



## The Structure of Morality.

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tives, is to show, by a tiresome profusion of examples, that the application of the test of utility to sorts of motive yields no results, because "there is no sort of motive but may give birth to any sort of action" (*Introduction*, 128); his argument depends on the use of very thin descriptions of sorts of motive.

The doctrine that a type of motive is better, the greater the utility of commending or fostering it in a system of moral education, might seem to be another version of universalistic motive utilitarianism, but is not a form of motive utilitarianism at all. For in it the test of utility is directly applied not to motives or types of motive, but to systems of moral education.

I am not convinced (nor even inclined to believe) that any purely utilitarian theory about the worth of motives is correct. But motive-utilitarian considerations will have some place in any sound theory of the ethics of motives, because utility, or conduciveness to human happiness (or more generally, to the good), is certainly a great advantage in motives (as in other things), even if it is not a morally decisive advantage.

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#### BOOK REVIEWS

*The Structure of Morality*. HECTOR-NERI CASTAÑEDA. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C Thomas, 1974. x, 239 p. \$12.75.

This book is to be welcomed for a number of reasons. The first is that most of the very penetrating contributions to moral philosophy of its author, hitherto scattered through the periodicals, are now available for the first time in a convenient form. Another is that, at a time when those who seek to bring philosophy to bear on practical questions are showing an increasing tendency to say "Good bye" to logic and rely on their own and their readers' prejudices, Professor Castañeda draws us back firmly to the truth that a theory of morality, if it is to do what is required of it, has to be securely based on a rigorous study of the logical properties of the moral words and of the other kinds of practical discourse. He says "In this book we break the tradition of attempting to define or analyze morality without bothering to formulate the appropriate underlying logical foundation" (7); and, although he exaggerates the extent to which his own work is innovative in this respect, the

implied reproach against most contemporary moral philosophy is well justified.

He has, however, presented us with an extremely difficult book. This is not merely because of what he calls the "shining complexity" of the "fascinating basic structure of the institution of morality" (vii); for, although the structure of morality certainly is complex, it is to be hoped that when it is definitively described (which is not yet), it will not be quite so complex as the structure of Castañeda's book. Indeed, it is sometimes hard to tell whether, and why, he thinks that the *existing* institution of morality *has* precisely the structure of his formal system. But the main source of difficulty is that the volume is compiled out of a series of articles, dating from 1957 onwards, which, albeit revised and cross-referenced (though neither adequately), have not been altogether made into a book. The author's thought has an impressive unity, but he has made it more difficult than perhaps he realizes for the reader to grasp this unity. Thus, for example, the reasons are left somewhat unclear why, having accepted what he says about imperatives and about "ought" in earlier chapters, we are committed thereby (if we are) to accepting the "structure of morality" outlined in the last chapter—let alone how we would be helped by the whole book in selecting any particular set of substantial moral principles. But we must be thankful for what we have been given.

The need for further revision is evident in many places. The same dialogue, which is essential to the argument, appears on pages 8, 49, and 97 f.; but there are what may well be crucial differences between its wording in the different places, and the reader is not warned of these. The same sort of trouble can appear even over the space of a few pages. On page 118 certain conditions are mentioned for saying that a "primary imperative" is "Justified-in-context-C"; it is not made clear whether the first subset of these are alternatives (i.e., whether the *disjunction* of them is a necessary or a sufficient condition) or whether they are *conjointly* necessary or sufficient. The second and third of them are mutually inconsistent; so it looks as if they must be thought of as alternatives. But on page 122 it is said that a certain decision satisfies all three of them, which it could not if they were inconsistent. In a book of such complexity, full of half-formalizations in a notation which is invented as we go along, such stumbling-blocks are enough to discourage most readers. But Castañeda is a penetrating and acute philosopher, and they should not be discouraged—not even by the repellent typography, with which the publishers are so pleased that they give themselves

a little pat on the back of the title-page, in spite of not having a font for the signs of quantification, which look as if they were lithoed from a master written with a cheap ballpoint.

For myself, the task of reviewing the book is peculiarly difficult, because so many of the articles were devoted to criticizing my own views (though this should not be allowed to conceal our agreement on most of the fundamental questions). I shall not be able in this review to discuss these criticisms; I shall mention only our most important difference, which (whether or not Castañeda's system as a whole could survive conviction of error on this point) certainly raises a very fundamental issue. I may note in passing that there are at least two direct misquotations from my writings, one venial (161: "universality" for "universalizability") and one serious (168: the omission of the words "There is a sense in which" and "in this sense" makes it look as if that view of mine were intended to apply to all senses of the word "moral" and not just to one of them).

The central thought of the book (if I have located it correctly) is that "Deontic operators or properties are non-iteratable modalities of practitions" (97). "Practitions" are a class comprising "prescriptions" and "intentions". "Prescriptions" are the "common structures at the core" of "mandates" (imperatives) such as orders, requests, pieces of advice, and entreaties whose content is the same (e.g., "Jones, bring Mary home" and "Jones, please bring Mary home"—p. 40). Practitions therefore comprise practical directives in all grammatical persons, whether expressed or only thought. That deontic operators are modalities of these seems to me a good and important suggestion, which will yield a deontic logic having many of the same features as my own earlier suggestion that "ought" expresses a universal prescription (in a somewhat broader sense of "prescription"). How different the two views are in their effects will depend largely on the account given of the deontic modalities in question.

One feature which the two views share is the adoption of a two-valued logic for mandates (85). [This is consistent with allowing (*ibid.*) that ordinary speech also provides us, both in the indicative and in the imperative, with ways of speaking in a three-valued way.<sup>1</sup> It is also consistent with the view that *deontic modal* propositions are *not* two-valued in a straightforward sense.] But his choice of words for the values might lead him into trouble. He uses, to correspond to truth in the case of propositions, a value for mandates which he calls "*Jth*", and explains informally as "justified-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my *Language of Morals* (New York: Oxford, 1952), p. 23.

ness" (84, 114). It is not clear how, if the preferred or designated value for mandates is "justified" and if (as is certainly the case) propositions of the form "The mandate  $p$  is justified" are *not* straightforwardly two-valued, a clash can be avoided. We can say that two propositions  $p$  and not- $p$  are in the ordinary sense contradictories in a system whose two values are "true" and "not true", only because " $p$  is true" and " $p$  is not true" are also contradictories. But if, where  $p$  is a mandate, it and not- $p$  are contradictories, we should expect by analogy that " $p$  is justified" would have a straightforward contradictory if *Jth* is one of only two values; but it is not evidently the case that it has. Historically, most two-valued systems for imperatives have been based on values such as 'satisfied' and 'non-satisfied', which do not produce this difficulty, though they may produce others.

For Castañeda, moral deontic judgments are distinguished from the rest architectonically in a way reminiscent of Aristotle: "The substance of morality is the set of principles for the moral ordering of non-moral practical codes"; moral duties both "undergird solutions to conflicts of duties" and "provide a background framework for the criticism of other systems of duties" (12). This ordering function is the "ethical dimension" of a moral code (13); it also has a "euergetical dimension" concerned with the harmonization of people's interests in society (13) and a "metathetical dimension," concerned with the criticism and revision of the existing *ethos* (14). The scheme is greatly elaborated in a later chapter (189 ff.). There are important insights here; morality does indeed seem to do all those things. But the relation between them was, for me at least, obscured rather than clarified by the complexity of Castañeda's schematizations—though I was humbled by the thought that Kant produces on me just the same effect.

A very important difference between us has its source in his adoption of the popular though mistaken causal theory of the meaning of imperatives, which regards their "pushing aspect" as essential to them: "It is an essential part of imperative language that the use of an imperative may always, and sometimes must, be an efficient condition of the actualization of the action prescribed by the imperative" (45). This confusion of the perlocutionary act of getting someone to do something with the illocutionary act of telling him to do it was pardonable before Austin's clarification of the distinction, but not after; Castañeda mentions my earlier arguments in favor of the distinction in *The Language of Morals*, though he does not here cite my fuller treatment in "Freedom of

the Will,"<sup>2</sup> nor my paper delivered to a conference which we both attended.<sup>3</sup> His only argument for his view (67, n. 6) is nothing more than a rather feeble attempt to shift the onus of explanation; he says "It is difficult to see what 'telling to' means as contrasted with 'telling that' if the former is deprived of its pushing aspect or causal intention." He has just not looked in the right place. He seems to assume that the only way of distinguishing between these two speech acts has to be in terms of their perlocutionary intentions; but what support is there for this assumption?

He argues that the reason why imperatives cannot appear in what he calls "cognitive *oratio obliqua*" is that there "their subordination to a psychological attitude would deprive them of their essential pushing aspect" (49). It is not clear what 'cognitive' means here; if it means that imperatives cannot, when subordinated, turn into indirect *statements*, governed by appropriate verbs such as "know" or "believe", the reason for this is plain: they are not statements and therefore one would not expect them to become indirect statements when put into *oratio obliqua*. But if what he actually says on the same page, that "Mandates cannot appear in *oratio obliqua*" is more than a clerical error—i.e., if he thinks that they cannot appear in *oratio obliqua* of any sort (indirect statement or command), then he is obviously mistaken, as is shown by the examples of indirect commands which he himself gives on page 40. Indirect commands *can* be "subordinated to a psychological attitude" as happens in "Smith intends (or wants) Jones to bring Mary home"; and this subordination does not deprive them of their *imperativity*, but only of the speaker's *subscription* to it.<sup>4</sup> This absence of subscription is a feature of indirect statements too. So there is no argument here that would support the "pushing" theory of mandates.

Space does not allow any further examination (which would have to be of the same degree of intricacy) of the elaborate structure that is reared upon such partly sound and partly unsound foundations. As might be expected, it is of exceedingly uneven reliability; but its perusal can be confidently recommended to any student of moral philosophy who is gifted with more than ordinary acumen, patience, and leisure.

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<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, suppl. xxv (1951): 201–216.

<sup>3</sup> "Wanting: Some Pitfalls," in R. Binkley, R. Bronaugh, and A. Marras, eds., *Agent, Action and Reason* (Toronto: University Press, 1971).

<sup>4</sup> See my "Meaning and Speech Acts," *Philosophical Review*, LXXIX, 1 (January 1970): 3–24.