

**February, 26**

**Main parts of Ethics**

**Theory of moral (or non-moral) values.**

*How and where do moral values exist?*

*What is a relation between moral and non-moral values?*

*What is a relation between value and „norm“.*

*Are values and norm relative or absolute“.*

*How explain the moral plurality and diversity of norms?*

*Should we think that there is one moral system which is true and valuable?*

*What do kinds of values exist (axiological/moral monism , -dualism, -pluralism).*

**Theory of moral activity:**

*what is a structure of moral action; which part of it is most important.*

*what is more important: a result or an intention (purpose one wants to achieve, planned goal)?*

**Theory of moral virtues (valuable properties of person: personal activity, personal general attitude),** i. e. detailed analyse of various virtues: honesty, reliability bravery, friendship, love, righteousness, truthfulness, honour, sacrifice, self-control, altruism

**Special ethics:** *Etyki specjalne: etyka lekarska, etyka życia seksualnego, etyka prawnicza, etyka dziennikarska, etyka polityki, etyka życia w rodzinie.*

**Applied ethics:** *it considers especially very detailed practical problems appearing in the present, especially connected with great possibilities created by the contemporary technological progress (in the areas of private and public life, the professions, health, technology, law, and leadership):*

business ethics (corporate social responsibility, corporations and moral agency, deception in business)

Bioethics (especially beginning of life issues, including abortion; end of life issues, including euthanasia)

Moral standing and personhood (theories of moral standing and personhood; the moral status of non-human beings - animals)

Professional Ethics: medical ethics: a system of moral principles that apply values to the practice of clinical medicine and in scientific research - especially in case of various conflicts: 4 famous principles of health care ethics: autonomy, justice, beneficence, nonmaleficence; legal ethics (a system of moral principles that apply values to the practice of lawyer's); ethics of education.

**Environmental ethics;** theory concerning the moral aspects of environment protection (2 general standpoints: 1) we must protect environment as it is a basis for human existence; 2) we must protect the nature because it is weak. Hans Jonas says: Act so that the effects of your action are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life.

Theory of values = axiology

The problem of values has been a subject of philosophical discussions for hundreds if not thousands of years. But the name “theory of values” or “axiology” was created in the XIXth Century. What is the axiology? It is a study of the nature of values and value judgments.

Problems, which are very typical of axiology.

The first one is this: what families or what kinds of values may we speak of? It's clear that we usually think about moral and material values. However, his often represented distinction is wrong because it is too simple. The world of values seems to be more diverse and complex.

The second questions: what kinds of existence of values may we speak of? Are all the values objective? Perhaps some values are subjective? Must all the values really be objective? And, as I think, also this distinction, I mean the distinction between objectivism and subjectivism, is too simple. There is one another theoretical possibility - axiological relativism.

And the third problem is the following question: are values relative or absolute? In everyday life you can often hear following phrases: My opinion depends on my situation, every moral judgment is based on specific circumstances, our axiological opinions and judgments depend on our place in life and are justified by our individual conditions, ... etc. etc.

So the problem is this: should we really speak of relativity of values. Because it is easy to see that relativism leads to many very dangerous problems. If values are really relative, we can't judge the behaviour of another people, if only they live in different situations. And we can't judge another cultures, another historical periods. And we can't judge for example the human behaviour during the second War.

The position, which I want to defend may be defined as axiological pluralism. Its main thesis says: there are many different types of values: moral values, hedonics values, vital values, religious values, social values, personal values, theoretical values, economical values etc. That's why axiological monism or dualism are wrong. (if I say monism I mean theory that reduces all values to one axiological class; if I say dualism I mean standpoint reducing all values to two axiological families).

To illustrate that axiological pluralism let me present you some examples.

Moral values:

(positive) Truthfulness, fidelity, integrity, goodness, patience, compassion, honesty, selflessness

(negative) disloyalty, malice, impatience, indifference, dishonesty, egoism, selfishness

Vital values:

(positive) Live, health, pleasure (physical or spiritual)

(negative) Death, illness, physical pain, mind pain

Hedonics values:

(positive) pleasure (physical or spiritual), ecstasy, joy

(negative) pain, suffering, tortures, discomfort, sorrow, grief, worry

Religious values:

(positive) God, sainthood, holy images

(negative) devil, demon, profanity, disbelief

Theoretical values:

(positive) truth, knowledge, cognition, cognitive progress, cognitive development, criticism

(negative) falsehood, untruth, ignorance, cognitive illusion, fallacy, mistake, cognitive regress, cognitive progress, dogmatism

Economic values:

(positive) economic development, profit, successful business, usefulness, effectiveness, efficacy  
(negative) economic crisis, economic regress, loss, unsuccessful business, uselessness, ineffectiveness, inefficacy

Social values:

(positive) nation, state, motherland, good education, patriotism, liberalism, national welfare, national independence, social and political freedom, social peace, international peace  
(negative) political dependence, bad education, totalitarianism, war, national and social poverty, slavery, servitude

Personal values:

(positive) individual freedom, activity, rationalism, sensibility, intuition, creativity, openness, imagination  
(negative) individual dependence, slavery, passivity, irrationalism, imitation

Value objectivism:

- a) Value does not depend on human valuing; it exists irrespective of human feeling or valuing
- b) Value is attribute of object
- c) Value exists "in" objects

Value subjectivism:

- a) Value depends on personal valuing
- b) Value is created by human feeling, action or perception
- c) Value exists "in" subject and in his or her feeling

Value relationism:

- a) Value does not depend on human subjective valuing
- b) Value depends on objective structure of human being
- c) Value exists in an objective relation between subject and object

Meat is nutritious for a dog and at the same time is not nutritious for a horse. So the value of nutritiousness does not exist "in" an object. It is not its attribute, and it does not exist in a subject. Because the horse, what is obvious, does not know the value of nutritiousness. The value of non-nutritiousness is constituted by an objective relation between structure of organism and objective attributes of meat

Value relativism :

theory holding that truth or moral or aesthetic value, etc., is not universal or absolute but may differ in case of different individuals or cultures. Value judgments (on truth, beauty, or morality) have no universal validity and are valid only for the persons or groups holding them.

Value absolutism:

theory holding that truth or moral or aesthetic value, etc., is universal and absolute. Value judgments, as of truth, beauty, or morality, have universal validity and are valid for all persons or groups.