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NOBILITY IS THE REWARD OF MORALLY RIGHT CHOICES

“It seems to me ‘tis only noble to be good.”

-Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Morality has been discussed for centuries. Hundreds if not thousands of philosophers have proposed theories, philosophies and theses, and yet none can claim to be the certain and only way to live, act, and choose morally. This is because one of the main qualities of living, choosing and acting morally is not exclusively found in one theory, for it is seen in most, if not all.

All Moral philosophies share the same purpose, which is to be the correct system in which people can become Moral. Choices themselves are infinite in their complexity, but all the concepts describe that there is a right choice. The philosophies differ in approach to find and justify what is the correct choice, but the function is the same. Each system admits to a right choice, and although each one has a different ideology (though similarities are shared) as to what the right choice is, there is a right choice to be made.

Morality is defined as the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior, and Morals are defined as the objective standard of good and bad on which people act based on

their subjective perception of them. In order for Morality and Morals to be used, awareness of the choices in which there is a requirement for Morals is needed.

There are three categories of Moral Awareness: *Active*, *Passive*, and *Apathetic*. These are what a person does with morality, as well as how a person perceives and observes a choice. Moral Awarenesses are the acknowledgement of a possibility, and the opportunity to use Morality to discern the right and wrong. The Awareness is not Morals themselves and Morality itself, but the use, lack thereof, or disuse of them.

The first Awareness is *Active*. This is when Morals are used earnestly when a choice is presented to determine the best option. Ender, in *Ender's Game*¹, uses Morals actively when battling with Bonzo in the bathroom. Bonzo, blinded with pride, is determined to kill Ender to save his ego. Ender, with what little willpower he retained from a previous battle, reasons through every possible option before he decides—and knows—that Bonzo must die.

When Ender saw Bonzo's stance, his heart sank. Bonzo had also taken classes. And probably more recently than Ender. His reach was better, he was stronger, and he was full of hate. He would not be gentle. *He will go for my head*, thought Ender. *He will try above all to damage my brain. And if this fight is long, he's bound to win. His strength can control me. If I'm to walk away from here, I have to win quickly, and permanently.* He could feel again the sickening way that Stilson's bones had given way. *But this time it will be my body that breaks, unless I can break him first.*²

Ender's brain ran him through the scenario and, in the split second he had to use his Morals actively, he responded. And since he was the only one who had to carry out his

¹Orson Scott Card, *Author*.

²*Ender's Game*, Chapter Twelve.

^{*}*Italics added to differentiate thought in the text.*

choice—and the only one who had considered every consequence until he arrived at the correct one—he feels the weight of the right choice.

After killing Bonzo, Ender's comrade Dink led him out into the hall, away from the scene. "Then, to Dink's surprise, Ender began to cry. Lying on his back, still soaking wet with sweat and water, he gasped his sobs, tears seeping out of his closed eyelids and disappearing in the water on his face. 'Are you all right?'

'I didn't want to hurt him!' Ender cried. 'Why didn't he just leave me alone?'"³

The action of killing Bonzo, though extreme, was the right one. Ender doesn't want to fight, and feels remorse for what happened. He reasoned through every other possibility and found the only option, and didn't want it. Logically it was the right choice as well, as it results in Ender saving the world and killing the buggers, which was more important than Bonzo's pride being wounded. The last reason is that Ender understands Bonzo and Bonzo's perspective and actions. The phrase "When you really know somebody you can't hate them"⁴ is echoed throughout the series, and it is not missing in this instance. Ender knew and loved Bonzo, which made killing him all the harder but also all the clearer, and that is why it was the right choice to make.

The second Moral Awareness is *Passive*. This is the most basic of the three, simply because it is the lack of awareness entirely, and is the state of unawareness that there is a choice. In Passive Moral Awareness the person is simply unaware, and thereby is unaccountable for the things outside of their attention and knowledge. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*⁵, there are many instances where the main character *Scout* is unaware of a Moral quandary, and then when there is a realization that there is a Moral quandary, the young girl doesn't understand it. In the book, the

³*Ender's Game*, Chapter Twelve.

⁴*Ender's Game series*, Orson Scott Card.

⁵*Harper Lee*, Author.

child learns to use Morals Actively, and act on their distinguished choices. But before Scout learns, she doesn't know of the prominent problems of the time. The book itself is highly praised for it being a sensitive treatment of a child's *awakening* to subjects like prejudice and racism, meaning that before the girl was unaware and not held responsible since she was oblivious. But when Scout did know, the responsibility was hers and she was answerable to it, and then had choices to make, now that choices were in her sphere of awareness.

A laid out example of Passive is this: Two people are walking down a street. The street is crowded, flooded with afternoon foot traffic. As they are walking, Person one bumps into a passerby. Person two does not notice that the passerby dropped their wallet when bumped but continues walking. Person one notices, picks up the wallet and goes after the passerby. This is where Person two is being Passive since they are unaware of the problem *and* the choice since they did not see the wallet fall or Person one jostle the bystander. Now if Person two notices Person one is no longer by his side, then he might see him going after the owner of the wallet, and would then be presented with a choice to follow or wait or continue, but because of Person two's Passivity the opportunity of assisting with the wallet was missed.

Passivity could be confused with Moral ignorance, which is defined by Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics*. The difference between the two is that Passivity is the unawareness of the existence of a choice, whereas Moral Ignorance is the "ignorance of particulars, i.e. of the circumstances of the action and the objects with which it is concerned."⁶ In Moral Ignorance (dubbed *Involuntary Ignorance* by Aristotle) it is similar to Passivity in that the person in question is not held responsible for not knowing. "For it is on these that both pity and pardon depend, since the person who is ignorant of any of the acts involuntarily."⁷

⁶*Nicomachean Ethics, Book Three, One.*

⁷*Nicomachean Ethics, Book Three, One.*

Both share the similarity of unawareness, but Moral Ignorance is the unawareness of the details of the choice, and Passivity is the unawareness of the choice altogether.

Although Passivity does not seem to have a great consequence, in actuality it does. Humans grow because experiences, choices, and actions refine them. Without these things men do not grow. Without awareness of choices, actions, and experiences people would remain at the stage they are at for there would be no opportunity for self progress. In Passivity there is no growth, so people unknowingly stay stagnant.

A person cannot be purposefully Passive. In order to be purposefully Passive, there would have to be an acknowledgement that there is a choice, or there are choices, that the person would be ignoring with full awareness of what they are doing. This contradicts the core of the Moral Awareness, which is to be involuntarily unaware of a choice. The idea of purposeful ignorance towards choices suits *Apathy*.

Apathy is the third and final Moral Awareness. The general definition of apathy is a lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern. A more modern one is a resolute distaste for action. The two parts of Apathy as a Moral Awareness is a lack of interest towards the right option of a choice, and a lack of interest towards the choice altogether. Being Apathetically aware is to acknowledge the existence of a choice and knowingly avoid it. Or to purposely make the wrong decision, with the full awareness that the better possibility could be taken. It is purely self serving as well, and is used for the benefit of self despite the possible greater benefit in terms of others or of the long term.

Monsieur Thenardier matched the first part of Apathetic Awareness in the choosing of the wrong choice (the purposeful ignoring of the right option) though he knew of the better option. In *Les Miserables*⁸ Thenardier is an opportunist of war, misfortune and ignorance, pouncing on

⁸Victor Hugo, Author.

anyone and anything in order to reap whatever reward the situation, circumstance or actions would produce. He would knowingly and purposefully choose the wrong decision in every choice introduced to the man because the benefit, though temporary and lame, would benefit him. These benefits never lasted long, but the behavior never stopped. They were easy fixes, and not worth repenting for in his mind, so the self obsessed man saw no reason to end them, and thus the Apathetic awareness continued.

He had an apparent awareness of both right and wrong but so casually chose the wrong of every choice that was presented to him. This was because the benefit that he received was instant and for himself. In Apathetic Awareness a person can acknowledge that there is a better choice. The benefit of the wrong choice is instantaneous and for self. It does not last long but it aids momentarily and for the sake of the makers. The benefit of the right choice may be prolonged and is made usually for the sake of others. Thenardier chose wrong every time for himself for its immediateness. The right's benefits are fulfilling, especially compared to the benefits of a wrong choice. The wrong choice's benefit is purely lucrative and a placebo in the moment. The benefits of being Moral have the distinct purpose and fulfillment of wholeness or goodness, without the disparity of needing to continuously fill a void that comes with Apathetic Awareness and the action that follows it.

One trait of Apathetic Awareness is doubling down on the bad decision instead of regretting, apologizing, or learning. This, although portrayed perfectly by Monsieur Thenardier throughout *Les Misérables*, is not unknown in many if not most antagonists in literature. In the *Lord of the Flies*⁹ the pacifist, Simon, is killed¹⁰ by the other marooned boys in a fit of violence and rage, the “tribe” caught up in the swell of the moment and the swell of their leader's (Jack's)

⁹William Golding, *Author*.

¹⁰*Lord of the Flies*, Chapter Nine.

bloodthirsty blindness. Jack then retreats to the cave his tribe stays in. He proves to be a tyrant by punishing followers who question him about anything, especially about the killing of Simon, which the tyrannical boy knew was objectively wrong.

Jack: "...the beast might try to come in. You remember how he crawled—'

The semicircle shuddered and muttered in agreement.

'He came—disguised. He may come again even though we gave him the head of our kill to eat. So watch; and be careful.'

Stanley lifted his forearm off the rock and held up an interrogative finger.

'Well?'

'But didn't we, didn't we—?'

He squirmed and looked down.

'No!'"¹¹

With the weight of another person's life on Jack's shoulders, the guilt presented itself as a new choice. Either to regret, apologize, learn and grow from doing the wrong thing, or to double down so the admittance of Apathy would not be apparent. So Jack chose to state that the act of Simon's murder was only a sacrifice to keep the beast momentarily at bay, creating a pattern of Apathetic Awareness towards both choices themselves and the right option.

It is not impossible for those in Apathetic awareness and action to become Moral. The thing that decides that a person is trying to be Moral is the acceptance and acknowledgement of past wrong and bad/incorrect actions. Denial is a continuance of Apathetic lead action.

Peeta Mellark exemplifies the effort of *trying*. Peeta was chosen to compete in the Hunger Games twice, a compulsory televised battle royale death match. In both, he fought to survive by killing his fellow tributes. Peeta is open of the acceptance and horror he has as a result

¹¹*Lord of the Flies, Chapter Ten.*

of the lives he took. There is an obvious acknowledgement of the wrong that was done, and that is where a person starts to try to do the right thing. In the final book of The Hunger Games Series¹², he was captured by the Capital at the height of the rebellion against it. Forced to do an interview which was broadcast nationwide with the purpose to diminish the spirits of the rebels, he told how awful the experiences of the Hunger Games were.

“As bad as it makes you feel, you're going to have to do some killing, because in the arena, you only get one wish. And it's very costly.”

“It costs your life,” says Caesar.

“Oh, no. It costs a lot more than your life. To murder innocent people?” says Peeta. “It costs everything you are.”

“Everything you are,’ repeats Caesar quietly.”¹³

Not all the users of Apathetic Awareness are observing every choice this way. Humans can be selectively Apathetic: running away from certain things while facing others; selectively Passive: subconsciously avoiding choices that fall into things outside of a person’s sphere; and selectively Active: taking some problems head on with analyzations while other choices don’t seem to need the effort. Humanity’s perception of choice is made up of all three.

Our awareness of choices falls into these categories, which also define our responsibility to the outcome and to the better possibility. In *Active* Awareness there is the process of actively looking for choices and for the better outcome and possibility, then having the responsibility to make the right choice because it has been seen. In *Passive*, as stated before, there is no awareness of choices and there is therefore no responsibility to make the better choice. In *Apathy* the responsibility to make the right choice is a result of the awareness of both options and

¹²Suzanne Collins, *Author*.

¹³*The Hunger Games, Mockingjay, Chapter Two.*

acknowledgment of the right one, but the duty is purposely shirked. The outcome, however, still rests on the person who avoided it. And of course, in some cases people pick up what other people refuse to, but if the choice is presented then its original responsibility remains with the first to encounter it. If the outcome is resolved then there is some argument about whether the responsibility remains on the person who ran from it or whether it is resolved along with the conflict, but in any case the Apathetic in and of itself is a wrong choice. And Passive, although not a conscious state of mind to be in, is wrong too, for remaining unchanged and stagnant does not allow us to glean a benefit or even glimpse the reward for Morally right choices.

Choices, by my decided definition, are the action upon the distinction of right and wrong, or the action upon Morals. Not all choices are in need of Moral Awarenesses or even Moral resolution. In fact, thinking of every moral outcome that can result from a common place choice can be a hindrance. Morals and Morality do not need to be a forced factor of every choice in life. There are no moral consequences attached to the preferred cereal type of some versus others, or if a person wears a sweater to class instead of a hoodie. These types of choices are not dependent on a Morally correct answer because there isn't one. These choices are subjective and the outcome is circumstantial, if that, whereas Moral choices are viewed as objective and the outcome is stemmed from the option taken.

If a person tries to force the thought of "every choice has a right option" while ignoring the level of Morality that it calls for, even if the choice doesn't call for Morality, that person will over-fixate and obsess over what makes right right instead of considering the level of the choice Morally. In *The Good Place*¹⁴, NBC's four season series comedically dealing with the idea of Morals, Moral philosophy and philosophers, one of the main characters Chidi Anagonye¹⁵

¹⁴NBC, Michael Schur (Creator).

¹⁵Portrayed by William Jackson Harper.

continually treats every decision he ever makes like the biggest Moral question he may ever encounter, and for that the Professor of Ethics is sent to the Bad Place (*The Good Place*'s interpretation of Hell). In the Season One finale episode, "Chidi learns that he went to the Bad Place... because he tortured everyone in his life with his indecisiveness and his rigidity."¹⁶

For a choice to require Morality, a pattern that has arisen is this: In order for a choice to include the need for Morals and Morality the good of others is more prominent than the good of the person making the choice. Chidi did not suffer because of the obsession over Morality in the choices themselves, but of the effect. And not the effect on him, but on everyone who was affected by the choices that Chidi made.

The idea of the greater good being directly consequential to the amount of people it benefits is not unheard of in Moral and Ethical philosophies. Utilitarianism is the philosophy that actions and decisions are right depending on if they are useful or benefit the majority of people. In the case of Chidi Anagonye, his obsessing and stress in unknowingly forcing subjective decisions into his own imagined objectivity (the thought process that every choice has a Moral consequence no matter how seemingly inconsequential), hindering other people instead of just himself. It is not that some choices are inconsequential compared to others, but it is that forcing Morality into subjective choices also forces others into them.

The right choice is found in both the majority of people and the benefit. The most optimal situation is where the best benefit affects the majority of people, but in some Moral choices the most favorable option can shift between greater benefit and benefit of majority. The benefit of the majority is when a right choice is made depending on the people it will better (Utilitarianism). The greater benefit is not dependent on the number the people affected, but is found in the quality of the benefit itself.

¹⁶https://thegoodplace.fandom.com/wiki/Chidi_Anagonye (*The Good Place Wikia*).

The benefit of the majority is when a choice is made for the bettering of a greater number of people. Women's Suffrage/rights is an example of this. The *19th Amendment*¹⁷ was passed for the progress of the United States at large, facilitating a more true and accurate representation of the population, and the population's actual needs. It is the majority that benefits.

An example of benefit outweighing the majority is in *Fahrenheit 451*¹⁸. In this dystopian novel, Guy Montag is a fireman burning books, then returning home to a wife numb to reality. When Montag learns that a neighboring girl, Clarisse, dies, he starts to become increasingly unhappy with his life, as the girl had opened his eyes to the emptiness of his own life and the fullness of hers. He starts to read a stash of outlawed books he had hidden. When he is outed by neighbors and his wife, he is forced by his fire chief to burn his house to the ground and in turn burns the chief. He succeeds in escaping the city, drifting down a stream until he finds a group of renegade intellectuals. Montag, who was able to memorize the Book of Ecclesiastes, joins them. He goes with them as the city he lived in is obliterated, ready to rebuild civilization. Montag chooses the right decision to read and eventually fight back and leave, and goes against the majority, who were content with the one-note pleasure, leisure, and insensibility that they lived in. The benefit is the knowledge he retains (as well as his life), the knowledge he learns, and the knowledge he will be able to give. The benefit outweighed the rule of the majority.

Choices ask for varying levels of Morality, as not all Moral quandaries are equal in extremity, depth and necessity. Some do not need Morality, like in deciding a person's favorite type of cereal or whether they bring a hoodie or sweater to work, because people are not directly affected by this. A Moral choice would be in deciding whether they lend the hoodie or sweater to someone who is cold.

¹⁷United States Constitution.

¹⁸Ray Bradbury, Author.

It is possible to accidentally make the right choice—or the wrong one. The aftereffects are still the same whether the knowledge of the choice was full or not, or even if it was voluntary or involuntary. The amount of responsibility changes depending on the amount of knowledge about the choice. If a mother tells her child that the stove is hot and will burn him, and he touches it, the burn is his fault because he was warned. If a child touches the stove and was not warned or told by his mother that it would burn him, he still gets burned but it is less of his fault because he didn't know. The result is still the same: they both get burned. But the knowledge of what they were doing was different.

To some extent, when a person accidentally makes a choice they have responsibility no matter the amount of knowledge of the choice. The only case where a person has no accountability is when they are Passive. However, if a Passive person by chance makes a choice, again, the effects of the choice still happen.

Choices made by chance provide opportunities for future awareness. Morality is learned mostly through examples and being taught, including the example of yourself and learning from both good and bad experiences. If there is a wrong choice made and there wasn't an intent for it, someone can learn from their own experience and have a desire for more Active awareness because the effects still transpire. But, continuously being Passive and living and acting by chance causes a problematic life. If there is no link between conscious decisions and the resulting consequences, then a person will be undergoing effects they were unconscious of initiating; therefore, the ignorant still pay for the choices with the repercussions.

A Moral decision is made with something bigger in mind than just the decider. Joan of Arc had both her country and her God in mind in every choice she made, which resulted in the saving of France and the obeying of God. There was no thought of self in the Saint's mind; she

never saw herself as anything but a vessel for choosing the right choice. The intent that she carried was that of saving France for France and God. Morality is for the “greater”.

There is something distinctly selfish in forcing Morality and as a result forcing people into choices (which is Chidi’s downfall). It overrides the good of the situation, whatever it may be, and replaces it with a self centered intent, which contradicts the point of good choices which is to benefit people. Those in *Active* and *Apathetic* realize the required measure of Morality, and thereby see those included within the scope of benefit and effect. Selfishness opposes the reward of Morally right choices made with good intent and for the greater good of something bigger than the decider.

Nobility is a universal reward of being Moral and acting on Morality. It is not the nobility of a high rank, status or birthright in society that I am referring to. It is the quality or trait of Nobility that Morality awards, a direct gain from using Active Awareness to perceive the right choice and acting upon the learned distinction, or put simply: a reward of Morally right choices. Morality is the standard by which the difference between right and wrong is made distinct and Nobility is given when it (Morality) is used to *Actively* discern the right choice, and then is followed through by action. A person can be Moral without Nobility, but cannot be Noble without Morality.

The difference of Morality versus Nobility is found in its overarching completeness. Nobility is a whole and Morality is used in instances. A person could continually be aware of choices, and Morally make the right choice, but in order to be Noble the three parts above are needed, and needed in continuance. Now of course there is struggle, and this also is a division between Nobility and its sire. Aristotle says this of Nobility:

...a multitude of great events if they turn out well will make life happier (for not only are they themselves such as to add beauty to life, but the way a man deals with them may be noble and good), while they turn out ill they crush and maim happiness; for they both bring pain with them and hinder many activities. Yet even in these nobility shines through, when a man bears with resignation many great misfortunes, not through insensibility to pain but through nobility and greatness of soul.¹⁹

Nobility is the bearing of Morality and the refining of character through struggles. It comes after the resolution of whatever situation the person is in. It is not the action of the resolution, but the conduct towards and in the situation itself. This is why those who survive hardship are seen as and very often are Noble. Nobility is found in the resilience of the human soul.

Nobility has many parts that make it up as a higher plane of Morality: The first: A trust and chosen penance in faith and other convictions. The second: A quiet observance of need and relief accompanied by gentle action. And the third: A willingness to choose and act with no thought of opposition because of the certainty of right and good.

Sainte Jeanne d'Arc, The Maid of Orléans, or the woman most widely known as Joan of Arc is perhaps the most accurate and exact example of Nobility known, but she serves as the example of the first and foremost part of Nobility, which, stripped of prose, is both faith and sacrifice. The acts executed by Joan are not nameless. At age twelve or thirteen the young girl started experiencing visions sent from God. At eighteen she led the French army to victory over the English at Orléans. A year later Joan of Arc was put on trial, found guilty of being a heretic, and was burned at the stake. A constructed cross made by an English soldier was put around her

¹⁹Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book Ten.

neck and a crucifix held by a couple of soldiers²⁰ in her view in solemnity and respect of the undeniable faith and devotion shown to God. Her death cemented her willingness to risk and sacrifice everything as her life ended.

The ultimate sacrifice given by the woman for faith in something greater shows the near if not perfect Nobility possessed. The translator's preface²¹ in Mark Twain's *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* talks of the Nobility of Joan.

To arrive at a just estimate of a renowned man's character one must judge it by the standards of his time, not ours. Judged by the standards of one century, the noblest characters of an earlier one lose much of their luster; judged by the standards of to-day, there is probably no illustrious man of four or five centuries ago whose character could meet the test at all points. But the character of Joan of Arc is unique. It can be measured by the standards of all times without misgiving or apprehension as to the result. Judged by any of them, it is still flawless, it is still ideally perfect; it still occupies the loftiest place possible to human attainment, a loftier one than has been reached by any other mere mortal.²²

Joan of Arc was and is renowned for both the actions carried out and the purpose that accompanied and never left them. The Saint did nothing for herself, only for her country as directed by and done for her God. Faith and sacrifice in Nobility are complex in the understanding that they are made, refined and performed for and in the name of the greater good in which the convictions are formed and fixed.

Joan's page and secretary, the Sieur Louis de Conte, whose perspective *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* is based on, states this in a letter addressed to his future progeny:

²⁰Joan of Arc, Wikipedia.

²¹Jean Francois Alden, Translator.

²²Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc, Mark Twain. Translator's Preface.

As the years and the decades drifted by, and the spectacle of the marvelous child's {Joan's} meteor flight across the war firmament of France and its extinction in the smoke-clouds of the stake receded deeper and deeper into the past and grew ever more strange, and wonderful, and divine, and pathetic, I came to comprehend and recognize her at last for what she was—the most noble life that was ever born into this world save only One.²³ The legacy of Joan serves and will continue to serve as an example of near if not perfect Nobility in faith and sacrifice for the greatest good; her God.

The second part of Nobility is represented beautifully by Dickon Sowerby in *The Secret Garden*²⁴. Dickon becomes the much needed friend of Miss Mary Lennox, a sickly, neglected and underloved girl who moves to Misselthwaite Manor in England to live with her wealthy and hunchbacked uncle after her parents die of Cholera in India. The ten year old girl finds herself alone in the isolated manor, and begins to find solace, excitement and love in both the idea of a secret garden on the manor's grounds and in herself. Whilst searching for and finding the hidden garden, Mary hears of twelve year old Dickon from the grounds gardener Ben Weatherstaff and from his older sister, Martha, who works at the Manor.

Mary Lennox is enthralled by Dickon before she even meets the *moor boy*²⁵. Martha is continually bubbling over about the trust animals have in him and of the good nature he exhibits towards every creature or person he meets. And when asked about whether Ben Weatherstaff knows Dickon or not he tells Mary, "Everybody knows him {Dickon}. Dickon's wanderin' about everywhere. Th' very blackberries an' heather-bells knows him. I warrant th' foxes show him where their cubs lies an' th' skylarks doesn't hide their nests from him."²⁶

²³Personal Recollections of Joan Of Arc, the Sieur Louis de Conte, To his Great-Great-Grand Nephews and Nieces.

²⁴Frances Hodgson Burnett, Author.

²⁵SparkNotes: *The Secret Garden*, Dickon Sowerby: "Dickon Sowerby is, in some sense, the spirit of Missel Moor. His eyes are described as looking like "pieces of moorland sky," and he smells of "heather and grass and leaves...as if he were made of them.""

²⁶*The Secret Garden*, Chapter Four.

When the two children first talk Mary is put at ease almost instantly by the approachable and humble air of Dickon. “He did not speak to her as if they had never seen each other before but as if he knew her quite well.”²⁷ Mary describes him as "beautiful," and as "a Yorkshire angel" because of his uncanny connection and relationships with wildlife and wild things, which he seems to reflect in his countenance.

When Colin Craven, the pale and self-pitying cousin of Mary who fears dying from his ailment, meets Dickon and his animal companions, he is so overwhelmed by the presence of the soft spoken wonderment that he did not even think of speaking to him. “But Dickon did not feel the least shy or awkward. He had not felt embarrassed because the crow had not known his language and had only stared and had not spoken to him the first time they met. Creatures were always like that until they found out about you.”²⁸ This humble empathy is why he is a trusted person, and is why he is so gifted with understanding all things; people, creatures, and the earth. Even the robin sees the understanding in the humble moor boy: “The first moment he set his dew bright eye on Dickon he knew he was not a stranger but a sort of robin without beak or feathers. He could speak robin... Any robin could understand Dickon, so his presence was not even disturbing.”

Dickon carries an immense amount of humility, which is the basis for the quiet strength of both physique and character, and both gained from childhood spent in the moorlands and in serving people, creatures, and the earth. He takes care of animals, works to restore the secret garden to its former beautiful state, and befriends Mary. In all these cases Dickon Sowerby makes low things higher, or rather helps things to reach their potential. He sees the inherent goodness in all things, as he believes in God, for which he lends his gentleness (for Mary) and

²⁷*The Secret Garden, Chapter Five.*

²⁸*The Secret Garden, Chapter Nineteen.*

strength (for Colin). The young boy has a proficient observance of need, weakness, and any kind of lacking in all he encounters, which he willingly works to fill. In this humility does the “magic” like qualities Dickon possesses become more apparent to be Nobility.

And Atticus Finch from *To Kill A Mockingbird* is the example of the third part of Nobility. Atticus is the father of Scout and Jem and a lawyer who chose to fairly and deliberately represent the black minority in a criminal trial despite the likelihood of unfair consequences against him. Atticus is appointed by the county judge to be the attorney to represent Tom Robinson in court, and as a result of shouldering that responsibility in Alabama in the 1930s means he needs to defend himself and his family. He is mocked and scoffed at on many accounts, and was confronted by a mob when Atticus is sitting in front of the Maycomb jail, where Tom Robinson was moved. Still though, Atticus remains firm to defend Robinson, slowly developing into the loss of place in his own community. And his community is aware of it, and aware of his intention to provide the black man with a fair and honest argument. Scout, while walking into the courthouse to watch the trial, overheard men talking of her father:

“...thinks he knows what he’s doing,’ one said.

‘Oh-h now, I wouldn’t say that,’ said another. ‘Atticus Finch’s a deep reader, a mighty deep reader.’

‘He reads all right, that’s all he does.’ The club snickered.

‘Lemme tell you somethin’ now, Billy,’ a third said, ‘you know the court appointed him to defend this nigger.’

‘Yeah, but Atticus aims to defend him. That’s what I don’t like about it.’²⁹

It is clear that the people do not think that Atticus Finch is a bad person, but think that what he was doing was bad and beneath him and thereby embarrassed them. He knows they

²⁹*To Kill A Mockingbird, Chapter Fifteen.*

think this as it was proven to him through the scoffing and confrontations and such. But he also knows that what he is doing is right, so he stands up for it, not only because of the nature of his work, but because he has an obligation to stand. His integrity (and therefore his Nobility) refuses to let him give up what he knows implicitly to be right because others oppose it. Since he knew the right choice in the situation, he was therefore responsible for bringing it to light, despite the many who oppose him and the right choice.

There is a great amount of Nobility in doing something that Atticus knows won't make a difference. Atticus knows that no matter what he does Tom Robinson will be found guilty. No matter how much evidence he presents, no matter how truly innocent Robinson is, he knows it makes no difference about whether he does his job well and chooses the right thing, but he still does it. Despite everything, he still Nobly stands up for what he knows to be true. And although it won't make a difference in the verdict given, it can make a difference in people.

I {Scout} shut my eyes. Judge Taylor was polling the jury: "Guilty... guilty... guilty... guilty..."

Atticus took his coat off the back of his chair and pulled it over his shoulder. Then he left the courtroom, but not by his usual exit. He must have wanted to go home the short way, because he walked quickly down the middle aisle toward the south exit. I followed the top of his head as he made his way to the door. He did not look up.

Someone was punching me, but I was reluctant to take my eyes from the people below us, and from the image of Atticus's lonely walk down the aisle.

"Miss Jean Louise?"

I looked around. They were standing. All around us and in the balcony on the opposite wall, the Negroes were getting to their feet. Reverend Sykes's voice was as distant as Judge Taylor's:

"Miss Jean Louise, stand up. Your father's passin'." ³⁰

Each character presented would and is found to exhibit each of the parts of Nobility. The entirety of all three parts are needed to truly be Noble, though a person could exhibit one or two more visibly than the others, each are all possessed:

Joan met with the Dauphin at the Royal Court in the town of Chinon in 1429 to ask to march with the army and armor. The Dauphin, Charles VII of France, ordered background inquiries and a theological examination to verify her Morality. The commission of inquiry "declared her to be of irreproachable life, a good Christian, possessed of the virtues of humility, honesty and simplicity." ³¹ Dickon put his faith into nature which in turn put its faith in him, and he sacrificed effort into the earth. Even when he wasn't gardening with Mary or supporting Colin, he was tending to a garden for his family. Atticus sacrificed his and by default his family's place in the community by standing for what he knew was right and what he put his faith in. He is also humble in his rightness, and taught his children to be the same. Each character/figure exhibited each of the three parts that make up Nobility—some being shown more subtle than others—which thereby means that each is needed in order to possess Nobility as a whole.

There are many benefits to being Noble and thereby being Moral, but as Nobility is a higher plane of Morality it encompasses the other benefits more fully and more assuredly.

One of the benefits is connection. As said before, to be Moral is to consider others, the majority, and the greater, and by being Moral people can accomplish that and make connections.

³⁰*To Kill A Mockingbird*, Chapter Twenty One.

³¹Vale, M.G.A., 'Charles VII', 1974, p. 55.

NBC's *The Good Place* says that connection is one of the greatest benefits of Morality, as well as a reason behind it. In *The Good Place*, the incredibly flawed characters learn Morality and how to use it and how to become better people, and in doing this they find each other. The show is centered around the Moral question of "What do we owe to each other?"

Though the question is taken from a philosopher arguing Contractualism³², he as well as the show has one purpose behind their using it:

The interactions between people and the relationships which are formed throughout people's lives help *transform* people. The accountability of the relationships humans harbor and create hold them accountable to each other and encourage the consideration of kindness (and thereby Nobility) instead of self serving *Apathetic* actions. The characters in *The Good Place* could not get better on their own, they needed each other. This may be because of the lack of Moral quandaries when no other person is a part of a choice because there would be no "greater" to consider, but it is also about serving one another and shared growth between people.

Whether Contractualism is correct or not does not matter as much as the message the makers of *The Good Place* want people to hear. Their message is applicable whether or not the philosophical argument is true. It is that humans, *at the very least*, can and should serve each other. That is where growth is found, that is where Morality is used, that is where Nobility is earned, and that is where relationships are developed. "As long as you're not being complacent and ignoring the feelings of other people and ignoring the effects of your own behavior on the

³²T.M. Scanlon's work on Contractualism: An act is wrong if its performance under the circumstances would be disallowed by any set of principles for the general regulation of behaviour that no one could reasonably reject as a basis for informed, unforced, general agreement. (Scanlon 1998, p. 153).

*Contractualism appeals to the idea of a social contract. It attempts to derive the content of morality (and, in some versions, also the justification for holding that we are obligated to follow morality) from the notion of an agreement between all those in the moral domain. (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/contractualism/#WhaCon> Contractualism).

world, then you're doing a good job... What matters is that you're trying.”³³ And really, at the very least, what *do* we owe each other?

Another benefit is happiness. It is strange that virtue is more commonly associated with happiness than Morality. It seems most assume that to be Moral is to continually sacrifice and to give up all things material and pleasurable. Morality is not a lifestyle as proved before, it is a system through which choices are filtered.

Happiness is often seen as more of a goal than a direct benefit. In Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle teaches that to be virtuous (a synonymous quality with Nobility) is to be searching for happiness. Happiness, according to the great philosopher, is something chosen for its sake alone. Never for any other thing and is considered the final good, and yet it is not a goal given at the completion of anything. Happiness comes, throughout our lives, in the completion of actions. Happiness itself is the pursuit of happiness. is much more than just completion. It is in the act of, the striving for happiness, the experiencing of it, the attaining and continuing it. Whether the opinion of happiness given by Aristotle is true or not does not matter because when a person is Moral or Noble there is a distinctive and real feeling that is experienced. And since it is fulfilling people continue chasing it.

And the last to be mentioned is being and doing good. Which is what the hundreds and hundreds of Moral Philosophers are trying to pinpoint. The purpose of the many philosophies that are made is to become the system through which people can become good and Moral and Noble, and they do this because being good is good. And people want to be good. Miss Mary Lennox knows that she wants to be good from the second she realizes she's not. When talking about Dickon to Martha before the young girl met him, she says:

³³<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/krystieyandoli/the-good-place-michael-schur> "The Good Place" Creator Michael Schur Explained The Real Message Of The Show, BuzzFeed News.

“He wouldn’t like me,” said Mary in her stiff, cold little way. “No one does.”

Martha looked reflective again.

“How does tha’ like thysel’?” she inquired, really as if she were curious to know.

Mary hesitated a moment and thought it over.

“Not at all—really,” she answered. “But I never thought of that before.”³⁴

And through this self reflection she starts to learn what the right choice looks like, and finds the desire to learn how to make them.

Through analysis of examples of right choices, it can be surmised that in order to find the correct option and make the right choice several prominent elements should be introduced into the thought process required when making a choice.

To be aware of Moral choices is key. Awareness starts with how a person is aware of how they are aware and what they do with that awareness. This is why Moral Awarenesses are important.

Reasoning through the dilemma with Morality is key as well. The example of Ender and Bonzo shows that reasoning through, understanding the situation and the particulars of the circumstance is nearly vital when trying to figure out the right choice (sometimes the right choice is obvious or can be chosen correctly by chance). Aristotle states that rationality is the function of the human soul³⁵ and it would only make sense that function would be used, and through the rational discerning of right and wrong can the right be found.

And to trust your gut and in whatever transcendent³⁶ feeling or purpose a person has or follows is important. The former was shown by Dickon, who knew how to help Mary and Colin very easily since he trusted in his gut and in how his mother had raised him. The latter was

³⁴*The Secret Garden, Chapter Seven.*

³⁵*Nicomachean Ethics.*

³⁶*(of God) existing apart from and not subject to the limitations of the material universe.*

shown by Joan, as she trusted that God would show her what was right, and that she was chosen to do those right actions which she performed throughout her life.

A trust in conscience (which both gut and transcendent feelings can be included in) has continuously proven to pay off. A literary example of this is the Talking Cricket in *The Adventures of Pinocchio*³⁷. The cricket represents conscience very clearly, warning the wooden puppet of bad situations and pleading with him to listen. He does not, on many occasions, even throwing a hammer at the Cricket. At the end of the book, Pinocchio and his father Geppetto enter a cottage after escaping the stomach of a whale and see the Talking Cricket. Pinocchio apologizes for killing him, and for ignoring his wisdom, to which the Cricket says: “I’m going to take pity on both father and son, but I wanted to remind you of the bad treatment I received and to show you that in this world of ours, whenever possible, it’s necessary to be kind and courteous to others, if we want to be paid back in kindness in our own times of need.”³⁸ In this the Cricket, Pinocchio’s conscience, reminds him that what his conscience says is important, and that the puppet should heed it in order to experience the benefits of being Moral.

Those who are Noble exhibit *habitual* Morality, using many if not all the elements that have been presented in how to make the right choice. When talking of Moral virtue Aristotle uses the word *hexis*. “But the word does not merely mean passive habituation. Rather, *hexis* is an active condition, a state in which something must actively hold itself.”³⁹ Meaning that to be Morally virtuous is to be *actively* Moral, including active in awareness.

Active Moral Awareness is the first building block, as has been established. It is circular in its existence, as the more it is focused on and used the more in use it becomes. It is the widening of paradigms⁴⁰ and the forming of more apt knowledge of Moral choices, since the

³⁷Carlo Collodi, Author.

³⁸*The Adventures of Pinocchio*, Chapter Thirty Six.

³⁹<https://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-eth/> Aristotle: Ethics, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

⁴⁰(Perspectives).

more a person experiences the more awareness and comprehension they have of the components and the experiences themselves. Active awareness is slightly habitual as it is a part of the conscience, but the most active use the more understanding gained.

The second is making the mundane greater. When things become habitual, they may seem to lose meaning. The key is to remember the purposes behind being Moral and Noble, which is to reap benefits both for self and for others and to have the desire to be good. Once the purposes are emphasized, the meaning is brought back to light. And once again, the more it is done the more the meaning is made prominent. There is a reason why people are Moral and Noble, and that is the purpose behind doing it.

The third is to keep trying—because it matters.

Nobility is important because it is the human soul being refined and hurt and joyful and beautiful and just and merciful and wounded and great. It is a level of greatness humanity admires so incredibly much because it is something we all want and we all need and we all want to become. It doesn't matter which philosophical theory is right, because the purpose is still behind each of them: to be the correct Moral system through which people can find goodness, because people want to be good, and want to know how they can act and behave as such. People want to know how to be good and Moral. And it matters that we do. It matters that we want to be Noble, it matters that we want to be Moral—*it matters*. Because it is us trying, and wanting, and doing and becoming the best we can be, for ourselves and for each other.

And there is nothing more Noble than that.

*This is dedicated to my parents,
Thank you so much.
And to the other many examples of Nobility I've encountered throughout my life—
Because it matters.*

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