CS 4873-A: Computing and Society

Munmun De Choudhury | Associate Professor | School of Interactive Computing

Week 4: Stakeholder Analysis
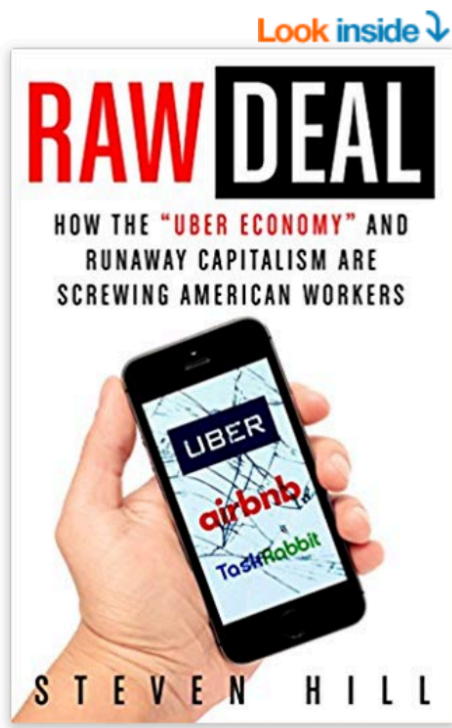# February 7, 2021

Who are stakeholders?

- Mostly discussed in the context of business ethics.

- Stakeholders are broadly defined as anyone who is impacted by a decision-maker's decision.

- Some examples of corporate stakeholders would be shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, financiers, families of employees and the community in which the corporation is located.

- Stakeholders could also be less directly related to the operations of a corporation.

Ethical dilemma and stakeholders

- Identification of potential stakeholders is essential for ethical behavior, and failure to identify stakeholders has led many to make unethical decisions without ever realizing they had a moral dilemma in the first place.

- E.g., Profit vs. low wage

- E.g., Production vs. pollution

Uber

- Uber is one of Silicon Valley's biggest success stories.

- The company is valued at close to $70 billion by private investors and now operates in more than 70 countries.

Look inside ↓

Raw Deal Paperback – June 27, 2017

by STEVEN HILL (Author)

★★★★⯪ ﹀   58 ratings

› See all 3 formats and editions

Kindle $9.99	Hardcover $12.00	**Paperback** **$16.19**
Claim your **$5 Kindle credit** Read with Our **Free App**	33 Used from $0.60 9 New from $7.79 2 Collectible from $12.00	14 Used from $5.99 5 New from $10.89

"What's going to happen to my job?"

That's what an increasing number of anxious Americans are asking themselves.

The US workforce, which has been one of the most productive and wealthiest in the world, is undergoing an alarming transformation. Increasing numbers of workers find themselves on shaky ground, turned into freelancers, temps and contractors. Even many full-time and professional jobs are experiencing this precarious shift. Within a decade, a near-majority of the 145 million employed Americans will be impacted. Add to that the steamroller of automation, robots and artificial intelligence already replacing millions of workers and projected to "obsolesce" millions more, and the

‹ Read more

💬 Report incorrect product information.

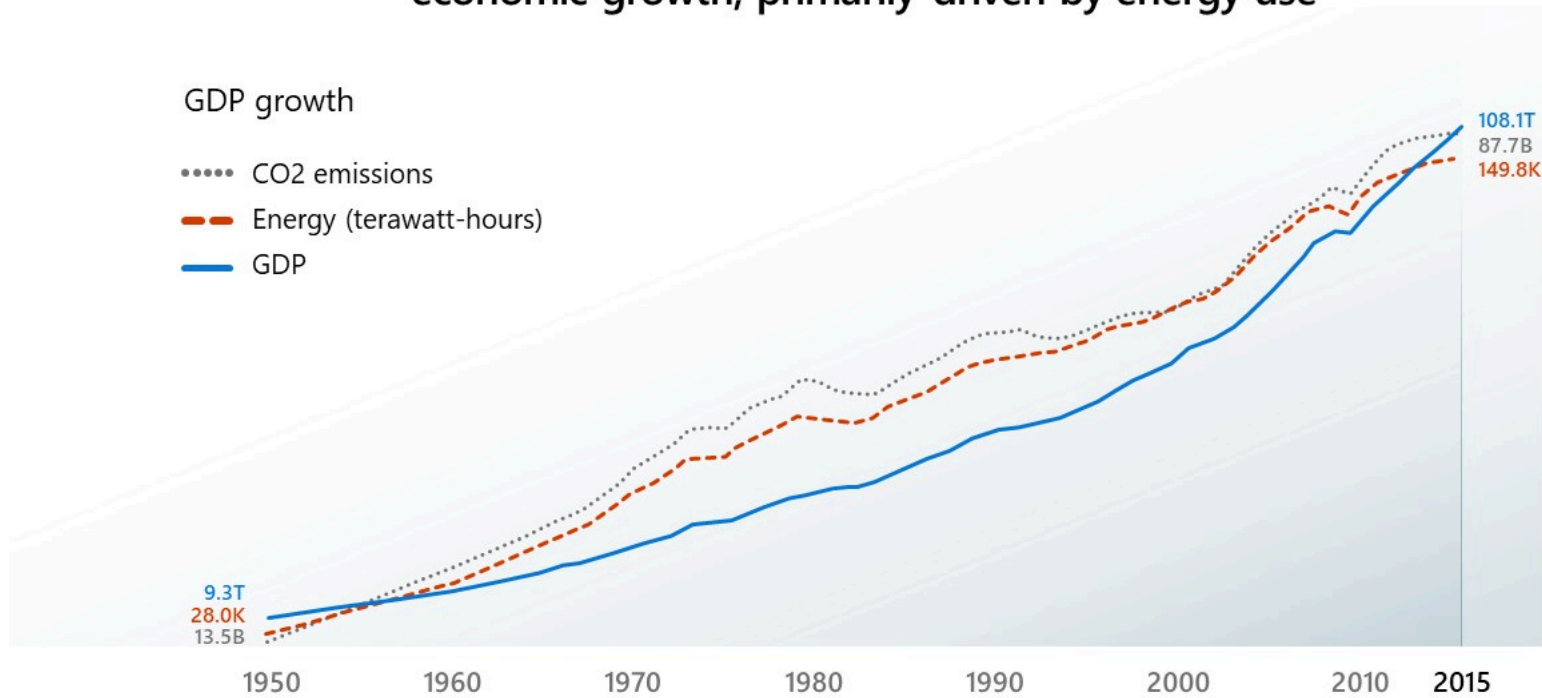**The Amazon Book Review**
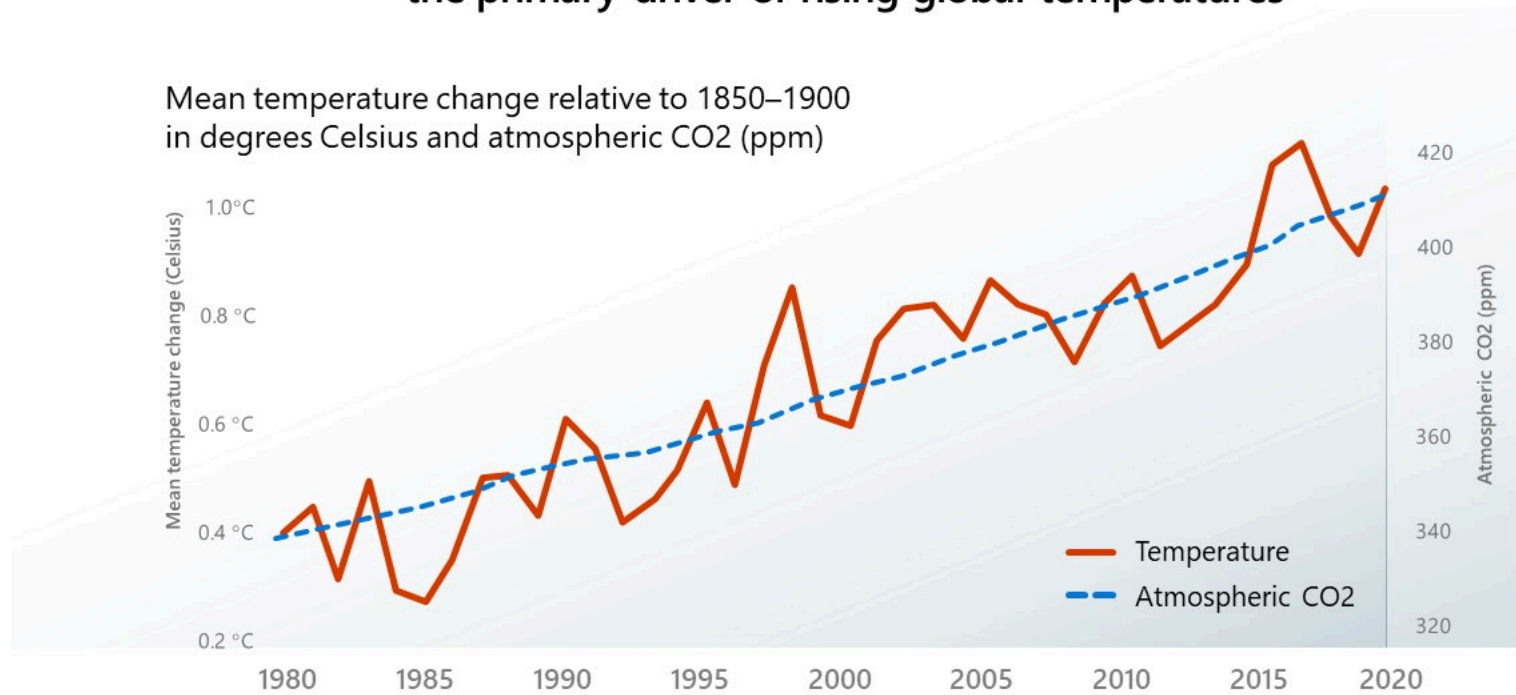Author interviews, book reviews, editors' picks, and more. Read it now

See this image

Over the last century, the world has experienced unprecedented economic growth, primarily driven by energy use

GDP growth

····· CO2 emissions
- - - Energy (terawatt-hours)
—— GDP

108.1T
87.7B
149.8K

9.3T
28.0K
13.5B

1950   1960   1970   1980   1990   2000   2010   **2015**

Source: ourworldindata.org

Increase in carbon dioxide emissions is the primary driver of rising global temperatures

Mean temperature change relative to 1850–1900
in degrees Celsius and atmospheric CO2 (ppm)

Source: HadCRUT4.6 and NOAA

Plastics Plants Are Poised to Be the Next Big Carbon Superpolluters

A boom in petrochemical plants driven by cheap natural gas could lock in greenhouse emissions for decades to come

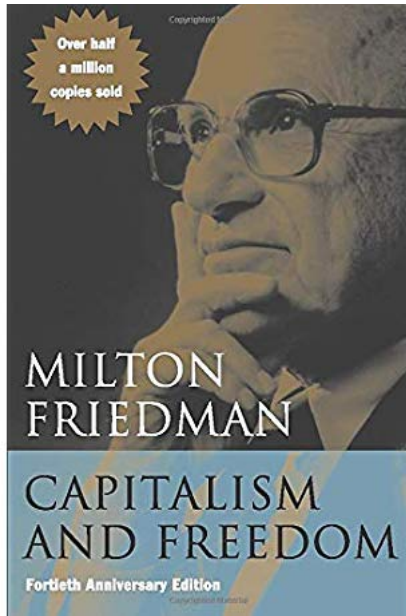By Benjamin Storrow, E&E News on January 24, 2020

Milton Friedman

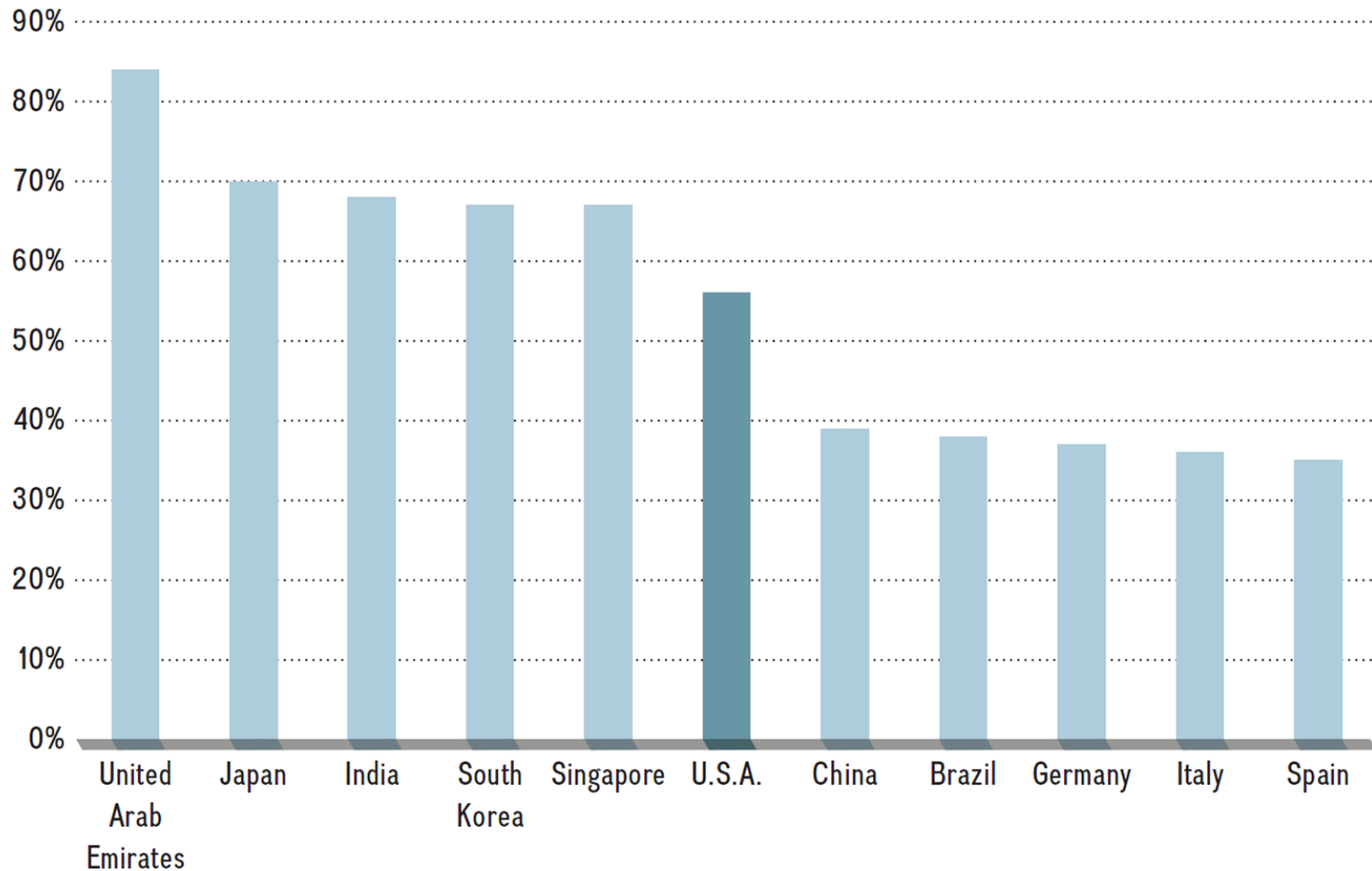American Economist

- 1976 Nobel in Economics

1962 book: "Capitalism and Freedom"

- The book focuses on the connection between economic freedom, political freedom, and the important impact this connection has on an economy

↗ "The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits."

↗ A survey asked the top 25 percent of income earners holding a university degree in each country surveyed whether they agree with Milton Friedman's philosophy.

↗ The results...

Percent of "Informed Public" Who "Strongly/Somewhat Agree" with Milton Friedman

SOURCE: Author's depiction of data from Edelman's (2011) Trust Barometer as included in "Milton Friedman goes on tour," The Economist, January 27, 2011.

Jump to Appendix 3 long image description

The Shared Value Creation Framework

↗ Michael Porter argues that executives should not concentrate exclusively on increasing firm profits.

↗ Rather, the strategist should focus on creating shared value, a concept that involves:

　↗ Creating economic value for shareholders

　↗ Creating social value by addressing society's needs and challenges

↗ It is a model proposing that managers have a dual focus on:

  ↗ Shareholder value creation

  ↗ Value creation for society

↗ Example: GE's ecomagination initiative

  ↗ To provide cleaner and more efficient sources of energy

  ↗ To provide abundant sources of clean water anywhere in the world

  ↗ To reduce emissions

Microsoft will be carbon negative by 2030

Jan 16, 2020 | Brad Smith - President

1. Expand the customer base

   ↗ Bring in nonconsumers such as those at the bottom of the pyramid (large / poor socioeconomic group).

2. Expand traditional internal firm value chains.

   ↗ Include more nontraditional partners such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

3. Focus on creating new regional clusters:

   ↗ Such as Silicon Valley in the United States

   ↗ Electronic City in Bangalore, India

   ↗ Chilecon Valley in Santiago, Chile

Strategy and Business Ethics

↗ An agreed-upon code of conduct in business, based on societal norms

↗ Lay the foundation and provide training for:

  ↗ "behavior that is consistent with the principles, norms, and standards of business practice that have been agreed upon by society"

↗ Can differ in various cultures around the globe

  ↗ Universal norms include:

    ↗ Fairness

    ↗ Honesty

    ↗ Reciprocity

↗ Ask whether the intended course of action falls within the acceptable norms of professional behavior.

  ↗ As outlined in the organization's code of conduct

  ↗ As defined by the profession at large

↗ Would you feel comfortable explaining and defending the decision in public?

  ↗ How would the media report the business decision if it were to become public?

  ↗ How would the company's stakeholders feel about it?

Uber offices in Berlin last year. Some current and former Uber employees describe a largely unrestrained workplace culture. Krisztian Bocsi/Bloomberg

- Strategic leaders set the tone for the ethical climate within an organization.
    - Employees take cues from their environment on how to act.
- CEOs of Fortune 500 companies are under constant public scrutiny.
    - Ought to adhere to the highest ethical standards
    - Unethical behavior can destroy the CEO's reputation.
- Ethical expectations must be clear.
- Management must provide.

↗ Does Facebook have an ethical responsibility to curb the spread of misinformation and disinformation and provide corrections when people do share these type of content?

CS 4873-A: Computing and Society

Munmun De Choudhury | Associate Professor | School of Interactive Computing

Week 4: Virtue Ethics
February 7, 2021

Critique of Enlightenment Theories

- Kantianism, utilitarianism, social contract theory ignore important moral considerations
  - moral education
  - moral wisdom
  - family and social relationships
  - role of emotions
- Virtue ethics
  - *arete*, virtue, excellence: reaching highest potential

Virtue Ethics

- The virtue ethicist argues that what matters morally is not what we do at a time, but what we become over time.

- To the virtue ethicist it is the acquisition of a good character that is – or should be – our moral aim

Virtue Ethics

- Importantly the virtue ethicist rejects the idea that we should:
  - follow rules *
  - try to produce certain consequences

- * Moral wisdom or discernment takes precedence over any rule

Response of a Virtue Ethicist – two examples

What are Virtues?

- A virtue is an excellent trait of character

- Rosalind Hursthouse says:
  - *A virtue such as honesty or generosity is not just a tendency to do what is honest or generous, nor is it to be helpfully specified as a "desirable" or "morally valuable" character trait. It is, indeed a character trait—that is, a disposition which is well entrenched in its possessor, something that, as we say "goes all the way down", unlike a habit such as being a tea-drinker—but the disposition in question, far from being a single track disposition to do honest actions, or even honest actions for certain reasons, is multi-track. It is concerned with many other actions as well, with emotions and emotional reactions, choices, values, desires, perceptions, attitudes, interests, expectations and sensibilities.*

What are virtues?

- Importantly we can't be born virtuous, **virtue is something that must be acquired**

- Being virtuous is a matter of acquiring the right habits

- Human beings must habitually act in accordance with virtue to avoid becoming morally flabby

- **Habit:** If you acquire the right habits you will, over time, become a person with the disposition to do certain things in certain circumstances.
    - E.g. honesty (Quinn)

Examples of virtues

Vices

- Vices are opposite of virtues
- Vice: a character trait that prevents a human being from flourishing or being truly happy
- Often, a virtue situated between two vices
  - Courage between cowardliness and rashness
  - Generosity between stinginess and prodigality

Examples

SPHERE OF ACTION OR FEELING	EXCESS	MEAN	DEFICIENCY
Fear and Confidence	Rashness	Courage	Cowardice
Pleasure and Pain	Licentiousness/Self-indulgence	Temperance	Insensibility
Getting and Spending(minor)	Prodigality	Liberality	Illiberality/Meanness
Getting and Spending(major)	Vulgarity/Tastelessness	Magnificence	Pettiness/Stinginess
Honour and Dishonour(major)	Vanity	Magnanimity	Pusillanimity
Honour and Dishonour(minor)	Ambition/empty vanity	Proper ambition/pride	Unambitiousness/undue humility
Anger	Irascibility	Patience/Good temper	Lack of spirit/unirascibility
Self-expression	Boastfulness	Truthfulness	Understatement/mock modesty
Conversation	Buffoonery	Wittiness	Boorishness
Social Conduct	Obsequiousness	Friendliness	Cantankerousness
Shame	Shyness	Modesty	Shamelessness
Indignation	Envy	Righteous indignation	Malicious enjoyment/Spitefulness

＊＊

Working example A: Virtue and vice

- For the virtues below, outline a scenario when their deficiency can be a vice and when in excess they can also turn vice:

- Anger

- Magnanimity

- Courage

Working example A: Solution

- For the virtues below, write when their deficiency can be a vice and when in excess they can also turn vice:

- Anger - using power and status to control innocent people/protesting against injustice or murder

- Magnanimity - mercy to foes/helping a homeless person

- Courage - suicide bomber/inability to complain against injustice

Problem of virtue used for evil ends

- Is a Nazi soldier who fights valiantly and faces risk without flinching, courageous?

How much of a virtue is enough?

- How much generosity is enough?

Are the virtues the same for everyone (or are they culturally relative?)

Does virtue require adherence to absolute rules?

Different Formulations of Virtue Ethics

Different Formulations of Virtue Ethics

- arete (moral progress)
- phronesis (practical or moral wisdom)
- eudaimonia (flourishing)
- agent-based (exemplarism)

Moral Progress – By Training

- Over time and by practice, you will achieve moral progress when you will:

  - know what the right action is;

  - perform the right action;

  - perform the right action because it is the right action.

Practical wisdom

- A virtuous person possesses *phronesis*—moral or practical wisdom

- Given that virtues lead to intentions to act well or "*do the right thing*", we may say that practical wisdom is the knowledge or understanding that enables its possessor to do just that in any given situation.

- A virtuous agent with practical wisdom are flesh and blood creatures
    - When things are going right, their feelings and thoughts are in alignment

**

Practical wisdom

- The practically wise agent has the capacity to recognize some features of a situation as more important than others, or indeed, in that situation, as the only relevant ones.

- The wise will tend to see the personally disadvantageous nature of a certain action as competing in importance with its honesty or benevolence or justice.

- **Example: mom's (or SO's) bad haircut; honesty vs. compassion**

Eudaimonia

- Defines virtues in terms of their relationship to eudaimonia.

  - A virtue is a trait that contributes to or is a constituent of eudaimonia and we ought to develop virtues, the eudaimonist claims, precisely because they contribute to eudaimonia.

  - The concept of eudaimonia, a key term in ancient Greek moral philosophy, is standardly translated as "happiness" or "flourishing" and occasionally as "well-being." [Not material happiness, but value-laden or moralized concept]

Agent-based (exemplarism)

- **Agent based or exemplarist virtue ethics**

- Agent-based virtue ethicists argue that forms of normativity—including the value of eudaimonia— are traced back to and ultimately explained in terms of the motivational and dispositional qualities of agents

- Define *rightness or wrongness in terms of agents' motivations*; in other words, by reference to the emotions, motives and dispositions of virtuous and vicious agents

Agent-based (exemplarism)

- **Agent based or exemplarist virtue ethics**

- How do you identify virtuous motivations and dispositions?

- "We do not have criteria for goodness in advance of identifying the exemplars of goodness" (Zagzebski 2004: 41).

- *As we observe the people around us, we find ourselves wanting to be like some of them* (in at least some respects) and not wanting to be like others. The former provide us with positive exemplars and the latter with negative ones.

- Our understanding of better and worse motivations and virtuous and vicious dispositions is grounded in these primitive responses to exemplars

Working Example B

- You discover Bill Gate's wallet lying on the street. It contains $1000.00 Do you send it back to him?

Working Example C

- You are shopping and notice an older woman of likely less fortunate financial standing stuffing a pair of stockings into her purse. Do you report her?

The Case For and Against Virtue Ethics

Where Virtue Ethics is Difficult to Apply

- You run an orphanage and have had a hard time making ends meet. A car dealership offers you a new van worth $15,000 for free if you will falsely report to the government that the dealership donated a van worth $30,000. You really need the van and it will give you an opportunity to make the children happy. Do you agree to take the van?

Contrast with other theories

- *Suppose it is obvious that someone in need should be helped.*

Virtues in other theories

Comparison of Ethical Theories