and what is bad. Professional ethics, in this case, represent the collective and time-tested wisdom that is passed to the young professionals by experienced professionals in regard to what is right and wrong in the respective profession. In my journey as a young professional in different organizations, there are three ethical choices I witnessed which shaped my professional life to who I am today.

The first incidence took place in Grets Health Services (GHS) where I was working as an assistant administrator in the procurement sector of the hospital. The hospital had suffered a lack of medicine to the extent of closing up. This is because it had spent the available resources a few months ago to import a container of medicine from Germany. However, issues which were little known by the subordinate staff members had made the container to be held in the port for three months since they arrived. The management team could meet frequently to discuss the way forward but none of them could disclose what was happening. However, after their last meeting which included some members from the National Bank of America, the drugs were delivered the

following day. This raised suspicion because it was clear that the hospital had borrowed from the bank to facilitate the clearance of the container.

When the drugs arrived, another suspicion arose because the procedure of receiving the medicine which involved several departments coming together to authenticate the safety of drugs was altered for the first time in the history of the hospital. The only people who took place in receiving the container were the five top management officials, which did not matter anyway. However, when doctors and nurses started using those drugs, peculiar cases like side effects to patients would be reported from time to time. The top management seemed not to care and would refute those claims. This saw the hospital record three deaths and several patients with worse conditions.

One week after, one of the top official members stood out firmly and revealed publicly that the hospital management had corrupted its top management not to disclose that the drugs received had expired following their long stay in the port waiting for clearance. He linked the extreme cases which had been reported in the hospital to the fact that the drugs they were taking had expired. His revelation saw people transfer their patients to other hospitals. Although was criticized for his actions which led to the closure of the hospital, he had saved many patients who would have suffered.

The second incidence took place when I was undertaking an internship in a government auditing firm. Being the most energetic group, interns would be sent on the field under the supervision of one or two experienced auditors. After one year, interns were fully qualified and were trusted to the extent that they would be sent out to the field alone. Most of the government's institutions we were auditing had corrupt cases and would try their best to ensure their audit

reports were adjusted to escape corruption cases. This included following their reports to the auditor general offices. One of those days when we would be sent to audit government institutions as interns alone, we came across the managing director in the Government Disaster Anticipation and Recovery Unit (GDARU) who was willing to pay \$500 to see his audited report adjusted to exclude a deficit of \$1000 which featured in the organization accounts. Three of my fellow interns considered it a good deal and accepted to adjust the accounts while two of us considered it unethical and refused the deal with a lot of temptations though. We had refused the deal when considered how people had lost their lives a few months ago because of floods when GDARU lacked resources to respond to that disaster. Some two years down the line, the incident erupted and forensic investigations revealed that the three interns had been involved in the case. Besides their property being auctioned and financial accounts deactivated, their auditing certificates were revoked rendering them useless in the job market.

The third incident took place when I was working as a junior human resource manager in an oil company. The senior human resource had been taking advantage of desperate female job seekers to advance her sexual demands in exchange for a job opportunity. Most of the female workers who were working in that company had gone through the process before getting the job opportunity they were seeking. Although the human resource department was aware of what was happening, they had been warned against speaking it out lest they lost their jobs. After joining and working in the HR department for two months, what seemed a nightmare to me displayed it openly when I found the senior HR with a teenage girl in his office molesting her. Just like others, he warned me against speaking about it. However, my instincts showed me otherwise and decided to share it with the managing director. I considered it unethical for HR to take advantage of the desperate job seekers to misuse it and that is why I ended up reporting the incidence. After

being fired for such an action, it was later revealed that the HR was suffering from AIDs and had infected all those he had slept with. I was happy that had saved many more from becoming victims

Reflecting on the three incidences whenever I encounter a situation that calls for ethical decision making, I always opt to be ethical. For instance, the case of the top manager in Grets Health Services reminds me of unethical actions oppressing the already oppressed like the patients who had visited the hospital with the hope of being treated and reclaiming their health only to be killed because of the unethical actions of the top management. This incident also reminds me that I might be the saviour of the oppressed just like the top manager who isolated himself to defend the oppressed

In the second incidence where I made an ethical choice not to accept a bribe to adjust the audit reports in a corrupt institution that had caused the loss of many lives, it reminds me that unethical choices have consequences. This is in consideration of the fact that the three interns who accepted the deal ended up losing their corrupt property as well as their audit certificates being revoked. When I reflect on this incidence facing a situation that requires ethical decision making, I always consider being ethical

In the last incidence as a junior human resource officer, it reminds me that my ethical choices may be the only hope for many people. In this incidence, if I had decided to keep quiet just like the other members of the department had done, the senior HR would have continued to infect more teenage girls whose desperate conditions were making them fall into the HR's trap. My ethical choice saved many more girls who would have ended up being infected and their happiness in life taken away.



The three ethical choices above borrowed largely from the classical ethical theory. For instance, the utilitarian theory which places the locus of determining what is right and wrong on the outcomes and consequences of choosing one approach over the other was considered in the first instance (MacKinnon & Fiala 2015). The manager must have considered the number of people who were going to die and suffer as a result of the actions of some few managers who had been bribed to maintain the low tone and realized that the consequences were adverse on the side of the majority than the minority before exposing the incidence. In the third incident, I also utilized the utilitarian theory by considering the number of people who were going to suffer in the hands of the senior HR if I was not going to make an ethical choice to speak out despite the warning.

Deontology was applied in the third incident where I refused to take the bribe which was meant to entice us to make adjustments of the audit reports to enable the managing director to avoid the consequences of being corrupt. Deontology is an ethical theory that advocates on the use of rules to differentiate between what is right and wrong unlike consequentialism which classifies the situation as of right or wrong on the basis of results, deontology basis the argument on series of rules (MacKinnon & Fiala 2015). I refused the bribe not because I was rich but because I knew it was wrong to be bribed in order to cover the actions of the managing director who had caused deaths due to mismanagement of funds meant for disaster recovery.

In the three incidences, virtue ethics was utilized in coming up with the ethical choices (MacKinnon & Fiala 2015). Virtual ethics emphasizes virtues and moral character, unlike the deontology that emphasizes on rules and duties. In the first incident, the top management member who took an ethical choice to reveal that the drugs had expired considered it moral not to let other people suffer when she knew the reason behind their suffering. In the second

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incidence, I considered it immoral to accept the bribe and let the managing director get away with his corruption case which had led to the death of several people because there was no money to facilitate disaster recovery. In the last incidence, I also considered it immoral to let the senior HR to continue messing with the lives of teenage girls who were falling into his trap because they were desperately searching for job opportunities.

#### References

MacKinnon B. & Fiala A. (2015). Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues, 8<sup>th</sup> edition