

POWER & COMPASSION:

The Ethics of Moral Force,

WITH AN ARGUMENT FOR ABSOLUTE PACIFISM

attempts to define a new fundamental approach

to normative ethics. "Moral force" is an aspect of thought about moral decisions and values that has been little accounted for in the three major schools of ethics (deontological ethics, consequentialism, and virtue ethics). I present it as both as a necessary supplement to all three and as a fourth general normative system.

IN SECTION A

"Gyges's World," I define the basic question of ethics as a question of what force being good has. Setting aside punishment and reward, something's being good or bad seems to be either a natural or a conceptual property but not one to which we are forcefully obligated. The classic presentation of this is the Plato's story of Gyges in *The Republic*. The enforcement of morality is examined through the grand theme of the relation of truth and good in Western philosophy.

IN SECTION B

"Agonistic Moral Orders," the problem of moral facts is taken up. Lacking force, moral ideas are thereby taken to be subjective feelings. But I argue that there is a positive content to these feelings that need not be subject to rationalist reduction. This content is given by the way in which we organize moral phenomena. This way is to view actions in moral life in terms of either power or compassion. Our choices of action are always of expressions of various manners of interlock of these two. This ordering of our thoughts, however, always involves us in a dilemma of multiple choices of action based on these orders. These dilemmas are moral

obligations. We experience them over long periods through all situations, though in varying degrees. Because one must choose to act, these obligations may be called moral facts. The nature of compassion is given particular attention.

IN SECTION C

“The Moral Archive,” I consider how we organize these facts into moral knowledge. We keep moral observations and lessons as narrative of objects and events. These, in turn we associate together in a catalogue based on constantly shifting plans. This archive is the long-term settlement of the sense of knowledge around moral problems and question. In this way, the experience of obligation grows, at various speeds, by collection and classification into moral knowledge. I greatly emphasize that this knowledge is created by reflection upon remembered objects and events and not by direct intuition.

IN SECTION D

“We Are All Volunteers,” the final part of moral life, decision is characterized as assent. Assent is based on the intensity of moral obligations claimed in different cases as measured by our moral archives. Thus it has a highly internal and individualized basis, and as the same time it is based on the communication among persons of ideas about morality as each person develops his own standards. I take moral values as promises of future behavior rather than as substantive.

In moral decision we balance the choices given us by power and compassion. By the nature of these approaches, the choice is skewed toward compassion. From this a new argument for absolute pacifism, with a criticism of just war theory, is presented.

The books is about 200 pp./80,000 words.

This is the third draft, completed in April, 2009.

Selection are available by writing to me.

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