

## 23. *Morality*

*'Who are you?  
The new number two.  
Who is number one?  
You are number six.  
I am not a number! I am a free man!'*

*The Prisoner (1967), Opening Titles*

**Synopsis:** *Morality is the ability to choose whether to carry out a processing operation or not (1); An analysis of morality's systems of thought (moral philosophies) is unnecessary for the moment within the context of this political philosophy (2); Can morality be avoided altogether? (3); On whether individuals should keep their promises (4); On religion (5)*

### 1. \*

These regulations<sup>659</sup> that are so well embedded on the information platform that is the state (through hundreds or thousands of years of implementation) that they allow choice (that is, the consequences of breaking them are nuanced) form morality.

In other words, morality is the ability<sup>660</sup> to choose whether to carry out a processing operation or not. This choice is made possible through regulations that have been applied for so long and so extensively that, instead of a yes or no situation enforced through consequences (as is the norm<sup>661</sup>), many more options are allowed to the individual. This is what is meant whenever it is claimed that morality is subjective: it is possible for the individual to decide what to do, to choose.

Consequently, there is no morality that is outside of or beyond regulation. However, there is law that has not yet become morality,<sup>662</sup> with the

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659 See Chap. 20, par. 5.

660 See Chap. 5, par. 8.

661 See Chap. 20, par. 8.

662 See, for example, data privacy legislation, which is most likely on this path after more than 50 years of implementation.

digital world, being relatively new, offering us a suitable opportunity to witness this procedure.

## 2.

An analysis of morality's systems of thought (moral philosophies) is unnecessary for the moment within the context of this political philosophy, for the simple reason that the basic questions asked by each do not coincide: the former suggest what humans should do, while the latter explains why, and how, things are as they are—why, and how, humans live as they live.

In other words, moral philosophy is, in fact, an algorithm that addresses the individuals' question, 'What should I do?', in the event that morality allows him or her a choice in any given situation in life: for example, to avoid pain and seek pleasure (epicureanism), to patiently endure (stoicism), to do whatever benefits the greatest number of others (utilitarianism), to do what one thinks should become a universal principle (Kant) or to do what God commands (religion).

Be that as it may, other than providing a definition for morality and moral philosophy, this chapter will only discuss two basic moral questions (one inherent, the other posited), and leave the topic of morality (a moral philosophy of information) for discussion at a later stage.

### 3. Can morality be avoided altogether? \*

Is there any philosophy or other human endeavour that does not engage with it? Even within the context of a political philosophy that does not address the question of what humans should do (or, for the same purposes, within the context of any other human endeavour), it is impossible to altogether avoid morality, to claim amorality<sup>663</sup> in any one of our actions.

With information processing explained through need<sup>664</sup> (and opportunity), the question can be asked as to whether this focus on need is not already some kind of morality. In its effort to explain how things are, and in replying that this is how they need to be, does this approach not adopt an ultimately conservative viewpoint? Does it not ultimately reveal a certain morality, that of affirmation, of acceptance of things as they came to be?

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663 Even the negative connotations of the term revealing the impossibility of the endeavour.

664 See Chap. 5.

The same is, after all, true of any human endeavour. If it is accepted that states are individualisation mechanisms for humans,<sup>665</sup> as suggested in this analysis, does this not reveal a certain morality as well? Should humans exist as individuals at all? Or should we be, for example, numbered<sup>666</sup> animals—with numbering resetting locally and periodically so that no identification across time and space is possible? Similarly, any social interaction (business, employment etc.) or scientific discovery (from its assumptions to the way it is used) also invariably reveals a certain kind of morality.

Difficulties, however, are also met with a hypothetical question. A hypothetical question about how things could have been<sup>667</sup> is useful in opening up new perspectives and elucidating overlooked aspects. However, being hypothetical, not only does it miss the reality test, which would after all demonstrate its worthiness (or from the opposing viewpoint, the fact that it was never reality is an argument for its unworthiness), but it too also reveals a morality: that of the person who asks it.

In other words, (a, any) morality cannot be avoided in any human action, because, quite simply, it is humans who act.<sup>668</sup>

The topic of morality is expected to hold a central role in the digital world, because it is a fully controlled, artificial environment.<sup>669</sup> Even if it is a simulacrum gone rogue,<sup>670</sup> the fact remains that processing operations need to be pre-planned in order to exist in it, offering humanity a unique, God-creator moment. Whether choice will be embedded in the system (and to what extent and under which circumstances) remains an open issue.

#### 4. On whether individuals should keep their promises\*

In spite of this striving (as seen in the previous paragraph, to the greatest extent humanly possible) not to be a moral philosophy, some replies to moral questions need to be provided here too, if for no other reason than illustration. After all, any theory is also assessed on the responses it gives to

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665 See Chap. 8.

666 The state in this case providing the numbering anyway—revealing even in this hypothetical scenario that states are natural (necessary, as per their nature, see Chap. 5, par. 5) to humans.

667 The suggestion of how things should be thus revealing the morality of the speaker.

668 Causing, after all, the Unique Human Observer Perspective disclaimer (see note 1/1/1), because ultimately (a certain) morality is in the eyes of the observer.

669 See Chap. 1, par. 17.

670 See Chap. 1, par. 11.

basic human questions, particularly if these have already been prominently<sup>671</sup> asked.

One such prominent question is, why should individuals keep their promises? In an informational approach, one would first have to analyse what a promise is: it is a (conditional) processing initiated on the information platform that is the state by an individual assisted by its state (warranting the individual's identity—and also the identity of the other party, for the same purposes). Keeping the promise, therefore, would be the final part, the conclusion of the algorithm underlying the processing—nothing more or less. A promise should (presumably) be kept because it exists, because the corresponding processing has been initiated on the information platform and it strives for its completion.<sup>672</sup>

Whether an individual should be forced to keep a promise (something entirely possible on the information platform that is the state), as for example in the case of a contract, is an entirely different (political) matter.

## 5. On religion

Religion is a type of morality. In fact, it is a morality that is different to the one described above,<sup>673</sup> because its basic terms of reference are different: morality is based on regulation, whereas religion is based on holy texts. These two moralities, therefore, have developed independently within states. At times they have had a harmonious relationship, when their texts of reference have been the same, and at other times a conflicting one, meaning that each insisted on its own solution as to what individuals (in fact, the very same individual) should do.

The reason why two types of morality exist in parallel in each state is due to the fact that, from humanity's beginning (or at least its recorded history) until a few hundred years ago, each served a very different purpose: religion was humans' only way to discover the law of Nature,<sup>674</sup> whereas morality was the outcome of regulation to manage human relationships. Of

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671 . Although, one has to admit, these questions are themselves the practical result of the implementation of older philosophies, placing any new philosophy at the disadvantage of having to heed, and tend to, the problems of the past—and therefore treating the question (on the relevance of the philosophy concerned) as the answer.

672 See also Chap. 4, par. 6.

673 In par. 1.

674 See also Chap. 20, par. 3.

course, with each passing century each type of morality gained depth as a result of human progress, that is, humanity's increase of its information processing capacity; and religion unavoidably developed its own moral code (humans need to control Nature anyway<sup>675</sup>). After the Enlightenment, religion was replaced by science; however, its moral code, developed over thousands of years, often through indescribable pain and bloodshed, remained in place.

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675 See Chap. 20, par. 3.