



**THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF EUDAIMONIA AMONG MILLENNIALS OF SHARIFF  
AGUAK  
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***Abstract***

This research wants to answer the question what is ‘the supreme good for man’, that is, what is the best way to lead our life and give it meaning? Is Aristotle’s concept of happiness parallel with the lived experience of eudaimonia among Millennials? For Aristotle, a thing is best understood by looking at its end, purpose, or goal. For example, the purpose of a knife is to cut, and it is by seeing this that one best understands what a knife is; the goal of medicine is good health, and it is by seeing this that one best understands what medicine is.

Keywords: Eudaimonia, Millennials, Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao del Sur

**INTRODUCTION**

***1.1 Background of the Study***

All persons have their own concept of happiness. Some are similar and related while others are totally different. This means individual’s concept of happiness has been affected and influenced by various personal orientations and status in life. Some people may conceptualize happiness based on their experiences. For a worldly people, they may have the belief that happiness comes from pleasure. In other cases, happiness is perceived based on individual contentment. Religion and concerned persons have a different perception of happiness compared to selfish ones. But, what is certain and common is that everybody has his own different ways to be happy.

Happiness is not measurable, profitable, nor tradable. Yet, above all else in the world, it is what people seek. They want to have happiness, and want to know they have a lot of it. But happiness, like air or water, is a hard thing to grasp in one’s hand. It is intangible. So how does one know if they have it? Is it just a feeling? And if someone does not feel happy, how can they go about achieving that feeling?

Recently, another approach to a good life has risen out of the historical and philosophical debates—the idea of *eudaimonic well-being*. Aristotle was the originator of the concept of eudaimonia (from daimon – true nature). He deemed happiness to be a vulgar idea, stressing that not all desires are worth pursuing as, even though some of them may yield pleasure, they would not produce wellness. Aristotle thought that true happiness is found by leading a virtuous life and doing what is worth doing (Aristotle, *Nicomachean ethics*) He argued that realizing human potential is the ultimate human goal. This idea was further developed in history by prominent thinkers, such as Stoics, who stressed the value of self-discipline, and John Locke, who argued that happiness is pursued through prudence.

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parallel with the lived experience of eudaimonia among Millennials? For Aristotle, a thing is best understood by looking at its end, purpose, or goal. For example, the purpose of a knife is to cut, and it is by seeing this that one best understands what a knife is; the goal of medicine is good health, and it is by seeing this that one best understands what medicine is.

## METHOD

Basic Qualitative Research Characteristics Design is generally based on a social constructivism. Themes describe the patterns/phenomenon as results. Qualitative methods are generally used to address questions about the way people organize, relate and interact with the world. In order to investigate the happiness elements present in the life of Millennials it was necessary to understand how Millennials organize their thoughts, perceptions and feelings and how they relate to happiness. Hence it was necessary to choose qualitative research method for conducting this particular research. This research has used depth-interview to capture free-flowing text. Analysis approach uses stories, first hand experiences, using the perspective of the story teller individually as compared to a set of the subject. Oral interview has been conducted in this study. The method that has been used in the data gathering was interview and library method.

### *Participants*

The respondents chosen were 7 males and 8 females. The age was from 21 to 35 y/o. All the respondents were leaders in their respected areas in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao. Snowballing was used in choosing the respondents of my research. All the interviewees were within the required age limit and personalities.

### *Locale of the Study*

The study will be conducted within Maguindanao area specifically in Shariff Aguak, because it is most relevant to the researcher. Shariff Aguak (formerly Maganoy) is a 3rd income class municipality in the province of Maguindanao, Philippines. According to the 2010 census, it has a population of 34,376 people in 7,323 households. It is the capital municipality of Maguindanao.

### *Research Instrument*

Aside from the library and journal sources the researcher's instrument in gathering the data is a key informants and interview to be scheduled depending on the availability of the interviewees. For the purpose of this research a sample size of 15 Gen Y respondents were selected. In-depth interviews were conducted with all the respondents and their narratives were recorded and documented. Questions were about their life history, experiences, notions about happiness and formative years experience. See appendix for the full listing of questions.

### *Data Gathering Procedure*

Study in depth interview were conducted among the 7 males and 8 females of Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao. The first step of gathering the data was a courtesy call to the Municipal Mayor of Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao and asked him for a permission to conduct an interview to some Millennials in his municipality. He then referred me to the Municipal Social Welfare Officer in the person of Farouk S. Romancap, RSW for an assistance during the conduct of interviews. Snowballing was used in choosing the respondents of my research. All the interviewees were within the required age limit. During the interview everything has been documented and recorded and Maguindanaon language was used.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A parent can still be in control and not be controlling by giving options and being consistent. I can think of nothing sadder than making a child into something he is not. All aspects of a man's life - his character, sense of responsibility, good and bad habits, ability to cope with difficulties, and his piety - are shaped primarily during his childhood. The bright memories of his childhood can strengthen and warm a man during trying times, and, contrarily, those who have not had a happy childhood can in no way remake it. Sometimes it's hard to balance what's best for children with what makes them happy — but the two don't have to be mutually exclusive. Happier kids are more likely to turn into successful, accomplished adults. Happiness is a tremendous advantage in a world that emphasizes performance.

The result of the interviews in terms of the formative years experience of 15 millennials in Shariff Aguak shows that a child's sense of morally responsibility in every act he does were all emanations from their parents. Who and what kind of people they are today is because of the teachings and enacted principles that their parents showed them. Their parents set a good example to them to show their children the goodness of every good decision because soon the child will make his/her own decision that he/she thinks the good and right thing to do. According to one of my interviewees her parents always told her that ; Parents need to provide a solid base for children to understand morals, because if the parents don't provide a solid base then the children will make up their own as they go along. Such as: the parent teaches the child that violence is wrong and the child is more likely to accept that as moral. If the parent doesn't teach that violence is wrong, the child is more likely to accept violence as a means to an end” ( Interviewee 2, 2017).

As the interviewee 7 puts it;I believe I should love, nurture, guide, set the example (good examples), plant the seeds (good seeds) and give them the freedom to figure out who they are, not who i want them to be and always knowing I'm beside them and behind them when they are ready to fly and when they do fly while knowing my love is always there” (Interviewee 7,2017).

And as interviewee 9 situates it; I believe like most here that you model the behaviour you want to see in your child, not mold them - but, in spite of yourself, you'll probably want them to be better than you - so it's human nature to want more, and there's where it gets difficult to stand back and not interfere if they're making the same mistakes you made. I like to see my kids as distinct from me and appreciate them for who they are and do my best to nourish their strengths, as I would with good friends. The most difficult thing is to really see them wholly and unselfishly for exactly who they are, with all their strengths and weaknesses without imposing our own expectations for ourselves on them (Interviewee 9, 2017). All of the interviewees agreed that in the formative years experience of every man should always have their parents beside them to guide them on the right path they are going to take for the better future.

While on the results of the interviews in terms of their vision about happiness, there was a question arises, what is one thing in life that man strives for? Most people would probably say it is happiness. Every man longs for happiness, a happiness that is long lasting rather than temporary. In order to find true happiness, one must be passionate about something to gain satisfaction (Interviewee 6, 2017). Everyone has a different perspective on what happiness really is and how it is achieved. There is only one type of happiness that really satisfies a person during their lifetime; happiness that is genuinely from within. According to 6 out of 15 millennials in Shariff Aguak true happiness comes from things people are passionate about and care about, whether it is a job, a hobby, or a lover. Many people tend to turn to superficial things for bliss, but eventually that type of bliss fades away. One cannot attain contentment and happiness from something which has an expiration date. Passion is an intense emotion or desire for something such as religion. Happiness is a mental or emotional state influenced by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from

contentment to intense joy. Satisfaction is the fulfillment or gratification of a desire, need, or appetite. Many people strive for the instant satisfaction that materials give them, with the hopes that satisfaction will last; however, temporary things only bring temporary happiness. In order to find true happiness, one must be passionate about something immaterial to gain satisfaction and to eventually gain that happiness.

Contentment comes from happiness and happiness comes from passion. Where their happiness stems from and how long that happiness will last, differs between people. Temporary happiness, which is happiness that is not within, fades away. It is a happiness which intends to make up for the loss of the happiness from within. Most of the time people mistake materialism as a gate to long lasting happiness, but realistically it empties the heart even more when one realizes that indeed this type of happiness is brief. Materialism, as a temporary happiness, is able to please the person for a small amount of time because it eventually fades away once he/she gets over the initial excitement of an object. It is a human thing for people of all ages to long for true happiness.

True happiness is a happiness that can satisfy deep inside, as a whole, instead of just on the surface (Interviewee 1, 2017). The most common thing perceived as true happiness is love for one another (Interviewee 11, 2017). Indeed it is one of the many forms of true happiness for it satisfies man physically and mentally, but it comes down to how that love is achieved. If it is a love that comes from passion and both individuals who love each other deeply and unconditionally, then it is most definitely a form of true happiness. If not, it is just another delusion that love brings happiness, instead it will bring sadness. For example, finding out that the one you truly love doesn't share the same true love is devastating. It could possibly put someone into a sudden depression mode. That is the catch to love: love must be a two way street for it to be a source of eternal happiness. However, when it is fabricated, forged, or bought, it becomes a factor of sadness.

While on the result of Millennials goals in life, they focused on the word achievement. What does one think when they hear that word? Maybe they think of a person that has achieved something really big, like Bill Gates. He is one of the richest people in the world. Most of the parents want their children to become leaders; they want their children to grow to be courageous, passionate and authentic. They want their actions to inspire other people to be their best, to get more out of life than they ever thought possible. As parents and caretakers of children, their path to leadership is in our hands. Parents can model and teach the skills that will equip them to lead themselves and others in this hyper-competitive world, or parents can allow them to fall victim to the kind of thinking that makes them slaves to the status quo. It's a big responsibility but when isn't being a parent a massive responsibility? The beauty of building children into leaders is that it's the little things we do every day that mold them into the people they'll become.

As the author has interviewed 15 Millennials in Shariff Aguak, 6 of them notified and proved to the author that "The road to success is paved with failure" as their parents inculcated this in their minds. It means, failure is that the beauty of success. One will not learn if he/she will not experience failures. If there is a failure, there is learning and eventually there will happiness after learning from each experience.

But, most of them elaborated that their parents taught them that in order to achieve goals in life one must spread love. If there is love, no one will harm other people. Everything that comes from material things will not furnish true happiness. Happiness cannot be bought by anyone. It is something that can be achieved through love (Interviewee 13, 2017) but interviewee no. 10 and 14 argued that there are certain things in life that to be able for a person to be happy one will use his/her money to be happy. Buying a new house and lot will give so much happiness to me (Interviewee 14, 2017). According to 13 interviewees though it will give so much happiness but it will not last a lifetime. Worldly pleasures will only covers short period of time to be happy because true happiness is something that cannot be bought like love, respect and contentment (Interviewee 15,2017).

The happiness that Aristotle spoke of was not necessarily the same that we would think of today. Today our view of happiness tends to be hedonic. We want to feel good immediately and tend not to think too far ahead. So we see a night out or a pleasant activity as a route to happiness. The ancient Greeks had a very different perspective on happiness. Aristotle spoke about achieving eudaimonia, which is roughly translated into happiness. Eudaimonia is not an emotional state; it is more about being all that you can, fulfilling your potential. The idea is that by living in a way that reaches your full potential you bloom or flourish and so display the best version of you that you can be.

Aristotle thought that the practice of virtues would equate to happiness, in the sense of being all you could be. By virtues, Aristotle meant the act of achieving balance and moderation. For example, courage would be the balance and moderation between excessive amounts, rashness and insufficient amounts, cowardice. Generosity would be the mid-ground between being a wasteful spendthrift and being a miser.

He strongly disagreed with Socrates who held that knowledge would automatically lead to the right action. Aristotle argued that the greatest misdeed was to know the right course, but fail to do it.

So for him it was the act of living in balance and moderation that brought the highest pleasure. Not in the action itself, but in the way of life. It is this way of life that would lead to the greatest long-term value rather than just a passing amusement. A modern illustration would be the difference between earning a high income, but spending it all and living in more moderation and having great wealth that will last you and provide security.

It was Aristotle's belief that by achieving these virtues, happiness would result. So for him contemplation was the highest activity humans could do. Contemplation is the activity that refines and discovers virtues. Carried out continuously it allows you to reach your potential.

We often fall into the trap of thinking a new car, job promotion, beauty makeover, or some level of fame will make us happy. And often they do for a time. But it never lasts because wealth, power, beauty and fame simply don't bring lasting happiness, as much as we wish they would. Rather, true happiness comes from following God's example and developing Godlike attributes such as goodness, love, justice and mercy. It comes from serving others and helping them to follow the example and teachings of God. It comes from overcoming the appetites of our human bodies and instead following the promptings of the Spirit. It comes from working hard and having a healthy lifestyle, friends, family, and personal achievements. Regardless of what you do or don't have in this life, your deepest, most lasting happiness will come from knowing God's purpose of every existence.

Aristotle's ethics is sometimes referred to as "virtue ethics" since its focus is not on the moral weight of duties or obligations, but on the development of character and the acquiring of virtues such as courage, justice, temperance, benevolence, and prudence. And anyone who knows anything about Aristotle has heard his doctrine of virtue as being a "golden mean" between the extremes of excess and deficiency. Courage, for example, is a mean regarding the feeling of fear, between the deficiency of rashness (too little fear) and the excess of cowardice (too much fear). Justice is a mean between getting or giving too much and getting or giving too little. Benevolence is a mean between giving to people who don't deserve it and not giving to anyone at all. Aristotle is not recommending that one should be moderate in all things, since one should at all times exercise the virtues. One can't reason "I should be cruel to my neighbor now since I was too nice to him before." The mean is a mean between two vices, and not simply a mean between too much and too little.

Furthermore, the mean is "relative to ourselves," indicating that one person's mean may be another person's extreme. Milo the wrestler, as Aristotle puts it, needs more gruel than a normal person, and his mean diet will vary accordingly. Similarly for the moral virtues. Aristotle suggests

that some people are born with weaker wills than others; for these people, it may actually be a mean to flee in battle (the extremes being to get slaughtered or commit suicide). Here we see the flexibility in Aristotle's account: as soon as he begins to lay down some moral rules, he relaxes them in order to take into consideration the variety and contingency of particular temperaments.

Aristotle's doctrine of the mean is well in keeping with ancient ways of thinking which conceived of justice as a state of equilibrium between opposing forces. In the early cosmologies, the Universe is stabilized as a result of the reconciliation between the opposing forces of Chaos and Order. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus conceived of right living as acting in accordance with the *Logos*, the principle of the harmony of opposites; and Plato defined justice in the soul as the proper balance among its parts. Like Plato, Aristotle thought of the virtuous character along the lines of a healthy body. According to the prevailing medical theory of his day, health in the body consists of an appropriate balance between the opposing qualities of hot, cold, the dry, and the moist. The goal of the physician is to produce a proper balance among these elements, by specifying the appropriate training and diet regimen, which will of course be different for every person.

Similarly with health in the soul: exhibiting too much passion may lead to reckless acts of anger or violence which will be injurious to one's mental well-being as well as to others; but not showing any passion is a denial of one's human nature and results in the sickly qualities of morbidity, dullness, and antisocial behavior. The healthy path is the "middle path," though remember it is not exactly the middle, given that people who are born with extremely passionate natures will have a different mean than those with sullen, dispassionate natures. Aristotle concludes that goodness of character is "a settled condition of the soul which wills or chooses the mean relatively to ourselves, this mean being determined by a rule or whatever we like to call that by which the wise man determines it." (Treddenick, H. 2004, p. 100 .)

In this last quote we can see another important feature of Aristotle's theory: the link between the concepts of happiness and virtue. Aristotle tells us that the most important factor in the effort to achieve happiness is to have a good moral character — what he calls "complete virtue." But being virtuous is not a passive state: one must act in accordance with virtue. Nor is it enough to have a few virtues; rather one must strive to possess all of them. As Aristotle writes, "He is happy who lives in accordance with complete virtue and is sufficiently equipped with external goods, not for some chance period but throughout a complete life." (Treddenick, 2004, p. 110 .)

According to Aristotle, happiness consists in achieving, through the course of a whole lifetime, all the goods — health, wealth, knowledge, friends, etc. — that lead to the perfection of human nature and to the enrichment of human life. This requires us to make choices, some of which may be very difficult. Often the lesser good promises immediate pleasure and is more tempting, while the greater good is painful and requires some sort of sacrifice. For example, it may be easier and more enjoyable to spend the night watching television, but you know that you will be better off if you spend it researching for your term paper. Developing a good character requires a strong effort of will to do the right thing, even in difficult situations.

Aristotle would be strongly critical of the culture of "instant gratification" which seems to predominate in our society today. In order to achieve the life of complete virtue, we need to make the right choices, and this involves keeping our eye on the future, on the ultimate result we want for our lives as a whole. We will not achieve happiness simply by enjoying the pleasures of the moment. Unfortunately, this is something most people are not able to overcome in themselves. As he laments, "the mass of mankind are evidently quite slavish in their tastes, preferring a life suitable to beasts" (Nicomachean Ethics, p.109). Later in the Ethics Aristotle draws attention to the concept of *akrasia*, or weakness of the will. In many cases the overwhelming prospect of some great pleasure obscures one's perception of what is truly good. Fortunately, this natural disposition is curable through training, which for Aristotle meant education and the constant aim to perfect

virtue. As he puts it, a clumsy archer may indeed get better with practice, so long as he keeps aiming for the target.

Note also that it is not enough to *think* about doing the right thing, or even *intend* to do the right thing: we have to actually *do* it. Thus, it is one thing to think of writing the great American novel, another to actually write it. When we impose a form and order upon all those letters to actually produce a compelling story or essay, we are manifesting our rational potential, and the result of that is a sense of deep fulfillment. Or to take another example, when we exercise our citizenship by voting, we are manifesting our rational potential in yet another way, by taking responsibility for our community. There are myriad ways in which we can exercise our latent virtue in this way, and it would seem that the fullest attainment of human happiness would be one which brought all these ways together in a comprehensive rational life-plan.

There is yet another activity few people engage in which is required to live a truly happy life, according to Aristotle: intellectual contemplation. Since our nature is to be rational, the ultimate perfection of our natures is rational reflection. This means having an intellectual curiosity which perpetuates that natural wonder to know which begins in childhood but seems to be stamped out soon thereafter. For Aristotle, education should be about the cultivation of character, and this involves a practical and a theoretical component. The practical component is the acquisition of a moral character, as discussed above. The theoretical component is the making of a philosopher. Here there is no tangible reward, but the critical questioning of things raises our minds above the realm of nature and closer to the abode of the gods

Aristotle's emphasis on good reasoning combined with his belief in the scientific method forms the backdrop for most of his work. For example, in his work in ethics and politics, Aristotle identifies the highest good with intellectual virtue; that is, a moral person is one who cultivates certain virtues based on reasoning. And in his work on psychology and the soul, Aristotle distinguishes sense perception from reason, which unifies and interprets the sense perceptions and is the source of all knowledge.

### *Conclusion*

The lived experience of eudaimonia among Millennials of Shariff Aguak seem to have a common denominator that in order for a person to be happy one must be contented with everything about their lives. That happiness cannot be bought by anything material in this world. And I quote;

“True happiness is when you have with you your family that supports you in everything that you do and you are contented with your life even though it is not as comfortable as other's life” (Interviewee 9,2017)

This means that if there is love there is contentment. Everyone should always learn and bear in mind that the life in this world is only temporary so instead of wasting it by doing things that will satisfy someone's delight think of an activity that many people will benefit like of religious acts that can satisfy the body and soul.

The author's side of happiness is a probably one of the first words that we ever learned to express one's emotions. Happy might mean a world of different things to each of people, but the author pretty sure your 4 one's old self was feeling similar things to author's when people used the word to say we enjoyed the birthday party we'd just attended.

The author seem to see the word everywhere the author go, whether it's plastered across tube adverts for a new dating site or a question from an energy company regarding the author's current electricity provider. It is a state of being that is barked at people from all angles by those promoting a lifestyle of high self esteem, a thrilling sex life or a new detox juice recipe. But what even is it? What is this elusive notion that someone once named 'happiness'?

The author's very wise dad once told her that the way that we truly become happy is by finding enjoyment in everything we do, even life's most mundane tasks. Things like enjoying the

journey to work can mean happiness, or the satisfaction that comes with paying your bills on time. I might just be a very pessimistic person, but this idea doesn't seem to measure up even halfway to the elation that happiness equates to in my head. I might not be able to pinpoint the last time the author felt 'happy' by her definition of it, but it is surely more thrilling than the avoidance of a final reminder or the gratitude you feel to a higher power when you get a seat during your morning commute.

In all the people that the author have come across during her brief time on this planet, very rarely do she meet someone who does not have something to do or some kind of outlook on the future. Even the most questionable levels of motivation that you encounter within the human race are acutely aware that there is some sort of task ahead of them. It is in someone's nature to keep themselves occupied. Living in cities and having such a rich plethora of opportunities surrounding people wherever they go only makes them busier. People are all busy people, with smartphones and tablets and schedules and rush hour. So where do they find time to be happy in all this chaos. It goes against the very fabric of our being to remain stationary and allow for the singular phenomenon of happiness to just wash over them.

Are they supposed to actively search for happiness and only do things that seem to bring them closer to it, or are they supposed to go about their lives, pretending that they are too busy to find it and allow it to take them by surprise? Neither of these approaches seems very practical to the author. For one thing, if the author only did things that made her happy, she would probably have to quit her degree and give up all her worldly possessions because her could no longer maintain my existence as it is. On the other hand, people may choose to just get on with life, in all its routine and predictability, in the hope that one day we are swept off our feet by happiness and fall head over heels in love.

Because that's what everyone think it's all about isn't it? No matter what the level of someones accomplishments, if one's fail to make that ultimate connection with another human being, then you have somehow made a critical error. Whatever happiness looks like, whatever form it takes, and whoever it resembles if that is indeed the case, it cannot be a definitive state of affairs. It has been said before that life is what happens while people are busy making plans. Happiness then, is something we either work towards in order to look back upon with nostalgia. It is never just as it is, within a moment, because that is not life. Happiness is the superficial context within which we are being ourselves. It is the background noise or the catchy irrelevant theme song of a mediocre film. It is not a necessity, masterpieces have been created without music, but it is the finishing touch. It is the cherry on the cake that we are all yearning for. It might be a different song for you than it is for me, but the point is that your life will be a bad movie without it.

### *Recommendation*

In the study of this paper, the researcher found out the Aristotle's concept of happiness is not the lived experience of Eudaimonia of some of the Millennials of Shariff Aguak.

It is always important to consider in regard to any ethical system what the results would be if the system were universally adopted, and it is plain to see that only good could come from the widespread acceptance of these ideas, and because of this, the researcher would like to recommend this research to the readers to take seriously, the act of virtues to attain happiness.

Furthermore, the researcher would also like to recommend Immanuel Kant's System of Duties for any further studies in the future and to be taught for everybody as the researcher observes of today's situation wherein social and political problems create chaotic situation because of the political will and self interest. Corruption is rampant in the society nowadays. These inhuman incidents always happen. However, if every individual will practice Kant's concept of



duties (Categorical Imperative), I think these problems could be lessening if it will not be totally resolved.

What is the duty that is to motivate our actions and to give them moral value? Kant distinguishes two kinds of law produced by reason. Given some end we wish to achieve, reason can provide *ahypothetical imperative*, or rule of action for achieving that end. A hypothetical imperative says that *if* you wish to buy a new car, *then* you must determine what sort of cars are available for purchase. Conceiving of a means to achieve some desired end is by far the most common employment of reason. But Kant has shown that the acceptable conception of the moral law cannot be merely hypothetical. Our actions cannot be moral on the ground of some conditional purpose or goal. Morality requires an unconditional statement of one's duty.

And in fact, reason produces an absolute statement of moral action. The moral imperative is unconditional; that is, its imperative force is not tempered by the conditional "*if* I want to achieve some end, *then* do X." It simply states, do X. Kant believes that reason dictates a *categorical imperative* for moral action. He gives at least three formulations of the Categorical Imperative.

"Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." (Johnson,2016)

"Act as though the maxim of your action were by your will to become a universal law of nature." (Johnson,2016)

Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only." (Johnson,2016)

What are Kant's arguments for the Categorical Imperative? First, consider an example. Consider the person who needs to borrow money and is considering making a false promise to pay it back. The maxim that could be invoked is, "when I need of money, borrow it, promising to repay it, even though I do not intend to." But when we apply the universality test to this maxim it becomes clear that if everyone were to act in this fashion, the institution of promising itself would be undermined. The borrower makes a promise, willing that there be no such thing as promises. Thus such an action fails the universality test.

The argument for the first formulation of the categorical imperative can be thought of this way. We have seen that in order to be good, we must remove inclination and the consideration of any particular goal from our motivation to act. The act cannot be good if it arises from subjective impulse. Nor can it be good because it seeks after some particular goal which might not attain the good we seek or could come about through happenstance. We must abstract away from all hoped for effects. If we remove all subjectivity and particularity from motivation we are only left with will to universality. The question "what rule determines what I ought to do in this situation?" becomes "what rule ought to universally guide action?" What we must do in any situation of moral choice is act according to a maxim that we would will everyone to act according to.

The second version of the Categorical Imperative invokes Kant's conception of nature and draws on the first *Critique*. In the earlier discussion of nature, we saw that the mind necessarily structures nature. And reason, in its seeking of ever higher grounds of explanation, strives to achieve unified knowledge of nature. A guide for us in moral matters is to think of what would not be possible to will universally. Maxims that fail the test of the categorical imperative generate a contradiction. Laws of nature cannot be contradictory. So if a maxim cannot be willed to be a law of nature, it is not moral.

The third version of the categorical imperative ties Kant's whole moral theory together. Insofar as they possess a rational will, people are set off in the natural order of things. They are not merely subject to the forces that act upon them; they are not merely means to ends. They are ends in themselves. All means to an end have a merely conditional worth because they are valuable only for achieving something else. The possessor of a rational will, however, is the only thing with unconditional worth. The possession of rationality puts all beings on the same footing, "every other rational being thinks of his existence by means of the same rational ground which holds also for

myself; thus it is at the same time an objective principle from which, as a supreme practical ground, it must be possible to derive all laws of the will." (*Johnson,2016*)

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