

## **Outline of *Excellence and its Ends*, by Glen Koehn**

Intro pp. 1-2. Introductory questions. Purpose of the work.

1. Three Views about Goodness, and an Alternative pp. 3-27
  - a) The Property View pp. 3-6 (Is goodness a property of good things?)
  - b) Problems with the Property View pp. 6-11
  - c) The Expressivist View pp. 12-14 (Its advantages over the Property View.)
  - d) Why the Expressivist View is Mistaken: Goodness for an End pp. 15-19
  - e) Are We Projecting When We Value Things? pp. 21-23 (No, and yes.)
  - f) Subjective or Objective? A False Dilemma pp. 23-25
  - g) The Divine Command View pp. 25-27 (Goodness not invented by God or human.)
2. Exploring the Adequacy Theory pp. 28-45
  - a) Adequacy, Goodness and Competition pp. 30-34 (Ranking not necessary for goodness.)
  - b) A Puzzle pp. 34-36 (Shopping and the regret factor.)
  - c) The Structure of Adequacy pp. 36-40 (Subject range, adequacy and object range.)
  - d) Sufficiency and the Golden Mean pp. 40-45 (The Mean as sufficiency for an objective.)
3. Beauty and Other Aesthetic Values pp. 46-65
  - a) The Ends of the Beautiful pp. 47-50 (Beauty concerned with aesthetic pleasures.)
  - b) Immanuel Kant on Beauty, Goodness and Agreeableness pp. 50-54
  - c) How Should We Respond to Kant? pp. 54-60 (With mixed feelings.)
  - d) Objections to the Pleasure Principle pp. 61-65 (Adorno. Beautiful things are not mere instruments.)
4. Disputing about Tastes pp. 66-93
  - a) Who Is to Judge? Voltaire's toad and other critics pp. 67-70
  - b) Hume on the True Standard of Taste p. 70-75 (Some better than others at criticism.)
  - c) Pressing the Case for Radical Relativism pp. 75-78 (How far can we go?)
  - d) Reining in Relativism pp. 78-91 (Tolerance within reason. What about elitism?)
  - e) A Place for Criticism: Concluding Remarks on Aesthetic Judgment pp. 92-93
5. Love and Friendship
  - a) Does love have an essence? (Some views pro and con.)
  - b) The Core Meaning. (A proposal: love is intense liking. Desire and delight.)
  - c) Some Objections
  - d) Love and Caring Concern (Is desire or caring more central in love?)
  - e) Resolution of the Dispute (Desire is fundamental, but its ends vary.)
  - f) Friendship (A form of reciprocity)
  - g) What Friends Are For (Internal and external ends of friendship)

## 6. Morality and the Ends of Moral Praise

- a) Morality as Socially Enforced Behaviour Examples of moral excellence. Morality not just a social preference. Concerned with acceptance or rejection of choices, it is enforced by granting and withdrawing social favour.
- b) What are the Ends in Moral Evaluation? They include: acceptance, support, admiration, love. They overlap with aesthetic ends. The meaning of the phrase ‘morally good person’.
- c) Morality and Etiquette. How is morality distinct from etiquette? Internal and external ends of a practice. In what way are moral judgments unconditionally binding?
- d) Coordination: Conventions as solutions to coordination problems.
- e) Etiquette and Morality Again A common equivocation when praising someone for courtesy or politeness.
- f) Is the Adequacy Account Trivially True? While it does not offer a criterion for judging, it is not empty. It entails the falsehood of influential philosophical theories, clears up several widespread confusions and helps structure everyday moral inquiry.
- g) Is the Account False? Some Objections Concerning Purpose J. L. Stocks and arguments that morality is not about goals and purposes at all. Duty and dutifulness. Good and right. Ought and should. Inadequacy of the phrase ‘just plain wrong’ as an instrument of criticism.

## 7. The Incoherence of the End-In-Itself

- a) Plato and Aristotle: Ways things are said to be good. No particulars are morally good “in themselves”. Goods as ends and the idea of intrinsic goodness. Richard Kraut on the absence of absolute goodness. Dewey on the incoherence of ends in themselves. Does the end justify the means? Can the means justify the end?
- b) Is there a highest good? Pleasure and happiness as conditional goods. Epicurus and the Stoics. Mistakes of addition. Utilitarianism. Coherence. Interpersonal utility
- c) Gaming the Golden Rule. Is morality a game? Bernard Suits on games. Ken Binmore on justice and the original position. Rationality and morality: which is a higher value? Types of rationality. Right reason and practical reason. Internalism vs. Externalism
- d) Plurality of values. Moral relativism. Prospects for convergence and cooperation. The extent to which substantive moral conclusions can be drawn from philosophical, biological, sociological, and game theoretical premises.

8. Excellence: case studies. Some Aristotelian and Confucian examples.

Reprise: Institutions, conventions and moral norms. How can we inquire about what to do? What to expect from philosophy.

Roles. In addition to clarifying many problems about the nature of goodness, an appealing feature of the adequacy theory is that it yields a natural theory of moral virtues as means. Even some Aristotle scholars have failed to understand this insight, focusing on incidental matters and overlooking one of the most significant advances made by their hero.

Can moral excellence be taught? The Socratic objections. "Virtue ethics". Character, Habit, Intelligence, Situation. Which is prior, act or character? An objection from social psychology about character.

Individual moral virtues: sincerity, humanity, generosity, courage, justice (vs. fairness), wisdom and intelligence. Resentment as a force in social life. Remarks on Weakness of will.

Rationality and Reasonableness. Constraints on goals and desires (unity, coherence, information). Is there a hierarchy of the virtues? Conflicts of the virtues. Morals for gods. Intelligence and practical wisdom. Happiness and what it requires. Meaning in life.