

## 1: Paul Lehmann's Christian Contextual Ethics

*Ethical problems Thinking about ethics -- Why not do wrong? -- Is the ethical a human construct or a factual realm? -- Do you just do what is right or do you try to predict the outcomes?*

Under deontology, an act may be considered right even if the act produces a bad consequence, [35] if it follows the rule or moral law. According to the deontological view, people have a duty to act in a way that does those things that are inherently good as acts "truth-telling" for example, or follow an objectively obligatory rule as in rule utilitarianism. Kant then argues that those things that are usually thought to be good, such as intelligence, perseverance and pleasure, fail to be either intrinsically good or good without qualification. Pleasure, for example, appears to not be good without qualification, because when people take pleasure in watching someone suffer, they make the situation ethically worse. He concludes that there is only one thing that is truly good: Nothing in the world—indeed nothing even beyond the world—can possibly be conceived which could be called good without qualification except a good will. Pragmatic ethics Associated with the pragmatists, Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and especially John Dewey, pragmatic ethics holds that moral correctness evolves similarly to scientific knowledge: Thus, we should prioritize social reform over attempts to account for consequences, individual virtue or duty although these may be worthwhile attempts, if social reform is provided for. Ethics of care Care ethics contrasts with more well-known ethical models, such as consequentialist theories e. These values include the importance of empathetic relationships and compassion. Care-focused feminism is a branch of feminist thought, informed primarily by ethics of care as developed by Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings. Noddings proposes that ethical caring has the potential to be a more concrete evaluative model of moral dilemma than an ethic of justice. Role ethics Role ethics is an ethical theory based on family roles. Confucian roles are not rational, and originate through the xin, or human emotions. Anarchism Anarchist ethics is an ethical theory based on the studies of anarchist thinkers. The biggest contributor to the anarchist ethics is the Russian zoologist, geographer, economist, and political activist Peter Kropotkin. Kropotkin argues that ethics itself is evolutionary, and is inherited as a sort of a social instinct through cultural history, and by so, he rejects any religious and transcendental explanation of morality. The origin of ethical feeling in both animals and humans can be found, he claims, in the natural fact of "sociality" mutualistic symbiosis, which humans can then combine with the instinct for justice i. This principle of treating others as one wishes to be treated oneself, what is it but the very same principle as equality, the fundamental principle of anarchism? And how can any one manage to believe himself an anarchist unless he practices it? We do not wish to be ruled. And by this very fact, do we not declare that we ourselves wish to rule nobody? We do not wish to be deceived, we wish always to be told nothing but the truth. And by this very fact, do we not declare that we ourselves do not wish to deceive anybody, that we promise to always tell the truth, nothing but the truth, the whole truth? We do not wish to have the fruits of our labor stolen from us. By what right indeed can we demand that we should be treated in one fashion, reserving it to ourselves to treat others in a fashion entirely different? Our sense of equality revolts at such an idea. Postmodernism This article or section possibly contains synthesis of material which does not verifiably mention or relate to the main topic. Relevant discussion may be found on the talk page. July Learn how and when to remove this template message The 20th century saw a remarkable expansion and evolution of critical theory, following on earlier Marxist Theory efforts to locate individuals within larger structural frameworks of ideology and action. This was on the basis that personal identity was, at least in part, a social construction. Post-structuralism and postmodernism argue that ethics must study the complex and relational conditions of actions. A simple alignment of ideas of right and particular acts is not possible. There will always be an ethical remainder that cannot be taken into account or often even recognized. Such theorists find narrative or, following Nietzsche and Foucault, genealogy to be a helpful tool for understanding ethics because narrative is always about particular lived experiences in all their complexity rather than the assignment of an idea or norm to separate and individual actions. Zygmunt Bauman says postmodernity is best described as modernity without illusion, the illusion being the belief that humanity can be repaired by some ethic principle.

Postmodernity can be seen in this light as accepting the messy nature of humanity as unchangeable. Hoy describes post-critique ethics as the "obligations that present themselves as necessarily to be fulfilled but are neither forced on one or are enforceable" , p. Hoy concludes that The ethical resistance of the powerless others to our capacity to exert power over them is therefore what imposes unenforceable obligations on us. That actions are at once obligatory and at the same time unenforceable is what put them in the category of the ethical. Obligations that were enforced would, by the virtue of the force behind them, not be freely undertaken and would not be in the realm of the ethical. Applied ethics Applied ethics is a discipline of philosophy that attempts to apply ethical theory to real-life situations. The discipline has many specialized fields, such as engineering ethics , bioethics , geoethics , public service ethics and business ethics. Specific questions[ edit ] Applied ethics is used in some aspects of determining public policy, as well as by individuals facing difficult decisions. The sort of questions addressed by applied ethics include: But not all questions studied in applied ethics concern public policy. For example, making ethical judgments regarding questions such as, "Is lying always wrong? People, in general, are more comfortable with dichotomies two opposites. However, in ethics, the issues are most often multifaceted and the best-proposed actions address many different areas concurrently. In ethical decisions, the answer is almost never a "yes or no", "right or wrong" statement. Many buttons are pushed so that the overall condition is improved and not to the benefit of any particular faction. Particular fields of application[ edit ].

## 2: Table of contents for Why bother with ethics?

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May 5, In the modern period, the debate between Kantians and utilitarians has raged for two centuries. During the twentieth century, a number of ethical theorists have sought a third way out of this deadlocked debate. One such way out is contextual ethics: Christian ethicists have been particularly interested in exploring such a third way, as the usual debate seldom allows the particularities of Christian witness to come to the fore. Paul Lehmann is a preeminent exponent of Christian contextual ethics. The contextual character of Christian ethics is not derived from an application to the Christian koinonia of a general theory of contextualism. The question addressed by this paper is whether Lehmann succeeds in deriving his contextual ethic from a theological understanding rather than the other way around. The over-arching thesis of this paper is that Lehmann does succeed. Rather, he begins with a discussion of Scripture. He then turns to issues of ecclesiology, the doctrine of God, and Christology prior to a direct treatment of his contextual method. His theological reflection does not merely serve his preconceived notion of ethics; rather, he sees the ethical reality through the lens of material theological claims. Nevertheless, there is a distinct contextual shape to his theological argumentation. He does not proceed in a deductive manner from first principles, but develops his ideas in *medias res*. The major themes of ECC maturity, indicative, and humanization are embedded into the larger argument and so emerge slowly without direct treatment. Furthermore, the traditional doctrinal loci are not treated in a deductive ordering. In a sense, he moves backward, identifying in each loci a deeper basis that is then supplied by the following loci. Therefore, the following summative analysis of the theological content of ECC walks alongside his argument as it unfolds. Making Ethics Christian and the Question of Scripture Lehmann begins his book with the problem of making ethics a Christian theological discipline. What is it that makes Christian ethics particularly Christian? The answer that most obviously presents itself is that Christian ethics is Biblical ethics. Lehmann, however, criticizes this answer for lacking a sufficient hermeneutical awareness. The space and time between the Bible and us is too great to immediately apply Biblical injunctions and parables to our world. The uniqueness of Christian ethics is not its particular behavioral commands but the larger story within which it executes its behavior. Therefore, Christian ethics must pick up the task carried out with varied success throughout the history of the church: At first glance, it may appear that Lehmann is side-stepping the significance of the Bible, and especially the New Testament, in forming a contemporary Christian ethic. One could embrace the fact of a hermeneutical distance between the Bible and us without abandoning the Bible as the source and norm of Christian ethics. His point here is to block certain ways of using the Bible in ethical reasoning. Such a pattern of thinking betrays an ignorance of the power of the church in forming the New Testament and in forming Christians. Of course any Christian ethic worthy of the name will use Scripture in its thinking. But a truly Christian ethic must take account of the ethical reality of the church presupposed by Scripture. Once again, this would be a misleading interpretation. Lehmann affirms the Reformation maxims of perspicuity, sufficiency and the internal witness of the Spirit<sup>30</sup>, and criticizes Christian ethicists who ignore the relation between Scripture and situation. If then he is not elevating the church above the Bible, what is he doing? Lehmann is making a much less controversial claim: He is interested in exploring this relationship between Scripture and community, rather than subordinating one to the other. In other words, Lehmann is operating within the hermeneutical circle of text and interpreter. That this circle is not vicious depends on the fact of revelation, which creates the reality of both. This relocation of ethics requires that one indicate what the church is. In the second chapter of ECC, Lehmann carefully describes the church as the locus of divine activity. Thus Christian ethics is concerned less with morality and more with the maturity of this community. He contrasts this with the modern psychological notion of self-realization through self-acceptance. So when Lehmann points away from morality to maturity, he is bringing in the crucial contribution of a theological ethic: Christian ethics begins with the community, not because some arbitrary contextual methodology drives us there, but because that is where God has acted. And for Christian ethics, human action must follow the lead

of divine action. In the second half of this chapter, Lehmann develops his understanding of the church as an ethical reality. The first prong of his argument is to dispel individualist interpretations of Christianity by means of the communal imagery of the New Testament and the proper interpretation of the Reformation principle of the priesthood of all believers. The invisible church is not some ghostly ideal but rather the mature telos toward which the visible church is always being called. This last phrase might occasion an objection levied against any ecclesially-oriented ethic: The freedom of God is not a caveat but an axiom. Of course God is free to act wherever God pleases. The concept of an invisible church was developed by Augustine during the Donatist controversy. Augustine argued that the visible church should not be rejected on the basis of its less than holy members, for a true invisible church subsists within the admittedly corrupt visible church. This concept was picked up by the Pietists as a means for renewal within the church. Lehmann affirms this conception of the invisible church, while also reversing it in a dialectal manner. Thus, the invisible church not only names where the maturing action of God takes place within the institutional church, but also names where God is acting to make and keep life human outside the walls of the institutional church see diagram below. Just as his discussion of Scripture drove us to the church, so his discussion of the church drives us to the matter of divine action. Since the basis of the ethical reality of the church lies in the ethical action of God, Lehmann next turns to the character of the Christian God. A Christian ethics that takes the church as its point of departure is thus working with a particular concept of God. In the third chapter of ECC, Lehmann explains this concept according to the notion of God as politician. The definition indicates that politics means action and reflection upon action that is aimed toward humanizing humanity. The description fills out the content of what God does to humanize humanity. One might get the impression that the political character of God is some kind of first principle for Lehmann. Yet Lehmann does not operate in such a deductive manner. The contextual nature of his thinking leads him to move in a different direction. He begins with the reality of the church here and now and asks about its basis in divine action. Continuing along this road, Lehmann goes on to ask about the specific, concrete content of the politics of God. What is the basis of the claim that God is a politician? Messianic Theology In the fourth chapter of ECC, Lehmann develops the crucial contours of his theology with reference to three particular doctrines: Here one can see how Lehmann proceeds to make ethics a theological discipline in a material sense. He points out the intrinsic ethical implications of each doctrine properly understood. This chapter is both the completion of his theological argument and the transition to his methodological reflections. Lehmann summarizes his treatment of all three doctrines as follows: Indeed, just as the Trinitarian dogma states the political character of the divine activity in terms of the divine economy as the environment of Christian behavior, and just as the doctrine of the threefold office of Christ states the connection between the action of God and Christian behavior, so the doctrines of the Second Adam and the Second Advent express the actuality and prospect of Christian behavior, emphasis added. After discussing the importance of the economic trinity, Lehmann makes the interesting claim that the purpose of the homoousian doctrine is to show that God the Creator and God the Redeemer are one and the same God. The ethical significance of this claim is to locate salvation within the created order. The saving work of Christ concerns this world and human action is found within the embrace of this divine act. The trinity thus indicates the environment of Christian action. What Christ does for us through his messianic offices has direct implications for how we respond to him through our actions. Here Lehmann lays heavy emphasis on the royal office, which establishes Christ as the present-tense Lord of both our lives and the life of the world. Although one might object that Lehmann neglects the ethical impact of the priestly and prophetic offices, this would merely indicate an undeveloped aspect and not a fatal flaw. In a more complete theological ethics, one could discuss the ethical implications of each office of Christ. The purpose of these doctrines is to give an eschatological orientation to Christian behavior. Christian ethics does not focus primarily on the restoration of original humanity but rather on the new humanity found in Jesus Christ. Humanization is inextricably linked to the incarnation. He begins with the Bible, which turns out to presuppose the church. His discussion of the church as the context of divine action leads naturally into the doctrine of God as politician. The politics of God then unfolds into a multifaceted messianic theology. From this humanizing activity of the triune God revealed in Christ, Lehmann develops a distinctively Christian contextual ethic. It is grounded in the theological

understanding summarized above. The result is a unique understanding of ethics as indicative ethics. He criticizes this idea because of its inability to deal with the complexities of a particular situation. He deals illustratively with truth-telling in conversation with Kant and Bonhoeffer. The final plank in his criticism of ethical absolutism is that there is no such thing as an abstract moral space from which one might choose the good. Rather, ethics is an indicative enterprise executed from within a concrete moral location, which for Christians is the church. Although Lehmann does not discuss it directly in *ECC*, a very similar critique of utilitarianism can be supplied at this point. Lehmann would appreciate the attention to the facts in utilitarian ethics. However, utilitarian reasoning falls prey to pragmatic thinking, where the good action is the most reasonable and most likely to produce good outcomes. It therefore blocks from the outset the foolishness of the gospel and the possibility for bearing faithful witness without results. So, just like ethical absolutism, utilitarianism makes Christian faith peripheral to moral decision making.

### 3: Prewired: Do humans come into the world with moral circuitry?

*Acknowledgments. 1 Thinking about ethics.. Part One: Philosophical Ethics. 2 Why not do wrong?. 3 Is the ethical a human construct or a factual realm?.*

One is a question of moral epistemology: Ethical theorists and theologians of the day held, variously, that moral good and evil are discovered: Hume sides with the moral sense theorists: Hume maintains against the rationalists that, although reason is needed to discover the facts of any concrete situation and the general social impact of a trait of character or a practice over time, reason alone is insufficient to yield a judgment that something is virtuous or vicious. Moral rationalists of the period such as Clarke and in some moods, Hobbes and Locke argue that moral standards or principles are requirements of reason – that is, that the very rationality of right actions is the ground of our obligation to perform them. The moral sense theorists Shaftesbury and Hutcheson and Butler see all requirements to pursue goodness and avoid evil as consequent upon human nature, which is so structured that a particular feature of our consciousness whether moral sense or conscience evaluates the rest. Hume sides with the moral sense theorists on this question: Closely connected with the issue of the foundations of moral norms is the question whether moral requirements are natural or conventional. Hobbes and Mandeville see them as conventional, and Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Locke, and others see them as natural. If there were nothing in our experience and no sentiments in our minds to produce the concept of virtue, Hume says, no lavish praise of heroes could generate it. So to a degree moral requirements have a natural origin. Thus he takes an intermediate position: While even so law-oriented a thinker as Hobbes has a good deal to say about virtue, the ethical writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries predominantly favor a rule- or law-governed understanding of morals, giving priority to laws of nature or principles of duty. The chief exception here is the moral sense school, which advocates an analysis of the moral life more like that of the Greek and Hellenistic thinkers, in terms of settled traits of character – although they too find a place for principles in their ethics. Yet he insists on a role for rules of duty within the domain of what he calls the artificial virtues. Hume roundly criticizes Hobbes for his insistence on psychological egoism or something close to it, and for his dismal, violent picture of a state of nature. Yet Hume resists the view of Hutcheson that all moral principles can be reduced to our benevolence, in part because he doubts that benevolence can sufficiently overcome our perfectly normal acquisitiveness. While for Hume the condition of humankind in the absence of organized society is not a war of all against all, neither is it the law-governed and highly cooperative domain imagined by Locke. It is a hypothetical condition in which we would care for our friends and cooperate with them, but in which self-interest and preference for friends over strangers would make any wider cooperation impossible. In the realm of politics, Hume again takes up an intermediate position. He objects both to the doctrine that a subject must passively obey his government no matter how tyrannical it is and to the Lockean thesis that citizens have a natural right to revolution whenever their rulers violate their contractual commitments to the people. He famously criticizes the notion that all political duties arise from an implicit contract that binds later generations who were not party to the original explicit agreement. On his view, human beings can create a society without government, ordered by conventional rules of ownership, transfer of property by consent, and promise-keeping. We superimpose government on such a pre-civil society when it grows large and prosperous; only then do we need to use political power to enforce these rules of justice in order to preserve social cooperation. So the duty of allegiance to government, far from depending on the duty to fulfill promises, provides needed assurance that promises of all sorts will be kept. The duty to submit to our rulers comes into being because reliable submission is necessary to preserve order. Particular governments are legitimate because of their usefulness in preserving society, not because those who wield power were chosen by God or received promises of obedience from the people. In a long-established civil society, whatever ruler or type of government happens to be in place and successfully maintaining order and justice is legitimate, and is owed allegiance. However, there is some legitimate recourse for victims of tyranny: The indirect passions, primarily pride, humility shame, love and hatred, are generated in a more complex way, but still one involving either the thought or

experience of pain or pleasure. Intentional actions are caused by the direct passions including the instincts. Of the indirect passions Hume says that pride, humility, love and hatred do not directly cause action; it is not clear whether he thinks this true of all the indirect passions. Hume is traditionally regarded as a compatibilist about freedom and determinism, because in his discussion in the Enquiry concerning Human Understanding he argues that if we understand the doctrines of liberty and necessity properly, all mankind consistently believe both that human actions are the products of causal necessity and that they are free. The two treatments, however, surprisingly enough, are entirely consistent. Hume construes causal necessity to mean the same as causal connection or rather, intelligible causal connection, as he himself analyzes this notion in his own theory of causation: In both works he argues that just as we discover necessity in this sense to hold between the movements of material bodies, we discover just as much necessity to hold between human motives, character traits, and circumstances of action, on the one hand, and human behavior on the other. He says in the Treatise that the liberty of indifference is the negation of necessity in this sense; this is the notion of liberty that he there labels absurd, and identifies with chance or randomness which can be no real power in nature both in the Treatise and the first epistemological Enquiry. Human actions are not free in this sense. This is the sense on which Hume focuses in ECHU: Hume argues, as well, that the causal necessity of human actions is not only compatible with moral responsibility but requisite to it. To hold an agent morally responsible for a bad action, it is not enough that the action be morally reprehensible; we must impute the badness of the fleeting act to the enduring agent. Not all harmful or forbidden actions incur blame for the agent; those done by accident, for example, do not. The Influencing Motives of the Will According to Hume, intentional actions are the immediate product of passions, in particular the direct passions, including the instincts. He does not appear to allow that any other sort of mental state could, on its own, give rise to an intentional action except by producing a passion, though he does not argue for this. The motivating passions, in their turn, are produced in the mind by specific causes, as we see early in the Treatise where he first explains the distinction between impressions of sensation and impressions of reflection: An impression first strikes upon the senses, and makes us perceive heat or cold, thirst or hunger, pleasure or pain, of some kind or other. Of this impression there is a copy taken by the mind, which remains after the impression ceases; and this we call an idea. This idea of pleasure or pain, when it returns upon the soul, produces the new impressions of desire and aversion, hope and fear, which may properly be called impressions of reflection, because derived from it. Not just any ideas of pleasure or pain give rise to motivating passions, however, but only ideas of those pleasures or pains we believe exist or will exist T 1. More generally, the motivating passions of desire and aversion, hope and fear, joy and grief, and a few others are impressions produced by the occurrence in the mind either of a feeling of pleasure or pain, whether physical or psychological, or of a believed idea of pleasure or pain to come T 2. These passions, together with the instincts hunger, lust, and so on, are all the motivating passions that Hume discusses. The will, Hume claims, is an immediate effect of pain or pleasure T 2. The will, however, is merely that impression we feel when we knowingly give rise to an action T 2. The causes of action he describes are those he has already identified: Hume famously sets himself in opposition to most moral philosophers, ancient and modern, who talk of the combat of passion and reason, and who urge human beings to regulate their actions by reason and to grant it dominion over their contrary passions. His view is not, of course, that reason plays no role in the generation of action; he grants that reason provides information, in particular about means to our ends, which makes a difference to the direction of the will. His thesis is that reason alone cannot move us to action; the impulse to act itself must come from passion. The first is a largely empirical argument based on the two rational functions of the understanding. The understanding discovers the abstract relations of ideas by demonstration a process of comparing ideas and finding congruencies and incongruencies; and it also discovers the causal and other probabilistic relations of objects that are revealed in experience. Demonstrative reasoning is never the cause of any action by itself: Probable or cause-and-effect reasoning does play a role in deciding what to do, but we see that it only functions as an auxiliary, and not on its own. Our aversion or propensity makes us seek the causes of the expected source of pain or pleasure, and we use causal reasoning to discover what they are. Once we do, our impulse naturally extends itself to those causes, and we act to avoid or embrace them. Plainly the impulse to act does not arise from the reasoning but is only directed by it.

Probable reasoning is merely the discovering of causal connections, and knowledge that A causes B never concerns us if we are indifferent to A and to B. Thus, neither demonstrative nor probable reasoning alone causes action. The second argument is a corollary of the first. It takes as a premise the conclusion just reached, that reason alone cannot produce an impulse to act. Given that, can reason prevent action or resist passion in controlling the will? To stop a volition or retard the impulse of an existing passion would require a contrary impulse. If reason alone could give rise to such a contrary impulse, it would have an original influence on the will a capacity to cause intentional action, when unopposed ; which, according to the previous argument, it lacks. Therefore reason alone cannot resist any impulse to act. Therefore, what offers resistance to our passions cannot be reason of itself. The third or Representation argument is different in kind. One might suppose he means to give another argument to show that reason alone cannot provide a force to resist passion. Yet the Representation Argument is not empirical, and does not talk of forces or impulses. Therefore, a passion or volition or action , not having this feature, cannot be opposed by truth and reason. The argument allegedly proves two points: The point here is not merely the earlier, empirical observation that the rational activity of the understanding does not generate an impulse in the absence of an expectation of pain or pleasure. The main point is that, because passions, volitions, and actions have no content suitable for assessment by reason, reason cannot assess prospective motives or actions as rational or irrational; and therefore reason cannot, by so assessing them, create or obstruct them. By contrast, reason can assess a potential opinion as rational or irrational; and by endorsing the opinion, reason will that is, we will adopt it, while by contradicting the opinion, reason will destroy our credence in it. The Representation Argument, then, makes a point a priori about the relevance of the functions of the understanding to the generation of actions. Hume allows that, speaking imprecisely, we often say a passion is unreasonable because it arises in response to a mistaken judgment or opinion, either that something a source of pleasure or uneasiness exists, or that it may be obtained or avoided by a certain means. In just these two cases a passion may be called unreasonable, but strictly speaking even here it is not the passion but the judgment that is so. And there is no other instance of passion contrary to reason. Either way, Hume denies that reason can evaluate the ends people set themselves; only passions can select ends, and reason cannot evaluate passions. Instrumentalists understand the claim that reason is the slave of the passions to allow that reason not only discovers the causally efficacious means to our ends a task of theoretical causal reasoning but also requires us to take them. The classificatory point in the Representation Argument favors the reading of Hume as a skeptic about practical reason; but that argument is absent from the moral Enquiry. Ethical Anti-rationalism Hume claims that moral distinctions are not derived from reason but rather from sentiment. His rejection of ethical rationalism is at least two-fold. Moral rationalists tend to say, first, that moral properties are discovered by reason, and also that what is morally good is in accord with reason even that goodness consists in reasonableness and what is morally evil is unreasonable. Hume rejects both theses. Some of his arguments are directed to one and some to the other thesis, and in places it is unclear which he means to attack. Demonstrative reasoning discovers relations of ideas, and vice and virtue are not identical with any of the four philosophical relations resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality, or proportions in quantity and number whose presence can be demonstrated. Nor could they be identical with any other abstract relation; for such relations can also obtain between items such as trees that are incapable of moral good or evil. Furthermore, were moral vice and virtue discerned by demonstrative reasoning, such reasoning would reveal their inherent power to produce motives in all who discern them; but no causal connections can be discovered a priori. Causal reasoning, by contrast, does infer matters of fact pertaining to actions, in particular their causes and effects; but the vice of an action its wickedness is not found in its causes or effects, but is only apparent when we consult the sentiments of the observer. Therefore moral good and evil are not discovered by reason alone. Hume also attempts in the Treatise to establish the other anti-rationalist thesis, that virtue is not the same as reasonableness and vice is not contrary to reason.

## 4: Hume's Moral Philosophy (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

*All human suffering is the result of attachment to a construct, including fear of the construct we call death. Death is only real within the limits of the construct we manufactured.*

Termites and ants, while not so lyrical, also do it. All cooperative creatures have an important similarity: But in the familiar social species called *Homo sapiens*, social rules are usually considered more than mere animal behavior. Birds and bees do not know religion; they simply do what they do, no questions asked. But humans are different, or so we like to believe. What is the source of this both vexing and comforting ability? According to social science as well as neuroscience, humans appear to be prewired with moral circuitry. How much control do we have over this circuitry? Maybe our conscious sense of this process is only an illusion. And how does this mental mechanism become calibrated? The concept was proposed almost 30 years ago, but it was sociobiologists Charles J. Lumsden and Edward O. Wilson who in coined the term *culturgens* to summarize the interplay between our exterior social world and the interior biological world of genes. New ideas that enhanced survival, and the mental wiring that gave rise to those ideas and therefore the genes that directed the wiring, were selected. A distinction between right and wrong behaviors then became embedded in both the culture and the genetics of humankind. From a wholly evolutionary viewpoint, whatever behavior leads to more viable offspring is by definition right and must therefore be the source of our moral insight. The authors of three recent books carry the discussion further into the realm of the neurosciences as they try to shed light on the sources of that control. As would be expected from a book compiled by a lawyer, much of what is found here concerns culpability for personal behavior, especially criminal responsibility. Each chapter of unpleasant anecdotes and pathological cases concludes with what one must call a biological trump, a get-out-of-responsibility-free card that absolves individuals from any liability for the poor choices they make. Our actions are the result of the labyrinthine systems of the physical brain working, so to speak, behind the scenes. Along with this deficit, Tancredi believes that as the cultural environment shifts, we must be more tolerant of those who push the ever-stretching moral envelope. If the sociobiologists are correct, morality is just a cultural construct. Our social contracts expire and must be reconfigured: This is a prescription little better than the shock therapy or lobotomy of decades ago. While such an idea seems childish, bilateral aspects of brain structure do come into play in our mental conversation. The two hemispheres of our brain have different ways of experiencing the world and responding to it. In *The Ethical Brain*, Gazzaniga asks a simple question related to the problem of moral responsibility: This raises the question, Are we out of the loop? It is a socially constructed rule that exists only in the context of human interaction. It does not exist in the neuronal structures of the brain. By inventing the term *clonote* to replace the term *embryo*, one member convinced himself to accept human stem cell research. If biomedical cloning does not create an embryo but a *clonote*, then the process is okay. His, however, is not the wiring of the brain but religious superstition. Baseless beliefs, he says, stir the emotions and entice the LHI to invent clashes of identity between different peoples and cultures. Using an online tool called the Moral Sense Test MST, Hauser believes he has found a moral grammar of unconscious principles that drive moral judgment. In one example, a runaway trolley is about to kill five workers on the track. You have the option of pulling a switch and sending the trolley off on a siding where it will kill only one worker. What do you do? Fifty-two percent of respondents said they would pull the switch. When the option was changed to pushing one worker onto the tracks to stop the trolley and save the other five, only 10 percent were in favor. Although the results were consistent, the explanations were not. How we calibrate our inner voice, that left-hemisphere interpreter, is not trivial. And while all groups come to the same moral conclusions, they are all over the map when it comes to explaining the reason for their decisions. This, Hauser believes, indicates that the explanation process is culturally based, just as language is. The universal conclusions that Hauser draws from the MST may still be beyond the data, however. Although more than , have participated, critics wonder whether the test-takers are a true cross section of the population. Nevertheless, the results are intriguing because they indicate that factors more important than feelings underwrite our behavior—that doing what feels good is too simplistic an answer because it is too individual.

Emotions do not inform moral behavior, according to Hauser, but they do drive action and provide justification for our choices. The LHI is not a dry calculator; it is fired by emotion and becomes very situational in its ethics. If we are wired to save a guy right in front of us, we all survive better. We are able to judge ourselves, evaluate our behavior and willfully change, to repent of one way and turn to another. This moral sense makes it possible to work together side by side and across the globe. The Bible, too, is unequivocal in this see, for example, Proverbs 3: The mind is a physio-spiritual mechanism built for choice, but it must be given direction. We may be endowed with a moral compass , but it does not arrive with prewired direction. As secularists, of course, these authors cannot be expected to pursue that avenue in their search for the source of moral standards, especially when, as Gazzaniga notes, so much of what constitutes religious faith is founded on superstition rather than on truth. And so, as researchers improve drug cocktails to ultimately manipulate and control the brain as Tancredi believes they will , and as society haltingly accepts science as arbiter of good and evil as Gazzaniga believes it must , it is not too farfetched to imagine that the moral grammar Hauser describes can be refashioned as well. In fact, if history provides any clue, it seems a done deal.

## 5: Why We Need Radical Change for Media Ethics, Not a Return to Basics

*project and the ethical guarantees given to human subjects by modern experimental medicine. The last section of the article is a true exercise in the.*

Talk of media revolution is so ubiquitous that we sometimes become inured to the force of what we say. We nod our head in agreement that change is everywhere, but we fail to think through the consequences of change. During my public talks, I note that many people accept the fact of media revolution but they deny what follows from that fact – a revolution in media ethics. Funnily, when it comes to ethics, we become conservative, even if we are progressives in our teaching and practice. If we teach from a retrenched conservative mind-set, we do them a disservice. Current journalism principles are treated as eternal verities which, apparently, do not change in meaning, application or relevance. Nothing could be further from the truth. Today, we have new wine and new bottles. But beyond this general level, the media revolution has undermined a previous professional consensus on the best forms of practice, and the norms that guide them. Our media revolution creates multiple and conflicting interpretations of journalism. Media ethics, like media, is in turmoil. We need to reinvent media ethics from the ground up. Piecemeal improvements are not sufficient. We need to be radical in three areas: Let me describe briefly how to be radical in each area. So when a revolution happens, we circle the wagons. We preserve the status quo. In contrast, I believe media ethics and ethics in general is, and always has been, a matter of constantly inventing and altering norms to meet ever-new social and technological conditions. Media ethics in a revolution, then, must be open to the future. Contestation and change are natural to ethics, not regrettable aberrations. In the long run, they are good things. Ethics as invention is not just a theoretical notion. What meta-ethics we adopt influences how we react, practically, to new and difficult questions. As journalists, teachers and ethicists, we need a mindset that allows us to bridge the old and the new – to retain what is valuable from the past yet embrace new and valuable ways of communication. Thinking of ethics as always evolving and always contested helps us to reform applied ethics. We propose new conceptions of how mainstream journalists should use social media, and how newsrooms should validate citizen content. This new ethics is already being constructed by newsrooms. Finally, media ethics must radically redefine itself for a global age. Historically, media ethics has been non-global or parochial. It was a set of rules for serving local publics or, at most, a nation. But today, journalism reaches across borders. The role of the journalist needs a global interpretation. We need to rethink how global media should cover transnational issues from war to climate change. We should be radical in the ways of moral invention, envisaging a global media ethics for our interconnected world. What would it be like, concretely? I think it would stress these previously underdeveloped areas: Ethics of new media ecologies: Future media ethics will guide journalists working in non-traditional environments from non-profit websites to investigative centers within academia. Ethics of how to use new media: Future media ethics will say useful things on the responsible use of new media, and how to deal with integrated newsrooms. Ethics of interpretation and opinion: Interpretive and advocational journalism grows. Ethicists need to fill this gap by distinguishing between better and worse interpretations. Activist journalism will also proliferate. But when are activist journalists not propagandists? When are journalists partisan political voices and when are they journalists with a valid cause? Rather than simply dismiss activist journalism on the traditional ground of objectivity, how can we develop a more nuanced understanding of this area of journalism? Ethics of global democratic journalism: New thinking in ethics will need to reconstruct the role of journalism in global terms. If we do all of this, we will be truly radical. If we teach students from a radical mind-set, we do them a service. We need to help the next generation of multimedia journalists develop their own novel and progressive ethical frameworks for the media world that lies in their future. Ward is Professor and Director of the George S. Turnbull Center in Portland, Oregon. Previously, he was the first James E. With rapid access to media and rapid feedback mechanisms through Twitter and the like, the time to determine the ethical position is tight. It is like Alice in Wonderland. Tell the truth without spin, and when you get it wrong, publish a correction immediately, and as prominently as the original. Clearly delineate ideology and opinion from facts. That is all

it takes, period. If you think ethics is an evolving thing, then you are confused indeed. Ethics that changes with the times is not ethics at all. There is no such thing as modern ethics. While media consumers certainly need activist journalism, informed analysis and candid commentary, most of all we need fair reporting that provides a factual basis for evaluating all of that attempted persuasion. John Are you kidding me? This is a publishable article? What did you even say? Be fair, be objective, be transparent. There is no favoring one or another, as they should exist in harmony. Ethics cannot be simplified to such vague terms as you say. Write both sides of a story. Consult experts from both sides. Act with diligence etc. One of the key problems of this legacy perspective is it leads to false equivalency, so that in the case of human-caused climate disruption, news outlets still give a platform to climate change deniers despite the scientific consensus that it is human caused. Watch it again sometime. Doctor Who This article looks like the guy was smoking cocaine when he wrote it. There is no such thing as ethics on the internet. The internet has killed rational thinking. As the world becomes more connected and digital media takes over as the primary means of communication, having a code of ethics apply in this universe will be necessary. It is important to take into account that these rules will cross borders and cultures. Professor Ward makes a great point that we cannot regress back to basics on this issue, but instead but continue to evolve radically and creatively. Evolution has to be brought forth in the discussion on ethics, and I think the digital world is where we will see this played out.

## 6: What is the philosophy of ethics?

*Ethics or moral philosophy is a branch of philosophy that involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct. The field of ethics, along with aesthetics, concern matters of value, and thus comprise the branch of philosophy called axiology.*

The Concept of Autonomy In the western tradition, the view that individual autonomy is a basic moral and political value is very much a modern development. For historical discussions of autonomy, see Schneewind , Lindley , Part I. As such, it bears the weight of the controversies that this legacy has attracted. The idea that moral principles and obligations, as well as the legitimacy of political authority, should be grounded in the self-governing individual, considered apart from various contingencies of place, culture, and social relations, invites skeptics from several quarters. Autonomy, then, is very much at the vortex of the complex re-consideration of modernity. Autonomy in this sense seems an irrefutable value, especially since its opposite – being guided by forces external to the self and which one cannot authentically embrace – seems to mark the height of oppression. But specifying more precisely the conditions of autonomy inevitably sparks controversy and invites skepticism about the claim that autonomy is an unqualified value for all individuals. Autonomy plays various roles in theoretical accounts of persons, conceptions of moral obligation and responsibility, the justification of social policies and in numerous aspects of political theory. It forms the core of the Kantian conception of practical reason see, e. It is also seen as the aspect of persons that prevents or ought to prevent paternalistic interventions in their lives Dworkin , – It plays a role in education theory and policy, on some views specifying the core goal of liberal education generally Gutmann , Cuypers and Haji ; for discussion, see Brighouse , 65 – Personal or individual autonomy should also be distinguished from freedom, although again, there are many renderings of these concepts, and certainly some conceptions of positive freedom will be equivalent to what is often meant by autonomy Berlin , – Autonomy concerns the independence and authenticity of the desires values, emotions, etc. Some distinguish autonomy from freedom by insisting that freedom concerns particular acts while autonomy is a more global notion, referring to states of a person Dworkin , 13 – 15, 19 – But autonomy can be used to refer both to the global condition autonomous personhood and as a more local notion autonomous relative to a particular trait, motive, value, or social condition. Addicted smokers for example are autonomous persons in a general sense but for some helplessly unable to control their behavior regarding this one activity Christman , 13 – In addition, we must keep separate the idea of basic autonomy, the minimal status of being responsible, independent and able to speak for oneself, from ideal autonomy, an achievement that serves as a goal to which we might aspire and according to which a person is maximally authentic and free of manipulative, self-distorting influences. Any plausible conceptualization of basic autonomy must, among other things, imply that most adults who are not suffering from debilitating pathologies or are under oppressive and constricting conditions count as autonomous. Autonomy as an ideal, on the other hand, may well be enjoyed by very few if any individuals, for it functions as a goal to be attained. The reason to construe basic autonomy broadly enough to include most adults is that autonomy connects with other status designators which apply or, it is claimed, should apply in this sweeping manner. Autonomy is connected, for example, to moral and legal responsibility, on some views e. Lacking autonomy, as young children do, is a condition which allows or invites sympathy, care, paternalism and possibly pity. One might argue that central to all of these uses is a conception of the person able to act, reflect, and choose on the basis of factors that are somehow her own authentic in some sense. The idea of self-rule contains two components: However, the ability to rule oneself will lie at the core of the concept, since a full account of that capability will surely entail the freedom from external manipulation characteristic of independence. Indeed, it could be claimed that independence per se has no fixed meaning or necessary connection with self-government unless we know what kinds of independence is required for self-rule cf. Focusing, then, on the requirements of self rule, it can be claimed that to govern oneself one must be in a position to act competently based on desires values, conditions, etc. This picks out the two families of conditions often proffered in conceptions of autonomy: Competency includes various capacities for rational

thought, self-control, and freedom from debilitating pathologies, systematic self-deception, and so on. Different accounts include different conditions: Young , Haworth , Meyers The most influential models of authenticity in this vein claim that autonomy requires second-order identification with first order desires. For Frankfurt, for instance, such second-order desires must actually have the structure of a volition: Either one identifies with an aspect of oneself in the sense of simply acknowledging it without judgment or one identifies with a desire in an aspirational, approving sense of that term. But approving of a trait is also problematic as a requirement of autonomy, for there are many perfectly authentic aspects of myself ones for which I can and should be held fully responsible for example which I do not fully approve of. Watson , Berofsky , 99” However, the view includes no stipulations about the content of the desires, values, and so on, in virtue of which one is considered autonomous, specifically there is no requirement that one act from desires independently of others. Some writers have insisted that the autonomous person must enjoy substantive independence as well as procedural independence e. The motivation for such a position is that autonomy should not be understood as consistent with certain constrained life situations no matter how the person came to choose such a situation cf. This claim, however, threatens to rob the attribution of autonomy of any claim to value neutrality it may otherwise carry, for if, conceptually, one is not autonomous when one freely, rationally, without manipulation chooses to enter conditions of severely limited choice, then the concept is reserved to only those lifestyles and value pursuits that are seen as acceptable from a particular political or theoretical point of view. I will return to this line of thought in a moment. One variation on the internal self-reflection model focuses on the importance of the personal history of the agent as an element of her autonomy Christman , Mele ; cf. On these views, the question of whether a person is autonomous at a time depends on the processes by which she came to be the way she is. This locates autonomy in the general capacity to respond to reasons, and not, for example, in acts of internal self-identification. However, even in these accounts, the capacity to think critically and reflectively is necessary for autonomy as one of the competences in question, even though the reflective thought required need not refer to external values or ideals Berofsky , ch. Further difficulties have been raised with the requirement of second order self-appraisal for autonomy. For it is unclear that such higher level judgments have any greater claim to authenticity than their first order cousins. Clearly if a person is manipulated or oppressed and hence non-autonomous , it could well be that the reflective judgments she makes about herself are just as tainted by that oppression as are her ground-level decisions Thalberg , Friedman , Meyers , 25”41, Noggle , and often our second order reflective voices are merely rationalizations and acts of self-deception rather than true and settled aspects of our character for general discussion see the essays in Veltman and Piper This has led to the charge that models of autonomy which demand second-order endorsement merely introduce an infinite regress: Various responses to this problem have been made, for the most part involving the addition of conditions concerning the manner in which such reflection must be made, for example that it must be free of certain distorting factors itself, it must reflect an adequate causal history, and the like Christman , Mele Other aspects of the inner reflection model should be noted. As just mentioned, this view of autonomy is often stated as requiring critical self reflection see, e. But an overly narrow concentration on rational assessment exposes such conceptions to charges of hyper intellectualism, painting a picture of the autonomous person as a cold, detached calculator see Meyers , ” For parallel reasons, some theorists have noted that concentration on only desires as the focal point of autonomy is overly narrow, as people can fail to exhibit self-government relative to a wide range of personal characteristics, such as values, physical traits, relations to others, and so on see Double , For Kant, the self-imposition of universal moral law is the ground of both moral obligation generally and the respect others owe to us and we owe ourselves. In short, practical reason ” our ability to use reasons to choose our own actions ” presupposes that we understand ourselves as free. Freedom means lacking barriers to our action that are in any way external to our will, though it also requires that we utilize a law to guide our decisions, a law that can come to us only by an act of our own will for further discussion see Hill This self-imposition of the moral law is autonomy. And since this law must have no content provided by sense or desire, or any other contingent aspect of our situation, it must be universal. Hence we have the first formulation of the Categorical Imperative, that by virtue of our being autonomous we must act only on those maxims that we can consistently will as a universal

law. The story continues, however: Some theorists who are not self-described Kantians have made this inference central to their views of autonomy. Paul Benson, for example, has argued that being autonomous implies a measure of self-worth in that we must be in a position to trust our decision-making capacities to put ourselves in a position of responsibility Benson ; cf. But the Kantian position is that such self-regard is not a contingent psychological fact about us, but an unavoidable implication of the exercise of practical reason cf. So we owe to ourselves moral respect in virtue of our autonomy. But insofar as this capacity depends in no way on anything particular or contingent about ourselves, we owe similar respect to all other persons in virtue of their capacity. Hence via the second formulation of the Categorical Imperative , we are obliged to act out of fundamental respect for other persons in virtue of their autonomy. In this way, autonomy serves as both a model of practical reason in the determination of moral obligation and as the feature of other persons deserving moral respect from us. For further discussion, see Immanuel Kant and moral philosophy. Recent discussions of Kantian autonomy have downplayed the transcendental nature of practical reason in this account see, for example, Herman and Hill For example, Christine Korsgaard follows Kant in seeing our capacity for self-reflection as both the object of respect and the seat of normativity generally. But unlike Kant, Korsgaard argues that we have different practical identities that are the source of our normative commitments, and not all of them are of fundamental moral worth. But the most general of such identities “ that which makes us members of a kingdom of ends ” is our moral identity, which yields universal duties and obligations independent of contingent factors. Autonomy is the source of all obligations, whether moral or non-moral, since it is the capacity to impose upon ourselves, by virtue of our practical identities, obligations to act Korsgaard I mention two here, as they connect with issues concerning autonomy in social and political theory. The first concerns the way in which autonomy-based moral theory grounds obligation in our cognitive abilities rather than in our emotions and affective connections see, e. The claim is that Kantian morality leaves too little room for the kinds of emotional reactions that are constitutive of moral response in many situations: To view obligation as arising from autonomy but understanding autonomy in a purely cognitive manner makes such an account vulnerable to this kind of charge. The Kantian model of such a self is of a pure cognizer “ a reflective agent engaged in practical reason. But also involved in decision-making are our passions “ emotions, desires, felt commitments, senses of attraction and aversion, alienation and comfort. These are both the objects of our judgement and partly constitutive of them “ to passionately embrace an option is different from coolly determining it to be best. Judgment is involved with all such passions when decisions are made. And it judgment need not be understood apart from them, but as an ability to engage in those actions whose passionate and reasoned support we muster up. So when the optimal decision for me is an impassioned one, I must value my ability to engage in the right passions, not merely in the ability to cold-heartedly reflect and choose. Putting the passions outside the scope of reasoned reflection, as merely an ancillary quality of the action “ to consider how to do something not merely what we are doing “ is to make one kind of decision. Putting passions inside that scope “ saying that what it is right to do now is to act with a certain affect or passion “ is another. When we generalize from our ability to make the latter sort of decisions, we must value not only the ability to weigh options and universalize them but also the ability to engage the right affect, emotion, etc. Therefore, we value ourselves and others as passionate reasoners not merely reasoners per se. The implications of this observation is that in generalizing our judgments in the manner Korsgaard following Kant says we must, we need not commit ourselves to valuing only the cognitive capacities of humanity but also its relatively subjective elements. This directly relates to the nature of autonomy, for the question of whether moral obligation rests upon and contains affective elements depends on the conception of autonomy at work and whether affective elements are included in the types of reflective judgments that form its core. A second question is this: If the capacity for reflection is the seat of obligation, then we must ask if the conditions under which such hypothetical reflection takes place are idealized in any sense “ if they are assumed to be reasonable for example. Are we considering merely the reflections the actual person would make were she to turn her attention to the question, no matter how unreasonable such reflections might be? If so, why should we think this grounds obligations? If we assume they are reasonable, then under some conditions moral obligations are not imposed by the actual self but rather by an idealized, more rational self.

This shows the complex and potentially problematic implications of this ambiguity. This points to the question of whether autonomy can be the seat of moral obligation and respect if autonomy is conceived in a purely procedural manner. If no substantive commitments or value orientations are included in the conceptual specification of autonomy, then it is unclear how this capacity grounds any particular substantive value commitments. On the other hand, if autonomy includes a specification of particular values in its conditions "that the autonomous person must value her own freedom for example" then it turns out that moral obligation and respect attaches only to those already committed in this way, and not more generally to all rational agents as such as traditionally advertised by the view.

### 7: How to bring better ethics to data science.

*Lehmann's contextual ethic is a third type of ethics beyond absolutism and utilitarianism. Yet, as the above arguments show, Lehmann's critique of the other approaches is primarily theological. Comparing Kant and Mill with Lehmann is like comparing two apples with an orange.*

As science views reality, objective facts and rational thinking outstrip the traditional spiritual worldview, which explained Nature through higher powers known as the gods or God. But recently the playing field has become much more level than anyone ever anticipated. Explaining reality through objective means has seriously eroded, chiefly because as science drew closer to the source where space, time, matter, and energy emerge, Nature as we know it vanished. At the level of the quantum vacuum, the zero point of empirical knowledge, something inconceivable is at work. Only advanced mathematics remains as a useful tool when time and space no longer exist, and even then, our mathematical models are suspect, because there is no longer any proof that they actually match reality. To visualize this situation, imagine that you are a traveler who has followed your tour guide to a borderline. He turns and says, "Up to now we have crossed the land where causes lead to effects, where clocks measure time and space has three dimensions, where physical objects are reliably solid. Where science views "beyond" as a dark mystery, the ancient thinkers of India saw the starting-point of reality as a state of awareness that is actually reachable. The "beyond" is continuous with our world as the source of experience. It turns out, when it comes to explaining reality, that where you start has everything to do with where you end. If you start with conscious experience as your measure of reality, the end is pure consciousness. If you start with physical objects "out there," you end up with emptiness, a void. Two travelers visiting the Pyramids are going to see the same thing, no matter what they expect when they set foot on the plane. But the extraordinary thing is that the "beyond" is an exception. It can be the source of awareness or an empty void, entirely depending on how the human mind constructs it. If the world "out there" is real, once it vanishes into the quantum vacuum, the "beyond" is an empty void or at best a theoretical mathematical space. But if conscious experience is real, then consciousness was constructing reality all along. Having arrived at the borderline, we can look back over our shoulder and say, "Oh, I get it now. Everything I ever thought was real is constructed from consciousness. One sees that physical reality is a human construct and always has been. When we are in bed dreaming at night, a dreamscape can feel entirely real, but on the moment of waking up, we realize its illusory nature. To a rationalist who bases his worldview on physical objects "out there," it sounds bizarre to say that one can also wake up and see the familiar world as a dreamscape. The ancient thinkers explained with detailed specificity how consciousness constructs the entire range of reality from the grossest to the subtlest phenomena. Everyday reality appears to be a given, but on investigation, it reveals itself as a human construct. The building blocks of reality are not tiny physical objects atoms, subatomic particles but exist in our awareness, where everything begins and ends as an excitation activity in consciousness. We know reality as the experience of observer and observed occurring in the now. The fundamental experience of both observer and observed is in the form of mental sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts SIFT. Sensations, images, feelings, thoughts are entangled modifications of awareness, the result of social and cultural conditioning and accepted systems of education. Our awareness gets deeply involved in many systems education, politics, gender, religion, etc. Systems are arbitrarily made and changed. Therefore, no construct has a privileged position over another. Truth is always relative inside any system. These constructs, however, are intensely real for the individual awareness embedded in it. We allow ourselves to be programmed by such systems and would feel naked and vulnerable without them. Excitations of awareness are not as basic as pure, timeless, dimensionless awareness. Excitations or vibrations take place in the domain of time; in fact, they create the sensation of time itself. Pure awareness is timeless. We are entangled in a vibrational reality that feels real on its own terms but is basically a mental construct, like a dream. To realize this is known as "waking up. As constructs, the same status is shared by birth, death, body, mind, brain, universe, stars, galaxies, the big bang, and God or the gods. Freedom lies in the experience of knowing yourself beyond all constructs. All human suffering is the result of attachment to a construct,

including fear of the construct we call death. Death is only real within the limits of the construct we manufactured. The ultimate goal of all experience is the same: Consciousness-based reality is just as testable today as it ever was. Chopra is the author of more than 80 books translated into over 43 languages, including numerous New York Times bestsellers.

## 8: Technology and the Ethics of Responsibility | Metanexus

*Human resources professionals are given a great deal of moral, ethical and legal responsibilities. In recruiting, training, reviewing, terminating and working with employees, there are a great deal of ethical ramifications.*

His contrasting between objectivity and opinion became the basis for philosophies intent on resolving the questions of reality, truth, and existence. He saw opinions as belonging to the shifting sphere of sensibilities, as opposed to a fixed, eternal and knowable incorporeality. In Platonic terms, a criticism of subjectivism is that it is difficult to distinguish between knowledge, opinions, and subjective knowledge. Platonic idealism is a form of metaphysical objectivism, holding that the ideas exist independently from the individual. Both approaches boast an attempt at objectivity. If reality exists independently of consciousness, then it would logically include a plurality of indescribable forms. Objectivity requires a definition of truth formed by propositions with truth value. An attempt of forming an objective construct incorporates ontological commitments to the reality of objects. The importance of perception in evaluating and understanding objective reality is debated in the observer effect of quantum mechanics. The concepts that encompass these ideas are important in the philosophy of science. Philosophies of mind explore whether objectivity relies on perceptual constancy. David Hume, Non-cognitivism, and Subjectivism The term, "ethical subjectivism", covers two distinct theories in ethics. Some forms of cognitivist ethical subjectivism can be counted as forms of realism, others are forms of anti-realism. David Hume is a foundational figure for cognitive ethical subjectivism. On a standard interpretation of his theory, a trait of character counts as a moral virtue when it evokes a sentiment of approbation in a sympathetic, informed, and rational human observer. William James, another ethical subjectivist, held that an end is good to or for a person just in the case it is desired by that person see also ethical egoism. According to non-cognitive versions of ethical subjectivism, such as emotivism, prescriptivism, and expressivism, ethical statements cannot be true or false, at all: For example, on A. Moral realism According to the ethical objectivist, the truth or falsehood of typical moral judgments does not depend upon the beliefs or feelings of any person or group of persons. This view holds that moral propositions are analogous to propositions about chemistry, biology, or history, in so much as they are true despite what anyone believes, hopes, wishes, or feels. When they fail to describe this mind-independent moral reality, they are false—no matter what anyone believes, hopes, wishes, or feels. There are many versions of ethical objectivism, including various religious views of morality, Platonistic intuitionism, Kantianism, utilitarianism, and certain forms of ethical egoism and contractualism. Note that Platonists define ethical objectivism in an even more narrow way, so that it requires the existence of intrinsic value. Consequently, they reject the idea that contractualists or egoists could be ethical objectivists. Objectivism, in turn, places primacy on the origin of the frame of reference—and, as such, considers any arbitrary frame of reference ultimately a form of ethical subjectivism by a transitive property, even when the frame incidentally coincides with reality and can be used for measurements.

## 9: Autonomy in Moral and Political Philosophy (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

*Contemporary Moral Issues. placing ethics in an analogous realm to physics. himself and denying his human nature, and by reason of this very fact he still.*

We should not make moral judgements concerning other individuals and societies. We do and should judge other individuals and societies with reason and with sympathy and understanding. Have you ever thought or heard and not challenged the idea that we should not make moral judgments of other people? Have you ever thought that each person must make up his or her own mind about what his or her moral rules will be? Have you ever thought that while some act might not be morally correct for you it might be correct for another person or conversely have you thought that while some act might be morally correct for you it might not be morally correct for another person? Have you thought that each person must make up his or her own morality? Well, if you answered, "Yes" to any of the above you have relativistic ideas operating in your thought system. Now you might ask yourself whether or not you really accept those ideas? Do you believe that you must go out and kill several people in order to make the judgment that a serial killer is doing something wrong? Do you really believe that you need to kidnap, rape, kill and eat several young men in order to reach the conclusion that Jeffrey Dahmer did something wrong, morally wrong and horrible? Do you think that killing newborn babies because they are females is wrong, even for the Chinese? If you do you have absolutist ideas working in you as well. How can you hold opposing ideas at the same time? Let us begin to think more clearly about these matters. Let us move to some important distinctions. Two Types of Moral Relativism: Cultural and Individual Cultural Moral Relativism It is common to hear the following type of statement: Rene Descartes, 17th-century French philosopher, notes in the following passage both the difference between the belief systems of different cultures, and the apparent reasonableness of each one: But I had become aware, even so early as during my college life, that no opinion, however absurd and incredible, can be imagined, which has not been maintained by some one of the philosophers; and afterwards in the course of my travels I remarked that all those whose opinions are decidedly repugnant to ours are not in that account barbarians and savages, but on the contrary that many of these nations make an equally good, if not better, use of their reason than we do. More than that, the belief that abortion is a horrible moral crime is widespread. In Japan, not only is abortion legal, it is very frequently taken to be morally neutral. In answering the question: Is abortion morally wrong? In Ireland, yes -- abortion is wrong. In Japan, no -- it is not morally wrong. Individual Moral Relativism also called Subjective Relativism, or simply Subjectivism If you are an individual relativist, you believe that moral obligations depend upon or are driven by beliefs, but you think that the relevant belief is that of the individual moral agent, rather than that of the culture that the agent is from. Joe thinks that cheating on exams is morally acceptable when one needs a good grade, while Mary does not think that cheating is ever morally acceptable. Relativists do not claim that there is no source of obligation nor that there are no acts that are morally wrong. For example, if a person believes that abortion is morally wrong, then it IS wrong -- for her. In other words, it would be morally wrong for Susan to have an abortion if Susan believed that abortion is always morally wrong. It would also be morally wrong, according to relativists, if Susan had an abortion when she believed that it was wrong for only her to have one. In short, relativists do not have to abandon the objectivity of moral judgments; but they do have to give up other key concepts, like universalism; more on that later. A person can believe that moral obligations are relative to a culture and at the same time believe that a person from that culture has a genuine obligation to abide by whatever moral code that culture adheres to.

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