

ANALYSIS

PART I

ETHICAL THINKING

I. AIMS AND METHODS OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY

1. The achievements of many sciences are unexpected.
2. Hopes that moral philosophy would demonstrate what our duties are in detail were vain;
3. As was the hope that it would demonstrate the reality of duty.
4. Distinction of *obligations* from *duty*. The strongest present obligation is a duty.
5. Ambiguity of the question: 'Why ought I?'
6. Moral philosophy assists clearness in thinking and talking about conduct,
7. Mainly by distinguishing different senses of ambiguous terms.
8. Since it cannot demonstrate duties,
9. Its influence in practice is only indirect or negative, by criticism of false theories which might pervert judgement;
10. E.g. Hedonistic theories may have made some men more selfish,
11. Utilitarian theories may have made them less just,
12. Determinist theories less morally energetic.
13. All men are more or less prejudiced by popular theories, habits, and conventions, which philosophy may dispel.
14. Moral philosophy distinguishes between ethical and non-ethical meanings of 'good' and 'ought', and between various ethical applications of these words.
15. Grounds of definitions and distinctions.
16. Have the acts we ought to do any other common relation or character by which they might be definable?
17. The corresponding question has been asked about beautiful things.
18. We may discover the ground of some types of obligation but perhaps not the same for all types.

ANALYSIS

II. THE GROUND OF OBLIGATION

1. Do our obligations depend on the actual situation and consequences (*objective* view), or on our beliefs about these (*subjective* view), or on our moral estimate of what the supposed situation demands (*putative* view)?
2. Language supports all these views, but only one can be *true* in the same sense of obligation. Yet the senses seem the same.
3. Since the three usages are equally common they have equal claims to be called *correct*. Which should be adopted on reflection? Arguments (i) for the *putative* view. Only on this view can a man ever know his duty since he is not historically, scientifically, or morally infallible. (ii) Supporters of the *subjective* view (a) urge this last argument against the *objective* view, not seeing that it also applies to their own; (b) point out that the *putative* view seems to imply that whatever a man thinks his duty is his duty. (iii) Supporters of the *objective* view urge (a) that only on this view can duties and rights or obligations and claims be correlative, (b) that if a man's real duty depended on his beliefs he could have no obligation to reconsider them. Attempts to evade these difficulties.
4. Ground common to all these views; we assume a situation and our capacity for affecting it, and our duty to do so. Reflection and experience show these assumptions uncertain.
5. On the *objective* view a man might sometimes know an obligation but never a duty. He 'ought' to reconsider his beliefs about his *objective* duty in a sense analogous to that in which he 'ought' to take the probable means to any end. It must be *possible* for him to do his *objective* duty, but he is only responsible for trying to do it.
6. We can know that such-and-such a situation involves such-and-such an obligation and therefore that there are *objective* obligations.
7. Relations of 'objective' and 'subjective' duties.
8. An *objective* obligation must be to do something we could *if* we tried.
9. Legal application of these distinctions.
10. Approbation is only deserved by fulfilling *putative* duties;
11. And only when they are done because they are *putative* duties;
12. And perhaps only when meritorious because *difficult*.

ANALYSIS

III. NON-MORAL THEORIES OF CONDUCT

1. It has been held that moral judgements either (a) assert nothing or (b) assert somebody's like or dislike for certain acts and characters.
2. There is no contradiction between 'This act was wrong' and 'This act was popular' or 'I am proud of this act', so (b) must be false. Either therefore (a) is true or 'This act was wrong' asserts what it is generally meant and understood to assert.
3. The motive for suggesting that it asserts nothing is the doubt whether there really are obligations or can be known to be, since they are not verifiable in sense-experience or introspection.
4. Nor are many self-evident truths, which yet differ from unquestioned assumptions in being indubitable.
5. That there are obligations and that some things are good are truths of this kind.
6. Most who have denied the reality of obligations have been *Psychological Hedonists*, though some of these have thought obligations real.
7. The desire for my happiness upon the whole presupposes other desires which may conflict with and overcome it.
8. The doctrine gains nothing by substituting 'My own good' for 'my happiness'.
9. 'Good' preceded by a possessive or followed by a dative means advantageous; good absolutely means something different; but the two meanings are confused.

IV. CRUDE MORAL THEORIES

A. EGOISTIC HEDONISM

1. The crudest theory which allows of conflict and choice between desire and duty is *egoistic hedonism*.
2. If a man believed he had no other duty than to make himself happy, then not to torture others when he thought it would do so would cause him remorse.
3. The formula of *self-realization* only differs from this in vagueness.
4. Some have confined themselves to maintaining that 'duty and interest *coincide*'. But (a) if the alleged maximum happiness

ANALYSIS

is in the nature of reward, it must be for doing our putative duty.

5. (i) The arguments for a supernatural reward must be theological or metaphysical, not purely moral.
6. (ii) The natural reward or punishment of conscience is not always greater than the pains of moral action or the pleasures of immoral.
7. (b) If, however, it be meant that the maximum happiness ensues from the doing of objective duty, for this there can be no empirical evidence.
On either view (a) or (b) we should be relieved of any obligation to equate men's happiness with merit; on view (a) it would be unnecessary, on (b) impossible.
8. The formula that a man's duty is what he 'necessarily and freely must do'
9. Or what he would necessarily do if he 'reflected'.
Both these by confusing the moral and causal senses of 'must' seem to imply that we have no real obligations but only compelling impulses.

B. HEDONISTIC UTILITARIANISM

10. *Utilitarians* who accepted happiness as the only good thing came to see that one man's happiness must be as good as another's with the conclusion that our one duty is to increase general happiness.
11. They often confused this doctrine with psychological hedonism, perhaps owing to the *laissez-faire* philosophy of history,
12. But pure utilitarianism recognizes an obligation as distinct from interest and, though only one, a very important one.
13. Criticisms of the theory: (i) Pleasures cannot be weighed or measured. But since they can be compared, this argument is invalid and only considerable as being allied with economic doctrines.
14. I may be pretty sure which of two acts will give *me* greater pleasure, and sure enough which will give more to others.
15. Any theory which precluded the possibility of moral doubt would be false.
16. (ii) The fatal objection is that utilitarians have no place for the obligation of just distribution. This they showed by

ANALYSIS

qualifying happiness as that 'of the greatest number, every one to count for one' which was either otiose or inconsistent.

17. (iii) They also showed uneasiness by inconsistently considering the 'quality', i.e. the goodness of pleasures as well as their quantity.

18. (iv) They attempted to bring promise-keeping under the theory, when not directly felicific, as indirectly conducive to general confidence.

But this only applies where the default would be public.

19. (v) The utilitarian view of punishment must be purely preventive. This purpose would be fulfilled by a well-framed charge and punishment of an innocent man.

Utilitarianism forgets rights.

C. AGATHISTIC UTILITARIANISM

20. Other utilitarians, recognizing other good things than pleasure, thought the only duty was to do the *optimific* act, one *improving* rather than beneficent. They usually allow affection, aesthetic experience and knowledge, besides pleasure, to be good. But also morality itself.

21. But morality, though eminently good, is not a result but a character of conscientious action. So the *optimizing* act must be distinguished, and may differ, from the *optimific* one. Here utilitarianism breaks down, since it cannot be supposed that the goodness of doing an act because thought a duty is the ground of its being thought a duty.

22. It is not our only duty to increase goodness.

V. PUNISHMENT AND REWARD

1. Rewards and punishment depend on merits in the past, not wholly upon good results in the future. Is there a direct obligation to inflict pain for guilt or only a conditional claim upon us?

The hedonistic utilitarian would always and only inflict pain to produce greater pleasure, e.g. by prevention.

2. The agathistic might claim that the bad man pained is better, i.e. reformed, and could add this improvement to the preventive good results.

3. Retribution is not vengeance. It seems demanded by guilt.

4. Difficulty of assessing guilt,

5. And of equating it with pain.

ANALYSIS

6. Punishment, remorse, forgiveness.
7. Analogy of rewards and punishments.
8. If punishment is a duty what is the correlative right?

VI. NATURAL RIGHTS

1. If every man has always definite natural rights, how do they depend on the situation, and who has the correlative duties?
2. Neither rights nor duties can be conventional or fabricated and cannot depend on being recognized or implemented.
3. 'Egoistic hedonism' and 'self-realization' can allow no rights and Utilitarianism none proper to individuals.
Lists of 'inalienable' rights would deny their dependence on the situation. They may well conflict or be unrealizable. It is claims that are natural.
4. Man's natural right that all his claims should be equitably considered allows his other natural claims to depend on the situation, especially upon needs, capacities, and deserts.
5. Equality of consideration means that only morally relevant circumstances should be weighed.
6. The result of weighing may be that a man has no further claims or that they are all overridden.

VII. TYPES OF GOODS

1. *Morality* is eminently but not incomparably good.
2. *Virtuous dispositions* are ethically good. *Charity* is the greatest.
3. The *aesthetic experience* is good.
4. Only some knowledge is good; perhaps rather *reason*.
5. Other virtues: *temperance* and *determination*?

VIII. PLEASURE

1. Is pleasure as such good?
2. The 'problem of pain'.
 - . We feel some obligations to promote pleasure, yet some pleasures are bad.
 - . Yet 'innocent' pleasures, not depending on activities otherwise good, seem good.
5. It seems wrong to hurt people and right to please them though they remain passive.

ANALYSIS

6. Instances of good pleasure.
7. Pleasure and knowledge, then, are doubtfully good; our obligation to give either may not depend on its goodness.

IX. TYPES OF OBLIGATION

1. Beneficence or improvement was explicitly and justice covertly recognized by utilitarians as obligatory.
 2. If pleasure is not good but we have some obligations to produce it, we have at least three types of obligation.
- A. JUSTICE
- a. *Distributive*
 3. The obligation to distributive justice corresponds to the natural right of equal consideration
 4. When the equalization of benefits would make them all inconsiderable the obligation vanishes.
 - b. *Retributive*
 - (i) *Moral Retribution*
 5. Retributive justice is retrospective. It is, however, often difficult to distinguish from distributive, and sometimes from improvement. But improvement is not due in proportion to merit, and the equalization of happiness to goodness may conflict with the increase of happiness
 - (ii) *Debts*
 6. Debts are the most distinct of our obligations; they can be exactly fulfilled.
 7. Veracity may be classed as the fulfilment of an implied undertaking. The man who says 'I promise' never so far lies, but he may perhaps lie about what he promises or about his intention.
 8. Degrees of indebtedness.
 - (iii) *Restitution*
 9. Is there a stronger obligation to return uncovenanted benefits when this was expected? We should benefit those who love us, and even more clearly recompense those we have injured. Obligations of parents and children.
- B. IMPROVEMENT
10. We can render men more virtuous though not more moral, and can do as much for ourselves.

ANALYSIS

C. BENEFICENCE

11. Those who call pleasure good and pain bad class the obligations to promote one and spare the other under improvement.

D. OTHER OBLIGATIONS?

12. (i) *Non-interference* may conflict with beneficence or improvement; it corresponds to the claim for liberty. But constraint is a source of unhappiness.
13. (ii) *Playing the game*, i.e. the obligation to do something which would have good results or fulfil some claim if others co-operated.
14. Moral decisions a gamble.
15. Inadequacy of all such classifications for theory. They may be useful.

X. PRUDENCE

1. Besides obligations to improve ourselves and others and to benefit others, have we any to benefit ourselves?
2. Common language implies an obligation to pursue our happiness upon the whole rather than to follow impulse.
We seem to feel remorse when we have not done so, and perhaps some for sacrificing a great happiness of our own to a trifling pleasure of others.
3. Works of supererogation seem to be either products of good dispositions (in which case the agent does not sacrifice his happiness) or productive of them (in which case they might be obligations).
4. They might then be duties of self-improvement.

XI. RELATION OF GOODNESS AND OBLIGATION TO DESIRE AND CHOICE

1. The goodness of things, being an intrinsic quality, does not depend on their being desired or enjoyed.

(i) EXISTENCE OF GOODS

2. The thought that something is good seems to arouse some desire for its existence,
3. With the possible exception of conscientious action.

ANALYSIS

4. The painfulness of a conscientious action seems to make it better but less desirable; it also lessens the goodness which consists in the proportionment of happiness to desert.

(ii) CONTEMPLATION OF GOODS

5. We can desire the existence of good things, but only the contemplation of that existence can satisfy us. We generally desire to contemplate the existence of anything, good or not, whose existence we desire.

If the contemplation of things we think good were desired because of its own goodness, we should desire it as much in others as in ourselves, since it would be equally good.

(iii) POSSESSION OF GOODS

6. Or can we specially desire (because of their goodness) that good states or activities should occur in our own lives though they would be as good in another's? This seems self-contradictory if good is a non-relational quality. When good activities are also pleasant we desire to enjoy them.
7. The eminently good activity of conscientious action may be painful. So far, it could only be desired to exist, if at all, in all men equally.
8. If it were specially desired for oneself that must be because of some indirect pleasure in it, such as pride.
9. We have some desire that conscientious actions should occur, because good; and we can only bring them about in ourselves. We often desire something incompatible more.
10. If I think I have a duty I may go on to think that to do it for that reason would be good, and desire that this good should occur. But if I were to do it simply from this desire I should not be doing it solely because I thought it my duty and it would not have *that* goodness. The purely conscientious act would only be done either without reflection on its goodness, or when the desire aroused *by* such reflection were not so strong as one incompatible.
11. This difficulty has led to the view that because we think it optimizing we always think it our duty to do the optimizing act. If we do not think it optimistic we should not think it optimizing unless we already thought of it as done because we already thought it a duty.
An act optimizing because it is a moral act need not be for my good though done by me.

ANALYSIS

XII. FREEDOM

1. Arguments for determinism: (a) the axiom of universal causation, (b) the empirical fact that we predict with some confidence the behaviour of individuals and groups.
Arguments for freedom: (a) 'ought implies can', (b) the introspective conviction of freedom.
All events except actions (i.e. choices) are caused. Or are actions not to be called events? Or are they events caused by desires? All desires and beliefs are caused.
2. If the behaviour of electrons could be proved to be undetermined, we must suppose either that it occurs by 'chance' or is the behaviour of moral beings.
3. Many so-called choices, viz. all where there is no thought of obligation, are determined by desire. I then only 'feel free' because I am doing what I want.
4. Determinists hold that I must do my putative duty if I desire to do it more than anything incompatible, and only then can I do it. I never could have chosen otherwise than I did. Approval becomes a kind of liking, remorse a kind of shame for a defect.
5. If I were convinced that my choice on any occasion was determined I should cease to think I then had any duty.
6. We may be unable to choose to do a duty if we neither think it a duty nor desire to do the act.
7. We are not free to choose to fulfil our objective obligations or duties, only our putative duties.
8. Why should not that curiosity, a rational being, be also free? Is this less intelligible than causality?
9. A man's desires and moral beliefs being determined, the alternatives (if any) *between which* he can freely choose are in theory predictable.
10. Can we form a habit of choosing rightly or wrongly? How can some free choices be 'more difficult'?
10. The determinist argument from averages. In theory we could know how many people each year will want to do *x* and will think it permissible; also how many will want not to, and think this permissible. Only the remainder would be free and unpredictable by an omniscient actuary.

Free choice has strictly no 'motive', but rather alternative grounds.

III. SUMMARY

ANALYSIS

PART II

POLITICAL THINKING

XIV. MORALS AND POLITICS

(i) THE GROUND OF ALLEGIANCE

1. Political theory is a branch or application of moral theory. The rulers and those who appoint or influence them have obligations.
2. Whether we ought to obey the laws and what laws we ought to make depend on our obligations to our fellow men, those of justice, beneficence, and improvement.
3. Political obligation has sometimes been otherwise grounded:
(a) on the General Will, an entity distinct from any number of private wills, which makes for what is good;
4. (b) by utilitarians, on beneficence alone;
5. (c) by others, solely on the justice of contract-keeping. This might conceivably cover the duties of obedience, but not those of legislation. The contract theory is unhistorical.
6. Its upholders have to resort to a tacit contract, entered into by residence or, in democracies, by voting. But citizenship is not voluntary.
7. Obligations both of obedience and of good government look mainly to the future. It is to the future that rulers and candidates appeal.
8. Individual bad laws should often be obeyed if they are part of a good system, or of any system better than anarchy.
9. The political benefits we have received were mostly from our predecessors; those we can confer are mainly to posterity.

(ii) THE IDEAL STATE

10. The best state pursues justice, beneficence, and improvement most effectively. Is there ground for thinking democracy most likely to do this? Democracy means majority rule, which may be disinterested or selfish like any other.
11. Government should be by the best and wisest. But there is no way of discovering them or of keeping them wise and good when in absolute power.

ANALYSIS

lection of representatives is the least improbable device for discovering an aristocracy by trial and error and for keeping it sound by criticism. A majority may contain all or most of the wise.

13. Democracy (*a*) is suited to large communities, (*b*) tends to replace violence by persuasion, and (*c*) encourages self-criticism and tolerance.
14. Democracy is a good device for preventing oppression; but it depends on freedom of speech and intelligence.
15. Apart from the probable effects, has every man a claim to share in government?

XV. THE RIGHTS OF MAN

(i) EQUALITY

1. Democracy is likely to be beneficent and still more likely to be just, i.e. to secure to the governed individuals (i.e. to the minority) their rights.
2. Every man has an equal right to have his claim to liberty, possessions, improvement, and the means of happiness considered. Perhaps he always has a right to free speech.
3. Equality is a right, to be defined by the situation, i.e. by need, desert, and use.
4. All rational beings are equally capable of morality, and to a less degree, of other goods.
5. Equality is utilitarian also.

(ii) LIBERTY

6. Men only have a right to *equal* liberty, liberty being the power to do, and so far as possible to get, what they would choose.
7. Liberty, when the word is not qualified, means *the power of doing what one would choose, unaffected by the coercion or intimidation of other persons*. It has nothing to do with moral freedom of choice. It is not legal freedom, i.e. the power of doing what the law allows.
8. Nor is it merely freedom from legal restraint, but freedom from *all* restraint by other persons.
9. Nor is it merely the power of doing what we ought. All laws restrict liberty, very often rightly.

ANALYSIS

10. The solitary is most free and may be very unhappy; the manacled man is least free and must be very unhappy.
11. Justification of the above definition.
12. There are other claims which may conflict with any claim to liberty besides other people's claims to it.
Liberty is favoured but not necessitated by 'political liberty', i.e. franchise. 'Legal liberty' may be slight liberty for all and little or none for some.
13. Liberty more defensible on grounds of justice than on grounds of utility.
14. Freedom of speech.

(iii) PROPERTY

15. Property is the physical things a man has the right to use. Nothing is a man's absolute property in the moral sense (nor even in the legal sense) of 'rights'.
16. Claims of desert, capacity and need, and also claims to equality of happiness and improvement have to be assessed in estimating the right to possessions. Is equality of possessions incompatible with liberty?
17. The extreme inequality, viz. monopoly of a necessity, involves slavery. The less inequality the more general freedom.
18. Enforcement of the present laws of property and the substitution of more equalitarian ones both diminish some persons' freedom. Which most favours general or equal freedom? Claims of desert and utility may conflict with equality.
19. Prescription.
20. Transfer of property.

XVI. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. All political duties are duties to our neighbours.
The state has grown stronger than the family; the world may, for similar reasons, grow stronger than the state.
2. The obligation to obey any power that provides order implies an obligation to create such a power where it is lacking.
3. The right constitution of an oecumenical sovereign depends upon conditions similar to those which should determine that of a national sovereign.

ANALYSIS

PART III

XVII. MORALS AND AESTHETICS

1. The common identification or analogy of beauty with goodness and of aesthetics with morals.
2. History of this tendency.
3. Grounds for doubting its correctness. 'Subjectivity' of beauty.
4. Arguments for this subjectivity.
5. Meaning of 'bad taste'. Comparison with moral experience.
6. Relation of moral judgements to feeling.
7. Hume's 'moral sentiment' and Hutcheson's 'moral sense'.
8. Moral judgements, which on reflection are seen to claim objective truth, in this differ fundamentally from aesthetic judgements.