

Moral Theories

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Meta-ethical theories:

- emotivism
- relativism
- error theory
- realism

Normative theories:

- consequentialism
- deontology
- virtue theory

Moral Theories

Deontology (Immanuel Kant):

- not concerned with consequences
- concerned with duty

Duties are unconditional: you should do your duty no matter what

Example: tell the truth

Moral Theories

Duties are instances of the Categorical imperative (in other words, the absolute command): your actions or behaviors toward others should always be such that you would want everyone to act in the same manner.

For example: telling the truth - this is something we want everyone to do.

Moral Theories

Objection 1 to Deontology.

Deontology says we should do our duty no matter what, but sometimes our duties conflict so that we cannot carry out both duties.

Example: The Nazis at your door.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-deontological/#WeaDeoThe>

Moral Theories

Revised deontology:

Build in a hierarchy of duties

- Duty to protect innocent lives
- Duty to tell the truth

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Objection 2 to Deontology:

Deontology says that we should do our duty no matter the consequences. But what if doing our duty has terrible consequences.

Example: the duty not to torture. What if torturing one person will save 10,000,000 lives? What if torture someone to save the planet from exploding?