Debating Ethical Dilemmas in the Classroom

Floris Velema
Devin van den Berg
Natascha Kienstra (eds.)

ISVW Uitgevers

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The Erasmus+ project *A Community of Ethics Teachers in Europe* (COMET) is supported by the *Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Philosophie* (FISP).

The COMET project is a Special Interest Group (SIG) of the *Association Internationale des Professeurs de Philosophie* (AIPPh).

1st edition

ISBN: 978-90-832623-8-3
NUR: 730, 132

Funded by the European Union

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WORKSHEETS

Preface

Floris Velema

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Floris Velema

This book is the product of a partnership between several European schools, universities, and associations. Their extensive collaboration was initiated in 2017 by Natascha Kienstra and Floris Velema under the title *A Community of Ethics Teachers in Europe* (COMET).[1] The project then continued into 2020 as COMET 2.[2] Since then, the partnership consists of two secondary schools (Wolfert Bilingual School Rotterdam and Gymnasium Weilheim), five universities (Tilburg University, Oslo Metropolitan University, University of Alcalá, Sofia University, and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens), and three associations (the Croatian philosophical association *Mala Filozofija*, the Slovakian philosophical association *Filoe*, and the Slovenian debate association *Za in Proti*).

The aim of this book is to offer high school teachers a comprehensive method to debate ethical dilemmas in the classroom. In chapter 1, Matija Pušnik and Lucija Ivanuša start by explaining what we mean by debate, how debate can be implemented in the classroom, and why debate can be an effective method to teach ethics. In chapter 2, Floris Velema and Devin van den Berg develop a general approach to debating ethical dilemmas, while using civil disobedience as an example case. Then, Torbjørn Gundersen offers a collection of eight ethical dilemmas in chapter 3. We invite you to apply the approach developed in chapter 2 to each of the cases described in chapter 3. While experimenting with debate in the ethics classroom, we noticed that students often tend to argue in terms of harms and benefits (a utilitarian approach), while arguing in terms of values and principles is perceived as more challenging. Therefore, Marcel Becker elaborates on the topic of values in chapter 4, and offers several useful tips on how to deal with values in a debate context. Ivan Kolev continues in chapter 5 with an analysis of Immanuel Kant's ethics of duty, in order to give debaters a proper foundation for deontological arguments. As debates are not only about *what* is said, but also about *how* it is framed or portrayed, Ricardo Gutiérrez Aguilar expounds on narrative techniques in chapter 6. In order to incorporate the pro and contra format of debate into this teacher's guide, Stelios Virvidakis then concludes the book in chapter 7 with some reservations about the use of debate in the ethics classroom.

On the title page of each chapter, we have added certain icons and tags that characterize its content. These icons can also be found on the online platform https://ethics.community, where they are used to categorize the available digital resources. We invite you to visit the platform, where you will find curriculum descriptions and teaching materials from ethics classrooms in the European regions represented in the COMET project.

At the back of this book, we have added five worksheets that facilitate the effective implementation of our debate method in the classroom. A PDF version of these worksheets (A4/A3) can also be found on the ethics.community platform.

I would like to thank Luca Scarantino for supporting the COMET project in its initial phase. I would also like to thank Andrzej Kaniowski for his invitation to present our project idea at the University of Łódź, during the 2016 conference of the *Association Internationale des Professeurs de Philosophie* (AIPPh). A special thanks to the early contributors to the COMET project: Miha Andrič, Barbora Baďurová, Zoran Kojčić, and Rolf Roew. Lastly, I would like to thank Michael Paroussis, for giving us the opportunity to present the first copy of this book during the XXXI International Philosophy Olympiad in Olympia, Greece, May 2023.

1 *A Community of Ethics Teachers in Europe* (COMET). Programme: Erasmus+; Key Action: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices; Action Type: Strategic Partnerships for school education; Start: 01-09-2017; End: 31-12-2020; Project Reference: 2017-1-NL01-KA201-035219.

2 *A Community of Ethics Teachers in Europe 2* (COMET 2). Programme: Erasmus+; Key Action: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices; Action Type: Strategic Partnerships for school education; Start: 01-09-2020; End: 31-08-2023; Project Reference: 2020-1-NL01-KA201-064702.

Tags at ethics.community

Didactical methods

- Debate

Ethical theories

- Consequentialism
- Deontology

Metaethical theories

- Relativism

Ethical topics

- Justice
- Norms and values
- Utility

Philosophers

- Peter Singer
- Socrates

I

Introduction to using debate in the classroom

Matija Pušnik
Lucija Ivanuša

Chapter 1
Introduction to using debate in the classroom
Matija Pušnik & Lucija Ivanuša

1 Do we still live in a moral world?

After the end of the Cold War, authors, such as Francis Fukuyama, prophesied the end of history: the whole world was to embrace the principles of liberal democracy. The underlying optimism of the 90's did not only concern the settling of world affairs; rather, humanity was supposed to start solving its problems in a coherent, rational, inclusive, and—in some form or another—constitutional way.

Not only has the optimism of that era waned—one could argue that the exact *opposite* has in fact occurred. Since then, 9/11 has happened and ushered in the era of a new state paternalism and the sacrifice of individual rights for safety. Although there were many paternalistic regimes in the history of humanity, none had at its disposal such a variety of tools: never before has there been such a diversity of information that can be gathered, and never before has there been such computing power to organize this data in a meaningful way. The apparent demise of the US-led liberal world order introduced concepts such as "alternative fact" and "fake news"—the harbingers were the two infamous campaigns of 2016, which saw, against all odds, Donald Trump winning the presidency and the UK opting to leave the EU. The rise of right-wing populism has been accompanied by growing mistrust and politicization of the media. Just when the world was supposed to become *alright*, it, in fact, presented new problems and challenges.

Education has not been left untouched: all around the world, teachers are feeling the pressure to adjust their teaching to better reflect the values of those in power. In Hungary, teachers already are severely limited—by the government—in making their curriculum LGBTQ+ inclusive. Poland, at the time of writing this chapter, is well on its way to introducing similar limitations. Such limitations and interventions should be a cause of concern and alarm: teachers have a duty to their communities—a duty to educate, to help recognize evil, irrationality, and demagoguery, lest grim times are upon us.

Teaching ethics is ultimately going to be one of the most crucial areas of education. We—here meaning humanity in general—have shown time and time again that we are capable of producing brilliant scientists, mathematicians, and engineers; but can we also keep producing good human beings, given all the pressure and the ever-changing, polarizing and deteriorating nature of civil society and political discourse? It is our opinion that to best prepare students for active participation in the public sphere and contribute to a more critical and reasonable society, the way ethics is taught must be changed. The classic teaching model where students were passive recipients of knowledge is not enough anymore: we live in increasingly polarized societies, where we are unknowingly pushed into bubbles and echo chambers. Political dialogue and solution-finding has been replaced by incendiarism and soap-box orators. In the era of mass media and unfathomable amounts of information, students need to learn how to think critically and engage actively in civil society. The most effective way to combat populism and strengthen democracy is the ability to analyze statements of others, scrutinize their logic, and communicate such criticisms to a larger audience (Snider & Schnurer 2006, 2-5).

It is for this reason that we believe it is high time students were taught ethics and philosophy with the use of debate methodology. We believe this will enable students to take the concepts they learn in class and establish a critical relation to them. We also believe, furthermore, that this will allow them to gain an insight into the nature of any disagreement as such. This shall, we hope, give them the necessary skills, empathy, and motivation to understand complex issues they will encounter in their later life. In other words: we want to equip them with skills that will allow them to make informed decisions, see the logic behind their own opinions and those of others, and engage in conversation productively.

Specific questions on how *precisely* to adopt the debate methodology into the classroom are going to be answered later. In this chapter, we are going to discuss what precisely is *debate*, how it can *generally* be used in class, how it is different from some other approaches, what are some common concerns and why it should prove useful to teaching ethics.

2 What is debate?

In short, debate is a structured and, more importantly, equitable exchange of arguments to support and oppose a certain idea. There are many real-life situations where a debate may take place: informal conversations with friends, trying to decide which movie to see, debates in parliament, presidential debates, and everything in between. They all include the same basic idea: people of different opinions discuss them, and try to convince each other they are right.

Sometimes, we emulate debates. That means that we set up a debate: we invite speakers, we select a topic, we set *some sort* of rules and we create an audience. There are three reasons why one might want to do that:

- for sport and competition;
- to present information in a certain way;
- to practice *disagreeing*.

It is very common, especially in certain intellectual and academic environments, to debate *for sport*. We sometimes call this phenomenon—or at least part of it—competitive debate. Competitive debate has an extremely rich history, with the first debating societies dating back to Ancient Greece (MacKendrick 1961, 16). The more modern form of debating societies first emerged in the 18th century, attracting members from London's middle class. Competitive debate soon became prominent amongst university students: the Cambridge Union Society was founded in 1815 and claims to be the oldest continually operating university debate society (The Cambridge Union 2022). Today participants from all over the world and from every level of education compete in debate. There is an abundance of particular rule sets we call formats that differ slightly in time allocations, number of speakers, etc. Primary school students in Slovenia will, for instance, debate in the so-called *Karl Popper* format, but then in high school move on to the *World Schools Debating Championship* format, which is used all over the world, because, as its name implies, it is also used at the high school world championship. In a similar fashion, university students from all around the world use *British Parliamentary*—yet another rule format, to compete at the university world championship. This is only a small fraction of different debate styles and competitions: in the US *Policy* and *Cross-Ex* are used. In Asia, *Asian Parliamentary* is of immense popularity. What this illustrates is the fact that *competitive debate* is very popular, especially within education. Furthermore, we want to point to the fact that competitive debate *must* be organized with a specific rule-set, so as to make it fair and prevent the tactic of *shouting louder*.

Organized debate is also used to present information—usually to help people decide. This is very common in democracies: before an election or a referendum, the media might hold a debate between candidates or supporters and opposers, so that the audience can gather the information that can help it decide. Note—this shall become a recurring theme—that there is a difference between simply providing a voter with a nominal statement of policy of certain candidates and making the candidates discuss policy and *defend* their position against challenges. An argument might sound strong and intuitive in a vacuum, but perhaps there is a weakness in its structure that, once explained, makes it unbelievable. It is quite interesting how sometimes an argument *on its own* can be obscure but commanding and only when *someone else* has laid it bare we can see clearly why it is problematic—but more on that later. Again we want to point out, finally, that *rules* are quite important. A good example are the presidential debates between Donald J. Trump and Joe Biden in the 2020 election campaign: Trump tried employing the tactic of interrupting his opponent and thus *preventing* him from making a point—a controversy regarding turning the microphones on and off ensued. The point is clear: debates should be organized in a way where all opinions can be thoroughly examined.

Third on our list—and most important for the purposes of this book—is organized debate as a teaching tool. This is in many respects a newer concept. Its rise in popularity corresponds somewhat to the rise of the concept of active participation of students. Edwards (2015) proposes an active learning framework that includes intellectually active learning, socially active learning, and physically active learning. Organized debate will mostly concern the first two. We shall further explore the pedagogical benefits of debate below—for now, we shall just *mention* them:

- higher level engagement with concepts and knowledge
- better understanding of disagreement
- effective communication of ideas and thoughts
- wider inclusion within the classroom

Such a list can never be *exhaustive*, but we believe that the listed benefits of debate contain most major reasons why many teachers of various disciplines choose to employ debate methodology in class to help them teach.

3 Debate in the Classroom

Debate is used in many classrooms—all across the world and on all levels of education. Some authors (e.g. Oros 2007) use the term "structured classroom debate," SCD for short. We will not adopt this particular terminology. Instead, we will use debate in place of SCD, while using the term "discussion" for other, unstructured activities—this will be important later when we compare debate to other methods of learning. Debate in the classroom has the following form: there is a topic, usually set like a proposition (e.g., "euthanasia should be legalized"), there are two sides, *pro*, and *contra*, which are usually called "Proposition" (sometimes government) and "Opposition." Finally, there is a certain set of rules (we called this format above) that define who speaks when and for how long—and also other things, pertaining to *questions*, *cross-examination*, etc.

Typical debate in the classroom: example 1

Format
- one team for the proposition, one team against
- three speakers per team
- each speech is 5 minutes long

Note
Students themselves choose what arguments to present and how to present them. If you, therefore, ran the same debate twice with different students, you would get two different debates.

Debate: euthanasia should be legalized

Proposition speaker

1 A presents the basic deontological argument for bodily autonomy

B explains that in the *status quo* doctors already technically *stop* patient care at some point

Opposition speaker

A presents the argument for the sanctity of life

B responds to the Proposition's deontological argument

Proposition speaker

2 A presents the utilitarian analysis of suffering

B explains that the argument for the sanctity of life actually shows that euthanasia *should* be legal

Opposition speaker

A presents the argument of abuse

B explains how utilitarian analysis of suffering would not apply if we had proper palliative care

Proposition speaker

3 A rebuilds the deontological argument

B explains why Proposition is winning both on deontological and utilitarian grounds

Opposition speaker

A explains how the question of abuse is more important than any other utilitarian claim

B tries to show why the argument on the sanctity of life remains the most important point in the debate

Post-debate

- the class discusses the debate
- the teacher might help foster further discussion with questions

3.1 Higher level engagement with concepts and knowledge

We have mentioned briefly that we think debate enables active learning both on an intellectual and social level. Edwards (2015, 26) defines the intellectual dimension of active learning as: "*learning [that] requires students to intellectually engage with the content using critical thinking or higher levels of thinking such as analysis or synthesis*." This means moving beyond the domain of basic replication of knowledge that is customary in the classical *ex-cathedra* approach to teaching. Debate fulfills this goal by fostering a higher level of engagement with concepts and knowledge.

Let us unpack this. Knowledge of a concept on a "higher level" of thinking can be defined as *flexible*. A student that knows and understands a concept really well will be able to understand it as a complex web of contexts, intricacies, and connections. They will be able to apply this concept in various contexts, connect it with other concepts or break it down. Debate makes students active in processing knowledge, without sacrificing learning important information. In fact, it deepens the understanding students have of the subject since creating persuasive arguments requires deeper knowledge of the subject. They are further motivated to do this, because this is not simply an assignment: they spar against other students. This is emphasized by the fact that the students are "educating" others and thus taking a public stance on an idea (regardless of whether they agree or not). This promotes a feeling of responsibility to scrutinize their logic and mechanisms, making it more likely to come to the root of issues being presented. Moreover, it motivates students to explain in detail and provide examples, as there is a reward of winning—note, you do not need to provide an *actual* award. Competition in-itself is as per our experience a strong enough motivator. In this we see a pivot from a passive approach to learning to an active one, creating and explaining ideas, rather than absorbing them.

In the example given in the first table, we present a possible way a debate *might* happen in an ethics class. It might prove amusing to a keen reader that we borrowed the listed arguments from Singer (2011, 155-190)—this is no accident or trick. We indeed anticipate that an ethics teacher might use Singer to cover the question of euthanasia—

instead of simply asking the class to submit a short written report, or just including it in the exam syllabus, the teacher can ask six students *to study* Singer's evaluation of the debate on euthanasia and prepare (separately, in teams) for a debate. We believe that by doing this, the students will actively acquire the knowledge of different arguments and operationalize it. They will be better able to compare them, to observe them within the same plain and pit them one against the other. They will be motivated to connect what they already know with new information to craft arguments. The wider effect of this is practicing doing research and gathering information.

Typical debate in the classroom: example 2

Format
- one team for the proposition, one team against
- four speakers per team
- each speech is 4 minutes long

Debate: we should abolish the death penalty

	Proposition speaker	Opposition speaker
1	A presents an argument on retribution	
	B explains how the only way to deter crime is to have serious consequences	
		A presents the argument of why killing another is always morally wrong
		B responds to the Proposition's argument on retribution
2	A presents the argument of justice for victims' families	
	B explains that we have an obligation to provide a fair and just society, and that those who break the law sign their rights away	

Proposition speaker	Opposition speaker
	A presents the argument of court mistakes B explains how the only way we can have a just society is by rehabilitation rather than taking lives
3 A gives additional reasoning and examples on previous arguments B explains mistakes can be rectified through the maximization of court duty	
	A gives additional reasoning and examples on previous arguments B tries to show why the argument of deterrence is better achieved when criminals are rehabilitated
4 A shows why justice and victims weigh over perpetrators B shows that prevention of future crimes is more important than potential mistakes	
	A shows why humanity weighs over retribution B explains that even if deterrence is achieved, it doesn't weigh over potential injustice

Post-debate

- the class decides who won the debate and provides detailed reasoning
- the teacher asks the observers to provide a written explanation of who they think won the debate and why

3.2 Better understanding of disagreement

Disagreement is a *fait accompli*. It is immanent to all aspects of life. But not all disagreement is the same. If we lean on Badiou, we can say that some disagreements are resolvable, but some are not by introducing the concept of commensurability. Imagine for a second that the classroom disagrees on whether the harms of abuse of euthanasia outweigh the benefits on a purely utilitarian level: one half of the class believes that the number of people unduly euthanized would far exceed the number of those who willingly end their suffering, the other half believes the contrary. In this case, we can *at least theoretically* precisely determine who is right and who is wrong. To put it more abstractly, the two sides are *co-measurable*. Badiou (2009, 3-5) gives us an example of an incommensurable disagreement: he quotes Plato, more precisely the dialogue *Gorgias*, in which (among other, perhaps more famous exchanges) Socrates debates Callicles. Socrates stands—to generalize—for the power of the argument and what is just, while Callicles defends the argument of power. It is quite important, notes Badiou (*ibid*.) that any true comparison between the two is *impossible*. The decision is paradigmatic and cannot be tied to anything else.

Some disagreements, thus, are traversable—others warrant a choice. But there is even more to it: sometimes disagreements are obscure, hiding the fact that both sides in fact agree. It is indeed quite common, especially within the political sphere, that civil society is divided by demagoguery and populism *whereas on many issues it is much united*. One can point, for instance, towards the curious case of how democrat and republican voters often time stand quite united in terms of public opinion (*cf.* support for "Medicare for all"—e.g., Blumberg 2018)—even though it seems that they are divided.

Using debate as a teaching tool ought to instill the necessary skills to traverse disagreement. Seeing through obscurity is a skill—not necessarily knowledge one could test or present in a taxonomy, and it is a skill that is best taught through practice. The controlled environment of a classroom debate is significantly different from real-life experience in two crucial regards: firstly, a teacher with intimate knowledge of the issue *and* significant authority is present. This means that after the debate, through discussion and reflection, students can, with the help of the teacher, understand what was obscure. But secondly, the debate here is at the same time impersonal and much more serious in form. There is less of a feeling of cultural (or other) attachment to one side, which is very common, for instance in politics. But furthermore, having a precise format means that all issues are explored in a civil and rational way. This, of course, requires the teacher to help students.

What if all students in a teacher's class disagree with the death penalty? We believe that in this case it is especially important that they study the other side. We believe that good analysis of arguments and positions is impersonal and objective—logic should not care for sides, and even usage of such subjective mechanisms as intuition pumps should be subject to objective scrutiny. We want them to routinely critically evaluate their own position and try to be the devil's advocate—this is how we can teach them to analyze a disagreement elsewhere in life properly and objectively.

3.3 Effective communication of ideas and thoughts

Public speaking is very often cited as one of the biggest fears for most people. But the problem of effective communication goes further. We (in this case both authors of the chapter) have experience training novice journalists for writing for radio emissions, which is challenging because radio listeners cannot rewind or re-read what they have heard. They also cannot be helped by visual aid as is the case with television. Therefore ideas have to be communicated in a precise yet not too dense way. Many aspects are important: choice of words, length of sentences, the order in which ideas are presented, etc. Similar challenges can in fact be encountered in *all* forms of communication—it is just that speaking (because we are afraid) and writing for radio (because our interaction with the audience is very one-dimensional) are more obvious. This detour is to illustrate that most problems with public speaking are in fact problems of communication and not public speaking.

One thing we have found, working both with students who are learning public speaking and novice-journalists, is that theoretical instruction *does not work*. Even though inventing universal and abstract operators seems prudent and appealing, as it *seemingly* covers all the cases. Students often find it difficult to integrate theoretical instruction and real life practice. To put it otherwise: a student might write down and memorize a list of different rhetorical figures (e.g., *the rule of three*—where, when listing, saying three things is more efficient than saying two or four). A more motivated and advanced student might even retain the ability to analyze a speech. But these abilities do not directly translate into being a good communicator. Instead, we have found that consistent routine of practice and feedback work best. In the case of writing, therefore, we teach by having a novice journalist write pieces which a mentor comments on. In the case of public speaking, we want a student to *debate* and then listen to feedback.

We often find that teachers feel they do not have the skills and knowledge to give feedback for speaking, especially teachers who did not study linguistics (teachers who teach languages sometimes have taken classes on rhetorics and verbal communication). But it is important that, especially for beginners, you do not need to be a seasoned debate coach to give useful advice and feedback. In many ways it might even be better that you are not. A speaker addresses a general audience, and it is the feedback of that audience which is important—even feedback among peers works and can be efficient.

The point is *precisely* that debate is not about rhetorical tricks. The main challenge in front of the students is to convey their thoughts clearly and succinctly to their listeners. Participation in classroom debate teaches students how to voice their thoughts and arguments not only clearly, but also persuasively—here, teachers are of help, as well as peers, with their feedback and comments. During the course of debating, students also learn to project confidence. They do not need feedback for that, however—you cannot teach someone into confidence. It is only by repeated exposure to public speaking that students become motivated. A teacher merely creates a space where they can feel safe expressing themselves. As a result of all this, we see students gaining the knowledge of good public speaking, recognizing the elements of a good speech, and developing a skillset to recognize a speech that sounds nice but is not based on any coherent argumentation or a strong position.

3.4 Wider inclusion within the classroom

Edwards (2015, 27) grants *socially* active learning equal importance to intellectually active learning. Debate in the class brings about greater inclusion in the learning process. Oros (2007, 293) notes that usually in a class discussion the number of students actually participating in a discussion is rather limited. He proposes that using debate helps achieve “classroom participation beyond the ‘usual suspects’ present in every classroom.” Using debate in the classroom can help include *all* students—even, if not especially, those, who do not usually participate. This is so because of three reasons:

1. the teacher can *impose* their cooperation while also regulating the cooperation of the “usual suspects” to grant more space for less willing students;
2. they will find the subject more interesting when they are actively participating;
3. they will have the time to prepare which will give them additional confidence.

Debate, second of all, empowers students to have the ability to stand up for their beliefs (through all the mechanisms above). Often times students need to become aware of how global policies shape the world and where their negative impacts can be seen (Snider & Schnurer 2006, 34-45). The classroom may be a safe space, but it is not neutral, nor is it sheltered from the outside world. The content taught—especially in the ethics class—ought to reflect that. Students are heterogenous, they come from various backgrounds with various experience, different biographies. It is important that a platform is given to them in form of a sandbox, where they can learn to express themselves and speak truth to power—in two ways: first, in an indirect way where they learn advocacy in school and use that as members of the civil society, but also second in terms of challenging even the very believes taught within the educational system. Even what the teacher is teaching must be challenged—and the students should be given a platform to challenge it.

Typical debate in the classroom: example 3

Format
- one team for the proposition, one team against
- three speakers per team
- each speech is 5 minutes long

Debate: having children is immoral

	Proposition speaker	Opposition speaker
1	A presents basic deontological argument for bodily autonomy of children, namely having no consent in being born	
	B explains the current state of the world, mainly the climate crisis, paint children as both victims and causes of it	
		A presents the argument for furthering humanity
		B responds to the Proposition's deontological argument
2	A presents the incentive structure for having children, which is in all cases selfish	
	B explains that we have an obligation to provide a good life to future generations, rather than just furthering humanity	
		A presents the argument of life being a blessing
		B explains how the only way we are fighting to save the planet is through the desire to have children and give them a good future

Proposition speaker	Opposition speaker
3 A rebuilds the deontological argument	
B explains why Proposition is winning both on deontological and utilitarian grounds	
	A explains how furthering humanity can never be selfish
	B tries to show why the argument on the quality of life is better fulfilled on side Opposition

Post-debate
- the class discusses the debate
- the teacher uses the debate to jump into discussion on motherhood, intra-generational debt, etc.

Feminism is a good example—very often, female students also suffer from the effects of patriarchy *within the class itself*. This does not have to have anything to do with the teacher consciously being sexist or not, but rather with the wider social context, primary socialization. It is in such topics that the teacher must make sure, that female students get a platform to be able to voice their view—note that they might not have a clear view at the start, and thus it often might seem like they do not need it, but this is false: you can only begin to develop a view when you are given a platform.

We can use what we have just said and compile a list of direct goals that a teacher should set for the class before employing debate methodology. This whole list of goals is borrowed from Snider (2014, 4-6):

1. Higher level thinking

Finding arguments and evaluating them critically takes intellectual engagement and the ability to analyze the topic and applying new ideas to the problems we might come across.

2. Speaking

Addressing a larger audience without fear, using rhetorical tools to present arguments and thoughts in a clear, understandable and confident manner.

3. Active listening

Active listening is a skill many students lack, which can lead to misunderstandings and misevaluation of the statements they are hearing. To fully understand arguments and be able to negate them, debaters need to learn how to listen critically, evaluating the statements, their claims, and the logic being presented.

4. Critical thinking

We want students to be able to subject an argument (any argument, including their own) to rigorous analysis and test.

5. Constructive disagreement

Debate is not simply shouting “Wrong!” at someone else’s idea, but rather it seeks to find missing links in the logic of the argumentation. Ideas are constantly tested and revised, as debaters try to find the best idea to present.

6. Decision-making

After deep preparation and analysis of their arguments, debaters choose which to present and how to present them, but at the same time have to make split-second decisions on how to rebut the opposing team’s arguments or which questions to ask them.

This, then, is how debate is used in a classroom. We hope it is now clearer what debate in the classroom is—and to what end it should be used. Now we can address the fact that similar methodologies also exist—we shall, though many approaches share similar philosophies, focus on what is different.

4 How is debate different from other classroom activities?

In this paragraph, we shall briefly compare debate to other popular methodologies and show why we prefer debate.

1. Simulations

Simulations are quite popular in high school and in tertiary education. In high-school Model United Nations (MUN) simulations are most common. They mimic the United Nations (and their organs) whereas students represent countries. Although this format has its own merits, we would like to mention the following reservations:

- Simulations are explicitly not arenas where arguments and truth are tested, but rather arenas of interest and struggle. You "win" not necessarily by the power of arguments but rather through politics—which might be a lesson in itself, but is totally different from the point of debate;
- Simulations are usually much more chaotic, given that you routinely have more than thirty delegates in one body. That means that speeches are going to be short (the norm is sixty seconds) and that the discussion is going to go off-topic (as a rule);
- Simulations require much more time in order to yield any results (such as a resolution written as a result of negotiation), whereas a debate can easily fit within a lesson.

2. Ethics bowls

Ethic bowls are often quite similar to debate. Often they will feature two teams squaring off on a certain topic. The main difference is often only that in an ethics bowl the goal is to reach a compromise. We elaborate on why we *do not* want a compromise in the following paragraphs.

3. Round-tables / discussion

We have already said much about this, so, to be short: in a discussion or a round-table format, the stress is on *opinions* and not so much on the clashing of sides. This is why there is less examination of arguments, less back-and-forth, etc. A round-table is usually more interesting when you have a collection of people (i.e., experts) who have something interesting to say on a topic, but who do not wholly disagree.

5 Common criticism of debate

Working with teachers, we have found that there exist some common initial concerns, which we seek to address here. Teachers are most often worried by:

- having students argue for the side they *do not* believe in;
- debate explicitly not seeking consensus or compromise, but rather *one side prevailing;*
- that debate allows for multiple truths, enables *relativism*;
- the common presumption that *rhetorics* is an art of demagoguery and sophism.

We have found—and this is purely anecdotal, we have not conducted any proper empirical study to support this claim—that in particular philosophy teachers most often expressed these concerns, which grants this section particular importance. We aim to dispel these concerns in the final part of this chapter.

5.1 Students arguing for the side they do not believe in

There are two reasons why it is *inevitable* that debate methodology, as presented in this textbook, leads to students arguing against their beliefs:

- Oftentimes, when the classroom is presented with a dilemma, due to various cultural, or perhaps even generational factors, one side is far more represented, and thus, in order to explore both sides of a dilemma, students will have to represent the side they *disagree* with. An example might be the internet or video games.
- Moreover, students arguing against their beliefs presents a teaching opportunity, not a challenge. We in fact want students to argue against their beliefs—which enables them to reconsider their opinions and underlying assumptions.

A usual concern that we often receive from new teachers is that they feel this is *dishonest*. We discuss the specific reason why we think students benefit from arguing for both sides at the end of the second subsection of the second section (*Better understanding of disagreement*), but, to repeat, we believe that debate methodology is first and foremost an exercise in logic. While it is true that most of the time, debate argumentation strays within the realm of induction rather than deduction, we still hold it that logical analysis should be independent of the locutor. We hold it therefore that they who wish to thoroughly, honestly, and rigorously examine a problem, must be able to explore all possible answers—even those that they might disagree with personally. The concern then reduces to the question of what is sufficient exploration and understanding of a side of the discussion. We believe that only by actively trying to make an argument as strong as possible—even when we do not agree with it—can we learn to engage with it in goodwill. To conclude, we do not believe it to be dishonest that students should argue for the side they do not believe in. We indeed want them to be able to take a rational, impersonal approach to an argument and to understand all sides before making a decision.

5.2 Debate does not lead to consensus or a solution

Another, relatively common, concern that we have encountered is that debate does not lead to consensus or a solution, which *is* the case for some other approaches, such as different simulations or ethic bowls. Yet here once again the answer to the concern is not to refute it but rather to accept it: debate *does not* lead to consensus or a solution, and this is good.

Philosophy ought, such is our conviction, operate in the domain of *truth*. A philosophical problem—if it is properly constructed—cannot be properly satisfied with a compromise. One way to express this is the following (Hoffmaster & Hooker 2017, 59):

> Compromise is logically intolerable because it preserves inconsistency between principles, and there is no middle ground between the rational requirement of logical consistency and the irrational incoherency of logical inconsistency.

Hoffmaster and Hooker in fact claim that compromise should be integrated into philosophy at large, saying that it *de facto* pervades our lives (2017, 74). However, here—at least from a teaching point of view, if not generally as well—we disagree. Philosophical endeavor, as said above is one of truth and not practicality. It is a satisfactory conclusion to a philosophical inquiry to find a dilemma impossible to resolve. And it is even more satisfactory, if, in the process of the inquiry, through active participation, students understood both the argumentation of either side and the underlying reasons a debate cannot be resolved.

One possible retort at this point could be that *because* in everyday life we have to resolve dilemmas and cannot be satisfied with simply recognizing *how* and *why* they cannot be resolved. Yet this is not a task for philosophy, at least not ethics. It is much more a question of political science and if anything, political philosophy. And while that aspect of education is quite important, we believe a firm foundation of understanding is required before any such compromise-making—and that can only be provided by debating the underlying principles. At any rate, observers are the one who should decide a compromise is due. When we have two sides, we must have them try their best to make the best version of the argument—*and not give up halfway in to make a compromise*.

But this concern is much worse when applied in reverse: while in debate either one side wins convincingly, or it is recognized that a particular dilemma is difficult to resolve, in different simulations or ethic bowls, students are *pressured* to make compromises, which runs a much greater risk of giving merit to sides and position just for compromises' sake. When you set up an activity, especially when you want to make it at least slightly competitive, you must either instruct debaters to seek a compromise or an argumentative victory. Even if you find other reasons for debate unconvincing, we think that disingenuous compromise achieves way less than productive disagreement.

5.3 Relativism

Alternatively, debate is also criticized on the count of relativism. The argument—if we recall and reuse the above story of Socrates and Callicles—could go somewhat like this: in debate, we learn to argue for either side, thus granting legitimacy to both options. But this fear is misplaced.

As mentioned above, some decisions *are* paradigmatic. That means that as soon as we decide on any set of assumptions, the decision already falls—in other words, that there is no neutral footing from which we could equally consider both sides. Indeed do we realize that it is quite challenging then, to show why Callicles is necessarily and universally wrong. But this problem is no less small in a world with no debate. In some ways, a large part of western thought has been precisely that: answering Callicles' argument for argument of power and realpolitik. The criticism of debate in this regard is therefore undue: debate is a contest of logic, an examination of arguments, an expedition into the domain of truth.

We would argue that it is precisely the recognition of this irreconcilable dilemma that allows us to make the right choice. Without understanding that some choices are paradigmatic, I might be swayed by a modern Callicles—thinking that given what he says makes sense *in some way* he must be correct and speaking truth. But, knowing that logic of power and fascism is indeed consistent in its evil ways, I can elucidate the choice—and make sure I choose good. It is hard to resist quoting Badiou directly here (2009, 12):

> We can now sum up the tasks of philosophy with regard to situations. First, to throw light on the fundamental choices of thought. "In the last instance" (as Althusser would say) such choices are always between what is interested and what is disinterested. Second, to throw light on the distance between thinking and power, between truths and the state. To measure this distance. To know whether or not it can be crossed. Third, to throw light on the value of exception. The value of the event. The value of the break. And to do this against the continuity of life, against social conservatism.

5.4 Sophism

Perhaps the oldest, most classic criticism of debate methodology stems from ancient Greece. Plato recognized one of his most important challengers in sophists. But the argument against sophistry very much resembles the first concern we have covered: sophists taught their students to defend *any* opinion, regardless of its truth, their trade seems cynical and dishonest. To this, we can say two things. First, debate does not encourage but rather condemns the usage of demagoguery, fallacy, and other tricks that can otherwise be used to sway opinion. If indeed sophists *truly* are such tricksters, debate teaches to recognize them and disarm them with the power of reason. Indeed in all internationally used debate formats, reason and *logical* value of an argument matter most in who ends up winning a debate. That said, *style* often is its own category, but style does not mean empty rhetorics, but rather clarity and efficiency in delivery of argumentation.

But furthermore, we wish to contest the idea that *truth* is necessarily unitary—and even if it is, it is not directly accessible. As mentioned above, even within the specialized field of applied ethics *within* the field of philosophy, disagreement persists. One can for instance mention Singer's approach to the *violinist* example within the debate on abortion—the violinist is an example whereas if a famous violinist could only survive if you were tied next to them to a hospital bed for nine months, you would not have the obligation to save them and hence you also do not have the obligation to carry a child (2011, 132-134). While he certainly picks a side (and identifies himself as a consequentialist and utilitarian), it is apparent that even after careful philosophical consideration, *major* disagreements can persist, even though both sides are honest and rational.

We *do* want our students to recognize that truth is not offering itself to the passerby as low-hanging fruit: often it is complex. At best, they will have to work hard to unravel all arguments to finally find that *one* side is, in fact, *wrong*, but perhaps even more often, they will find that the core rift persists within the truth itself and then they will have to best decide: and they shall be aided by their ability to understand the disagreement and various arguments.

6 Why debate in ethics?

This last bit on truth and complexity of debate neatly leads us to the last section in which we explain why we find debate of *paramount* importance in any ethical education. Our argument is as follows: we think that regardless of which *particular* methodological framework of ethics applies, there are bound to be inherent *disagreements* on various aspects of a problem. We, then, believe that, for various reasons, the creation of *one*, *true*, and *universally applicable* moral theory is impossible. Therefore we believe that when we want to teach ethics, we need to give students the skills and knowledge necessary for them to be able to evaluate various *disagreements* about ethical problems and not just problems themselves—and debate is precisely the tool for that.

That there are bound to be inherent *disagreements* on a problem is to an extent tautological. Oftentimes, the dilemmas that we all agree on are *less* relevant. That does not mean they must not be revisited. However, we can easily see that most actual problems of practical ethics (*cf.* Singer 2011) are heavily contested. Disagreement is not only bipolar, in fact, often even people who agree with each other, disagree on *why* they agree with a stance—a prime example of that is, once again, abortion (Singer 2011, 123-154). Even if we posited that each of these problems had a simple one-sided solution, we still must: (1) understand the debate, which means analyzing arguments used, as well as their underlying assumptions, and (2) invent a way to explain the *correct* solution to people who disagree. But, alas, the first step in itself is very important. One could even say that the role of clarifying arguments and disagreement is one of the primary reasons why philosophers must be included on different panels and boards that rule on ethical problems (Strahovnik 2007, 175). Already here we see how debate can benefit students: through debate, where students are motivated to actively try and find *the best version* of each stance.

The last bit is most important. To find the best version of the argument, to argue in goodwill, we need, first of all, to actively teach students proper argumentation. This means that we teach them about logic, logical fallacies, the challenges of using induction, etc. This also means teaching them not to fool themselves—and indeed others with dubious argumentation. But furthermore, if we want to teach them to *seek* the best version of every argument in every debate, we need to motivate them. This is precisely why we set debate in a competitive fashion: they are not just performing a task, they are competing, suddenly the classroom is transformed into a *playground of reason*.

To sum up all of the above, we can simmer the expected outcomes into these four groups:

1. Students, motivated by a competitive setting are more likely to prepare more seriously to discuss a classroom issue. Teachers might—in our experience—find it *much* easier, to compel students to actively seek additional information on particular dilemmas. Now—to give an example—a chapter by Singer or Rawls might not seem to them like tedious homework, but rather a reservoir of ideas that they can use in class;
2. Through prolonged debate practice, students will develop a sort of universal debate and logic skill. That is to say, we expect them to start identifying patterns. This means they are going to have a much easier time *actively* applying bits of knowledge on logic, but also just picking up on the know-how on their own. We expect these students to be far better able to engage in *any* ethical dilemma and debate and to far better understand the underlying assumptions and what is at stake;
3. We believe students will also learn to approach disagreement in a less personal, more clinical way. Especially given that they will often be given different opinions to defend, they should also gain the ability to treat positions *as independent* of persons holding them. We think that this is not to be ignored: sincere disagreement is as frequent in life as anything else, and the skill to approach disagreement rationally is of immense value as a social competence;
4. Finally, we believe that students are going to be able to take what they learn and be inspired to speak truth to power. Teaching ethics, of course, should not be a neutral, or better put, *disinterested* activity. We want to empower students—one crucial way to do so is through debate.

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II

Debating civil disobedience:

A proposal for a general approach to debating ethical dilemmas

Floris Velema &
Devin van den Berg

Chapter 2
Debating civil disobedience: A proposal for a general approach to debating ethical dilemmas

Floris Velema & Devin van den Berg

1 Introduction

In this chapter, we propose a general approach to debating ethical dilemmas. This approach consists of five steps: (1) preparation, (2) argument generation, (3) argument development, (4) argument evaluation, and (5) conclusion. These five steps will be further explained by applying them successively to an example debate case. The example—in the form of an ethical dilemma and corresponding debate motion—will be introduced in paragraph 2, after which the process of building a debate case according to the five steps is described in paragraph 3. Paragraph 4 contains two example debate speeches: an opening speech for the Proposition and an opening speech for the Opposition. We conclude this chapter with some practical advice on the implementation of our approach in the ethics classroom.

2 Example case

Civil disobedience and the climate crisis

In response to the latest publication of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 4 April 2022), UN Secretary-General António Guterres characterized our current predicament as follows:

> The jury has reached a verdict. And it is damning. This report of the IPCC is a litany of broken climate promises. It is a file of shame, cataloguing the empty pledges that put us firmly on track towards an unliveable world. We are on a fast track to climate disaster. Major cities under water. Unprecedented heatwaves. Terrifying storms. Widespread water shortages. The extinction of a million species of plants and animals. This is not fiction or exaggeration. It is what science tells us will result from our current energy policies. We are on a pathway to global warming of more than double the 1.5°C limit agreed in Paris. Some government and business leaders are saying one thing, but doing another. Simply put, they are lying. And the results will be catastrophic. This is a climate emergency (United Nations, 4 April 2022).

Given the clear need for immediate emissions reductions in order to limit global warming to 1.5°C, and the failing of governments and businesses to do so, it is understandable that the climate emergency has led to numerous campaigns from environmental NGOs and to mass protests from citizens around the world. However, some were dissatisfied with the limited impact of petitions and demonstrations and called for more drastic measures. A social movement that arose from this sentiment is Extinction Rebellion (abbreviated as XR). Roger Hallam, one of the co-founders of XR, describes the ambitions of the movement as follows:

> The paradigm shift is to move from the words to radical action, from lobbying to mass breaking of the law through nonviolent civil disobedience and from elitist exclusion to popular democratic mobilisation. (Hallam 2019, 8)

Civil disobedience can be defined as *'an act of protest, deliberately unlawful, conscientiously and publicly performed'* (Cohen 1971, 39). Conscientiously, in turn, can be defined as *'in the honest belief that what one does is right, in spite of the fact that it is illegal'* (Cohen 1971, 20). Since its establishment in 2018, XR members have joined in a variety of disruptive illegal actions, such as gluing themselves to windows, blocking busy intersections, forming human chains, anchoring themselves to structures, and organizing *die-ins* (where a group of people gather and lie down as if dead). Targets of these actions often include busy city centers, fossil fuel companies, fast fashion distributors, and printing presses of rightwing newspapers. These actions are typically followed by arrests, and many XR members have been taken to court. In fact, Roger Hallam suggests the use of court hearings as a means for more publicity, and advises activists in the defendant's bench to proclaim in a loud voice:

> I am duty bound to inform this court that in bringing me here it is complicit in the "greatest crime of all" namely, the destruction of our planet and children due to the corrupt inaction of the governing regime whose will you have chosen to administer. I will not abide by this court's rules and will now proceed to explain the existential threat facing all life, our families, communities and nation. (Hallam 2019, 30)

XR's disruptive actions are meant to mobilize more and more people, with the end goal of forming a Citizens' Assembly that will *"take over the sovereign role from a corrupted parliamentary system"* (Hallam 2019, 11). According to Hallam, ordinary people are in a better position than politicians to prevent a climate catastrophe, as they can take the necessary measures without the debilitating influence of powerful lobbying groups. The question remains whether XR's acts of civil disobedience have the potential to attract a growing number of sympathizers, or if they will only alienate and antagonize the general public.

One way to justify civil disobedience, is to see the violation of a law as a means to prevent greater imminent harm. For example, six XR protesters told the court they had deliberately sprayed graffiti and smashed windows of Shell's London headquarters in 2019 because the company was directly contributing to the climate crisis, thereby causing serious injury and death (BBC News, 23 April 2021). However, not all harms might have been taken into account in this argumentation. In his enlightening book on civil disobedience, Carl Cohen mentions another consequence of citizens partaking in illegal activities:

> When such citizens, whatever their moral fervor, take it upon themselves to break the law deliberately, whatever other consequences they may have in view, they help, through such conduct, to deteriorate the fabric of a law-abiding society. [...] Because civil disobedience does injure that fabric, the evil it does can never be outweighed by the good it can accomplish. (Cohen 1971, 149)

Another, more principled way to justify XR's civil disobedience would be to point out the current climate injustice, as some people and places are more vulnerable than others to the impacts of global warming. One could also point out the need for *intergenerational* justice, by taking into account the impact of the climate crisis on future generations. In his famous essay *Civil Disobedience* (1849), Henry David Thoreau argues for individual resistance to an unjust state:

> Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience, then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have the right to assume, is to do at any time what I think right. (Thoreau 2017, 272)

A similar idea can be found in the Letter from Birmingham Jail (1963) by Martin Luther King Jr., which became an important text for the civil rights movement in the United States:

> There are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. (King 2018, 9-10)

However, a response to this type of reasoning was again articulated by Carl Cohen[1]:

> Civil disobedience that is defended by seeking to invoke some higher (or "natural") law beyond and above the systems of positive law and alleged to have universal and supreme authority always proves unjustifiable at last. This is because the very nature of this defense is a serious threat to a stable social order. An effective system of laws, and the peaceful and orderly life of a community under the laws, is possible only when the authority of those laws is not readily overthrown by appeal to some principles outside the legal system. (Cohen 1971, 146)

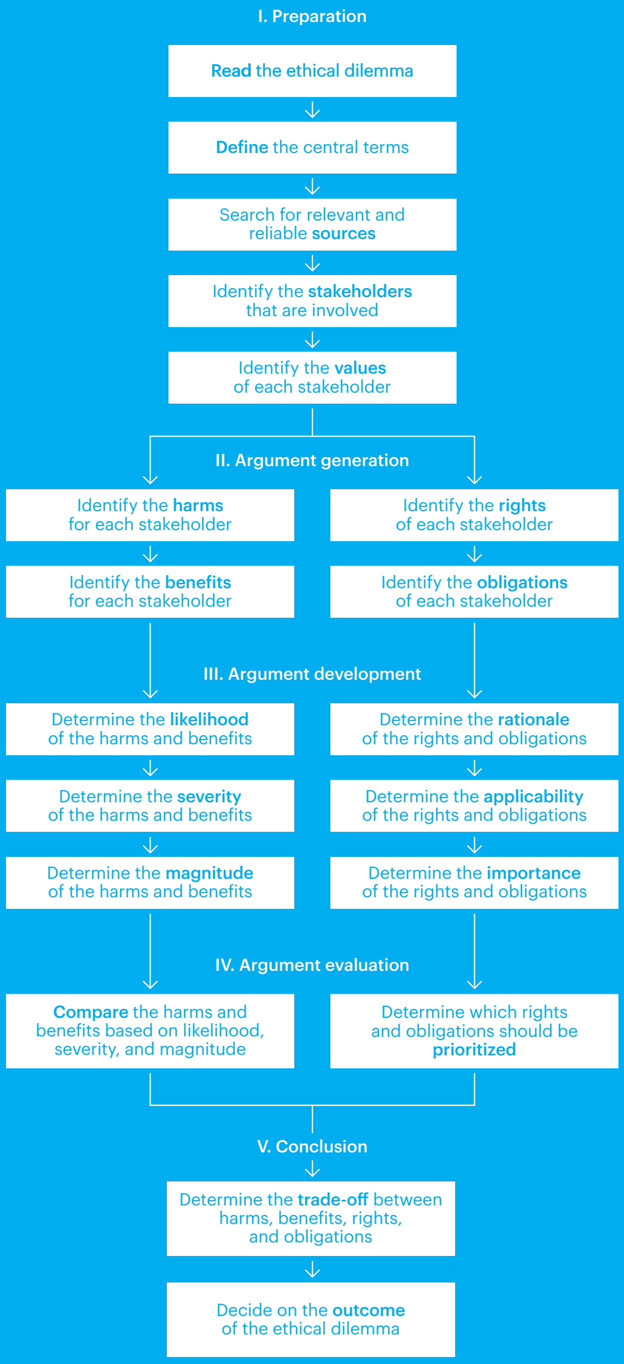
That "an effective system of laws" can indeed be deployed to fight the climate crisis became apparent in 2021, when the District Court of The Hague ruled that oil company Shell was obliged to reduce the carbon dioxide emissions of its

1 Cohen's book contains counterarguments to the mentioned positions as well.

activities by 45 percent at the end of 2030 compared with 2019 (Rechtbank Den Haag 2021). This example shows that climate justice may indeed be attainable within the legal system, calling into question whether actions outside the legal system, such as civil disobedience, can still be justified. However, Shell has recently filed its appeal to the ruling from 2021, and at the time of writing a final verdict has not yet been reached.

Motion

This house believes that non-violent civil disobedience is a justified response to the climate crisis.


I. Preparation
Read the ethical dilemma
Define the central terms
Search for relevant and reliable sources
Identify the stakeholders that are involved
Identify the values of each stakeholder
II. Argument generation
Identify the harms for each stakeholder
Identify the benefits for each stakeholder
Identify the rights of each stakeholder
Identify the obligations of each stakeholder
III. Argument development
Determine the likelihood of the harms and benefits
Determine the severity of the harms and benefits
Determine the magnitude of the harms and benefits
Determine the rationale of the rights and obligations
Determine the applicability of the rights and obligations
Determine the importance of the rights and obligations
IV. Argument evaluation
Compare the harms and benefits based on likelihood, severity, and magnitude
Determine which rights and obligations should be prioritized
V. Conclusion
Determine the trade-off between harms, benefits, rights, and obligations
Decide on the outcome of the ethical dilemma

3

How to approach an ethical dilemma: five steps

Now that the ethical dilemma has been described and the ensuing debate motion has been set, we will guide you through the process of building a debate case according to our proposed five-step approach.

I. Preparation

Read the ethical dilemma

Define the central terms

Search for relevant and reliable **sources**

Identify the **stakeholders** that are involved

Identify the **values** of each stakeholder

II. Argument generation

Step 1 Preparation

In most debate trainings or during debate tournaments, the participants are provided with a debate motion only, leaving it to the debaters to come up with their own arguments. What we offer in §2 is a more detailed description of the dilemma, to give the students some context and hints of possible pro and contra arguments. The same format can be found in chapter 3, where Torbjørn Gundersen offers a collection of eight ethical dilemmas. We believe that within the limited time of an ethics class, the description of the dilemma will shorten the time that students need to think of possible arguments, leaving more time for development and evaluation. For this reason, we advise students to read the dilemma carefully, and to be on the lookout for possible arguments to support their case.

It is up to the first speaker of the Proposition to define the central terms in the debate motion. The goal is not to provide dictionary definitions, but to set the limits of what is discussed. In general, we would discourage the tendency to define central terms in ways that would be advantageous to one's own side of the debate. Rather, it is recommended to define terms in such a way that they delineate the playing field as neutrally as possible. In our dilemma, a definition of civil disobedience has already been provided in the text.

The next step, searching for relevant and reliable sources, will in practice not be such a linear process as our model suggests. As Pušnik and Ivanuša have pointed out in chapter one, creating persuasive arguments requires deeper knowledge of the subject (see chapter 1, §3.1), so some research might be necessary at the start to get informed on the topic at hand. At the same time, it can become a pitfall to spend too much time researching when it is not yet clear which argument the data should support. This is why the main part of the research will occur in the argument development phase, when specific claims need to be illustrated or supported by evidence.

Still, becoming more acquainted with the context of the ethical dilemma will give students a better idea of all the stakeholders that are involved.

Table 1 Stakeholder identification

People committing the acts of civil disobedience	• People that already experience the harms of climate breakdown • People that have not experienced the harms of climate breakdown yet
People that are affected by the acts of civil disobedience	
General population	• People in favor of more extreme action against climate breakdown • People in favor of moderate action against climate breakdown • People who believe that the problem of climate breakdown is exaggerated
Governments	

In our example, we suggest four main stakeholders: (1) the people committing the acts of civil disobedience, (2) the people that are affected by the acts of civil disobedience, (3) the general population, and (4) governments. The first group can be divided into (a) people that already experience the harms of climate breakdown, and (b) people that have not experienced the harms of climate breakdown yet. The third stakeholder, the general population, can be divided into (a) people in favor of more extreme action against climate breakdown, (b) people in favor of moderate action against climate breakdown, and (c) people who believe that the problem of climate breakdown is exaggerated. An overview of these stakeholders can be found in table 1. Although we have not touched upon this in our example, note that it is possible to consider non-human stakeholders as well.

In the last step of the preparation phase, consider the values of each stakeholder. What is important for them? What motivates them? What do they hold dear? Mapping out stakeholders and their values will greatly help to obtain an overview of the dilemma and to think about possible outcomes in a nuanced way. In our example, the members of XR are trying to prevent a climate catastrophe, so one of their core values is no less than survival. The people that are affected by XR's action might, in turn, appeal to security and protection by the state. The values of all other stakeholders in our example have been listed in table 1. Still, making your case while appealing to values can be tricky. In chapter 4, Marcel Becker describes some challenges and pitfalls when working with values. We will also return to this topic in the paragraph on Argument evaluation (step 4).

Table 2 Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholders	Examples	Values
People that already experience the harms of climate breakdown	• Alaskans experiencing wildfires • Haitians experiencing decreased agricultural yields • Rising sea levels at the coast of East Timor	• Fairness • Survival
People that have not experienced the harms of climate breakdown yet	• Extinction Rebellion (Hallam 2019)	• Intergenerational justice • Survival
People that are affected by the acts of civil disobedience	• Companies whose property is occupied • People that are hindered by blockades	• Safety • Protection
People in favor of more extreme action against climate breakdown	• Supporters of Extinction Rebellion	• Survival • Social change
People in favor of moderate action against climate breakdown	• People who believe that climate action in the status quo is sufficient • People who prefer formal actions, i.e. policy change (Hallam 2019: "Reformists")	• Proportionality
People who believe that the problem of climate breakdown is exaggerated	• Climate change deniers • Right wing or centre conservatives	• Moderation • High regard for the law
Governments		• Stability • Protection of the democratic process

	Harms	Benefits	Rights	Obligations
	• Less cooperation from people that are affected • Being at physical risk during the actions	• Mobilizing others to act against climate breakdown • Raising awareness	• Self defense	• Having to respect the law
	• Less cooperation from people that are affected • Being at physical risk during the actions	• Mobilizing others to act against climate breakdown • Feeling of empowerment by acting against the interests of large corporations	• Protecting future self and future generations • Freedom of expression	• Having to respect the law • Not to be complicit in crimes against humanity (Hallam 2019, 30)
	• "Economic disruption" (Hallam 2019, 36) leads to less profit • Blockades lead to irritation		• Right to be protected	• Obligation not to harm others
	• Will be extra disappointed if the actions have no results • Nonviolent action might lead to violent action (Malm 2021)	• Motivated to take action • Feeling of satisfaction that something is being done	• Self defense	• Having to respect the law
	• Becoming disengaged because they don't identify with extreme actions	• Motivated to take action instead of silently agreeing • Motivated to make different lifestyle choices	• Protecting future self and future generations • Freedom of expression	• Having to respect the law
	• Polarization • Certain people or groups might organize counteractions	• More munition in terms of rhetoric		
	• Losing monopoly of power • Failing to protect citizens	• Pressured to take action		• Short term protection of property • Long term protection of the safety of citizens

II. Argument generation

Identify the **harms** for each stakeholder

Identify the **obligations** for each stakeholder

Identify the **rights** for each stakeholder

Identify the **benefits** for each stakeholder

III. Argument development

Step 2 Argument generation

Now that we have a clear view of all the stakeholders and their respective values involved in the dilemma, both the Proposition and the Opposition can start to think of arguments that will support their case. In the phase of Argument generation, the goal is to come up with concrete, one-sentence summaries of each argument. These sentences consist of two parts: (1) a *statement* that describes the change that the motion is proposing to bring about, and (2) the *impact* that the change will have.[2]

The most intuitive way to think about impact, is in terms of the *harms* and *benefits* to each stakeholder in case the motion is accepted. In our example, the potential harm of the climate crisis is disastrous on a planetary scale, so the Proposition could argue that civil disobedience is justified if it helps to prevent this outcome:

Statement	Civil disobedience is a justified response to the climate crisis,
Impact	since the effects of climate change are so severe that it is justified to break the law if it helps to prevent these harms.

In contrast to the utilitarian approach described so far, it is also possible to understand impact in a non-consequentialist manner. In our model, we have opted for the terms *rights* and *obligations* as umbrella terms for all non-consequentialist terminology. So, "obligation" could also be understood as a duty, a responsibility, or any norm that one should adhere to as a matter of principle. "Rights" should be understood in a broader sense than its strict legal meaning: the term also comprises any social or ethical principle that a stakeholder could be entitled to. While formulating arguments, debaters could, for example, take a human rights perspective, or focus on Kantian deontology (*cf.* chapter 5 by Ivan Kolev). Impact, in non-consequentialist terms, can be understood as the degree to which a certain principle is upheld when the motion is accepted.

2 Exercises relating to this topic can be found at https://debaticons.com/worksheets, especially Worksheet #2 ("Practicing analysis").

For the Opposition, a successful non-consequentialist argument will show that a certain principle is *violated* or *neglected* when the motion is accepted. In our example, the Opposition could argue that civil disobedience is a threat to a stable social order, as we have seen articulated by Carl Cohen in §2. The one-sentence summary of the argument would then look something like this:

Statement	It is unjustified to commit acts of civil disobedience,
Impact	because they undermine the key principles of a functioning democracy.

In summary, the Argument generation phase is meant for both teams to formulate concrete one-sentence statements, followed by a possible impact of the change the motion proposes. The impact will be characterized as a desired outcome by the Proposition, while the Opposition will try to prove that the outcome is in fact undesirable.

III. Argument development

Determine the **likelihood** of the harms and benefits

Determine the **severity** of the harms and benefits

Determine the **magnitude** of the harms and benefits

Determine the **rationale** of the rights and obligations

Determine the **applicability** of the rights and obligations

Determine the **importance** of the rights and obligations

IV. Argument evaluation

Step 3 Argument development

In the Argument development phase, the goal is to turn our previous one-sentence statements into a well-constructed argument. We have already categorized our statements into consequentialist reasoning (focusing on harms and benefits) and non-consequentialist reasoning (focusing on rights and obligations). This distinction is important because it determines which questions you need to answer to further develop your argument.

We will first turn to the development of consequentialist arguments. As the name suggests, consequentialist arguments deal with tangible consequences of the ethical dilemma. For each consequence that is brought up, students should explain the *likelihood* of the consequence occurring and the importance of the consequences to the dilemma, consisting of *severity* (the seriousness of the consequences) and *magnitude* (the scope of the consequences). These further elaborations on consequences often remain unanswered in everyday discussions.

Applying this to the debate motion under consideration here, proponents of the motion could suggest that acts of civil disobedience will make sure that people will become more aware of the urgency of the problem and, as a consequence, people will be inclined to join climate movements, or at least make more responsible choices in their everyday lives. Opponents could argue that a significant group of people will see these acts of civil disobedience as too extreme, making them less likely to identify with the problem of the climate crisis since they do not identify with the activists. As a consequence, they will be less likely to take action or change their behavior. Both statements could simultaneously be true. Some people can be inspired by acts of civil disobedience, while others might be turned away. This is the point where the average dinner table (or even classroom) discussion stops, because "both sides are somewhat right." This is where the question of likelihood becomes important.

In the Argument development phase, students should try to explain why the consequences that they claim will occur are likely to occur. If they are in the Proposition team, they should explain why it is likely that the acts of civil disobedience will lead to citizens taking action rather than them feeling attacked and alienated. The Opposition should, of course, argue that the exact opposite will occur. So both sides will try to explain why their claim is true for at least the great majority of the people being exposed to acts of civil disobedience.

Two elements are crucial when explaining the likelihood of a statement. In debate terms, the first is *analysis* and the second is *illustrations*. Analysis, in this context, is the reasoning that explains why your claim is likely to be true. In our case, a possible analysis could be:

> People rationally understand the dangers of the climate crisis. The reason why they do not take action yet is because of the gap between them understanding the issue and having the emotional trigger that is needed to act. Civil disobedience is an effective way to bridge that gap, because the acts of civil disobedience create the trigger needed to make sure that people feel the urgency on an emotional level. Because most people already understand the problem on a rational level, it is likely that they perceive these acts as something positive rather than something negative. Even if they might feel that the actions are quite extreme, they understand that the reason for them being so extreme is that alternatives did not work. So even in the case where they disagree with the method, they will still be reminded of the importance of the cause.

What the paragraph above shows is that analysis is a series of statements that, when combined, form a logical chain that "makes sense." If this example does not sound convincing, this is probably because of one of the following three reasons:

1. Some of the steps in the chain of logic might be controversial. For example, some might disagree with the statement that understanding the problem of climate change on a rational level will make you more likely to be sympathetic towards acts of civil disobedience.
2. There might be some gaps in the chain of logic. For example, it hasn't been explained why someone who disagrees with the method would still be reminded of the importance of the cause. It could

3. There might be opposing chains of logic that are more convincing. For example, even if it is true that civil disobedience might spark a sense of urgency, it will only have a short-term effect, since the urgency will fade away as life goes on. Seeing the actions on television might not lead to significant change in people's behavior.

These three points of criticism show that it is important to elaborate why a claim is likely to be true. Developing the analysis on both sides of the debate motion will lead to more depth of argumentation and a firmer grasp on the issue at hand.[3]

Another way to demonstrate the likelihood of your claim is by using illustrations. When talking about illustrations we are referring to both softer forms of illustrations, such as examples and analogies, and harder forms of illustrations, such as statistics and quantitive data. Using illustrations to demonstrate the likelihood of your idea has two big advantages. First of all, it shows the audience the plausibility of the analysis in concrete terms. This makes them more likely to believe the abstract logical steps of the analysis. The third point of criticism mentioned before could be made concrete with the following example:

> Even if it is true that civil disobedience might spark a sense of urgency, it will only have a short-term effect, since the urgency will fade away as life goes on. Seeing the actions on television might not lead to significant change in people's behavior. This is why we all have a hard time sticking to our new year's resolutions. The urgency is created when we are surrounded by friends reflecting on the past year, but the urgency fades away after time. As the 2018 IHRSA Health Club consumer report shows, 50% of new gym members cancel their subscriptions within the first six months. We think this example is analogous because both cases require long-term personal sacrifices in order to create sustainable change.

Illustrations can help to bring your analysis to life and thereby increase the likelihood of the statement. An additional advantage of

3 For a further elaboration on analysis in debate, see Velema (2022), chapter 6.

using illustrations is that researching a specific example can help you to add steps of analysis you hadn't thought of before.

After establishing the likelihood of a claim, it is necessary to determine its importance. Certain things might be very likely to happen but, at the same time, are relatively unimportant. These claims should therefore carry less weight in a discussion or debate. Suppose that the Opposition presents the argument that civil disobedience is undesirable because it leads to more media messages about the climate crisis and as a consequence might leave people feeling bad after watching the news. Although this might be likely to happen, it is a relatively unimportant claim in the debate. The question of whether people will do more or less to stop climate change when confronted with acts of civil disobedience is a much more important issue. On the other hand, there are claims that might be extremely important if shown to be true, but that are simultaneously very hard to prove. This would be the case if the Proposition claims that acts of civil disobedience will completely undo the effects of the climate crisis. So, one should always try to develop arguments that are both valid and important within the debate.

In the model presented here, we distinguish between two metrics that will help to explain the importance of a consequentialist argument. The first is the *severity* of the impact. Severity simply refers to the question of how good or bad the impact of an argument is. Naturally, the severity of an impact is not a binary issue (either good or bad), but should rather be seen as a scale. Therefore, it is up to the students to describe how good or bad the impact actually is. For example, it is not enough to say that people who feel inspired will decrease their carbon footprint and will thereby minimize the consequences of climate change. It would be better to explain to what extent they will minimize their footprint and how big the effect of that minimization would be.

The concept of severity can be further elaborated in terms of *intensity* and *duration*. A less intense impact can still have severe outcomes if the outcome lasts for a long time. A very intense impact might be very short-lived. Think, for example, of ripping off a band-aid. The classic work *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* by Jeremy Bentham (1789), especially chapter 4, *Measuring Pleasure* *and Pain*, counts as the leading source for this type of classification. In any case, making the severity of the impact clear will have many advantages in the Argument Evaluation phase, when opposing arguments will have to be considered side by side.

A second metric to determine the importance of a consequentialist impact can be found in the concept of magnitude. This would be the number of people affected. An impact that is less severe but influences a large group of people could still be considered more important than a more severe impact that affects a smaller group. In the paragraph on Argument Evaluation, we will further describe how to apply the severity and magnitude to weigh arguments against each other.

We have now described the steps for turning a consequentialist statement into a fully developed argument. Next, we will describe the questions one could ask to achieve the same result for non-consequentialist claims. Assume that the Opposition would want to develop the one-sentence summary we presented in step 2: *It is unjustified to commit acts of civil disobedience because they undermine the key principles of a functioning democracy.*

We distinguish three steps in the development of non-consequentialist arguments: (1) rationale, (2) applicability, and (3) importance. We will describe them here consecutively. In order to describe the *rationale* behind the right or obligation that is introduced, one should consider two things. First, a description of what the general right or obligation entails, and second, an explanation of why we generally value this right or obligation. Notice that the first step is about explaining the rationale behind the general right or obligation without applying it to the specific case in question. In our example, the general principle could be described as follows:

> When a law is created following a democratic process, protests against that law should also be conducted within the confines of the law by using the mechanisms that a democracy offers to voice one's discontent. For example, by voting, lobbying for change, or going to court when you feel that a law endangers basic human rights.

The next step in describing the rationale is to explain why we value this general principle:

> The reason for this being a key principle within our democracy is that it makes sure that the system works in the long term. If individuals can decide to break the law whenever they disagree with a policy, radical minorities would be able to disrupt our society whenever they don't agree with what is happening. This harms the fundamental principles of a democracy since a democracy assumes that all voices and opinions are equally important. Therefore, one group does not have a bigger claim over what is good or bad than the other. As a consequence people who are on the losing end of a decision should not be able to disrupt society simply because they disagree with the policies that are in place. This is also why we don't allow civil disobedience in other instances where you as an individual might not agree with the law. You are not allowed to stop paying taxes when you disagree with a government's economic policy and you are not allowed to occupy the parliament simply because you believe that more money should be spent on education. Both concerns might be legitimate, but you ought to use the mechanisms a democracy offers to make them heard.

The reason we advise you to start with the general rationale before you dive into the specific case is that rights and obligations are often more broadly applicable than just the case you are discussing. By showing why we have a right or obligation and how we treat that right or obligation in other instances, it becomes easier to explain why we should follow the same chain of logic in the specific case you are discussing.

After explaining the rationale, the applicability of the right or obligation should be examined. In this step, the team should explain why the specific case that you are discussing is analogous to the general principle you have described. For some of the claims in the description of the rationale that we have offered, it still needs to be shown that they are also applicable in the case of our specific motion on civil disobedience. (1) It needs to be shown that the laws that are harming the climate and the absence of taking actions that reduce the harms of the climate crisis are both result from following proper democratic processes. (2) It needs to be shown that the mechanisms that a democracy normally offers (voting, protests, court cases etc) are available in this specific case. (3) An explanation needs to be given of why policy surrounding the climate crisis is similar to other policies and should therefore not receive any special status. This last question is relevant because even if it is shown that the process used is the same as with other policies, civil disobedience could still be legitimate if policies about climate change carry a different weight and should thus be exempted from standards we normally uphold when disagreeing with a law. As such, the applicability is determined by explaining as precisely as possible why the specific case in question is analogous to the general rationale explained before.

The final step in the development of an argument consists of explaining the importance of the right or obligation in question. In debates or everyday discussions, there are often rights and obligations that clash with one another. In those instances, it is not enough to simply explain why we uphold a right or obligation when a motion is passed because upholding that right or obligation might mean that we are not upholding another. The students should then be able to explain why a particular right or obligation overrides other rights or obligations, by engaging in a comparative assessment of the priority of rights, and take into account issues of proportionality. We leave the strategy in this step to the creativity of the students. Examples can be found in §4, where we offer a fully developed debate speech for both Proposition and Opposition.

IV. Argument evaluation

Compare the harms and benefits based on likelihood, severity, and magnitude

Determine which rights and obligations should be **prioritized**

V. Conclusion

Step 4 Argument evaluation

What often happens when those new to debating are asked which side they think won the debate, is that they repeat one of the arguments made by the team that convinced them most and then say that they were convinced by that argument. The downside of this reply is that it gives very little information about the procedure that the decision-maker used. By just restating the argument that was the most convincing, it remains unclear why that argument was more convincing than everything else that was said during the debate.

Therefore, teachers should guide their students away from evaluating arguments in a vacuum and towards evaluating them in comparison to other arguments that were raised during the debate. Debaters should be able to explicitly compare the argument that persuaded them to the arguments that did not persuade them. Looking at debates from a comparative perspective has two big advantages. Firstly, it reduces the risk that the outcome of the debate is reached on the basis of blind spots and biases. Secondly, it will help students to articulate their opinion on the topic of the debate. When students need to directly compare arguments to each other, it will become harder to ignore good arguments that might not fit their initial world view. It is easier to ignore arguments than it is to logically explain why these were less convincing than others.

For classroom debates, this has two implications. First of all, we encourage adjudicators (both students and teachers) to judge debates based on explicit comparatives and trade-offs. Secondly, we encourage speakers to already make these explicit comparisons and trade-offs in a debate to get the judges on their side. In some instances, it is very obvious why arguments need to be compared to each other. Returning to the case of civil disobedience, there could be an argument on the Proposition side claiming that civil disobedience leads to awareness of the impact of the climate crisis which, as a consequence, will make people more likely to change their behavior. On the other hand, the Opposition could argue that given the extreme nature of these actions, people will be alienated from climate movements and, as a consequence, be less likely to change their behavior.

It would be a shame if judges, after seeing the debate, would say:

> I'm more convinced by the Proposition because I believe that people will become aware of the consequences of the climate crisis and thus change their behavior.

All Opposition speakers would be dissatisfied because it is unclear why the judge is inclined to believe that statement over the Opposition statement. This might indicate that the decision is based on a preconceived notion of whether social disobedience is desirable without fully crediting the new arguments that were raised during the debate. Therefore, we encourage judges to make an explicit trade-off and explain why they are more inclined to believe one claim over the other. In other words, they should dwell in more detail on the analysis of the opposed claims.

In this case, the arguments revolve around a consequentialist trade-off. So, the arguments can be compared using the three criteria mentioned in step 3: likelihood, severity, and magnitude. The most straightforward way to compare arguments is to assess them on the basis of likelihood. For example:

> I think that it is more likely that people will be inclined to support Extinction Rebellion and change their behavior than it is likely that they will become alienated because…

However, just assessing the likelihood of the statements would not do justice to the complexity of the debate. It could be the case that the majority of people perceive the actions of civil disobedience positively and as a consequence are likely to change their behavior for the better. Nonetheless, this could still mean that there is a considerable minority who perceive these actions as negative, leading to more opposition towards these movements and to solutions to the climate crisis in general. It then becomes relevant as to which group has the largest impact on the path towards solving the climate crisis (positively or negatively). It could be the case that the majority only changes their behavior for a short time, taking small-scaled action, while the people opposing these acts could be enraged for a longer time, taking more serious actions. In this case, both teams need to analyze the likelihood and the severity of the impact to be able to make the trade-off.

When it comes to comparing non-consequentialist arguments, choosing which rights and obligations should be prioritized might be challenging. In step 3, we partly developed the Opposition argument that it is unjustified to commit acts of civil disobedience because they undermine the key principles of a functioning democracy. In this same debate, the Proposition could bring an argument saying that the government neglected its duty to protect its citizens by failing to act against the climate crisis and that, as a consequence, people should be allowed to break the law to protect themselves. In comparing these arguments, we advise to first review the extent to which the arguments are shown to be sound. For example, if the Proposition refutes the Opposition argument by explaining that because of corporate lobbying, laws surrounding climate change are actually not following a proper democratic procedure, the argument becomes less credible in the debate. But what if both arguments are sustained in the debate? Our advice would be to consider the following questions:

> 1 To what extent are the rights and obligations in question upheld or lost when choosing one side of the debate over the other?
> 2 What is the relative importance of the right or obligation that is prioritized when choosing one side of the debate over the other?

With "relative importance," we refer to the importance of a certain right or obligation that is upheld, in comparison to the importance of a right or obligation that is lost in the trade-off. Preferably, these questions are addressed by the debaters during the debate, instead of leaving these questions for the jury to decide.

V. Conclusion

Determine the **trade-off** between harms, benefits, rights, and obligations

Decide on the **outcome** of the ethical dilemma

Step 5 Conclusion

The last step in our proposed approach to debating ethical dilemmas is essential, because in this phase (1) the outcome of the debate is decided, and (2) the competitive aspect of the debate is replaced by a more deliberative approach, where students get to form their own opinions.

It is up to the judges to decide who wins the competitive aspect of the debate. We encourage teachers to ask their students to pick a winner, as it forces the adjudicators to assess the actual trade-offs. So, in a classroom context, getting to a conclusion is an important step in the learning process. We have already seen how consequentialist and non-consequentialist arguments can be compared, but how should one proceed if one team wins the consequentialist line of the debate while the other team wins the non-consequentialist line of the debate? The jury is then confronted with comparing a utilitarian and a deontological lens, thus moving to another, more philosophical level of confrontation of issues. From a competitive perspective, the jury should favor the team that was able to present the most sound argumentation from their perspective. Perhaps the teams even touched upon the question of why a utilitarian lens should be preferred over a deontological lens in this specific case. Again, the team that makes the comparison more explicitly should be favored over the team that leaves the comparison to the judges.

After the judges give their final verdict, the debate is over and all students can leave their roles behind. This is a great starting point for a classroom discussion, as all participants have witnessed the arguments from both sides of the dilemma. The classroom debate is not meant to offer the final verdict on an ethical dilemma. Instead, we see debate as a useful game to map and compare all possible arguments around a controversial topic, after which the student is in a much better position to articulate their own point of view. We leave the structuring of this final classroom discussion up to the discretion of the teacher, in which a more personal tone can be adopted, and space should be created for personal values.

4 Example speeches

First speech of the Proposition

With the increase in droughts, floods and wildfires, the effects of the climate crisis are visible around the globe. Although governments generally acknowledge the need for change, many people facing the consequences of climate breakdown feel that too little is being done to create the sustainable change needed. We believe that, when a government fails to protect the basic rights of its citizens, you should be allowed to stand up for yourself in order to create the change you need. That is why we're in favor of the motion: *This house believes that non-violent civil disobedience is a justified response to the climate crisis*.

Let's first define some of the key terms in the motion. For the purpose of this debate, we define "civil disobedience" as an act of nonviolent protest, deliberately unlawful, conscientiously and publicly performed. This could look like Extinction Rebellion members gluing themselves to windows, blocking busy intersections, forming human chains and anchoring themselves to structures. Note that all of the aforementioned actions are examples of non-violent civil disobedience. Violent disobedience is something we will not stand for during this debate.

A second key term that we want to clarify is the term "climate crisis." The climate crisis refers to the effects of human-induced climate change like the rising ties, melting ice caps, and increase in droughts and wildfires.

In this speech, we will present two arguments in favor of the motion. First of all, we will explain why civil disobedience is a legitimate response to the climate crisis since the effects of climate change are so severe that it is justified to break the law if it helps prevent these harms. Moreover, we will argue that civil disobedience, regardless of its outcomes, can be justified as a form of protest in cases where governments are failing to justly govern their nation.

Now let's move on to our first argument for why civil disobedience is a legitimate response to climate change since the effects of climate change are so severe that it is legitimate to break the law. We already established that the harms of climate change are immense. Some people are unable to grow food because of droughts, while others have to leave the land that their family held for centuries because of floods.

But why then would it be legitimate to break the law to prevent these consequences? From a utilitarian perspective, we could argue that laws are put in place to optimize collective utility. The fact that I'm not allowed to drive in someone else's car without permission might slightly decrease my utility, but that is compensated by the fact that in return I know that no one else can drive my car without my permission. In that way, laws about possession would optimize collective utility. But what if "sticking to the law" would cost more than "breaking the law" would? In that case, we could argue that it is not just legitimate but maybe even your duty to break the law. If you're standing in front of a red traffic light and you see that a car is about to hit a child that walks on the street, most people would argue that it's legitimate to cross the red light to save the child.[4] From a utilitarian standpoint, we could argue that this is the case because the benefit gained (saving the child) is much greater than the cost endured (crossing the red light).

So how would this logic apply in the case of civil disobedience? The acts committed are relatively small infringements, like gluing yourself to a window or blocking an intersection. Yes, it might be true that these acts cause a certain kind of inconvenience, and thus harm someone else's utility, but that decrease of utility is meaningless compared to the benefit of saving the planet, current citizens, and future generations.

Another aspect to this point, however, is the likelihood of the benefit occurring. Yes, if we save the world, that is a high score for every utilitarian. But if the chance to achieve this is close to zero, while the smaller loss is guaranteed, breaking the law might not be legitimate, even from a utilitarian perspective. That is why it is important to also explain why it's likely that these acts of civil obedience will lead to change.

One of the reasons why this is the case is that civil disobedience generates a lot of media attention. Images of human chains or people anchoring themselves to structures often evoke a lot of emotions. Because of this, more people are likely

4 A similar argument can be found in the famous Chomsky-Foucault debate (Chomsky & Foucault 1974, 176-177).

to consume this kind of news. This also means that the problems discussed will reach a broader audience. This is important for two reasons.

Firstly, the emotional response that you feel creates a sense of urgency. A lot of people agree that we should try to fight the consequences of climate change. However, they don't feel the urgency to make the sacrifices needed. That is why there are a lot of people who vote for green parties but don't make the necessary small-scale sacrifices on a daily basis. They still go on holiday by plane and drive polluting cars. The urgency added by these emotionally triggering acts of civil disobedience could be the last push people need to change their behavior.

But even if people don't feel a strong emotional stimulus that instantly makes them change their views, these acts could still create change. Another way to create urgency is by showing a message over and over again, leading to people feeling strongly about the topic. This is the reason why the values that we have been raised with are often hard to change. These values were constantly repeated and reinforced. As a consequence, they became an important part of our belief system. We believe that repeatedly seeing acts of civil disobedience on the news could have a similar type of effect. By seeing it over and over again, the urgency becomes a part of your belief system.

Moreover, we believe that acts of disobedience can trigger individuals to find out why the people on their screens are performing a relatively extreme act. Because of that, they start reading up on how severe the circumstances are and start consuming more and more information about the causes and consequences of climate change. This means that you're confronted with the consequences more intensely making it more likely that you start caring about them.

Because of this, people are more likely to take an active role in solving the problem. This could range from small individual changes, like eating less meat and traveling by train, to sparking structural changes by voting differently and lobbying for change.

So since, on the one hand, the infringements committed are relatively small while these actions could on the other hand significantly impact our chances of combating the climate crisis, we believe that committing these acts is justified from a utilitarian perspective.

These actions can however also be legitimized from a non-consequentialist point of view. That is what we will argue in our second argument. Besides the utilitarian framework, we could also evaluate the concept of laws by taking a closer look at the value of reciprocity. From a contractual standpoint, laws exist because there is a reciprocal relationship between citizens and the government. Simply put, the government takes care of you so you should abide by their laws. They take care of you by having a police force that protects you, by providing education so you can develop yourself, and by facilitating healthcare so you can be helped in case of illness. In return, you are expected to follow the laws, pay taxes, and be a part of the society you live in.

If we look at civil disobedience from this perspective we would argue that, since the government is not living up to their side of the bargain, it is legitimate to not live up to your side of the bargain. This is analogous to a relationship between an employer and an employee. If an employer doesn't pay their employee or doesn't respect labor laws, it is legitimate for an employee to refuse to work. It works exactly the same the other way around: if an employee doesn't show up at work and refuses to do what they're meant to do, an employer can break the contract and fire them. So even though this relationship has a hierarchical structure, both sides are still expected to respect their side of the contract.

So how can this analysis justify civil disobedience from a contractual perspective? We would argue that by not taking the actions needed, governments are failing to fulfill their obligation. It is their primary task to keep their citizens safe and prosperous. Not only now but for years to come. By overlooking the role of big companies in the climate crisis and by hesitating to take action that might harm them, governments are at best neglecting the duty they have towards their citizens. At worst, they could even be seen as complicit because they willfully choose not to act when needed.

We thus believe that since the government breaches its side of the contract, it is legitimate for citizens to ignore their contract too. But if all this analysis is true, why do we only support non-violent civil disobedience and not stand for a world where citizens can break every law? This is because we believe that, within the context of a relationship, proportionality is key. So, if a government is actively attacking its citizens we are fine with the citizens fighting back. But since governments around the world are trying to implement changes we think that, although they don't do everything they should, they are still trying to live up to their side of the contract, meaning that minor infringements are allowed, but major infringements are not.

This argument shows that regardless of whether these actions will actually prevent the negative results of climate change from occurring, it is justified to commit the actions as a response to the dysfunctional relationship between the state and its citizens in this specific area.

4 Example speeches

First speech of the Opposition

One of the key principles of functioning democracies is that it is founded on a system of strong checks and balances. We believe that as long as these checks are working properly, enforcing your will on others by breaking the laws—and thereby circumventing the democratic process—is not legitimate. Moreover, we believe that these acts of civil disobedience actively decrease the likelihood of change being put into effect, meaning that it becomes harder to prevent the consequences of climate change.

Let's start by quickly examining the case of the Proposition. In their first argument, they try to justify the acts of civil disobedience from a utilitarian perspective. In our second argument, we will explain why these acts will only make it harder to convince people to join the cause, meaning that from a utilitarian perspective more harm than benefit will be created. However, we have one response that we would like to give at the start of this speech. We don't understand why the Proposition is only willing to support non-violent cases of civil disobedience. They explain why climate change is one of the biggest problems we have ever faced. Surely that means that, in a utilitarian calculus, preventing the harms of climate change is so important that it would even outweigh violence being used in the process. The fact that they don't stand for this seems to imply that they still believe that there are cases where laws need to be upheld regardless of the utilitarian outcome of breaking them.

The second Proposition argument was about why it is in principle legitimate to commit these acts regardless of their consequences. They argue that from a contractual perspective it is legitimate to break the law since the government hasn't upheld its side of the contract. Our own principled argument will directly clash with this point, but we have one separate point of rebuttal we want to present first. We believe that, even if their logic is correct and governments around the globe have failed to live up to their side of the contract, there are plenty of options within the system to voice one's disagreement without breaking the rules. Some of these options are organizing regular protests within the confines of the law or starting court cases against governments and companies. We have seen many successful examples throughout the world. Think for instance of the global Student Climate Strike on 15 March 2019 that followed the example of the peaceful protests initiated by Gretha Thunberg, or the verdict made by a French court in 2021 stating that the French Government was legally responsible for contributing to the climate change crises because it failed to meet the Greenhouse Gas emission targets it set for itself (Urgenda Foundation 2021). We believe that, just like with regular contracts, you have the obligation to use the routes within the system before you are allowed to break the contract. That is why if an employer refuses to uphold the necessary labor standards, you are expected to sue them instead of taking matters into your own hands.

Now that we have dealt with the Proposition case, it's time to present our own arguments. In our first argument, we will explain why it is principally illegitimate to commit these acts of civil disobedience because they undermine the key principles of a functioning democracy. Afterwards, we will explain why the actions are also illegitimate from a utilitarian point of view.

Let's start this first argument with a very simple premise. In democracies, governments ought to represent the will of the people. In return we expect society to respect the laws that are created as a result of that democratic process. If we vote for progressive politicians who increase taxes to support the welfare system, we expect everyone, regardless of whether one voted in favor of these progressive politicians, to pay their fair share.

But does that mean that the majority is always right and that we should thus always follow their wishes? No, not always. Because in a democracy we also acknowledge that everyone has basic rights that cannot be outvoted. That is why we have constitutions that make sure that, even if we would want to, we cannot just strip people of their freedom of speech or right not to be discriminated against.

If we look at past instances of civil disobedience, we see that they arose in situations where the democratic system wasn't functioning properly. Take the civil rights movement in the US for example. The acts of civil disobedience that took place are largely deemed legitimate, for two reasons. First of all, there were laws in place that in themselves were deemed wrong because they disregarded Black people's basic right to be treated equally. Secondly, you could argue that these actions were legitimate because even if some of the laws that were broken weren't illegitimate in themselves, they helped to uphold an unfair system. We think that both of the aforementioned criteria don't apply in the case of climate change-related civil disobedience.

First of all, Extinction Rebellion is not breaking rules that are in themselves illegitimate. When Rosa Parks refused to sit in the back of the bus this was an act of civil disobedience that was directly aimed at the law she broke. She refused to follow the law because she believed that the law in itself was unjust. Climate change activists on the other hand do not disagree with the laws they're breaking. When members of Extinction Rebellion anchor themselves to structures they don't do so because they believe that people don't have a right to property. When they block busy intersections, they don't do so because they disagree with traffic regulations. So it's clear that the first criterion, breaking laws because you believe that the laws in themselves are illegitimate, doesn't hold in the case of climate change.

Now let's move on and assess the second criterion, breaking laws because they help to uphold an unjust society. To assess this criterion we first need to establish if a society in which governments choose not to act or don't do enough to prevent the consequences of climate change is actually an unjust society. We think that this is not the case. Since governments are supposed to represent the will of the people, they cannot be blamed for inaction when citizens haven't been prioritizing the environment when making political choices. For decades voters have had the option to vote for green parties who would prioritize climate change over other short term needs, but many of them didn't. Following this logic, we would actually argue that prioritizing the climate over other needs would have meant neglecting the wishes of voters and thereby breaching the contract between the citizens and the state. The reason why governments didn't shut down the oil industry is not because they are evil entities but because the gas was needed for citizens to drive to work and the petrol was needed to keep factories running. Shutting down the oil industry would mean that many people would lose their jobs and have lower living standards. So constant trade-offs between short term needs and long term needs had to be made. Since trade-offs like these don't have objectively right or wrong answers, the only way to determine the just course of action is by following a process where citizens can share their preferences so a government can act on those preferences. That is exactly what voting is. So we believe that the political system as it is right now is not unjust and, therefore, breaking laws to rebel against that system is also not a just course of action. So this argument shows that on grounds of principle the acts of civil disobedience are not justified.

Now let's take the utilitarian case of the Proposition at its strongest. Assume that the Proposition has shown that the consequences of climate change are so severe that preventing the occurrence of these consequences legitimizes methods that would otherwise be deemed illegitimate. This line of reasoning only stands if the Proposition proves that it is likely that the acts of civil disobedience would actually contribute to preventing the consequences of climate change. If we prove that it is unlikely that acts of civil disobedience aid the prevention of the consequences of climate change or, even worse, make it harder to prevent them, the acts are illegitimate from a utilitarian point of view. That is why we will use our second argument to explain why civil disobedience makes it more difficult to fight the consequences of climate change.

The main reason why this is true is that these acts of civil disobedience make it harder for an average citizen to identify with these movements. We see a trend where more and more people are acknowledging the severity of climate change. At the same time, we also see that people tend to become defensive when they feel like they're under attack or when there's a risk of something important being taken away from them. That is why people become defensive if someone tells them that it would be better if they would stop eating meat or stop flying to holiday destinations. These acts of civil disobedience tend to scare away an important group of moderate followers because they use extreme, perpetrator focused narrative, such as:

> On June 18, we plan to carry out nonviolent direct action to ensure Heathrow Authorities close the airport for the day, to create a 'pause' in recognition of the genocidal impact of high carbon activities, such as flying, upon the natural world. [...] This is not about targeting the public, but holding the Government to their duty to take leadership on the climate and ecological emergency. (XR UK, 30 May 2019)

This means that a part of the people that you want to reach get alienated because they don't identify with the extreme message or the extreme action. According to a study by Nature, public division about climate change is rooted in conflicting socio-political identities. They state that interventions that increase angry opposition to action on climate change are especially problematic (Bliuc et al. 2015).

These potential followers are crucial in the process of creating change. The first reason why this is the case is that this group is relatively big and therefore plays an important role during elections. Alienating them might lead to them prioritizing other issues during elections, making it harder to solve the problem at hand. A second reason why this group is crucial is that a lot of the actions that need to be taken to minimize the effects of climate change are small-scale or even individual actions. Think of daily choices like eating less meat, going on holiday by train, or buying an electric car. If alienation means that the urgency to solve the problem decreases, it is less likely that people will be willing to make these small individual sacrifices that are needed for the greater good. So this means that the acts of civil disobedience actively decrease the likelihood of necessary actions against climate change being taken.

So, on the Opposition side, we believe that these actions are both immoral and ineffective and should thus be deemed illegitimate and not be condoned.

5 Implementation in the classroom: some practical advice

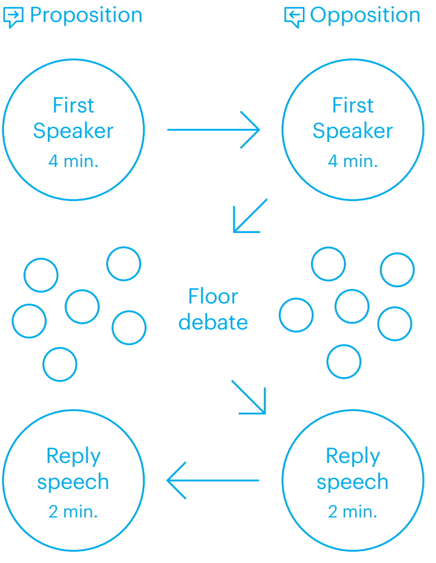
We conclude this chapter with some practical advice on how to implement the debate method described above in the ethics classroom. Our suggested approach to debating ethical dilemmas in the classroom consisted of five steps. The sequence of these steps, and their respective positions in the debate, is summarized in the following table:

I	Preparation	The preparation occurs before the debate. Teachers can ask their students to prepare for the debate at home, or give them 10-20 minutes in advance to prepare for a more *impromptu*-style debate.
II	Argument generation	Arguments are generated before the debate and are presented during the debate speeches of the First and Second Speaker.
III	Argument development	The further development of the arguments forms the core of the debate.
IV	Argument evaluation	The evaluation of the arguments starts towards the end of the debate and can continue in the discussion after the debate.
V	Conclusion	The conclusion is reached in the Reply Speeches, which are evaluated by the jury and in the discussion after the debate. In the discussion, all students can reach their own conclusion based on the arguments that were presented and compared during the debate.

To ethics teachers without prior debating experience, it might seem daunting to implement all five steps in the classroom at once. Therefore, we suggest breaking up the implementation of the debate method into manageable chunks, in the following way:

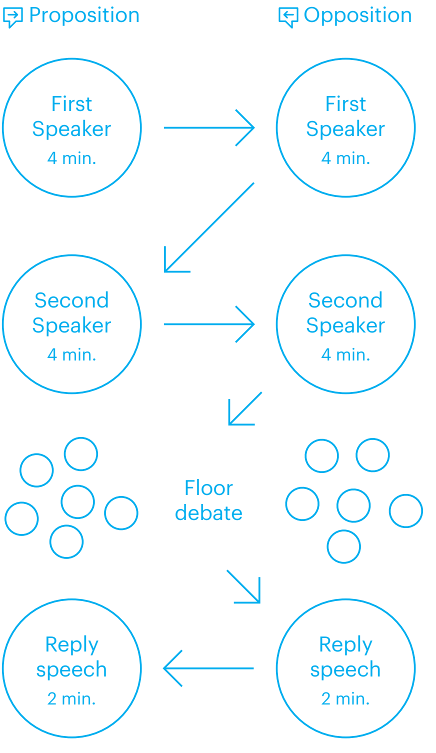
I Beginner

- Select descriptions of ethical dilemmas that contain stakeholders and possible arguments.
- Focus on step 3: the development of the arguments based on the description offered in the text.
- Divide the class in two teams. Each team selects one speaker for the opening speech and one speaker for the reply speech. Let each team develop two arguments to be presented in the opening speech (the speeches should last no longer than 4 minutes).
- During the floor debate, students present arguments in turns with the moderator ensuring equal opportunity for all. Speakers have 40 seconds to present their arguments, and to address opposing arguments.
  To signal the moderator, students can raise their hand or stand up (as preferred by the teacher).
- One speaker from each team summarizes why their side has won the debate (the reply speech should not exceed 2 minutes).



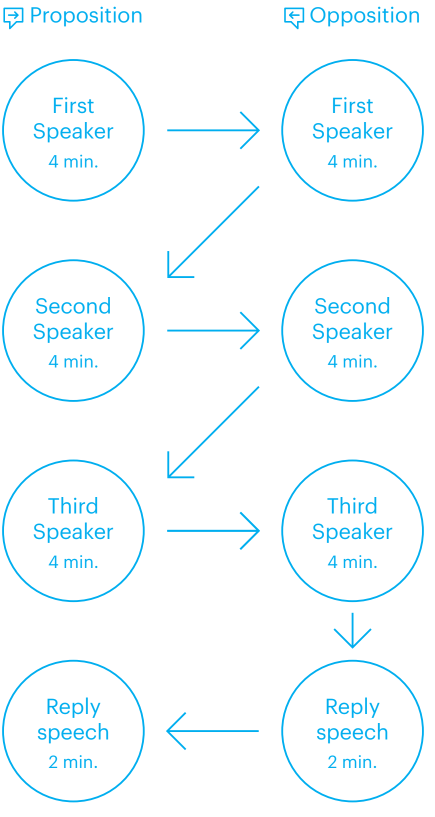
II Intermediate

- Select descriptions of ethical dilemmas that contain stakeholders and possible argument to save time in the preparation phase.
- Add a Second Speaker to each team. The Second Speaker should criticize the arguments from their opponents, and add a third argument to the two argument presented by the First Speaker.
- Select three students as jury members. The jury should focus on step 4 and 5 (Evaluation and Conclusion). To follow the debate, the jury members can use worksheet 3, 4 and 5).
- Ask the students to focus on argument evaluation in the floor debate.
- Ask the student who gives the Reply Speech to focus on the conclusion: a final comparison between the given arguments.



III Advanced

- Present the students with a debate motion, without further elaboration on stakeholders and possible arguments.
- Replace the floor debate with a Third Speaker on each team. The Third Speaker should not add any new arguments to the debate, but is allowed to rebut the arguments that have been brought up by their opponents and elaborate on their own team's arguments. The speaker should also focus on argument evaluation.
- The Reply Speech is given by the First or Second Speaker. Debate teams now consist of only 3 members. All other students can join in the discussion after the debate.



In the next chapter, Torbjørn Gundersen has described eight current ethical dilemmas, which are all well-suited for a classroom debate. Each case contains descriptions of stakeholders and hints to possible arguments on both sides of the dilemma. We invite you to apply the general approach to debating ethical dilemmas that we have developed in this chapter to the cases in chapter 3.

Tags at ethics.community

Didactical methods
- Brainstorming
- Case method
- Debate

Types of ethics
- Applied ethics

Ethical topics
- Animal rights
- Human rights
- Justice
- Nature
- Norms and values
- Responsibility

Cross-curricular topics
- Global citizenship
- Health
- Sustainability

Interdisciplinary relations
- Artificial intelligence
- Medicine
- Politics

III

Ethical dilemmas in science, technology, and public policy

Torbjørn Gundersen

Chapter 3
Ethical dilemmas in science, technology, and public policy
Torbjørn Gundersen

Introduction

This chapter presents eight cases involving ethical dilemmas, the contents of which can be used for debate purposes. All eight cases include a debate motion, and students will be assigned to argue for or against it. The cases revolve around current issues in science and public policy, such as artificial intelligence, climate change, medical research, and trust in experts. These issues are among the most serious ethical problems of our time. All dilemmas are based on actual cases. The main aim of the cases is to provide a rich context for debate. However, for each case, we include additional questions that might stimulate further discussion, reflection, and communication between pupils and teachers.

Cases

1 The climate crisis, scientists, and political activism

2 Artificial intelligence in medicine: potential benefits and the accountability problem

3 Animal experimentation in medical research (public health vs. animal rights)

4 Climate change, wind power, and environmentalism

5 Mandatory vaccination for health professionals during the Covid-19 pandemic

6 Self-driving cars: who bears responsibility for accidents (companies vs. designers)?

7 The right to try: experimental drugs

8 Transplantation of animal organs

Case 1

The climate crisis, scientists, and political activism

Climate change is arguably one of the most significant challenges of our time. Due to emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane, humans are a major contributor to global warming. An increasingly warmer planet translates into melting ice sheets, rising sea levels, and more instances of extreme weather, such as heat waves and rainstorms. These changes in climatic conditions will have harmful consequences not only for our ecosystems but also on humans and societies. In short, these social effects are complex and wide-ranging. More droughts will have negative effects on crops and water supply in some regions. Due to rising sea levels, several populated areas will become inhabitable. Public health and international security could also be negatively affected by climate change. In other words, climate change could have catastrophic consequences on a global scale, and several politicians and citizens now refer to its consequences as the climate *crisis*.

Some of the effects of climate change are visible to ordinary people. However, the systematic and reliable knowledge of human-induced climate change is based on advanced scientific measurements and theories. Had it not been for scientific research on climate change, we would probably not have been aware of the effects of our greenhouse gas emissions on

Just Stop Oil protest at London's National Gallery, still from video shot by Rich Felgate temperature and weather patterns. This means that climate scientists play a crucial role in utilizing scientific evidence to inform us about the dangers of climate change. Since 1990, the main provider of such knowledge about climate change has been the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC), which provides detailed overviews of what scientists know about climate change, its causes and effects, and ways to mitigate the phenomenon. The IPCC is generally considered a reliable source of knowledge about climate change, and most politicians in most countries defer to it for knowledge about climate science, which makes our policies on climate change dependent on these scientific experts.

One could argue that while climate scientists and the IPCC have been successful at providing reliable knowledge, the policy response has thus far been inadequate. Indeed, while there are several international agreements on the need to mitigate climate change (e.g. the Paris Agreement, which set a 2 °C target to limit global warming, even aiming to limit warming to 1.5 °C), global greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise. In other words, the policy response to climate change has lagged behind the clear scientific evidence of the attendant consequences.

Against this backdrop, some climate scientists feel tremendous responsibility not only in terms of informing the public about climate change but more actively seeking to influence citizens and politicians towards taking more radical measures to mitigate climate change. The following is a quote from a senior climate scientist:

> As a climate scientist I feel I have a very big responsibility. I almost have nightmares about what the next generation will say about us. You had all this knowledge and what did you do? Did you try to influence people? It doesn’t look like it. What were you doing? I worry about this.
> (Quoted from Gundersen 2020)

What should climate scientists do? Should they merely provide knowledge, or should they take on a more activist role? Climate scientist Stephen Schneider has pointed out that climate scientists who seek to communicate their knowledge to the public face a double ethical bind, which stems from their commitment to the scientific method and ethical values. In a 1988 editorial in the scientific journal *Climatic Change*, he expressed these ideas as follows:

> How then, should we scientists approach public discussion of a complicated issue such as the detection of a greenhouse effect signal in a noisy climatic record? In essence, we face what I like to characterize as a 'double ethical bind'. While we do not have a formal Hippocratic path, most scientists feel a loyalty to the scientific method: test and retest ideas, constantly being vigilant for false hypotheses. This loyalty translates into public comments filled with caveats, if's, and's, and but's, and other clear statements of the nature of technical uncertainties. On the other hand (there always is one, of course), most of us also wish to see the world a better place, (e.g., to mitigate harm from potentially unprecedented rates of climatic change). (Schneider 1988)

In other words, we might say that climate scientists face two conflicting ethical requirements: political neutrality and activism. On one hand, they can try to provide knowledge in a neutral manner, completely free from views regarding what should be done in terms of policies, measures, and actions. This is how the IPCC has understood its role so far: providing objective knowledge without ever recommending policies. There are many advantages regarding this way of providing knowledge, for instance, it provides an accurate and reliable account of what scientists actually know about climate change. Furthermore, people tend to trust scientists who are neutral and not tied to particular political ideologies.

On the other hand, we also know that in order to promote political change, scientists could employ the effective strategy of appealing to peoples' values and emotions. In order to grab headlines, scientists cannot simply stick to the facts; they have to tell a simple story that is likely to rouse public emotions and engagement. For these reasons, some climate scientists have taken on an *activist role*, engaging in direct efforts to promote radical political responses to climate change. Indeed, some climate scientists have felt this responsibility so strongly that they have taken more activist paths. For instance, James Hansen, a leading climate scientist, has felt tremendous responsibility towards future generations and has taken on a different approach regarding how to communicate climate scientific knowledge, surpassing that of the IPCC. While Hansen is not explicitly critical of what he refers to as the 'technical' and scientific approach deployed by the IPCC, he points out that there are simpler, more effective ways to present science to non-expert audiences, and he does not refrain from discussing policy implications and solutions. He even got himself arrested for protesting outside the White House in 2011 after urging President Obama to reject the Keystone pipeline extension. In other words, climate scientists should not only inform the public in a neutral manner; they should also work to promote political change that can mitigate the climate crisis.

This case includes several stakeholders with different levels of knowledge, perspectives, viewpoints, and values. In addition to the scientists themselves, there are politicians and bureaucrats who have to make policies based on the available science as well as the general public. The general public is not a homogenous group but consists of climate sceptics, people who already support the goals of climate activists, and a more neutral group. We know that some climate sceptics generally view climate scientists as untrustworthy. In their view, climate scientists are environmentalists dressed up as scientists and that knowledge about climate science is more uncertain than what climate scientists would have us believe. One could expect that more activism on the part of climate scientists would further strengthen this kind of distrust. An important question in the debate is how to sway the neutral group if scientists take an activist stance. Will they start to mobilize, or will they become more sceptical towards the scientific evidence?

Motion

This house believes that climate scientists should take an activist stance, that is, work towards policy change and tell more dramatic stories.

Questions

1. Why should scientists avoid activism? Why should they not? Try to systematize the arguments for and against scientific activism.
2. Can you think of any problems regarding trust in science if scientists exaggerate the dangers of climate change?

Guidelines for teachers

This case shows the conflict between scientific principles such as objectivity, truth-seeking, and neutrality, on the one hand, and the ethical principles of avoidance of harm to nature and human societies, on the other. It is also interesting to see how activism might come in conflict with public expectations of science and that this could undermine trust in science in the long run, which is a core value not only for science but also for society as a whole. Public distrust in science (climate science, medical expertise, biology) could have dire consequences for a democratic society.

Case 2

Artificial intelligence in medicine: potential benefits and the accountability problem

Recent breakthroughs in artificial intelligence (AI) hold great promise for solving practical problems. For instance, many now argue that medical practice will become more efficient and accurate if AI replaces medical doctors in making diagnoses and recommending treatments (see, e.g. Topol, 2019). In particular, forms of AI such as machine learning and deep learning have proven to be particularly promising for medical application. Machine learning consists of algorithms that are able to improve their performance based on previous results, without intervention by human designers. Through the ability to analyze vast data sets much faster, more cheaply, and more accurately than medical doctors, the use of machine learning can help detect diseases at an earlier stage and with greater accuracy than medical doctors.

Chest X-ray showing a radiologists' mark-up of airspace opacity (light), compared to the AI saliency method (dark). From article 'Benchmarking saliency methods for chest X-ray interpretation' by A. Saporta, X. Gui, A. Agrawal et al. (2022) / CC BY 4.0 license

Medical doctors and other health professionals do not have the time and resources or the kind of cognitive capacity required to handle such huge data sets. For example, deep learning algorithms have been proven to have a higher accuracy rate than medical doctors when it comes to detecting certain kinds of cancers in patient pictures, videos, and x-rays.

This can have beneficial consequences for the future of medical practice. If medical doctors can use deep learning algorithms as part of the process of diagnosis and treatment recommendations, one might expect that more diseases will be detected and that more people will receive proper treatment. This could have a positive impact on public health and increase life expectancy. Moreover, replacing part of the decision-making process of medical doctors with algorithms could make public health care cheaper and more accessible. This could potentially free up resources so that medical doctors can use more of their time on direct interaction with patients than they do now. Furthermore, this could lead to budget cuts in public health care. Taken together, the use of AI algorithms in medicine could improve public health and save money and human resources. These benefits have led some to think that we should—in the not too distant future—replace some parts of the work of medical doctors with AI.

Despite the potential benefits, there is currently little use of AI such as machine learning in crucial parts of medical practice. Health professionals do use applications that rely on AI in parts of their work (e.g. webpage design and online searches), but few actual machine learning algorithms have been implemented in clinical practice today. In particular, in the most important aspects of medical decision-making—such as gathering and analyzing patient data, diagnostic procedures, and treatment recommendations—AI is yet to play a major role as part of public health care in the European Union or United States. There are several reasons for this, for instance, the fact that AI is still a rather new technology, which has not yet been sufficiently developed, tested, and proven to have positive effects on clinical practice.

One of the main obstacles to the future implementation of AI in medicine are the many ethical and legal problems it raises. In particular, the use of AI disrupts the established model of professional accountability that dominates such fields as law, engineering, and medicine. According to this model, responsible conduct by medical doctors is based on the standards of medical expertise and ethical principles. If medical doctors fail to meet these standards, they can be held to account, for instance, by patients and colleagues. However, with the introduction of AI in medicine, a substantial number of decisions are being made by the machine learning technology itself in a manner that is unknown to medical doctors or even the experts who design the technology. This makes it unclear where responsibility lies in a medical context. If AI algorithms replace medical doctors in diagnostics, who would bear responsibility for erroneous diagnoses? Is it the medical doctor who relies on AI as part of her practice, the expert who designed it, or the AI algorithm itself? In other words, when AI replaces doctors, the distribution of responsibility between digital experts and physicians becomes unclear.

This case involves several stakeholders with various roles in the use of AI in medicine. Medical doctors are particularly important since their work can be partly replaced by this technology. Since AI is currently applicable to the analysis of data, it seems fair to expect that even in the most techno-optimistic scenarios, medical doctors must apply and interpret AI outputs and communicate the results with patients. This requires doctors to be able to understand how AI works. Patients will of course be directly affected if part of the service they receive is performed by algorithms. A central principle of medical practice is that patients receive proper information about how decisions about diagnosis and treatment have been made. This presupposes that medical doctors have a proper understanding of the evidence upon which the diagnosis and treatment are based and clearly explain this to their patients, who can then make informed decisions about their treatment. If doctors are unable to explain how the algorithm works and, thus, how a decision has been made, this undermines patients' rights to proper information about the medical practice. Another central group here consists of AI experts and companies that design algorithms for medical purposes. In developing artificial technology for application in professional contexts, digital experts face several challenges as they are often unfamiliar with some central aspects of the work of the medical doctors they seek to assist. Additionally, they are not regulated by the code of conduct of the professional experts they assist, and often, there is hardly any direct communication among designers, doctors, and patients.

Motion

This house believes that medical doctors should be replaced by AI in disease detection and diagnosis.

Questions

1. AI is mainly developed by informatics experts who often have no medical expertise and experience from contact with patients and their needs. What consequences could this have for medical practice?
2. Do you think that patients will receive medical treatment that involves no contact with health professionals but with AI in the not too distant future?
3. Should medical doctors be replaced by AI? Provide reasons for your response.

Guidelines for teachers

This case illustrates the conflict between improving health care by making it more efficient (quicker and cheaper) and accurate and the idea that the use of AI might make it difficult to properly attribute praise and blame. The nature of machine learning technology might make it difficult for patients and other stakeholder to understand how decisions about their health have been made.

It should be noted that there are several concerns over the use of AI in medicine besides those enunciated here. A particularly important problem has to do with the fact that while algorithms might be more accurate overall, they might be prone to errors other than those typical of human doctors, which would be ethically problematic. We know that a recurring problem with machine learning algorithms is that they can be biased against minorities, women, and marginalized groups. Groups that are underrepresented in the data used to train an algorithm might be at risk of less accurate diagnostics than the rest of the population. Machine learning algorithms have also proven to be overly "eager" in disease detection. This makes them more inclined to falsely classify healthy individuals as being ill. Not only is it a waste of public resources to provide treatment to healthy people, the practice can also harm these people's health and well-being. It also comes into conflict with one of the foundational principles of medical ethics *Primum, non nocere* (first, do no harm), which warns against the potential harm that can be inflicted on patients when providing medical treatment.

Case 3

Animal experimentation in medical research (public health vs. animal rights)

Medical research is currently significantly dependent on animal testing. Animals such as cats, dogs, mice, monkeys, pigs, rabbits, and rats are regularly subjected to experimental testing (Nuffield Council, 2005). The rationale for testing varies. In some cases, the aim of studies using animals for testing purposes is primarily to advance fundamental biomedical knowledge, which can lead to benefits for humans in the long run. Often, however, the applicatory value of animal testing is more concrete, immediate, and foreseeable. For instance, early testing of the effects of new drugs and other medical treatment methods with a potential to cure diseases and improve public health is often based on animal testing.

Animal testing is currently crucial to the regime of medical research due to the biological similarities between humans and non-human animals and the lack of feasible alternatives. In order to be approved and recommended by medical authorities, it is required that a medical treatment has had proven effects in clinical trials in which new drugs or treatment methods are tested on humans. Testing new medical treatments on humans might involve risks to the research subjects, who typically will not themselves benefit from the development of the new treatments. There are several examples from the history of medical research in which human test subjects have become ill and even died as a consequence of participating in medical research. By using animals in earlier stages of testing medical treatments, one could reduce risk to those who will later receive that treatment. For this reason, medical drugs are often tested on animals before being used on human test subjects. In other words, the testing of medical treatments can generate new and improved medical treatments and reduce the risk of human research subjects. Arguably, therefore, the sheer significance of new and scientifically tested medical treatments for public health justifies the use of animals in medical research. Indeed, the use of animals in experiments has a long history, and pivotal contributions in the history of modern medicine involve animal experimentations.

However, there are several ethical concerns regarding the practice. There is an increased awareness of the ability of animals to feel pain, cognize, interact, and socialize. Many now argue that for these reasons, among others, animals have a moral status and that their worth and ability to feel pain should be taken into due consideration in medical research. Put differently, medical ethics should not only revolve around our duties and obligations towards other humans but also towards non-human animals. For instance, few would deny that rats and mice, which are commonly used in medical research, have the ability to feel pain. To the extent that test animals experience pain and stress as a consequence of experimentation, this is ethically problematic. Moreover, as opposed to human adults, animals are unable to properly express their views, consent to participating in research, and fully unable to withdraw from a research project. One could argue that inflicting pain and causing harm to animals which are unable to understand and assess their own participation as test subjects (e.g. in testing the toxicity of a new drug) make them particularly vulnerable and worthy of our protection rather than exploitation. Put differently, animal test subjects are being wronged because they are being treated as objects and means that can benefit humans without being recognized as having a moral status.

This case involves several stakeholders, such as medical researchers who aim to develop new and improved treatments for patients who might benefit from the medical research. Moreover, it involves both human and animal stakeholders. This raises the important question of the moral status of animals and the extent to which their interests should be taken into consideration in the legal and ethical regulation of research. Since animals are unable to express their interests and engage in public deliberation, animal rights activists and organizations have become a crucial stakeholder group.

Motion

This house would ban all forms of animal testing.

Questions

1. What are the benefits of animal testing?
2. What objections and concerns can be raised against animal testing?
3. Can you think of any alternatives to animal testing?
4. Utilitarians (i.e. people who adhere to the normative ethical theory of utilitarianism) emphasize the importance of maximizing happiness and minimizing suffering. How do you think a utilitarian, who acknowledges the importance of animal suffering, would evaluate the practice of animal testing?

Guidelines for teachers

This case illustrates the moral contradictions between improving the growth of knowledge and public health and obligations towards animal welfare. Are we willing to allow more risky testing on humans in order to reduce the largescale suffering of animals for our benefit? If animal testing could help cancer patients by offering new lifesaving drugs and therapies, can we afford not to pursue such research?

One way to tackle the concerns over animal testing is to try to minimize, as far as possible, the pain that animals experience during testing. A more humane approach to animal testing (without inflicting pain), one could argue, would make such testing more ethically acceptable. Moreover, one could argue that while we should not ban animal testing, we should reduce its use as much as possible by using fewer animals and trying to develop alternative ways of performing tests—e.g. by developing digital models (Passini et al. 2018, March).

Case 4

Climate change, wind power, and environmentalism

There is robust scientific evidence of the occurrence of climate change and its impending catastrophic consequences for food security, health, migration, conflict, and biodiversity. However, there has been meagre political progress in mitigating the phenomenon, and it has been proven difficult to develop effective policies and technologies that are both effective and popular. In order to mitigate climate change, it is widely agreed that there must be a transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, such as solar power, hydropower, and wind power.

Wind power is among several important energy sources used to mitigate climate change. According to the IPCC (Wiser et al. 2011), “wind energy offers significant potential for near- and long-term GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions reductions.” However, wind power remains contested and controversial. In Norway, there have been several recent controversies over the development of new wind farms on land. Even among environmental groups—which largely endorse the aim of replacing fossil fuels with renewable sources of energy—there is much opposition to wind power due to its negative environmental impacts. Some of them argue that wind power causes unacceptable levels of noise and that it has negative effects on nature and wild

Windmill blade transportation - P. Adams Schwertransporte, Luxembourg life, especially birds, which can be killed by flying directly into the wind turbines. Moreover, it is often argued that this power source diminishes the aesthetic experience of being in nature.

The Norwegian environmental organization *Naturvernfornbundet* (Friends of the Earth Norway) now argues that all instances of what they refer to as “nature-destroying wind power” must be stopped and that wind power should only be developed in areas that are already industrialized and developed. One of *Naturvernfornbundet’s* arguments against wind power is as follows: “Even though renewable energy is needed to replace fossil fuels, we are also dependent upon nature being robust and intact. (...) We need to find solutions that both mitigate climate change and takes good care of nature.” A central reason for their view is that wind farms involve the construction of infrastructure that damages forests, swamps, and wetlands and reduced biodiversity. In other words, in order to protect nature, wind farms should not be installed in the wild, despite their potential to replace fossil fuels.

This case involves several stakeholders, in principle, everyone affected by climate change. In particular, it involves environmental groups, wind power companies, and the local communities directly impacted by the installment of wind power plants.

Motion

This house, as the environmental movement, would seek to cease the development of wind power in the wild outside of industrialized areas.

Questions

1. Do you think that the opposition to wind power is justified?
2. What is more important, mitigating climate change or preserving nature?
3. Is it feasible, as the Norwegian environmental organization claims, to both mitigate climate change and preserve nature?

Guidelines for teachers

This case could be used to discuss the divergent ideological and ethical views within the environmental movement. Indeed, since the political breakthrough of the ascension of global warming on the political agenda in the 1980s, most of the environmental movement has taken this issue seriously. Interestingly, however, some of the central political measures to mitigate climate change might come in conflict with other central principles and views within the movement, such as nature conservation and opposition to the idea that new technology can solve our environmental challenges.

Further reading

https://naturvernforbundet.no/?lang=en_GB
https://naturvernforbundet.no/vindkraft/
https://www.ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment

Case 5

Mandatory vaccination for health professionals during the Covid-19 pandemic

Since the 19th century, the issue of mandatory vaccination has been hugely controversial. Given the beneficial effects of vaccination on public health, many have argued that some vaccines should be mandatory. This issue has also been central to public debates around the Covid-19 pandemic in several countries. Austria became the first country in the EU to make vaccination against Covid-19 mandatory.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2019), proposals that impose mandatory vaccination for the general population have not been common. Very often, the issue of mandatory vaccination concerns a particular group, such as a profession. By mandatory vaccination, we refer to the idea that people who do not comply with vaccination programmes are subject to sanctions, such as not being allowed to attend school or perform a certain professional task, such as working in a hospital.

The issue of mandatory vaccination is often discussed in the context of healthcare workers. This could mean that vaccination is a condition for taking on the job of a medical doctor or nurse in, for example, a hospital or elderly care facility. The sheer scale of the Covid-19 pandemic has meant that the issue of mandatory

'Patient receives Covid-19 vaccine shot' by Steven Cornfield on unsplash.com / Unsplash License vaccination has been widely discussed in several countries for people working in public health. There are several reasons as to why vaccination should be made mandatory for this particular group. The WHO (2021) points to the significance of the "unique settings in which health workers work and their ethical obligation not to harm their patients. Moreover, mandatory Covid-19 vaccination might appear to be particularly plausible for health workers given that vaccination of this population might be seen as necessary to protect health system capacity (...)." The professional and ethical guidelines for healthcare workers and the crucial role of healthcare workers in society arguably justify mandatory vaccination. However, the issue of mandatory vaccination raises several ethical concerns pertaining to vaccine safety and efficacy as well as individual freedoms. Moreover, mandatory vaccination can have a negative impact on trust in public vaccination. A case in point, the British Medical Association (BMA) took a stand against mandatory vaccination for healthcare workers. Dr Chaand Nagpaul, BMA Council Chair, objects to mandatory vaccination for healthcare workers due to the risk of erosion of public trust in vaccines:

> Doctors naturally want to be protected against this potentially lethal infection that has already taken far too many lives, including hundreds of their colleagues', so those who do decline a vaccine are unlikely to do so lightly. Compulsion is a blunt instrument to tackle a complex issue. Recent research has highlighted that pressurising health and social care workers can have damaging effects, leading to an erosion of trust, worsening concerns about the vaccine and hardened stances on declining vaccination. (BMA, 2021)

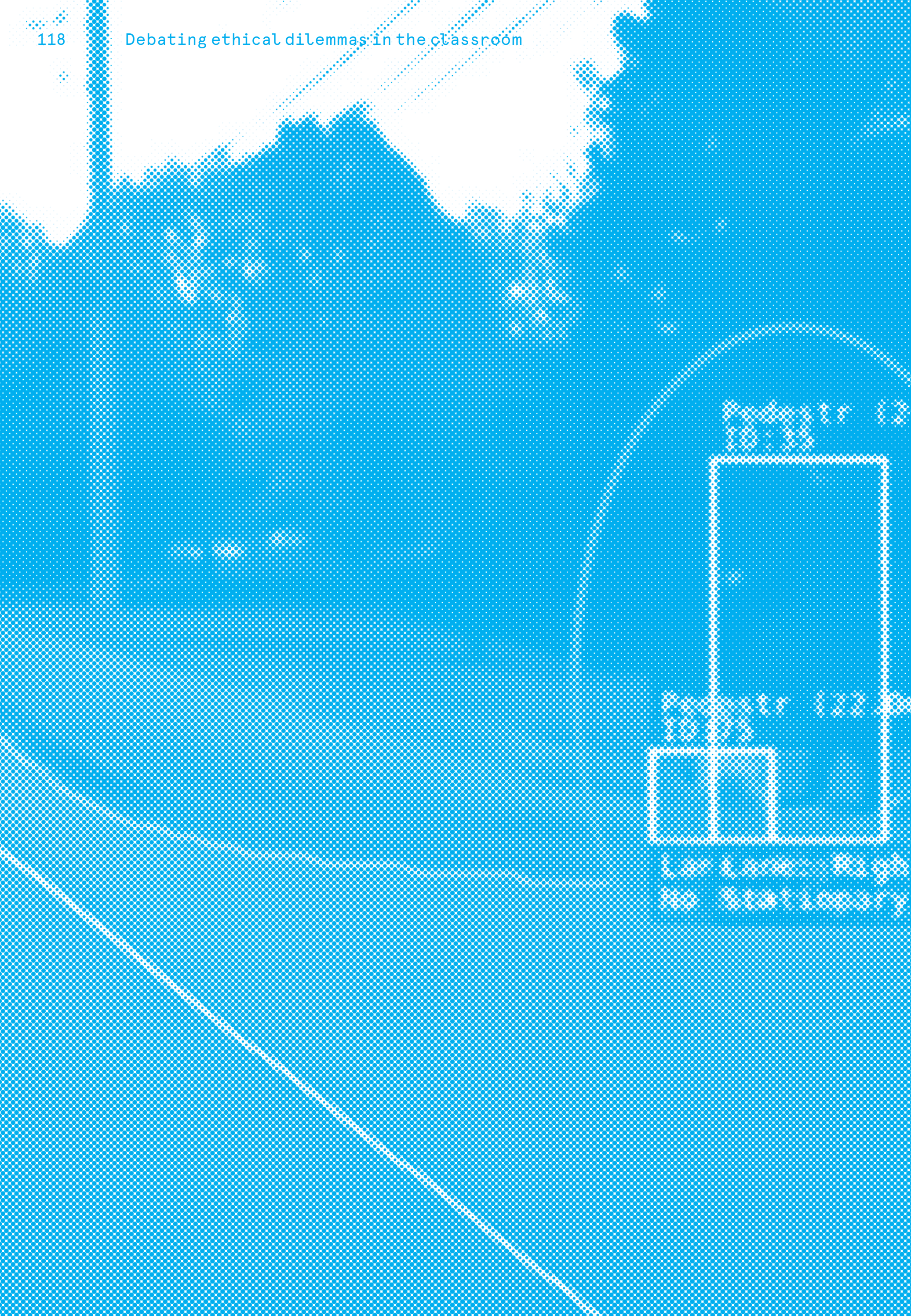
This case involves stakeholders such as healthcare professionals with direct contact with patients, such as doctors and nurses, who might be subjected to mandatory vaccination, and politicians, who are to decide for or against mandatory vaccination. Moreover, an important group of stakeholders is the general public, whose health is at stake, especially patients in need of healthcare services.

Motion

This house would introduce mandatory vaccination for healthcare workers, such as medical doctors and nurses.

Questions

1. What, in your view, are the central arguments for mandatory vaccination?
2. Mandatory vaccination is controversial. In your view, what are the most plausible objections to it?



Case 6

Self-driving cars: who bears responsibility for accidents (companies vs. designers)?

According to the World Health Organization, more than 1.3 million people are killed in road traffic crashes annually, and more than half of those killed are "vulnerable road users: pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists" (WHO, 2021). A significant number of these fatalities are arguably due to human error, such as inattentiveness and risky behavior from drivers. There are several ways to mitigate the number of fatalities, such as reducing speed limits, imposing stricter punishment, and improving the quality of driving tuition. Some now argue that replacing human drivers with self-driving cars could be a promising way to reduce fatalities and injuries. Recently, the prospects of reliable self-driving vehicles such as ships, tractors, buses, and cars have become a more realistic scenario.

The extent to which a vehicle is considered self-driving and able to travel without interference from humans comes in degrees, for instance, in the form of warnings that the driver

An autonomous vehicle uses camera data to perceive objects in its environment receives from the vehicle, partial interference from the vehicle in cases of emergency (e.g. emergency brakes), and fully autonomous vehicles in which no human driver is required. While there are cases of driver-less cars and buses being used in testing in actual traffic, the actual transformation of cars from being controlled by humans to being fully autonomous has not yet happened. There are several reasons for this. For instance, there are still some technological obstacles that must be solved in order to make self-driving cars safe enough to completely replace ordinary cars in complex and chaotic traffic environments and in the face of rare and new traffic events. There are also ethical challenges pertaining to the use of completely driver-less cars that apply even if self-driving cars were to be significantly safer than human drivers.

One major ethical problem is tied to the issue of how the car should be ethically designed and programmed to operate in risky situations. Since fully autonomous cars are completely independent of human drivers, the vehicle must be programmed so as to make the kinds of moral judgments that drivers make in the face of accidents. First of all, it is very difficult to see how car designers could programme a car in an ethically acceptable way to make it acceptable to all car users. In very complex and risky situations, human drivers make such moral judgments based on a wide set of ethical values and principles, training and experience from driving, and their personal views on risks. Some people might take more risks than others, and some drivers might focus more on avoiding harm to other people than others. In short, the decisions that drivers make in risky situations might be very complex and might vary from driver to driver, depending on personal, cultural, and moral differences.

To illustrate the ethical complexities involved, take the following simple case. Let us assume that a fully autonomous car faces a pedestrian who crosses the road illegally and recklessly. In such cases, the car could be designed in a way that would try to save the vulnerable pedestrian, even when it puts those who drive the car at risk, or it might be designed so that the safety of the driver is prioritized over that of pedestrians, especially in cases where the pedestrians cross the road illegally. This leaves the designers of autonomous cars with a difficult ethical problem. Should the designers of self-driving cars prioritize the interests of drivers, who have bought their cars and trust the car designers that the car will be safe for them to use, or should self-driving cars be programmed to protect vulnerable road users, even when they act recklessly? In sum, despite the potential for reducing the number of car accidents, the ethical design of self-driving cars raises the difficult question of devising the correct algorithm to enable the car to respond in risky situations. Moreover, different stakeholders might have divergent interests. One might expect that consumers would want to buy a car that prioritizes driver safety, which would generate commercial incentives to produce cars that are safer for drivers at the expense of the safety of stakeholders such as other drivers and road users such as pedestrians.

Motion

This house supports the development of self-driving cars.

Questions

1. How should self-driving cars be designed so as to make safe and ethically acceptable decisions in complex and dangerous situations?
2. What are the benefits of self-driving cars? What are the most serious objections?
3. The case of the ethical design of cars raises the issue of whether there is an ethically correct thing to do in each case. Do you think personal and cultural differences in ethical views undermine the idea of a correct ethical decision?

Guidelines for teachers

The main moral conflict in this case is the choice between fewer accidents under a more standardized and potentially morally problematic accountability regime of self-driving cars versus more accidents and a more context-sensitive and clear regime of accountability. It should be underlined that the moral dilemma concerns the future of self-driving vehicles: there are currently very few cases involving the complete replacement of human drivers.

Further reading

https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-ai/

‘For god’s sake, you coldhearted bureaucrats, they’re dying’

Gregg Doyel in The Indianapolis Star
Apr[illegible] 2015

Case 7

The right to try: experimental drugs

Experimental drugs are medical drugs that have been approved for clinical testing in an early stage of research but have yet to be fully approved for medical use. Since new treatment methods are continuously being developed and improved in medical research, not all promising treatment methods receive full approval for use in patients in public healthcare systems. Moreover, a drug might be approved for one disease but might have the status as an experimental drug for another disease. This means that for some patient groups, new and promising drugs might not be allowed in their medical treatment. For terminally ill patients, experimental drugs can be their last hope. If there are no approved promising treatments and the prognosis for survival without treatment is bad, then experimental drugs might, in their view, be worth trying.

However, experimental drugs raise difficult ethical choices for medical doctors, policymakers, and patients. When medical doctors recommend treatments for patients, there are several ethical and legal constraints they must take into consideration. Generally speaking, there must be available evidence that the treatment being offered to patients is effective and that it has been approved by the relevant regulatory authorities. Moreover,

Protester rallying for broader access to experimental drugs the doctor must assess the risks and benefits of the treatment in question for the specific patient and communicate those risks to the patient. Since experimental drugs are not approved for use, doctors are not allowed to offer them as treatments.

This raises a difficult dilemma. On one hand, it seems reasonable that the regime of clinical testing and approval of medical drugs should be based on thorough medical research in order to ensure drug safety and efficacy. Furthermore, experimental drugs could instill false hope and reduce the quality of life in the patient's end-of-life phase. One the other hand, for some patients who are terminally ill and have few or no treatment alternatives, there might be good reason to test a promising experimental drug, even when there is significant uncertainty about the drug's safety and efficacy. For terminally ill patients with limited options, for instance, patients with certain forms of cancer, experimental drugs might offer the only available treatment for their condition. There are several cases where terminally ill patients have argued for the right to try experimental drugs. Even if there is only a slight chance that the drug is effective, one might argue that it should be offered to them.

This case involves stakeholders such medical researcher, medical doctors, health authorities, and patients.

Motion

This house believes that patients should have the right to try experimental drugs.

Questions

1 Should it be the case that only medical drugs with proven effectiveness should be approved for medical use?
2 If patients are allowed to decide for themselves to try experimental drugs that turn out to be harmful, how could this impact our trust in public care?

Guidelines for teachers

In regard to the last question on trust, it might be helpful to consider a scenario in which terminally ill patients receive drugs that inflict pain and are even less effecive than established treatments.

Further reading

https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-ai/

Case 8

Transplantation of animal organs

For some people, organ transplantation can be the only way to survive, yet there is a shortage of human organs available for transplantation. One way to tackle this shortage is to transplant animal organs into humans. Indeed, there are some examples of this; a male patient in the United States recently underwent a transplantation of a pig's heart. The surgeon Bartley Griffith told the BBC that "the surgery would bring the world 'one step closer to solving the organ shortage crisis.' Currently 17 people die every day in the US waiting for a transplant, with more than 100,000 reportedly on the waiting list" (Roberts 2022).

However, organ transplantation raises some difficult ethical concerns. Since there are differences between human organs and those of animals such as pigs, there is a considerable risk of organ rejection. Nevertheless, if the risk of the transplantation is communicated to the patient, one might argue that they can decide for themselves whether they are willing to receive an animal organ. In the following quote, an expert in medical ethics argues that it might be ethically acceptable to transplant organs from animals into humans: "You can never know if the person is going to die catastrophically soon after the treatment—but you can't proceed without taking the risk," says Prof. Julian

Pig (a) and human (b) hearts. From article 'Coronary angiography and percutaneous coronary intervention in the porcine model' by P. Williams, N. Malik, P. Kingston (2012) /

Savulescu, Uehiro Chair in Practical Ethics at the University of Oxford, adding that “As long as the individual understands the full range of risks, I think people should be able to consent to these radical experiments.” Furthermore, Professor Savulescu maintains that it is important that these patients are given all the options available to them, including mechanical heart support or an organ transplant from human donor (Hunter 2022).

The well-being and rights of the animals from which organs are harvested raise another set of ethical concerns. One could argue that animals have rights, that we should treat them with respect, and that their interest should be taken into due consideration in any discussion over organ transplantation. Moreover, in the abovementioned case of the heart transplantation from pig to human, the pig had been genetically modified to avoid organ rejection. A spokesperson for Animal Aid, a UK-based animal rights group, told the BBC that they were against modifying animal genes and transplanting their organs to humans: “Animals have a right to live their lives, without being genetically manipulated with all the pain and trauma this entails, only to be killed and their organs harvested” (Hunter 2022).

This case involves terminally ill patients, medical researchers, medical doctors, as well as animal rights groups voicing the interests of animals from which the organs are being harvested.

Motion

This house supports the transplantation of animal organs to humans.

Questions

1 What, in your view, are the most important arguments for and against animal organ transplantation?
2 Is it worse to use animals for organ transplantation than to consume them as meat?

Tags at ethics.community

Didactical methods

- Debate

Learning orientations

- Moral judgment-oriented

Types of ethics

- Metaethics
- Applied ethics

Metaethical theories

- Emotivism

Ethical theories

- Consequentialism
- Deontology
- Hedonism
- Virtue ethics

Ethical topics

- Freedom
- Justice
- Norms and values
- Responsibility

Philosophers

- Aristotle
- Jeremy Bentham
- Immanuel Kant
- John Stuart Mill

IV

Debate on values: Challenges and pitfalls

Marcel Becker

Chapter 4
Debate on values: Challenges and pitfalls
Marcel Becker

1 Introduction

Consider these three statements:

1. Europe (including Russia) and North America are responsible for 40% of the earth's carbon emissions. Their pro capita emissions far exceed the pro capita emissions of poor countries;
2. In rich countries the number of people who consider sustainability as an important value has grown gradually in past decades;
3. We, people in prosperous countries, have to shift to sobriety in order to achieve a just distribution of the burden of climate change.

The first statement is about factual developments. An appropriate response to such a statement would be to either affirm or reject it by referring to published scientific research. In the past decades scientists have made huge progress in laying bare how human behavior influences the world's ecology and climate, and that knowledge cannot be neglected. (There is more about this in chapter 3 by Torbjørn Gundersen).

In the second statement, "sustainability" as a value is central, but it is used as a description of people's views and attitudes. A proper way to deal with such a statement is, again, to either affirm or reject it by referring to published scientific research. Social scientists are well-equipped to deliver this kind of knowledge.

In reaction to the third statement, we can, of course, discuss the notions of "prosperity" (and ask economists for their advice) and "disaster" (and ask ecologists what it means). But such discussions distract from the key message: An appeal is being made to people to adapt their behavior. In that appeal, the notions "sobriety" and "just distribution" are central. These are values which, as is often the case, are introduced in order to motivate people.

Debaters have to deal carefully with the different kinds of reasons. Factual claims, whether they are based on the pure sciences or the social sciences, must be approached in ways other than through value claims. Of course, the fact-value opposition can be disputed: facts are always interpretations of a reality that can never be fully grasped. But it is generally agreed that talking about facts differs from talking about values, and that a deduction of one from the other is dangerous.

In a proper debate, we distinguish between claims on the basis of data, delivered by the (social) sciences, and value claims.

This chapter focuses on value claims. These are often met rather cynically. People emphasize the lack of hard evidence that should support value statements, and they suggest these are subjective and personal. However, even a superficial observation of debates will refute this claim. Values exert an attraction that is pre-eminently designed to convince people. But values are explosive material. They can be powerfully convincing, but they must be used with care. In order to clarify their role, I open with a description of the main characteristics of values, and I introduce different kinds of values that can be distinguished. I then focus on how values are used in debates.

2 What is a value?

Humans are evaluative beings. Any time we use expressions like “good” or “worthy,” and also when we use notions like “distasteful” or “irritating,” we evaluate people, things, or states of affairs. Consider also the “able” concepts in the English language: these concepts imply the idea that the thing being evaluated has merits or is worthy of a certain attitude or response: desirable, admirable, etc. (Orsi 2015). In each of these evaluative statements, we are making a claim: we are considering the evaluative preference to be justified, fitting, suitable, appropriate or "rightly so." We claim or at last feel that our preferences and aversions might be underpinned by reason. Values are an important access to understanding such claims. A proper discussion requires that sooner or later the relevant values be considered.

The notion "value" is derived from the Latin verb "valere," which means "to have strength." The verb has a very broad meaning: it can be attributed to a variety of people's capabilities and even to things. But the verb was always related to classification (which things are strong) and measurement (how strong they are).

This act of classifying is characterized by a relationship between:

- The person and their reasons for attributing the strength;
- The qualities of the object that gives rise to the attribution.

This relationship is vital for understanding our contemporary use of values. On the one hand, values originate in persons and therefore they differ between persons. Different persons live according to different sets of values. Values also differ between groups and between cultures. Openly and directly expressing one's opinion counts as an important value in the western world, as it is said to bring clarity in communication. But in other cultures, these actions are considered to be impertinent. Timeliness is a core value in western society, where deliberately arriving too late is considered disrespectful. In other cultures, people have a more relaxed attitude towards their watch. This characteristic of values implies an important guideline for debating.

> Always take into account the target group and its sensibilities. Values that are self-evident to one group or culture might be highly problematic to others.

On the other hand, the diversity of values does not imply that they can be used arbitrarily. They have a certain strength in themselves.

Values refer to abstract qualities that people consider to be worthy to strive for. In contrast to facts, values attract us. Oddie speaks about the "magnetism of the good" (Oddie 2015). Values are motivational goals that guide attitudes and behavior. Because of their attractiveness, values are present in each moral theory, although it might not always be clearly visible. The theory most closely connected to the vocabulary of values is hedonism, which considers pleasure to be the highest value. Consequentialist theories rank actions according to how conducive they are to good outcomes for values to be determined. Deontologists develop principles about values. Virtue ethics intends to develop proper attitudes that enable a person to cherish and cultivate values.

2.1 Subjectivism and emotivism

The tension between the person who attributes value and the attractiveness of value pervades all discussions about the strength and convincing power of values. Scholars who emphasize the attractiveness of the value are often described as objectivists. They consider the intrinsic quality of values to be a good basis for firm moral convictions. They state that people desire something because it is valuable. Scholars who stress the attributing activity of the person state that what makes something valuable is the fact that it is desired. They tend to a more skeptical view, in which sentences like "health is good" do not express a distinctive kind of claim. They are merely the equivalent of a sentence like, "Health is something good for John to experience." According to them, value claims do not cover a distinct area. They are merely expressions of personal experiences and preferences. Because of the emphasis on preferences, their view is widely known as subjectivism and emotivism. Emotivism has a long history. Plato in his dialogues introduced the sophists, who denied the existence of a moral order. Their main spokesman was Protagoras, with his famous statement, "Man is the measure of everything." Centuries after Plato, Thomas Hobbes said that we only call the objects of appetites "good".

Subjectivism is attractive because there is often a relationship between the values that people cultivate and their psychological constitution. People's characteristics and the way their emotions develop definitely influence the values they cherish. But a direct explanation of someone's values from their psychological state is unjustified and dangerous. It is always unjustified because the following question can be asked: is the value caused by the person's psychological constitution or is there merely a correlation between value and constitution? It is also dangerous because such an approach hampers a rational discussion of values. When values are considered to be a mirror image of a person's preferences, an exchange of values wouldn't be anything other than an exchange of personal preferences. In such an exchange, any argument about the other person could easily be dismissed because it would have meaning only for the person who presents the argument. This does not do justice to the strength and attractiveness of values. The convincing power of values gets lost when values are reduced to personal preferences. A proper exchange of arguments requires recognition of the fact that value statements imply a claim that surpasses expression of subjective preferences. That, in fact, is what people usually do when they are debating: they present claims and challenge the other person to react to the substance of the view put forward. A reduction to psychological constitution would spoil the debate.

This is not to deny that psychological knowledge can be useful in a debate. It can be helpful to point to underlying psychological mechanisms that might explain why people take a certain position. And a consideration of these mechanisms can enhance a person's empathy and responsiveness. In discussions we regularly see that someone reduces a person's statement to his or her personal background. Indeed, the force of an argument can be disabled when its meaning is restricted to the person who expresses it. But in debates this strategy is not appreciated. This is a dangerous strategy. It does not benefit the discussion about value; instead, it works as a "conversation stopper." A topic can be discussed properly only when the persuasive pretension of the value is taken seriously.

Be careful about reducing value claims to psychological mechanisms.

Subjectivism is not only a serious challenge for debaters. It also touches upon the heart of ethics. In the history of philosophy, this challenge is met in many ways. The most important strategy is to make a distinction between values and desires. People clearly have desires, the satisfaction of which do not seem to create value. Desires can be ill-formed, base, artificially aroused and paradoxical. Clearly not all of our desires are value generating. Making a distinction between the “defective desires” and the “good desires” requires a criterion that surpasses our desires and refers to values. Such a criterion is also necessary because people often have conflicting desires, and solving such conflicts does not go without a criterion that is independent of desires.

This brings us to the position which stresses the characteristics of value: objectivism. Within this camp, the most important distinction is between instrumental and intrinsic values.

2.2 Instrumental and intrinsic values

Instrumental values are good because they lead to other good things. For instance, in hedonistic approaches, freedom and altruism are appreciated not because of their inherent characteristics, but because they enlarge opportunities for people to lead a more pleasurable life. Freedom can also be considered as an instrument for achieving utility or other values that are appreciated in society. Efficiency is very often instrumental to other values, as it enlarges the possibilities to realize these values.

The use of instrumental values is widely dispersed. Very often justifications of values consist of referring to other values. However, when a value is good only for what it leads to, the question ultimately arises as to whether there is something that is good in itself. In the first paragraphs of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle even states that, should such a supreme value be missing, “all desire would be futile and vain” (1095a22). A justification for an instrumental value ultimately must lie in something that is good in itself, i.e., it is *intrinsically* good. Each great ethicist starts by identifying what is ultimately good and bad. Aristotle considered “eudaimonia” (well-being) as the highest good at which all our endeavors are directed. Immanuel Kant opens his *Groundwork* with the statement that only a “good will” is unconditionally good (without limitations), and that brings him to the supreme ethical rule, the categorical imperative (more on this in the contribution by Ivan Kolev). John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham considered pleasure and happiness as supreme goods, as these do not need further justification. They subsequently contrasted the highest good with things that are good for something else.

Whether a value counts as instrumental or intrinsic depends on the use that is made of it. We spoke about freedom as an instrumental value, but there are also approaches in which it is an intrinsic value. Pattanaik and Xu (2015) refer to Mill's statement that freedom stands next to well-being as an intrinsic value: "Free development of individuality is one of the leading essentials of well-being; that it is not only a co-ordinate element with all that is designated by the terms civilization, instruction, education, culture, but is itself a necessary part and condition of all those things" (Mill 1859, chapter 3, §2). To Mill, freedom is intrinsically valuable because it is in the process of making choices that the individual develops their own preferences and judgments and hence their personality. This stands in contrast to the idea that people have fixed preferences, and freedom is just a means to satisfy their needs. Health can be described as an instrumental value: it is highly esteemed because it contributes to well-being, freedom, independence, etc. But to many people, health is an intrinsic value.

> A good debater presents his or her core values in a proper order, in which the relative weight of the values is made explicit.

3 Values in debating

3.1 Prioritizing values

In attributing strength to someone or something, we implicitly or explicitly place that person or entity in relationship to someone or something else. Strength—regardless of whether it is physical, psychological or in the form of charisma—is always relative to other people. This invites comparison, and comparison often makes it possible to exchange one thing for something else. An entity to which a fixed amount of value is attributed can be exchanged for a price. In economics, this makes value a core notion.

Likewise in debating, values are prioritized, and participants have firm convictions about the importance of values. Depending on the case, stressing solidarity might be at the expense of freedom; stressing justice might be at the expense of individuals' acquisition of property; tolerance might be at the expense of a sense of community. But in contrast to economic values, it is not so easy to juxtapose two moral-value claims in order to decide which one is more important than the other. Neither is it easy to determine precisely what has to be given up. This problem has two different dimensions that are often intertwined: the incommensurability and the incomparability of values.

3.1.1 Incommensurability

The notion of incommensurability means that the values or the actions that they propagate cannot be measured, i.e., they cannot be represented by cardinally significant numbers, such as by an amount of money as in economics. In the history of utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham embraced a strong version of hedonism, a monistic and reductionist theory of intrinsic value, according to which all values are commensurable and can be reduced to pleasure. He invented the "Felicific Calculus" through which he tried to establish a common denominator. According to Bentham, it was possible to calculate the degree of pleasure that actions induce. There were several variables that could be included in the calculation, such as intensity, duration, certainty and extent (how many people would be affected). Each of these could be expressed in numbers, and that made actions and values measurable. The Calculus could, in principle at least, determine the moral status of any act that was being considered. But Bentham's project failed.

His utilitarian successor, John Stuart Mill, stated convincingly that values differ qualitatively from one another—there were higher and lower ones—, and that makes it impossible to determine a cardinal common denominator for them. Mills qualitative rather than a quantitative conception of hedonism brought Chang (2015) to the conviction that no plausible ethical theory relies essentially on the commensurability of values.

Their impossibility of being counted is an important characteristic of values which is often neglected; in debating, however, it is of vital importance. Counting requires a detached point of view from which a neutral assessment can be made. But in the case of values, such a neutral stance often is unavailable, and rigidly aiming for it leads to a misinterpretation of the values. Of course, from a neutral point of view, we can state that dismissing 20 people from their employment would save the jobs of the remaining 200 people, and the dismissals would therefore be justified. This is the way in which consequentialists work. But, as tempting as it may be, such an approach is often not justified. This is quite visible in the so-called *trolley problem*, a thought experiment, developed by Philippa Foot (1967), in which an onlooker has a choice between saving five people who are in danger of being struck by a trolley or diverting the trolley whereby one person would be killed. This problem has endless variations in which there is an increasing appeal to people to put aside their personal affiliations. For instance, imagine that you are on a footbridge overlooking the trolley track on which five people are tied down, and the trolley is rushing towards them. There is no spur this time, but you are accompanied by a very good friend who happens to be a chubby man. If you heave him over the side of the footbridge, your friend will stop the trolley. Are you prepared to kill your friend? An immediate "yes," based on counting, goes against basic moral intuitions. In morality, particular affiliations and attachments count.

Affiliations with particular responsibilities play a role not only on a personal level but also on a professional level. When conjoined twins are born, they share their main organs. Because these organs are exactly in the middle, it is difficult to determine which twin they belong to. The doctor faces an ethical dilemma. If she does nothing, both babies will die. If she operates, she will save one baby, but the other one will die. Which choice should the doctor make? The majority of my students do not need long to decide: one life should be saved at the expense of the other. But we do not need much imagination to take it one step further. (I apologize for the crudeness, but thought experiments like these are most effective when morbid examples are used.) As another example, imagine that a surgeon is just starting to treat a healthy young boy's broken ankle when five men are carried into the hospital, each of whom needs a new organ. In this case, there seem to be no medical obstacle to the surgeon's sacrificing the healthy young man in order to use his organs to save five lives. Of course, my students react with indignation when I apply the counting rationale to this case. A more practical reason why values are incommensurable is that in the implementation of values, the calculations and assessments are surrounded by uncertainties. Take, for instance, debates about safety measures that place a burden on society. In a careful consideration, the actual constraints on liberty must be weighed against the safety *risks*. These are often based on algorithmic analyses of potential threats, given a set of *probabilities*. This implies speculation about insecurities that cannot be precisely calculated.

For all these reasons, the often-used metaphor of "balancing values" is inappropriate. The notion of *balance* implies quantity and precision, as if an ordinal comparison could be made, and new considerations could "outweigh" elements at the other side of the scale. Such a suggestion, mirrored in notions like "honesty has a price" is deeply problematic. This brings us to the other problem.

3.1.2 Incomparability of values and practical reason

Two things are incomparable when there is no positive-value relationship between them in respect to a *covering consideration*. Note the importance of "covering consideration." Two things are never simply comparable or incomparable; they are always comparable in some respect. Often a general notion like well-being is used as an example of this. That values are comparable means that acting according to one value makes a greater contribution to, for instance, well-being than acting according to the other value (Chang 2015).

Values can be comparable, even when they are incommensurable (Chang 2015). When no quantitative common denominator is available for a comparison, practical reasoning might still be used to compare the values. Judgment replaces calculation, and qualitative considerations play a role (Kleinig et al. 2011, 180). Practical reasoning refers to our moral convictions, which can be used to elaborate on these values in an appropriate way. Why is donating money to Oxfam morally better than buying a Ferrari? Why is respecting basic rights of other people better than opportunistic behavior? Of course, there can be situations in which no reasons are available. In such cases, there is nothing practical that can be done, and what remains is "plumping": selecting one alternative over another in a normative void (Chang 2015). But more often the problem is that both options are quite defensible, although there are no decisive reasons to choose one over the other. In such situations, the person must select one of the options. An alternative can be selected on the basis of reasons that support it, but there is some arbitrariness in the selection because the reasons do not support choosing it *over* the alternative. The arbitrariness does not alter the fact that the choice process is guided by practical reason. Of course, such value conflicts have a tragic dimension. A defensible choice is made, but the rejected option might reasonably be regretted. Something remains lost in the choice. It is a vital part of practical reasoning that it recognizes this loss.

In making qualitative judgments, an abstract analysis of the values is insufficient. The notion of "practical" as in "practical reason" makes it clear that the required rationality focuses on concrete issues instead of on abstract entities. There is a huge difference between abstract balancing of values taken in isolation and comparison of values in concrete cases. In general, deep existential moods are considered to be higher in the value of well-being than are sensory pleasures. But the once-in-a-lifetime experience of having a meal in a Michelin-star restaurant will bring a person more well-being than would the vague happiness of a sunny morning. In general, equality may not be comparable to fairness, but particular instances of fairness may nevertheless be preferred. These examples make it clear that values may be irreconcilable; nevertheless, a choice between particular instances of values would still be possible. The focus on concrete cases provides more opportunities for comparison. There are several ways in which the values can be implemented.

3.2 Abstract values and real situations

Because of their attractiveness, values are rather easily presented in debates. An argument is given force when it is underpinned by freedom, justice, solidarity, etc. But the easy use of values carries with it an important disadvantage. A value can be presented in a variety of contexts because it is an abstract entity. The same value can even be used to support conflicting statements. For instance in debates on a headscarf ban one party can speak about solidarity with the own Muslim community, whereas the other can speak about solidarity with the wider circle of people who fight for religious freedom. In debates on abortion freedom can be used to underpin pro-choice arguments, but it is also possible to speak about free development of the nascent life. Given their wide meaning, the use of values does not always add much. An exchange of arguments that is limited to the abstract level of values leads only to empty phrases. It leaves the audience with a nice feeling, but without a clear notion of what is going on. Values can only be productive when they are translated into concrete guidelines for action. There are several ways in which this translation can be made.

3.2.1 Norms and standards

Very often values are complemented by norms, which are standards for good behavior. Different domains have their norms: Safety norms, hygiene standards, legal norms, etc. Moral norms are directly inspired by moral values, although they are not always laid down in writing. Nowhere in school regulations is it prescribed that a teacher should give pupils the opportunity to ask a question and for it to be seriously answered. Hopefully, however, no teacher would refuse to act according to this standard. It will be clear that this standard is a concrete expression of the value “respect.”

There is always a certain temptation to capture and define the moral dimension in judicial notions. Laws and other judicial regulations deliver a fixed framework that facilitates clear discussions about appropriate human behavior. It is much easier to talk about laws adopted by authorities than to extract a criterion from an abstract value.

However, just pointing out the existence of a law is not a substantive argument. References to law make sense only when they are underpinned by underlying ideas and relevant interpretations of the law. This is the domain of lawyers, and it is not a bad idea to leave law to the lawyers. An even larger problem of jurisdiction is that the legal framework is rather narrow. It ignores the existence of broader normative frameworks, that cannot be grasped through rules and regulations.

> Maintain a clear distinction between legal approaches and value claims.

Moral values and norms reflect two separate, inextricably intertwined manifestations of morality: general orientation and concrete rule. When they are pulled apart, problems arise. Values need a concrete form that indicates what they expect from a person in a specific situation. Conversely, an understanding of the norm requires a person to be in touch with the underlying asset. The person who knows the norm but not the value is like someone who reads a text that is written in a language they do not know. Especially for people who want to convince others of why they have to adhere to standards (as is the case in debating), the link with the underlying value is important.

3.2.2 Narratives

Another often applied method to breathe values into life is to tell stories. In the presentation of concrete events and the actions of people of flesh and blood, a value becomes a living entity. The rhetorical merit is beyond doubt. Stories are recognizable; a good story tempts people to identify themselves with the characters. This applies to fiction, thought experiments and real-life events. In his contribution, Stelios Virvidakis refers to splendid examples of stories that have survived the ages because of their ability to express core values.
The use of stories is more valuable when it is accompanied by reflection in which pupils develop their capacity to look morally at situations. Which opinions about core values stand beside or opposite each

other? Why do they have convincing power? If this kind of reflection is absent, what is left is no more than a set of particular experiences that easily slip away.

3.2.3 Conceptual clarification and ethical theories

The philosophical tradition delivers several tools for conceptual clarification, in which related concepts are used in order to better grasp what the value stands for. I provide a few examples and hope the reader will overlook my simplicity and see this as a challenge with which to make further progress.

Traditionally, the notion of *responsibility* is connected to the image of a rational and autonomous person. She knows very well what she is doing, takes matters in her own hand and therefore can be held accountable for the decisions she makes. As she is held responsible, she will be praised or blamed for her actions. But we also speak of people being responsible for a task. In that case the emphasis shifts to care. Through dedication to their task, a responsible subject directs attention towards an often vulnerable object of responsibility. Empathy, responsiveness and emotional sensitivity are at least as important as a rational overview.

People are supposed to have *respect* for a person because of the office that person holds (as mayor, a minister, or the king). This form of respect is closely related to esteem. It is, however, completely different from respect for someone's autonomous decision, irrespective of the stupidity of the decision. In the latter case, there is an equal relationship between people, and the other person is completely free to make their own decisions.

Freedom is often defined as being free of constraints—to do, be, or have actions or outcomes. But opinions differ on the importance of an individual's preferences. At first glance, there is no connection between a person's freedom to do Action X and their desire to do Action X. But Berlin states convincingly that the extent of freedom depends on . . . how important the possibilities are in a person's plan of life. When people are deprived of possibilities that they consider to be of vital importance, they will experience a lack of freedom more than if they were deprived of more trivial possibilities (Pattanaik and Xu

2015). The kind of constraints also determines the level of freedom. When these constraints are an affront on human dignity, the loss of freedom will be experienced more profoundly than if they were of a more contingent nature. Freedom is also determined by the variety of options. And, of course, here is the famous distinction between *negative freedom* as in freedom *from* interference versus *positive freedom,* as in freedom *to do* something because of innately required capacities.

In an elaboration on these examples, ethical theories can play a role. In interpretations of responsibility and respect, we referred to autonomy, which is a core concept in deontology. Kantian deontology provides a strong conception of autonomy emphasizing the full exercise of rationality, while autonomy in a weaker sense, may imply mainly non-interference, or absence of external obstacles, in liberal political theory. This theories also provide a background of the traditional definition of freedom. In responsibility, as in care and positive freedom, the focus is on a proper attitude. In an elaboration of these interpretations, virtue ethics becomes involved. Practical reason is the ability to consider the described implementations of values and to make judgments. In this case, what are the best norms with which to implement a value? What is the underlying value of a narrative? What does a conceptual clarification provide about the meaning of a value? How can the theoretical framework lead to a solution of a case?

3.3 The danger of value oppositions

As Stelios Virvidakis says in his chapter, in a debate an adversarial format is usually adopted: opponents compete, and there is a winner and a loser. This has many advantages. Competition is attractive, and opponents bring out the best in each other. Moreover, a debating format strongly resembles real policymaking. In a limited-time framework, the main arguments pro and con must be presented, and a decision must be taken. But the adversarial framework has its limitations. Oppositions are exaggerated in a way that does not do justice to reality. For instance, it is tempting for opponents to use the notorious "straw man argument." In this rhetorical trick, someone refutes the opponent's proposition by replacing it with another proposition, which is a caricature of the original position.

A variant of the problematic value opposition is the false dilemma, in which the speaker limits the options that are available. The premise asserts that one among a small number of presented alternatives must be true. In its simplest form, called the *fallacy of bifurcation*, all but two of the alternatives are excluded. This oversimplifies the available choice by excluding viable alternatives. The inclination to present false dilemmas results from the tendency to simplify reality by ordering it through either/or statements. And these kinds of statements are to some extent already built into the debating framework.

Another danger is that values are opposed in such a way that that their real meaning is disregarded. The complexity of the values and the diverse ways in which they manifest themselves are denied. An example of this is the privacy versus safety debate.

3.3.1 Privacy versus safety

In safety issues, it is clear that several threats to society can be met by digitally monitoring people's actions. But this is at the expense of privacy. Unfortunately, privacy and safety are often opposed in terms of a "zero-sum game," which paints an overly simplistic picture. When people have to choose between privacy and safety, they of course choose safety. Safety is a value that shoves away almost all other values. With an insistence on safety, surveillance measures can be easily legitimized by reference to the supposed threats. This leads to a temptation to blindly accept rationales that would lead to intense surveillance measures. The person who protests against these violations is reproached for being naive (or, even worse, insufficiently patriotic).

Such "safety hypochondria" would be far removed from leading a meaningful life. John Stuart Mill expressed this view when he wrote, "A man who has nothing which he cares about more than he does about his personal safety is a miserable creature who has no chance of being free, unless made and kept so by the existence of better men than himself" (Mill 1862). The value of safety must be removed from its foothold as an absolute precondition. This is possible by giving it meaning through concrete practices and making careful assessments. In concrete cases, the opposition with other values is mitigated. Valuations of safety and privacy would vary widely in a speed control, a football match or a political rally. Crowd control with the help of CCTV is much more accepted in the case of hooligans than in the case of marches for peace (Van den Broek 2017).

At the end of the day, one could aim at a synthesis of considerations, in an attempt to respect more than one, apparently opposed values, also appealing to a principle of proportionality in weighing alternatives and eventually proposing a solution.

> A good debating strategy reveals the straw man argument, the value opposition and the false dilemma as rhetorical tricks, and points are scored by showing how complex things are in reality.

4 Conclusions

Values are attractive for debaters, but a proper use of values is not easy. Given the difficulties, it could be tempting to switch to other perspectives and approaches. Of course, empirical and psychological knowledge, law, and oppositionist stances have their merits, and they can be used properly in a wide range of situations. But they should not be confused with values, and switching to these approaches does not do justice to the strength of values. A good debater understands the interplay between abstract and concrete characteristics of values. They are able to convincingly prioritize values, by doing justice to how they manifest themselves in reality.

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V

Kant's ethics of duty

Ivan Kolev

Chapter 5
Kant's ethics of duty
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1 Introduction

It is possible to group influential contemporary ethical theories and their prominent representatives into four main groups, as follows: *virtue ethics* (Aristotle, Alasdair MacIntyre), *deontological ethics* (Immanuel Kant), *consequentialist ethics* (Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill), and *value ethics* (Max Scheler, Nicolai Hartmann).

For the purposes of this edition, we shall focus on the *basic concepts* of Kantian ethics of duty for two basic reasons. First, because the solid grounding and detailed elaboration of Kant's thought has had a profound influence on contemporary ethical reasoning. Second, because an understanding of its main ideas is advantageous both for the specific task of identifying arguments in discussions of ethical dilemmas and for the general task of sharpening our moral sensitivity.

2 Transcendental Philosophy

Ethics constitutes the second stage of Kant's "critical" philosophy—developed in the triad consisting of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), *Critique of Practical Reason* (1787), and *Critique of the Faculty of Judgment* (1790)—and the basis for his metaphysics. Kant distinguishes himself from his "dogmatic" predecessors in seeking to explain how, given our faculties, we may have *a priori* knowledge. Kant considers philosophy a "system of concepts of reason" and is confident that, given the right approach, such a system can be completed. The Kantian approach is uniquely characterized by inquiring into the "origin, volume, and validity" of our concepts. The most important among these are *a priori* concepts, which are independent of experience. By investigating these concepts, Kant believes, we may discern the very *a priori* conditions of possibility of experience. Given that the questions he asks, in effect, go beyond or above the world as we could possibly experience it, the philosophy earns the title "transcendental."

Kant believes that his project frees philosophy from its "dogmatic slumber" and clears the way for a non-dogmatic metaphysics. For this to happen, Kant must draw a strict boundary between the empirical and the *a priori* in philosophy (Stoev 2010: 21). *A priori* knowledge is the content of a pure philosophy from which everything empirical, all that is given in experience, is excluded. Unlike other philosophical systems, Kant maintains that critical metaphysics has a unique advantage: it may be completed.

The pure philosophy concerned with the *a priori* has two parts: logic and metaphysics. Metaphysics is "a system of the pure concepts of reason" and in turn also contains two parts: a *metaphysics of nature* and a *metaphysics of morals*. The metaphysics of morals is the "pure philosophy of morals" (GMM: 64, AA 4:410). By means of this approach, in which philosophical conclusions are achieved neither by harvesting empirical data from experience, nor by accepting dogmatic assumptions from previous thinkers, but by the pure application of reason to our concepts, Kant develops his ethical system.

3 Ethics

In line with the general theoretical commitments of his transcendental approach, Kant's goal is to demonstrate how the individual moral person can have "a position and criteria that are independent of any natural and social order" (MacIntyre 1998, 127). In contrast to the law, which is the external legislation to which a citizen is subject, and which depends on the social order in which one lives, ethics provides an *internal legislation* that governs any human being. Ethical reasoning, which is a pure practical philosophy of internal law, is concerned exclusively with the moral relations of one individual person to another. That is, strictly speaking, Kantian ethics is not concerned with the more complex human relations, which may be social, political, economic, and so on. Rather, his ethics cannot be extended beyond the limits of people's mutual relationships to each other, and it must be defined as "a system of the ends of pure practical reason" (MM: 602, AA 6:491). The goal is to articulate an ethical system independent of any further relations—including that between humanity and God or between the subject and their experience.

Thus, Kant sets out to find the immanent principles of ethics. Such principles might free ethics from its dependence on those human particularities studied by anthropology—anthropology is an empirical science from which no *a priori* moral principle can be derived (GMM 64, AA 4:410). Although one cannot do without a *moral anthropology*, that anthropology itself presupposes a metaphysics of morals (Ibid.).

4 Human Being

Kant's ethical views are intrinsically about those principles that govern the actions of rational, finite beings such as we are. As such, they are informed to a large degree by his account of human nature, which he sets out in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and which we may now briefly set out. There, Kant describes two aspects of a human being: it is a phenomenon and a thing-in-itself. The relationship between the two aspects is asymmetrical: things-in-themselves are the ground of phenomena. Because we belong to the world of phenomena, human beings have faculties. The cultivation of these faculties, Kant believes, is one of the tasks of philosophy. In this respect, he perpetuates the German Enlightenment idea of *Bildung*, itself a neoclassical renaissance of the Greek idea *paideia*—the training in arts, science, and virtue, which was integral to being a good citizen of the Greek *polis*. On the other hand, the noumenal aspect of humanity guarantees freedom from the laws of nature. Given that only a free being can be obliged to do anything, it is because of this freedom that humans can have duties. Here, one can discern the influence of Alexander Baumgarten's ethics of obligations (*Elements of First Practical Philosophy*, 1760)—which Kant used as the basis of his *Lectures on Ethics*—but also of Samuel von Pufendorf's doctrine of obligations (on these two connections, see Kolev 2021). Kant's commitment to personal cultivation is laid out magnificently in both his *Metaphysics of Morals* and *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. We may interpret the fact that these two works appeared almost simultaneously, in 1797 and 1798, respectively, as an indication of a connected corpus containing Kant's "humanistic legacy."

But along with the phenomenal conception of human beings that Kant describes, the noumenal aspect that shares in the classical conception of humanity. On that view, reason is the highest human faculty and the one that distinguishes us from other living beings (GMM: 99, AA 4:452). Just as Aristotle saw in *nous* a faculty separate from matter, so Kant sees in reason an autonomy that does not depend on the body. Reason, for him, is characterized by spontaneity: it is the origin of its own activity, rather than continuing another activity, like an activity of nature or of the body (Ibid.). In Kant's terminology, the ground for calling a being rational, or an intelligence, can be given by the fact that it is able to choose to act according to laws, rather than merely unconsciously obeying physical laws. When our reason determines our actions by itself, it is not determined, in doing so, by the contingent circumstances of space and time. Our freely chosen deeds have no genesis in nature, including the nature of the physical human body. Instead, Kant believes, they are "primordial," which is to say "free," "unconditioned," or associated with a specific spontaneity. Causality, on the other hand, is conditioned by time.

5 Intelligible World

By virtue of our freedom, we belong to an *intelligible world*—the totality of all intelligences (GMM: 108, AA 4:462). Our participation in the intelligible world, however, does not cut us off from the sensible world: as dual-aspect phenomenal and noumenal entities, we have the privilege of participating in both worlds. It is important to note that this duality is not substantive—it does not indicate that we are composed, as Descartes thought, of disparate substances. Rather, it is a modal duality: we are capable of two distinct *ways of acting*, according to different reasons and motives. In the intelligible world, we are autonomous beings who legislate. The moral laws included in that legislation, in turn, apply to and condition our actions in the sensible world. Therefore, as intelligences, human beings possess free causality.

6 Reason

The activities of the mind can be divided into *theoretical* and *practical*. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant describes *theoretical reason* as operating on those ideas that transcend phenomena. Therefore, it follows that theoretical reason cannot extend human knowledge: its ideas have no genuine empirical correlate. If theoretical reason tries to know the phenomena to which its ideas direct it, it falls into irresolvable contradictions or antinomies.

However, the situation is quite different with respect to the claims of *practical reason*. In this case, reason has postulates that constitute objects. The mind—like Plato's demiurge—is like an artisan, crafting the world around it. Through practical reason, ideas can acquire objective reality (more on this in a moment). This impressive achievement on the part of practical reason, in turn, forces theoretical reason to acknowledge the existence of such "supersensible" objects, even though these objects evade its own cognitive activity. In their practical use, ideas become *immanent* and *constitutive*: they serve as the grounds of the possibility of realizing the necessary object of pure practical reason, the highest good. Barring this possibility, ideas may only be transcendent and may only serve as the regulative principles of speculative reason (CPrR: 249, AA 5:135). But practical reason, unlike theoretical reason, does not constitute transcendent, merely regulative ideas: it constitutes objects that are immanent to it. These ideas of reason are the conditions for the possibility of such a specific object of practical reason as the highest good.

7 Practical Reason

Thus far, we have laid out Kant's general philosophical and ethical methodology, which Max Scheler has referred to as "formalism in ethics." We have also seen, in general, what his account of human nature suggests about our freedom and rationality. In slogan form, for Kant, the key to our freedom is our practical reason: it is through practical reason that ideas acquire objective reality. Let us now see how we might understand this claim by looking more closely at what Kant thinks about practical reason and about ideas, before turning to his views on free will as a way to develop the justification for his moral views.

What sense does Kant assign the term "practical"? Human reason is practical if and only if it determines the will purely on the basis of the mere notion of a law. That is, the will's determination can occur independently of external objects of experience, or internal feelings like pleasure or displeasure. Reason can determine the will formally—only on the basis of rules. Thus, Kant indicates the *causality* of practical reason. With its principles, practical reason is purely operative *a priori*.

Kant calls the consciousness of the moral law a "*fact of reason*" ("Act in such a way that the maxim of your act may become a universal law"). This fact is not empirical but synthetic *a priori*. It is *a priori* (rather than *a posteriori*) in that it is not given by anything in experience, but it is synthetic (rather than analytic) in that it states something substantive about the state of the world, rather than something that is merely true by definition. This fact speaks to the autonomy of pure reason.

By the notion of an object of practical reason, Kant means the notion of an object as possible action through freedom (CPrR: 186, 5:57). But, when he speaks of "objects of practical reason" he is not referring to phenomena of the external senses, but only that which is possible through freedom. *Good* and *evil* are just such objects. Moreover, they are the "only objects" of practical reason. Practical reason, unlike theoretical reason, does not aim to know the objects to which it refers. Thanks to the will's causal power, it is proper to practical reason to *realize* its objects, that is, to make them real.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant proves that pure *a priori* knowledge is possible using an example from mathematics: mathematics is an instance of such knowledge. But how might we prove that pure reason is also practical? Kant's answer is that this proof is not to be sought in the theoretical sciences. Instead, it may be found in the ordinary *practical use of reason*. What would be transcendent or supersensible in theoretical terms is, in practical terms, *immanent* (CPrR: 224, AA 5:105).

Unlike Platonists, Kant does not believe that the transcendence of the sensible world and the attainment of knowledge of "supersensible order and relations" occurs in the field of theoretical knowledge. Instead, it is within the purview of practical reason (CPrR: 224, AA 5:106). Our very consciousness of the moral law is a credible witness to theoretical reason's potential and capacity to also be practical reason. In other words, we may claim theoretical knowledge about our world by the sheer fact that we are aware of the moral law's grip on us. It should be made clear that we are not dealing here with two different minds, nor with the transformation of one mind into another mind. Kant specifically emphasizes that we are talking about *two different relations of the same reason* (CPrR: 237, AA 5:121). Given that interest means leaving the immanent, the interest of reason is ultimately always practical because it goes beyond the limits of the speculative (CPrR: 238, AA 5:121).

8 Idea

The discussion of the previous section will be elucidated by a brief discussion of Kant's account of ideas. Unlike Plato, Descartes, or Locke, Kant considers the idea to be a concept that has no analogue in experience, and that transcends the phenomena to which it refers. For instance, the ideas of theoretical reason—like freedom, immortality, or God—give us no knowledge: the more we try to understand them, the more they become obscure to us. Kant accounts for this fact by his claim that knowledge requires, at the least, an intuition (*Anschauung*), which is to say a singular representation of an individual. Ideas having no intuition, therefore, remain only thoughts, which—although not internally contradictory—are not yet knowledge in themselves. However, if an idea is a kind of perfection that has no adequate representation in experience, moral ideas cannot be transcendent. After all, the ideas handled by practical reason can be our models for practical actions, guiding us through the world of phenomena. Furthermore, such ideas can serve as the scale by which we judge human actions against what we take to be a model (CPrR: 242, AA 5:127).

How, then, do the ideas of reason obtain *objective reality*? They do so thanks to the legislation of practical reason itself. Practical reason itself creates those conditions that make possible what it refers to as its object. Through the practical law, we understand that the ideas of the mind have objects. However, we may have this understanding without yet being able to indicate how an idea's concept relates to an object. This, too, is not yet knowledge of these objects, and, therefore, we cannot obtain true speculative knowledge from pure reason. It is quite impossible to judge anything of them synthetically, or to determine their application theoretically. Therefore, no theoretical use can be made of reason—which speculative knowledge wholly consists of—with respect to them. Judgments about them do not have the character of knowledge and cannot be recognized as *a priori* synthetic cognitive judgments. Thus, the objective reality obtained through practical reason by the ideas of God, freedom, and immortality may have value for moral law. But they have no value for those laws to be handled by theoretical reason (CPrR: 251, AA 5:138).

In Kant's formal ethics, *good* and *evil* are neither metaphysical forces nor qualities of objects. His conscious denaturalization of good and evil accord with transcendental philosophy, according to which "phenomena are empirically real and transcendentally ideal." The denaturalization of good and evil shifts their *topos* from "available before acts" to "determinable only after the moral law." Good and evil, therefore, refer to acts and derive from the evaluation of those acts, an evaluation that derives from the moral law. Famously, Kant begins the first section of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* by asserting that it "is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be considered good without limitation except a good will" (AA 4:393). It is to this notion of will that we now turn.

9 Will

Kant inherits a register of traditional Aristotelian faculties (*dunamis*, according to the conception developed in Aristotle's *De anima*), most immediately from Alexander Baumgarten's *Metaphysics*. Among them, the will is distinguished by the fact that, as a faculty, it has the potential and the power (the two aspects of *dunamis*) to determine itself. The will is a faculty for those acts that are performed because their ground is the notion of a moral law (GMM: 66, AA 4:412). In this sense, the will is a "causality of reason" and, plausibly, possessed exclusively by rational beings. Because the will coincides with practical reason, which can realize its ideas, free will is just another name for the will that is subject to the moral law.

In the spirit of the transcendental philosophy and the concepts introduced in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant calls the will that is not influenced by inclinations and desires but that is based on *a priori* principles "pure will" (GMM: 46, AA 4:390). In our everyday life, we call many things "good" because we value them. So, we may claim that health, wealth, fame, or knowledge are good. But, according to Kant, the only "good without limit" is "*good will*" (GMM: 49, AA 4:393). Because, as we have established, the will is practical reason, it chooses only what reason determines to be practically necessary, that is, good (GMM: 66, AA 4:412). Therefore, the good will is "good in itself," meaning that it is good without regard to any comparison and to differences of degree. Therefore, a will's quality of being good does not depend on whether or not an action successfully achieves what one had intended by it.

Consequences are irrelevant to a good will and Kant considers consequentialism an unacceptable ethical position. One's concrete ends also have no effect on good will. Pure will has as its principle "a demand whose maxim can become a universal law" (GMM: 57, AA 4:402). In this sense, the purity of will is the purity of empirical grounds and of extra-rational motives. This is why the absolutely good will stands proudly above, and firm against, the demands of all contingent desires, inclinations, and purposes. It is precisely because of this purity that the maxim of the absolutely good will cannot be self-contradictory. Because it rises above reasons and motives external to it, it can be made a universal law. The good will's purity and universality protect it from the possibility of becoming its opposite—of being an "evil will." Reason directly determines the will, which, precisely because of its definition as pure will, has the *necessary* conditions for the observance of its prescription (CPrR: 246, AA 5: 132). A will whose purity is unwavering to the point of being incapable of maxims that contradict the moral law is called a "holy will." As has already been made clear, the will represents the reason for an act. This distinguishes it from *choice*, which is a characteristic of the particular act.

10 Freedom

Purity of will means independence from the empiricism of concrete life, from its grounds, and from its motives. This also makes it possible to understand the place of freedom in Kant's ethics. According to the Königsberg philosopher, freedom is an "idea of reason" (GMM: 102, AA 4:455), which puts it in stark contrast with the laws of nature, which are concepts of reason. Like the other ideas—God and immortality—freedom can be neither explained nor understood by reason.

Natural causality and free will are inherent in the human being as a complex, phenomenal, non-artificial being. Natural causality governs the body, and free will governs the soul. Free will, too, has a causality, but of a different type: *causa noumenon*. In the strict sense, freedom of the will differs from *psychological freedom* (which Kant calls comparative freedom): it is a *transcendental freedom*. By our possession of transcendental freedom, humans are independent of natural causality and, in general, of everything empirical, within and without. Owing to their strong divergence from our contemporary sense of ourselves and the world, understanding Kant's thoughts on transcendental freedom requires some effort. In his view, transcendental freedom implies that human beings are independent, even in relation to time. This conclusion does not follow from some theoretical knowledge or an exalted capacity for meditation or contemplation. It is simply the product of the practical capacity of reason to give itself laws.

In Kant's metaphysics, natural causality refers only to phenomena, whereas causality by freedom refers to things in themselves (CPrR: 214, AA 5:94). As we discussed earlier, whereas causality is a temporal relation, freedom is spontaneous. The concept of freedom, as one of the pure concepts of the mind, transcends the realm of knowable experience. But freedom must perform the equally important task of serving as a regulative principle of reason. How might the reality of freedom be confirmed? Kant's moral theory locates the proof in the practical foundations of action: the very existence of moral laws is evidence that pure reason has its own causality, and that it is the cause of actions without regard to the accompanying empirical conditions. These foundations prove that moral concepts and moral laws are sourced in the human will.

The *will* inherent in rational living beings is their causality, which may be called their freedom. A deed may be necessary as a result of either *heteronomy* or *autonomy*. If such an action-regulating necessity arises from nature, it is *heteronomy*. If it arises from morality, it is *autonomy*. Kant defines the will's capacity to legislate in morality as "autonomy of the will." It follows from the autonomy of the will that the maxim from which our actions proceed can be universalized to a law that applies to all rational beings. Autonomy of the will and freedom of the will are interchangeable concepts (GMM: 97, AA 4:451).

11 Laws and Maxims

Recall the earlier distinction between legal and moral laws: whereas legal laws impose external constraints on actions in situations conditioned by socio-political relationships, the moral law imposes an unconditional, internal constraint. The moral law is the legislative form of the maxim for the free will. A being who acts according to the idea of freedom is free in practical terms. Just as the concepts of reason that are not derived from experience are pure concepts, so the will that is determined only by the form of the law is called *pure will*. This purity of the will gives it a reason for being the supreme ground of all moral maxims.

According to Kant, the two legislations—legal and moral—stand in a relationship of external to internal. *Legal* legislation is concerned with an act's external aspect: whether it conforms to the law. If it does, the act is legal. As such, legal obligations are external. *Ethical* law is primarily interested in an act's motive, which it also involves in the moral evaluation of the act. A deed whose motive corresponds to duty is moral (CPrR: 383-384, AA 6:219-220). Practical principles are divided into *formal* and *material* according to whether they are attributed to ends that are objective or subjective (GMM: 78, AA 4:428).

As practical reason, the will gives laws to actions, and choice gives maxims. A *maxim* is not an imperative, but only a subjective principle that motivates an action. An agent, taking a maxim as the subjective basis of a deed, chooses to make it the rule of their action. According to Kant, the law is objectively valid and applies to *every rational being in general* (CPrR: 153, AA 5:19).

The *moral law* is a work of *pure reason*. Only pure reason can give a law that is *a priori* and, therefore, universal. It earns its force as law from its *a priori* nature, which means that, for us, the law is necessary. It contains a categorical imperative, not advising or recommending, but *commanding* (*imperans*). The fact that moral law is a uniquely intellectual causality makes it a *causality of freedom*. However, this association with freedom does not imply arbitrariness without restraint—quite the opposite. The law "crushes the self-conceit" of the individual and establishes a norm that is valid for all rational beings (CPrR: 199, AA 5:73). The "law of duty" is different from the "law of holiness" because of the difference between a finite rational being and an all-perfect being. For a finite human being, the moral law is a morality of duty that crushes the selfishness of self-love and self-righteousness (*arogantia*) (Ibid.).

The notion of freedom provides us with an *extension* into the realm of the supersensible, but only with respect to practical deeds and practical knowledge. Only thanks to the purity of the will and its freedom can we find the unconditioned and the intelligible. However, as we have seen, the free self-legislation of practical reason is unique to rational beings such as humans. Those worldly phenomena having no basis in freedom are determined by the laws of nature. Moral law is characterized by another type of determination: determination by the categorical imperative. Only this imperative is strict or categorical. Kant identifies two other imperatives. The *technical* imperative specifies how one must act in order to produce something. Such an imperative is inherent in art, understood in the broadest sense of making things, and is similar to the sense of ancient Greek *techne*. The *pragmatic* imperative specifies what actions lead to well-being. However, both imperatives depend on something contingent because both are tied to experience. The *categorical* imperative is not bound in this way. Therefore, it commands strictly.

12 Imperative

With this basic presentation of the core of Kant's ethical thought—including our capacity for reason and practical reason and their respective relations with ideas, the will, and freedom—we may now turn to some substantive issues. We shall now consider how, according to Kant, the duties and obligations imposed on us by morality are borne out by the categorical imperative.

Just as Kant believes that the categories of reason have objective validity in cognition, and thus, in morality, the principles to which the will is subject are objective, because they are laws valid for all rational beings. Given that such a law has the force of compulsion to the will as practical reason, it is expressed in the form of an "imperative." The imperative binds our acts, and, therefore, they leave the realm of empirical contingency and become characterized by necessity. For every moral person, imperatives are expressed as "you ought" (GMM: 66, AA 4:413). The principle's form—that of commandment—is appropriate for our finite, fallible nature: "You owe" is an indicator of human imperfection. On the other hand, there are no imperatives for a perfect, divine will or a "holy will" (GMM: 67, AA 4:414). This duty, that of "owe it to itself," is the duty of a sensible and supersensible being that resides in "two orders of things" (GMM: 101, AA 4:454). In the field of moral experience, the imperative appears as an orienting signpost. It indicates the action that is good for the moral being. Kant distinguishes two kinds of imperatives:

1. Hypothetical, when the deed is a means to an end; and
2. Categorical, when the deed is objectively necessary in itself, without regard to one end or another (GMM: 67, AA 4:414).

Depending on whether the imperative is an expression of the free self-determination of the will, or is bound to that to which it refers, we have autonomy or heteronomy of the will. The formula for heteronomy of the will produces a hypothetical imperative: "I must do this if I want this." Kant further distinguishes between two kinds of hypothetical imperative:

1. Problematic, when a hypothetical imperative specifies the act of a possible intention; and
2. Assertoric, when a hypothetical imperative refers to an actual intention (GMM: 65, AA 4:415).

The categorical imperative is not derived from examples. Rather, its origin is in the *a priori self-determination of the will*. The categorical imperative's only precondition is freedom, which is its necessary precondition because it is only by virtue of its unconditional character that the imperative refers to "the good without limitation," again recalling Kant's famous claim that only a good will is good "without exception" (AA 4:393). As a self-determination of the will, the *a priori* character of the imperative is also an *a priori* synthetic proposition: in it, the demand of the will is combined with the idea of free will. Here, we may recognize an analogy with the *a priori* synthetic cognition that is made possible by a pure reasoning concept that is added to the pure view. If humans existed only in the intelligible world, then their every action would immediately conform to the autonomy of the will. But, because we exist in "two worlds," our actions are bound to be explicitly consistent with autonomy of the will.

The categorical imperative has three formulas:

1. Act in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it becomes a universal law (GMM: 73, AA 4:421).
2. So, act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means (GMM: 80, AA 4:429).
3. Act in accordance with maxims that can at the same time have as their object themselves as universal laws of nature (GMM: 86, AA 4:437).

To test whether the first formula of the categorical imperative is universally valid, we consider how it adjudicates empirical problems. For instance, does it mean that it is morally permissible to commit suicide, or to make a promise that you have no intention of keeping? Clearly, the categorical imperative imposes on the will the true moral decision: neither action is permissible, because one cannot will that either one of them be a universal law. No one would consent to live in a world where suicide and lying are the moral norms to which everyone is subject. We shall return to certain further upshots of Kant's categorical imperative for our moral life momentarily, after briefly considering the nature of duty.

13 Duty

The necessity in morality is expressed by the concept of duty. "Duty," Kant claims, "is the necessity of a deed of respect for the law" (GMM: 55, AA 4:400). He distinguishes between acting "*from duty*" and acting in mere "*conformance with duty*." For Kant, strictly speaking, only the former deed is moral, because it is done according to the maxim of the action, not according to the purpose of the deed. Deeds of the second kind are legally, but not morally, good. Human inclinations, impulses, and feelings are neither the grounds nor the motive of duty. Rather, they hinder duty. Since duty is a "reluctantly accepted goal," it is imbued with necessitation, but necessitation of a particular kind: duty is necessitation by law. But, because the will is the actual legislator in morality, necessitation in duty is actually self-necessitation: it is necessitation on the basis of a "conception of law." A subject who overcomes the will must always make sacrifices: doing so requires an inner self-necessitation to do what is not altogether willingly done. A duty is a deed that one is obliged to perform, and, thus, involves obedience. There is no inherent sublimity in this component of duty. Sublimity, rather, comes from the fact that this obedience is directed toward that law that is the result of the legislative action of the will itself. Because compulsion is derived from the legislation of one's own reason, it also contains *exaltation*. This accounts for Kant's emphatic exclamation in the *Critique of Practical Reason*:

> Duty! Sublime and mighty name that embraces nothing charming or insinuating but requires submission, and yet does not seek to move the will by threatening anything that would arouse natural aversion or terror in the mind but only holds forth a law that of itself finds entry into the mind yet gains reluctant

> reverence (though not always obedience), a law before which all inclinations are dumb, even though they secretly work against it; what origin is there worthy of you, and where is to be found the root of your noble descent which proudly rejects all kinship with the inclinations, descent from which is the indispensable condition of that worth which human beings alone can give themselves? (CPrR: 209, AA 5:86)

The *objective necessity* of an act on the basis of an obligation is a duty, which is, in turn, an objective consistency with the law. The law has force for *maxims*, not for the acts themselves. Duty is what reason commands the subject on how they ought to act—directly, and *objectively*. The concept of "duty" contains within it the concept of "good will." Duty is a concrete way of expressing the will's dependence on the principle of autonomy.

In the *Metaphysics of the Morals*, Kant distinguishes between perfect and imperfect duty—a distinction introduced already in the Groundwork (GMM 73, AA 4:421). *Perfect* duty tolerates no exceptions. *Imperfect* duty is a duty of *virtues*: it is purely *ethical* and contains a certain latitude, being consistent with a range of actions, the limits of which do not lend themselves to precise definition. For instance, generosity is a virtue, but the duty to help those in need does not prescribe the magnitude of help to which our duty calls us.

Duty is a principle of moral conduct, but the concrete realizations of duty as concrete *obligations* vary. For a finite human being having no holy will, every duty is a moral constraint on the will. Our obligations arising from duty are of two kinds: (1) *legal duties* that may be externally legislated, and (2) *moral duties* (or *duties of virtue*) for which no such legislation is possible. Because every human being is constantly under various influences, our moral consciousness is bound up with *effort* and *struggle* between motives. Human nature cannot be appropriately squared with assertions of a moral purity of consciousness.

According to Kant, it is *duty, not merit*, that must have the greatest influence on the human spirit (CPrR: 265, AA 5:157). Because humans alone may incur duties and act in accordance with them, duty belongs to the *cultivation* of humanity. As such, that cultivation includes two crucial components. First, one must emerge from one's natural primordiality by a feat of our own personal effort. Second, elevating the culture of one's will to a maximally virtuous mode of thinking, that is, to a degree at which a law consistent with duty becomes the motive of human acts. Kant refers to this "inner moral perfection" as "moral feeling" (MM: 517, AA 6:387). By these means, the moral person fulfills his duty to "the dignity of the humanity within us" (MM: 558, AA 6:436).

14 Dignity

Kant's notion of dignity may be understood by means of his account of price. In the kingdom of ends, which we shall consider shortly, everything has *price* or *dignity* (GMM: 84, AA 4:439). Something has a *price* if it has some equivalent for which it can be exchanged: in exchange, we replace one value with another value equivalent to it. We may identify two kinds of price: (1) a *market price*, which is assigned to items, skills, and diligence that satisfy our needs (Ibid.) and (2) a *fancy price*, associated with things (e.g., wit) that are valued on the basis of taste (Ibid.). But *dignity*, in contrast, can be ascribed only to that which has no equivalent and, therefore, which cannot have a price, and stands in value above any price (GMM: 84, AA 4:435). Its value does not derive from something external: its value is *internal*, *unconditional*, and *incomparable* to anything else. Because moral actions are absolutely unconditioned expressions of spontaneity, only they have intrinsic worth and hence dignity. Autonomy, therefore, is the basis of dignity. One may manifest an adequate regard for that dignity by means of *respect*.

15 Personhood and Respect

As the subject of practical reason, the human being is priceless, having no equal in value. Their subjective recognition of morality consists in their capacity as a rational natural being to *legislate*, by virtue of which we may recognize their status as a moral person (GMM: 87, AA 4:438). A person is a subject whose acts can be imputed to them. The human—the *homo noumenon*—can never be a mere means: because, possessed of immanent spontaneity, it is more than a phenomenon, it is fundamentally irreducible to a means to an end. Thus, we must recognize every human being as an *end in itself*. As such, the human being possesses dignity and participates in the kingdom of ends. Owing to this inherent dignity, they are not only owed respect by all other rational beings: they also owes themselves *self-respect*. By such means, the *sublimity* of the human personality is clearly seen (CPrR: 210, AA 5:87).

Kant was the first to give a philosophical meaning to the word "respect" (German: Achtung), making it an important ethical concept. Respect is not a judgment but a subjective attitude. It is neither an affect nor a passion, to refer to the famous dichotomy from *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (§§ 73-86). According to the definition originating in *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, respect is "the consciousness of the subjection of my will to a law without the mediation of other influences on my sense" (GMM: 41, AA 4:402). This consciousness is "a notion of a value which offends my self-love" (ibid.). From this definition, it follows that we cannot respect beings that are not endowed with reason and sense. Because it is generated by reason (CrPR: 193, AA 5:66), respect has an intellectual ground. Simultaneously, it is also an expression of humility because it is an attitude of a being who is not merely intellectual. Humility is a kind of "intellectual contempt" (CPrR: 201, AA 5:75), being an awareness of the human limitation to act always only according to the moral law. In the sense of admiration, we can see a foreshadowing of the idea of the complexity of the feelings developed in the third *Critique*, where the aesthetic experience of the sublime is described as combining awe and fascination. Moral respect and aesthetic sublimity differ solely with respect to their temporal features. In the aesthetic, the opposing feelings are coherent, whereas in respect they are simultaneous.

Respect is an *a priori feeling*, rather than a "sense feeling" produced by the effects of external phenomena. It can only be *a priori* given that it is a "*self-produced feeling*" (GMM: 57, AA 4:402). This "self-production" of respect also allows us to understand its necessity. Respect is "produced" by the consciousness of the moral law, which makes it a “moral feeling.” A *moral feeling* is a susceptibility to pleasure or displeasure owing to a consciousness of the conformity or non-conformity of our actions to the law of duty. As a singular feeling, respect contrasts with “sensible feelings,” which, resulting as they do from our experience of a multiplicity of sensible objects, are a multiplicity. The feeling of respect is also peculiar in that it *is always directed to persons* and never to things (CPrR: 202, AA 5:76). The moral sense does not serve as a judgment, but only *as a motive* to make a maxim in itself out of this law (ibid.). The sense of admiration comes nearest to it, but it is an affect (ibid.). Respect for the moral law is the only *unquestionable moral motive* (CPrR: 203, AA 5:78).

16 Kingdom of Ends

Humans stand apart from other animals not only for being owed a unique respect. They also differ from other animals in their ability to set ends: we make choices according to the ends we have set for ourselves. An *end* is an object of free choice, the notion of which determines the volition to act, and thanks to which the object comes to be (MM: 519, AA 6:385). In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), Kant introduces the notion of the “kingdom of ends” (“*Reich der Zwecke*”). It is one of the concepts that justifies the inclusion of metaphysical considerations in a treatise on ethics. According to Kant’s definition of an end in the *Critique of the Faculty of Judgment*, “the concept of an object, insofar as it at the same time contains the ground of the reality of that object, is called an *end*” (CPJ: 68, AA 5:180). Without the notion of end, we could conceive of the will as a “faculty of self-determination.” The will is not a faculty that can be affirmed by an external object: it is, therefore, “another beginning.” That which—as a fully spontaneous apperception in the theoretical perspective of cognition—is the self is also the will in the practical perspective of human activity. With it begins a *second-order causality*—an unnatural causality.

Recall that, for Kant, the *will* is another name for practical reason, or, in other words, reason as practical is will. In theoretical terms, universality is truth, the objective component of knowledge characterized by universality and necessity. In practical terms, universality is a community of rational beings that is made up not of natural elements but of ends. The common ends shared by a community of rational beings are binding on the community. Thus, a "systematically connected totality" is formed, which Kant calls the "kingdom of ends" (GMM: 83, AA 4:433).

Given that every end is an instance of a rational being's free imposition of some constraint on itself, we can recognize a resonance between Kant's kingdom of ends and the social contract tradition in political philosophy, represented famously by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, or Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Unlike the political social contract, there is no presupposition that Kant's moral contract is realized by the concrete mobilization of human beings. The kingdom of ends is a theoretical idea to be explained, not *a practical idea to be realized* (GMM: 86, AA 4:437). Ultimately, the social contract leads to a constitution that can serve as the basis of positive law. The Kantian kingdom of ends leads only to the moral universality of maxims. Nonetheless, certain interesting analogies between the kingdom of ends and social contract require thought. For instance, Kant directly uses the political terminology of rulers and subordinates: he states that rational beings belong to the kingdom of ends both as *rulers*, insofar as they make the laws, and as *subjects* of those laws. Each member of the kingdom of ends has an *equal duty*. The long historical process whereby monarchs became juridical subjects is analogous both to the renunciation of objective and ultimate ends in nature, but also to presupposed substantive ultimate ends—such as happiness or *theosis*—in morality.

Here, Kant makes another radical move. Having abandoned nature's purposiveness for mere objective causality, he offers nature a kind of rehabilitation: he states that "morality regards the kingdom of ends as the *kingdom of nature*" (GMM: 86, AA 4:437). We can interpret this hermeneutically in an integrative-holistic sense. The moral kingdom of ends, which is based on maxims, and the realm of nature, which is based on causal laws, are analogous especially with regard to the integrity of the elements in the whole. Just as causality in a phenomenon cannot violate general causality in nature, so the ends that the will sets for itself as practical reason are moral—that is, they can be *integrated into the whole* of morality—only if they have the universality required by the categorical imperative. The analogy between the two “kingdoms” can also be interpreted as an expression of the synthetic *harmony of the human being* in morality. In turn, this harmony recalls the synthetic incorporation of appearance and concepts into cognition as its indispensable elements.

17 Happiness

Thus far, we have seen some of the judgments regarding how we ought to live and treat each other, which issue from Kant’s ethical view: we are bound by the categorical imperative to treat all humans with dignity and respect, as equal participants in the kingdom of ends. We shall now, briefly, foray into Kant’s views on the eminent ethical notions of happiness and virtue.

Because it seems that, in general, happiness is one of the few things that humans pursue for its own sake, happiness plays a central role in many ethical theories. But its role in Kant’s system is minor. As we have seen, despite his claim that the “interest is practical,” ethical principles cannot derive from experience. *Principles*, unlike advice and examples, cannot be derived from our lived contact with the world. Instead, they must be universal. But we may find nothing universal in experience. *Universality* confers an absolute *necessity*, which is not a feature of other norms of a more limited scope. It is precisely this universality and its absolute necessity that are the grounds for formulating the “owe it to yourself” requirement. Moreover, the applicability of “absolute necessity” goes beyond the realm of human existence and refers to all rational beings in general. (GMM: 62, AA 4:408)

Can happiness be a basic ethical principle? Unlike in Epicureanism, in which happiness is the basis of morality, Kant ascribes no special moral significance to happiness. Nonetheless, Kant does admit that “to be happy is necessarily the desire of every rational but finite being” (CPR: 159, AA 5:25). Happiness, here, refers to an existence that, in its totality, adequately satisfies the desires and will of the being. A being’s needs and inclinations must be maximally satisfied for its existence to be described as one of happiness. The possibility of such a happy fullness of existence is undermined by the fact—noted by the Stoics—that, as long as we live, our existence is never given to us as a whole, containing as it does an "impenetrable darkness" (CPrR: 169, AA: 169). The diversity of human inclinations and desires renders it impossible to form a definite concept of happiness, much less a rule whereby it may be achieved. Humans are endowed with such an immense variety of inclinations and desires by nature that even the most penetrating *connoisseur* of the human condition—barring, perhaps, a perfectly omniscient one—could list them, form a definite conception of them, or deduce a rule by which we may achieve happiness. Therefore, happiness is a topic of the imagination, but unsuitable for the "ideal of reason." As finite human beings, we cannot establish laws or imperatives concerning happiness, but only give advice or general rules. It is unreasonable to command someone to be happy, or to tell them how to be so. As such, the pursuit of either enterprise is indicative of an ignorance of human nature.

18 Virtue

For Kant, objects are neither goods nor anti-goods. Although he differs from the Stoics in a number of crucial respects, he thinks, like them, that virtue is itself a good. He attempts to prove this thesis in the *Analytics* of the *Critique of Practical Reason*. Unlike the Stoics, Kant denies that virtue is the whole and perfect good. A person's attainment of the highest possible good requires two elements: *virtue* and *happiness*. In the doctrine of duty, virtues are that in which the bringing of a deed under laws is done with a view to internal freedom rather than to external freedom. Therefore, virtue may be said to be the "firmness of a man's maxims" in the observance of his duty (MM: 524, AA 6:394).

This "firmness of maxims" is a function of the obstacles we must overcome by means of the will as practical reason. Overcoming such obstacles is "self-compulsion" and part of virtue. This *self-coercion* is neither ascetic nor masochistic: it is done in view of moral duty and its formal law. Kantian virtue, founded on firm and steadfast thinking, is the consent of the will to every duty. Therefore, there is but one virtue, and a formal one at that. But there are many virtues in terms of goals that morality inclines us to adopt. To acknowledge many virtues is to recognize that, from a single principle of virtue, we may be led to a variety of moral objects. Virtue is distinguished from vice not according to the degree to which the maxims are observed, but according to the specific *quality* of that observance: their *attitude to the law* (MM: 532, AA 6:404). The virtuous disposition is being motivated by the moral laws in the appropriate way, rather than being simply obedient to them. Kant's refusal to accept degrees of virtue and vice commits him to the position of a moral rigorist. Virtue is the moral firmness of a person's will in the observance of duty: it is a moral compulsion of *lawgiving reason*, that reason itself constituting a law-enforcing power. Insofar as virtue is an end in itself, it must be regarded as its own reward. In every virtue, we can find a certain will to duty and, accordingly, a certain firmness of will. This firmness is necessary owing to the dominance of reason—in its modality of practical reason—over inclinations and desires. According to Kant, because virtue is an end in itself, we must, like the Stoics, view it as a reward for the quality of our attitude toward the moral law. Owing to the intrinsic association between the freedom available to rational beings and spontaneity, the possible abuse of that freedom gives us reason to value "peace of mind" as a quality of virtue itself: despite our will's constant spontaneity, a virtuous will is at peace insofar as it is the expression of a thoughtful decision to follow the moral law and its prescriptions.

However, Kantian virtue is not static: it is not an intellectual inference that reaches an unchanging conclusion. Rather, it is in a perpetual state of upward *movement*, and if it does not move *upward*, it fades (MM: 537, AA 6:409). This ascent is not cumulative, like the accumulation of knowledge. Instead, it is a movement that *always starts from the beginning* (Ibid.), bearing a *sublime* originality. This sustained ascent is necessitated by the fact that, for Kant, virtue is not based on any habit or customary inclination, but rather on *freedom*. Therefore, we should not understand virtue as a natural characteristic, a static quality, or as a cold and disinterested intellectual judgment. By the presence of *effort* in it, virtue is dynamic, and, in its fullness, an ascent. The "virtuous man" of sublime character achieves superiority over external and internal nature through the resources of inner freedom and practical reason.

19 Morals and Morality

Given everything that has been said so far, what is the mission of morality? As already mentioned, Kant does not think that morality shows us how to be happy: that is the task of material ethics. Kant's ethics, like his doctrine of knowledge, is *formal*, in that it is concerned with the *transcendental conditions of morality*. It teaches us only how to become *worthy of happiness* (CPrR: 244, AA 5:130). To this, *religion*, which may promise a life without the limitation of time, can add the hope of happiness in dignity.

According to Kant, then, morality is the relationship of action to the legislation of reason (GMM: 84, AA 4:435). An act's moral value can be determined by checking whether its motive includes respect for the moral law (GMM: 88, AA 4:439). So, neither external commandments such as those of the *Old Testament* (Exodus 20) nor motives arising from a "good heart" or a "disposition to humanity" account for morality in the strict sense of Kant's critical formal ethics. His emphasis on *formality* means that moral good is derived from principles, not particular instances of actions. Only truly pure principles promote the individual's moral development, as they point us toward moral perfection. The principle is the first example, and the example only proves that such action is possible (GMM: 63, AA 4:409). To cultivate morality, we must not only do what our duty requires, but also do so out of a sense of duty, that is, with a motive consistent with duty. A deed consistent with autonomy of the will is *permitted*. But a deed whose maxim is, without compulsion, consistent with the autonomy of the will indicates an *absolutely good* or *holy will* (GMM: 88, AA 4:439). Because, for Kant, morality amounts to a harmonious concordance of external reason and internal motive, we may speak of it as a state of mind (CPrR: 267, AA 5:159).

20 Highest Good

Theoretical and practical reason, unlike understanding, seeks the unconditional. For theoretical reason, the unconditional totality of conditions gives us the idea of God. For practical reason, the unconditional totality of its object gives us the "highest good" (CPrR:

227, AA 5:108). The highest good includes both *virtue* and *happiness*, they should be held in possession by a person simultaneously (CPrR: 229, AA 5:110). Happiness and virtue are two distinct elements of the highest good. Their conjunction cannot be known analytically: it is, rather, a *synthesis* of concepts. This coupling is known *a priori*, that is, as *practically necessary*, and therefore not as derived from experience. The deduction of this concept is transcendental.

Attaining the highest good is the *necessary end of the will*, because the objective ground of the will as practical reason is the moral law, which is *universal*. The ratio of the human faculties is such that it corresponds to this higher purpose of the will (CPrR: 257, AA 5:146). This result of Kant's critical ethics can be seen as an ethical *apologia* for the human. With this notion of the highest good as the ultimate and total goal of pure will, we achieve what the theoretical cannot. Practical reason arrives at the concept of a *supreme being*. Thus, it becomes clear that the concept of God belongs not to metaphysics, but to morality. If things have a price, and personality has dignity, the sacred is an object of such moral weight that we have *obligations that cannot be recompensed*, and we remain always indebted to it. When we think of the substantive ideal of holiness, we think of God (CPrR: 266, AA 5:158).

Abbreviations

AA	*Kants gesammelte Schriften*, herausgegeben von der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1902 (*Akademie-Ausgabe*)
GMM	*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by Mary J. Gregor, in Kant (1996): 37-108; and on occasion revised in the light of Allison (2011)
CPrR	*Critique of Practical Reason*, translated by Mary J. Gregor, in Kant (1996): 133-272
MM	*The Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by Mary J. Gregor, in Kant (1996): 353-604
Anth	*Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, Robert B. Louden (trans.), in *Anthropology, History, and Education*, Robert B. Louden and Günter Zöller (eds.), 2007
CPJ	*Critique of the Power of Judgment*, translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews, in Kant (2000)

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VI

Value-laden narratives and normativity:

Debating morals in popular culture and media

Ricardo Gutiérrez Aguilar

Chapter 6
Value-laden narratives and normativity: Debating morals in popular culture and media
Ricardo Gutiérrez Aguilar

Someone asked Bernard Shaw what, in his opinion, is the most beautiful thing in this world. "Youth," he replied, "is the most beautiful thing in this world—and what a pity that it has to be wasted on children!" (Cook 1931, 8)

1 Introduction: Literal and figurative modes of speech

Language is a peculiar game. Everybody seems to like games. It is a constant in human nature to transform any activity and purpose in its reach into a game at the first opportunity. Games are certainly fun, which is a good motive to turn everything into a matter of play. Maybe it is because they excel in blending the comfortable securities of rules and norms, securities we all deem useful, with the freedom of fictions that—even being supplementary to our functional biological needs—our imaginations crave. We tend to think of a game in the fashion of a legal code. Some things are correct and others are wrong under its prescriptions. "You have to speak well!"; "That isn't how you say it!"; "Don't you dare say that again!," are common statements that surely we have employed more than once. Some statements are played well, others are not. We can do things with words. Linguistics talks in this sense about a performative dimension of language: like a spell, words can create realities, have people engaged in actions—"Please, close the door"—and, most significantly, evoke a colorful palette of emotions in the other person. Language is a powerful game.

Question 1

Within a debate and within everyday conversations choosing your words carefully can significantly impact how your message is perceived. The headlines below describe the same situation but are likely to provoke different emotions.

A Climate fanatics arrested after destroying precious artwork.
B Police brutally interferes during peaceful climate protest.

A Murder suspect on the loose because of lack of evidence.
B Innocent man being released from prison after two years of unjust imprisonment.

Now it is your turn to try to come up with two headlines that describe the same phenomenon in different words.

Words are pieces of a game. These pieces form a set. At the same time, each one opens up a richness of possibilities, as we have seen. We can do things with them, interfere in the real world, thanks to their multiple nuances. If they are pieces of a game, then their value depends on the play we entertain each time. There is an inner ambiguity in them. An appealing freedom. Hence, in the simpler games for every word there should be a meaning bound to it. Let's call this their *literal sense*. One meaning clearly connected and accessible to direct interpretation. Unambiguous, it can be said. Every letter works like a pact. If we say "dog," the pact in which we freely engage with our interlocutor entails a certain living object that barks— children learn about this type of pact. Lexicons and vocabularies are the tokens for these little contracts. But, in the process of committing to this aspect of social life, *they play*.

Children play either with the ringing surface of words, with the public part, or with the signs of them. There comes the slurring, babbling, stuttering in their pronunciation. Or the identification of the "dog" with its very animal sound. The dog is its bark. But they also play with the combination of words. Juggling with the order and position of entire syllables and terms. This is a primitive game. Haven't we all played with Meccano? Language is such a device. Alas, where there is fun, there is also seriousness... Words cannot be bent endlessly. Even though Meccano is the epitome of versatility, the laws of combination are limited to the protruding surfaces, the slots and crevasses that guarantee the connections. There are correct and incorrect uses, there are plain transgressions, and—in the eyes of some people—there are even crimes when we play. The majority of the time, codes are exhaustive, complete, perfectly devised and produced in a seemingly simple form. This is, of course, only an ideal. But let's accept it for the moment, if only for the sake of argument. Language as a code would have all the answers on correct and incorrect uses. Unfortunately for our assumption, language is also a recursive play that can give rise to infinite possibilities of combination with just a finite number of pieces. The Meccano's set is limited. There is a finite number of nuts, bolts and girders in the box. However, Meccano is not a puzzle and can be sorted in multiple ways. Likewise, grammar states the house rules for the word-citizens, but trespassing has become second nature. We expect word-citizens to behave according to words. But we also assume they sometimes misbehave... It comes as no surprise that the play extends itself to the link that binds the letter and its spirit. That is, with their meaning. Children discover then, even subconsciously, the symbolic dimension of words. A symbol is a more elaborate pact. Semantics and pragmatics call the shots and demand of the players a particular kind of confidence that bridges the gap between literality and imagination. Puns, jokes, and riddles over time take the place of phonetic tongue-twisters. Words cease to be one-directional roads that lead to a single meaning. Well, that is how play comes about. "When is a door not a door? When it is ajar" is quite the in-between example for these related species of pact.

Question 2

Not only the words chosen affect how a message is perceived. The understanding, associations and interests of the person receiving the message are at least as important. This means you need to adjust your message based on who you are talking to. Imagine that you are in favor of the following motion:

"Animal testing should be banned."

A Develop the argument that animal testing should be banned because animals right need to be protected.

B Now rewrite the argument three times to make it cater to three different groups:
- your vegan friend
- a biology teacher
- a five year old child

Question 3

As you can read in chapter 1, debate can be a tool to investigate outside perspectives and to test the strongest versions of opposing arguments. This is why you are not debating about opinions but about assigned positions.

Are there any topics that should be avoided when debating or should every topic be up for debate? Discuss your answer with the rest of the group.

Nonetheless, the child must first abide by the norms of the word-citizen, to pronounce words correctly, to thread words into coherent sentences and—more importantly—*to understand what is meant by saying these words*. *To think* on and consider all of these little commitments. We talk about *"minding your words" and "speaking your mind"* with a clear purpose. To speak and to think are two sides of the same activity. Before speaking is babbling, but babbling is a would-be intent for speaking (an intention to speak?). Songs, poems, fables, and tales support the educational drill with repetitions and codas. Education is a means of induction into the shared social world. Words and sentences are bent, stretched out, articulated in the most creative ways—although not every attempt is *according to language law*—by infants.

The pieces of the game are turned upside-down, interchanged, bound together, eventually ignored. Like every game, it has rules that it is mandatory to respect, but also like every game there are loopholes by means of which the rules generate exceptions and, finally, even grow out of their former reading. Like the child learning it, the language grows as well. The child exploring the language and its confines learns the contrast between *fiction* and *reality*, between *literal* and *figurative* acts of speech.

2 Unity of the discourse and logical narrative consequences

Despite the fact that language is a multi-layer game, we—more than often—forget about this essential trait of our accustomed communication instrument. With each step further in the ladder of combinatory plays, from juggling with syllables to juggling with meanings, from playing with the order of words to telling a joke, a story, performing an anecdote... we consume huge amounts of meanings, mostly without realizing. We absorb values without noticing. In every step up the narrative ladder the game involves decisions made by its players. If there is an entitlement in distinguishing between the literal and the figurative sense, between the word and its spirit, the latter of the two represents the intention behind the appearance. It is the only feature of the game that truly represents the player, indeed. There is no doubt that discourse is a technique, a way to achieve things and get things done, and that techniques tend to be judged as objective and neutral. In this light, an instrument or tool is just a device or means. The instrument is not to be blamed for any mischiefs caused in reaching its goal. We can discuss goals, purposes, ends, but the means is pure. It is not tainted by any pre-purpose. Or so we have been told... Language is an instrument, and there are of course even technical languages. Logic is a fine example of them. Mathematicians, philosophers of logic, are proud of their language. A purely symbolic language would be the ideal of any communicative system. The dream of an unambiguous system of meanings finds here its happy ending. Pieces of this language would have their meanings strongly attached to them. Symbolic conventions are strong pacts, safety nets for their speakers. Logicians, mathematicians, and linguists talk about propositions or statements—this last concept used in a more general and ordinary way. Discourses are made up of propositions. The diverse statements are connected with each other, forming a structure of sense, alluding one to another, giving rise to a unity. The sense of each is dependent of the whole community of statements.

Let's play with analogies; for example: An argument is a kind of organism. A proposition is like its basic cell. It is a linguistic structure in which something is asserted or denied of a subject. A proposition is depicted normally as a simple *S is (or is not) P*, a Subject *is*—or *is not*—a Predicate. The predicate is attached to or detached from the subject or the substantive—that which can be identified with an individual. Like with cells and their nutrients, the subject of the proposition absorbs in a way the predicate affirmed by it and rejects the one denied. A sort of logical digestive process. In logic, the intended science of natural thinking, the basic form of these organic unities is the *sequent*. "*If* it rains, *then* the streets will get wet" is a perfect example of a sequent—and a little train of thought. A sequent is the symbol in place of a connection, the connection made present. A link worth noticing. An inference or a deduction, are other examples of these narratives. A set of premises conducive to a conclusion. The several episodes of the argument are connected by logical functions or by literary effects that bind the gaps between them. Logical discourse is not different from plotting. In fact, thinking and plotting is quite the same. Because of this, narratology holds an ample notion of what a discourse is. A narrative is not just a matter of fiction—a diminished form of would-be argument. Thinking and stitching-together a *plot* is one and the same exercise, whether based on the logical consequence of propositions or the inevitability of *episodes* in a tale. Each episode—a scene—is a piece of a certain game set. A scientific theory is no less a narrative than a poem. They differ only regarding the nature of the episodes included in the plot. Tales are all the same. Within the realm of physics, the positively charged alpha-particles in Rutherford's experiment in 1911, which depicted the structure of the atomic nucleus by hitting it, is a story as entertaining as the one in which a child narrates the trip of a rocket man through the skies towards a bullseye cushion on the other side of the circus ring. Similarly, the hero's journey in its progression, confronting obstacles and overcoming difficulties until the very end, shows a strong analogy with the structure of the consequence and resolution—the happy ending—of an argument. There is an organic unity of judgments and there is an organic unity supported by the actions of the characters in a story. Each one, judgment or action, dependent on the whole for its final meaning.

Question 4

Arguments, just like stories, start and end somewhere. When developing an argument, you take the audience by the hand and explain how they get from start to finish. You can practice this skill not only by debating, but also by writing stories.

Step
1. Think of a personal trait that you are proud of.
2. When did you discover that you had this trait?
3. Can you come up with examples of cases where the trait manifested itself?
4. Prepare a 3-minute story where you tell how you discovered the trait and why you are proud of it.
5. Present your story to the group.

Stories are arguments. Plots are thoughts. They have the logic of consequences in them. Identification of preferences begin, as in logical thinking, with the assumptions on what should be the material conditions of the discursive world—its material implications. But this puts the presumed objectivity and neutrality of logic into danger. There is the letter, and there is the spirit or intention in it. Intention—derived from the Latin word *intentio*—is meant to set in motion something we wouldn't expect from the mere surface of the term. It is an indirect reach. To understand it, we have to ascribe motives and desires to the speaker, the plotter and the writer, and motives and desires are not evident traits of a person. Indirect speech and figurative narratives are the quintessence of value-laden language on this matter. Some traits are clearly represented and others are not. The plot shows immediately which episodes and agents have been selected—their presence—and which have been avoided—their absence or exclusion. Vocabulary matters. In order to develop distinct techniques of thought—such as moral reasoning—the presence or absence of a rich palette of terms and concepts not only helps imply the competence of the speaker, but sometimes makes the very exercise possible. Without some key components of moral language, for example, moral reasoning at certain levels is virtually impossible. Students who lack certain concepts see their competence in some arguments and thoughts blocked. They cannot articulate the train of thought or properly relate the elements of judgments when it comes to comparisons, all because they merely are in fault on the elements that should be identified and put to comparison (Smith 2011).

All languages are social. Moral language is no exception. Some authors extend the argument to the emotional domain. The emotions that can be *learned* and *talked about* are “reactive” emotions. They imply that first comes acknowledgment, and then a counteraction in response. A recognition of the other through one’s emotions. That said, we can infer that having a suitable vocabulary to point out concepts, emotions, and facts, it is a necessity for developing some competencies related to thought or *mental narratives*.

Question 5

As obvious as it might sound, you need words to describe concepts. When you lack or cannot find the right words, it is hard to accurately describe the concept you are referring to. Try to explain why freedom of speech is important within a democracy. There are, however, some words that you are not allowed to use during your explanation:

- opinion
- society
- influence
- interest
- value

How was it? Share your experiences with the rest of the group.

When a toddler attends its first story-telling, they absorb a huge amount of information on the things worth noticing. What kind of things does this brand-new world contain? What can the toddler expect of them? How do they behave? What are the toddler's feelings about them? And how do adults react to these same things? There are techniques to grant the assimilation of vocabularies and even norms. They all work the same and they work for adults with no exception. This means we are susceptible to the same techniques that are attractive for babies. These working narrative premises are already justified at the very moment they are presented as constituting the argument. No need of justification further than the fact that they are present in there. If we buy the argument, we buy the premises. Premises and axioms build a *diegetic* setting. An inner-world with its inner causality. Just as with episodes and that *once upon a time* coda which reveals that the facts that are going to be shaped occurred, the premises of a narrative, either a logical or literary one, build a world with its own new rules. An enclosed universe in which what is usual could have changed in the course of the story. Is it any surprise that to a toddler, any narrative about the universe, even when the universe is our accustomed world, is for them a new one, a bold new statement? Always a newly constituted *diegetic universe*? A diegetic universe is a reality competitor. A state of exception for the sake of an illusion.

Story-telling techniques like repetition—*anaphore*, overrepresentation of an episode—; memorizing—to assimilate or absorb some content *learning it by heart*, trusting it unconditionally like a premise—; excluding some event on purpose—*ellipsis*, the suppression of an episode—, both for avoiding the presence of an undesired element to the story or to highlighting its absence so we can miss it more deeply; or the known technique of starting *in media res*, where we are inducted in the story right in the middle of the plot, within the action, and we have to cope with the necessity of all that went before as a circumstance assumed… are good examples of how these techniques found the *diegetic universe* of a tale, no less than do the premises when they found the one universe referred to in logical arguments. Narratology and literary theory talk about *tropes*. Figures of the narrative speech. They are forms, configurations, organic settlements to found episodes, devised to make their transition smooth, to bind and fill the gaps of what is uncertain— to clarify what happened in the meantime. A trope is a balanced narrative structure that makes two differing episodes a community. Like in physical laws, tropes give expectation to an effect derived from a previous episode or circumstance. They give liability to a narrative result. It will or it *has* occurred. Irony, metonymy, synecdoche, and metaphor are the four basic common tropes. They are used in everyday language, used to put our own thoughts in an orderly fashion. With them we are faced with stable discourse structures. If they were organisms, they would be selected adaptive survivors. So, tropes such as the metaphor work really well in creating diegetic customs and habits: it is only by repetition, a function of frequency, that the novelty of a metaphor like the term "deadline"—used in a first place to mark the boundaries of a prison beyond which one inmate would be shot to death vanished into thin air, another usual trope, and the *living* metaphor turned into a *dead* one. Narrative tools such as repetition, learning something by heart, ellipsis or the *in media res* solution, are poetic laws instated in discourse. Determining what *is* and *is not* real in the universe referred to. Discovering what we should or should not expect from the behavior of the objects and subjects present in a make-believe world. A standard for truth. When a toddler is encouraged to repeat or memorize a text, a poem, a norm, a list of words, they end up in a unity by means of conjunction and iteration.

By means of a habit. They could be deemed as argumentative structures with a value twist. They make more or less likely what comes next. Propaganda exploits this very effect. For example, ellipsis would take advantage of frustrating our expectations and so arousing our desire for the intended effect in its absence. Like if the missing episode would glow in the dark. In other cases, ellipsis would simply obliterate one episode, binding together two differing ones in an intended logical consequence. Finally, narrative techniques like *in media res* would facilitate the justification of the premises to that situation in which we are suddenly immersed. We appear in the middle of the story, and so, we have to cope with the assumptions and the functioning of the precise universe in which we have been inducted, for example: in the blink of an eye we are inserted in a gun-fight at the O.K. Corral…

Question 6

Consider the following motion:

> This house would give those who commit crimes in massive multiplayer online role-playing games (World of Warcraft etc.) offline punishments.

Divide the group in a Proposition and Opposition side. Both sides get ten minutes to prepare their arguments. After the preparation time the debate will go back and forth between both sides. The speaking time for each speaker is limited to thirty seconds. During that time they can bring an argument, respond to their opponent or add to what a teammate has said.

Presence is a philosophical and psychological concept translatable to the context of narratives in general. It grants our immersion in the diegetic universe we are offered. There are traits of that reality that collide with the "real" world and others that do not. Philosophers of virtual reality call this effect "virtual discrepancy." Virtual discrepancies would be the noticeable differences between our virtual experiences and our physical experience of the real world, beginning at birth. Works of fiction play, in fact, with this ability of the mind to abstract itself from accustomed environments in pursuit of more ideal grounds.

3 Flow and narrative inertias in wishful modalities

There is a static quality and a dynamic quality to narratives, though. Or, better said, to their proper elements. The first of these layers of narrativity already presented is the one depending on the presence of episodes or the position of fundamental elements to the story—as we have pointed out above—and works subsequently *in a descriptive level* of the plot. *What, where* and *when* are the circumstances of these decisions. The descriptive level settles the universe of possible questions to be finally addressed. It pinpoints the few marks to be counted with and the limits of the story. If we are fond of our previous analogies in this chapter, that stage would be approximately equal to the level of Mechanics in physical sciences. That is, you will find merely the elements, their respective positions, and their mutual relations in a subsequent instant, but movement should only be projected in something like leaps of reacommodation of those same elements. In bits and pieces. Imagining the movement of a pulley, the expert in physics will count with the diverse initial conditions of the items in relation, and project the next iteration of the experiment thanks to the universal laws of mechanics. Transitions, however, are given into discontinuous episodes. Presence is a characteristic of this kind of approach for sure. Moving from topic but preserving the analogy, some biographies in newspapers are simply presented in the fashion of a collection of facts. A mere chronology. It is written linearly as if the life of a person could be boiled down to a list of private and professional achievements. They look similar to a *life*-resumé, certainly. If we open up a random history book, we will find these sorts of stories. Biographies of historical figures and biographies of historical movements do not differ in this sense. They can be outlined by their hits. But this class of biographies presents itself also like an inference from birth. Every step of the plot-road taken leads unflinchingly to the next one. They are determined in the same way causality determines the laws of inertia and movement between physical objects endowed with mass. The movement is inferred, calculated. An event set in motion in the past is presented to us as inevitably heading to a certain consequence. Making more and more liable its due occurrence. This is also a narrative case of *value*.

Is there any other element essential to a plot and open to the value-choosing trials then? For Aristotle, probably the first noticeable art critic stemming from his *Poetics*, alongside with the plot the most important element to a story are its *characters*. Characters are cells within the organism of the plot. Protagonists and leading roles imply that they move the story in its episodes, serving to accelerate it or—in the case of antagonists or opposing role—slow it down. Nurturing it or putting its survival at risk. Under this assumption, as agents in a story, characters are in fact just functions to it. They serve the story and benefit from it. By function we mean a narrative mechanism that pushes on some part of our stories before others. The story grows in a direction from the vantage point of each character, but as an organism; the growth of a part has to enter into a homeostatic equilibrium, a balance, with the other parts. Agents—in analogy with functions in logic and argumentation theory as well—act as facilitators of a result, of a consequent, of an effect or a conclusion. They are sets within a set.

Let's suppose then that an action either facilitates (leads to a consequence) or frustrates (contradicts a consequence) a conclusion. Characters in plays, comics, novels, TV-shows, common anecdotes, and jokes, are nothing but the equivalent of a logical function: they ease the jump to a conclusion parting from their particular circumstances—the *once upon a time* or the *in media res* of the story. Unity of the argument and unity of the character are tantamount. We continue to make profit from the analogy of the organism presented in the previous sections of this text. A character is a microcosm, a reflection of the story willing to be told but in miniature; an agent is a particular view of the whole plot.

Question 7

Stories often use animal characters to evoke a strong intuition. Wolves, for example, are often used as the bad guy. Think about stories like Little Red Riding Hood, Peter and the Wolf or The Wolf And The Seven Little Goats. In everyday life "characters" are also used to push people or phenomena into a frame. Quick and versatile football players are often called the new Lionel Messi or the new Alexia Putellas. The same thing happens with negative associations. An energetic young boy is often "one of those boys with ADHD" while a woman standing up against discrimination in the workplace is "one of those feminists." The effect of these frames is that we start associating a person with a bigger group instead of looking at them as an individual.

Can you come up with other instances where we use frames to (dis)qualify people in everyday life?

Apparently, characters in these last examples serve a varied use, they incarnate a different function in the mechanism of the story. Prof. Hayden White has stressed the importance of this technique—

decentralizing the argument in the plot amongst the characters, scattering the modules of the story to give a share of it to each character—even in scholarly historical discourse. That is, in the works of the brainy erudite historians, in their scholar texts, even they use the very same techniques as the novelist and the playwright. Characters, historical figures, and heroes embody their fair share of the story to be told and promote at the same time their incardination within the whole—either in a collaborative or confrontational way. Protagonists need their antagonists in order to excel, e.g., being a technique, is not one tainted with a deceiving intention necessarily. It solely helps to unwrap the author's thoughts. Telling a story and thinking of or reflecting upon a story is the same thing. For White, we are capable of *tropocognition*, that is, we think with the help of narrative structures, and this need is conveyed through the different types of stories we commonly concoct. The happy and sad endings are simply argumentative needs of our thought to be solved. Even in academic discourse historians exert as literary figures in some sense. Every story is a type of demonstration. Whenever they narrate the tribulations of, say, the French Revolution, they put in orderly fashion the distinct episodes and actors to this story, and risk discursive leaps of faith in the stitching-together of their texts. This is an exercise we can plainly call *ideology* (White 1973; 1978). Thinking and story-telling are exercises of value judgment. Of taking a stance. In this manner, it is most interesting to decipher the structures of unity in plots and characters according to the classical tropes of discourse in general: Hayden White holds that all figurative speeches can be sorted in either *integrative* or *dispersive*. There are characters and plots that present a diegetic universe tending to a unity or community, to a fusion into a whole, and there are others that prefer to outline the differences present between episodes and their elements so they can be individually highlighted in exclusivity. Thus, if we want to excel, it is essential to ponder the mechanism of distinction: we are not the same as… Dispersion and exclusion are familiar to each other. Integrative narratives, otherwise, utilize tropes like metaphor and synecdoche, where the employment of symbolic tools merge meanings and therefore transform the significant in its sense. Metaphor is a trope—a thinking tool—for *narrative conversion* or translation. It solves a tension by blending. It is a trope in which literal and figurative layers of discourse mix together and enlarge their meanings consequentially. A "laborious honey bee" could be easily turned into a "worker," and with this bold movement nuances and shades are added to the mixture of the character, which is more substantial than before. A symbolic—and in this case, a virtuous—filter is set and as for now we see the old essence of the industrious bug transformed in an anthropological way. "Our animal fellows" is another similar metaphor. Humans and animals would share a fellowship, they are *in some essential sense* all the same. If we are more prone to synecdoches, in which the translation is conducted only between the part and the whole of the plot alone, sentences like "he's all heart" or "Imperial Rome was Julius Caesar" would be meaningful to us. Synecdoche is a more humble and restricted metaphor. It points out to the essentiality, yes, but merely of a part of the whole. The whole would highlight conversely the part in its inner presence in a vicarious way. In political representation, the trope of synecdoche is frequently used. Parliament is the presence of a nation. Maybe synecdoches are apologetic, maybe they are intended to be critical as they cannot help but to compare whole and part... On the other hand, metonymy and irony exaggerate the differences.

They are eminently dispersive—says White. They confront one episode with another. They relate events *on* the surface exclusively so the hidden distinctions could emerge. For example, in metonymy if we talk about causes and effects or agents and actions, literally they are apart, but figuratively they are slightly bound to each other in an indirect way. They conserve their independence—their literality—as episodes, but there is some ideal link between them. If I am a prudent historian and I want to indicate a relation between two distinct events I may use the "neutral" technique of causal metonymy to bind them without implying an essential community for both. "Charlotte Corday stabbed Marat in his bath" is the same fact as "Charlotte Corday stabbed the Jacobin Party's Head in his bath" or "Charlotte Corday stabbed the Jacobin Party in the bath." Political representation can play well with these slight nuances among synecdoche and metonymy. How much responsibility do our MP representatives want to assume?

Irony, lastly, is an extreme case of metonymy. One variety that puts to a maximum limit the tensions between literality and ideality—figurative sense. In irony there is a pretended rupture in the coherence and the consequence of the story. The literal (explicit) side of the discourse and the figurative side (implicit) are colliding. This polarization in irony takes advantage then of absence and negation: as in descriptive misrepresentation, our attention is drawn to the veiled contradiction that confronts literal and figurative planes of the discourse, emphasizing the tragic truth underneath outer and inner signs. Irony works as a feigned nostalgia, as the critical accent is in reality put only onto something that is not lost at all. Different tropes call for different stories. Arguments like tragedy or satire derive with ease from a metonymic or an ironic state of mind. Individuals face destiny. They show the necessity of fate and the drag of human nature and yet, lament or mock these limitations of human action… Other arguments like comedy or romance entertain a more integrative train of thought close to synecdoche and metaphor techniques. Their heroes and protagonists tend to reconcile with the circumstances and even to conquer them at the end. Destiny can be surpassed, and fate has a place for an individual's freedom. Their characters don't have to reluctantly accept its conditions, its material limitations. Now, in these narrative levels the questions we are interested in are related to the *Why,* the *How* and, obviously, the *Who did what*.

To tell an appealing story is definitely tantamount to devising a convincing argument. Both are *value-laden*. Some facts are more important than others, true, but some facts *are even due to* others. They can be predicted, not just described. In this peculiar *narrative physics,* the third law of movement reigns. An action entails a reaction. Facts are interrelated in sort of a unity. Or so we are told… Thus, pairing with *presence*, scholars talk about *flow* in virtual narratives. What is *flow*? It can be defined as "an optimal experience characterized by the integration of a clear goal, feedback, a match between challenges and skills, concentration, control, and a loss of self-consciousness" (Seung-A. 2012, 2162). When a toddler immerses themself in a story, they are absorbed by it and come to their own conclusions about the traits of the plot: the clear goal or end towards which the story moves toward; the manageability or agent's experience—the toddler feels able to interact with the story themself, to introduce their action as a possibility, to manipulate it—; they assume the proportion between what is possible and what is without a doubt *im*possible; definitely, the loss of the sense of identification within the real physical world that characterizes our daily routines and that frames who we are from birth. The *flashback* (called classically *analepsis*) and the *flashforward* (called classically *prolepsis*) are two more techniques to achieve this type of unity of narration represented as *flow*. Flow plays with something philosophers of logic call modalities. A modality is a second-order judgment. That means it does not add any supplementary information to the propositions that it modifies. A modality would just tinge a statement or proposition. Think of it as a prism. If we say "Against all the odds, after being swallowed by the giant, Tom Thumb made such a hassle that the giant was forced into throwing him up alive," we are assuming a twist in the probability for that peculiar event to happen. What was in the first place impossible is made possible through a narration. Using tropes is a form of cognition, yes, and it is a form of rhetorical suggestion in the same movement. Developing these techniques entails a form of argumentative mechanism that provides value-laden propositions. It does not just rhetorically highlight some part of the discourse, but allows its existence and administers its near relations with other parts, their feasibility and expectancy. We should ask if there is any argumentative route eased in its path before another. If there is any one directly obstructed. *What is necessary* should be real, a matter of experience always, it cannot be spared in any sense. *What is possible* or *impossible* is virtually thinkable or not, and so it cannot be. Philosophers talk about *existence* and *counterinstance*—the unthinkable as a possibility to this (diegetic) universe—in their particular slang. Aristotle distinguishes between possibility and *verisimilitude*, the latter being the conscious exercise of presenting something possible as existing in the arts. Probable, seemingly true, convincing, plausible. Finally, there is the discourse on plain fiction. *What is amazing, extraordinary, marvelous, astonishing*—worthy of our surprise—, not expected in any sense. But still, thinkable, reasonable. Understandable. In tales, fictional stories, popular narrations, we count with what is astonishing. Normalizing it, approving it.

Not for nothing, modalities in general have in fact functional analogues in the realm of deontic logic. Deontic logic is the branch of logic that tackles the difficulties of articulating the normative aspects of rules, codes, laws and juridical propositions. In essence, it is the part of logic interested in understanding what it means to be allowed to, obliged to, permitted, encouraged, or forbidden to do something. Modalities like necessity, possibility, verisimilitude, impossibility and what is astounding, present the same structure as legal codes; what is deemed compulsory, has to play as a necessary condition; what is prohibited, should be impossible for everyone; that which is permitted, should be possible in general; verisimilar actions are probable causes, and *grants* or assumed circumstances to be dealt with; lastly, exceptions are marvelous events, special cases to the universal rule. Narrators are prone to lead the course of their plots this way, using what we shall call *wishful modalities*. Modalities are managed narratively. Sometimes—like in propaganda—*forced*. There are of course narrative players more active than others. The latter sadly officiate more as spectators. In this last role, we forget that, notwithstanding its normative structure, language is still a free exercise in which we all enter voluntarily and—sometimes—change the rules as we play it. But *what if we weren't able to judge when the "meaning poisoning" is willingly or unwillingly done?* Perhaps this oblivion responds to the eminent nature of language as a useful tool, one needed in every interaction with our family, friends and fellows, not to mention the inner dialogue we interact with ourselves on a daily basis. Language would be a *first-hand tool* and so, we would be prone to interpret words literally in principle (play the game). Where the former logical unity resembles a plain road map, easy to follow, this latter unity officiates better for an orographic one in which landscape matters. The landscape stretches out not only in search of a horizon but conquering each landmark in search of the heroic conclusion as if it was a matter of reaching every subsequent station of a journey. Each one more expected than the former. Lastly, we can project the consequential inertias of arguments and episodes to the heights. As with waterfalls, value imposes its logic, its order, top-down. There are facts and *facts*, episodes and *episodes*. Once they are selected, narrative gravity differentiates clearly between positive and negative values (*polarity*) and assesses their relative importance in the fashion of a hierarchical distance (*rank*) that settles the rationale of the preference. *This before that*. A selected event in a story is valuable in itself, assumingly worth of attention—but a plot twist *is* a decisive event among others. One that is value-generating, and most probably consequence-generating. However, narratives, unlike arguments, play with modalities beyond *necessity* and manage the (un)expected. A problem logic does not suffer. What is *possible* or *impossible, true* or merely *plausible,* shapes the logical outcome of the narrative.

Narratives are easily used this way with pedagogical purposes. Play and pedagogy have been intertwined since antiquity. That which is taught by this means is not a matter of our concern at this point. The important thing to notice is the intent(the game played) by the designated narrator of forcing the discourse (and its modalities) in a previously determined direction. An *intentio*. Where there is an intention, there is a pretension. This chapter has set forth a proposal to read—and evaluate—such narrative maps. Two axes can be taken into account for this task. Logical consequence is the axis to be supplemented with a second devoted to logical preference. Pedagogy labors with valid inferences, but also with intended valid values—positive or substantial content of the judgment, the *what* of it. In ancient *juvenalia* (pedagogical ancient literary tools) fables were short moral tales with a clear exemplary aim known by their users. Not just any type of narration was prepared to cope with the job: they had to be brief *to catch the ear and attention* of children and listeners in general in one go. In their organic unity. They provided an evident sense of unity and are thus granted their prompt assimilation. Fables were easy to learn and easy to memorize in this specific way, fables were both an egalitarian—maybe we could consider them even democratic—and private tool for education: not discriminating the sort of public they addressed, they were apt for both children and adults. Furthermore, since the 18th century a decentralized pedagogical movement in Europe privileged parental home-schooling, taking the place of formal scholastic and religious centers of cultural formation and relocating academic training into the sanctity of family homes (Noel 1975). Heads of the family, hence, needed abundant materials and collections of edifying tales and volumes of selected inspirational fables, myths, and stories were favored for the task. Fathers and mothers sat comfortably on the rocking chair before the hearth surrounded by their children and read to them. The Bible was little by little substituted as a moral source by Aesop, Phaedrus and later by La Fontaine, Lessing, or by Iriarte and Samaniego in Spain. Some exclusive characteristics of fables made them a very suitable educational vehicle: (1) avoiding the diminishing attitude of former lectures and sermons in which the pupil was assumed as the one at (intellectual) fault, fables profited from the pride (self-interest) of the student in the eventual success of their intellectual intuition in identifying the hidden moral of the tale (of following the argument correctly); (2) in fact, the moral was hidden in plain sight. If we pay attention, we can ascertain with ease the explicit character of the virtuous teaching: it is deliberately presented as manifest so the student can keep up with it and at the same time feel a sense of achievement; (3) thus, fables should be brief moral stories, and characters in them should aptly show this trait in their glowing unity of personality. Wolves should be conveyed as predatory, self-centered, brutal, as virtues and vices should be just as easily identified; lambs would have to be docile, humble, sometimes naive…; (4) likewise, moving on from the material and logical implications present in actions and agents, popular pedagogical methods must always display a comparison. A competition in cunning. That is, a comparison between characters in the story and readers/listeners. Underneath it there is a poetic truth: in our case, it is clear that animals are mirroring human beings. Not mocking them, but definitely taunting and challenging their spectators into their presumed rationality. Not putting into question their alleged rationality, but asking for its consequence. How is it that an animal can act in a more moral way than a human being? This is the diegetic moment of the argument; (5) and the mark of their rationality? Animals, like humans, are allowed to entertain speech. Speech implies rationality, and only rational animals could act and extract a moral. Characters in the fable are and *are not* like humans. Ironically. The polarization of the narrative used here pushes us, whether we are willing or not, to the revelation of the self-criticism moment of the fable.

Question 8

There are at least three different versions of the fable "The Raven and the Fox"—Aesop the Phrygian's, Jean de La Fontaine's, and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's—with three different value-laden narratives. Let's take a look at them.

The first and more ancient one tells us:

> *The raven seized a piece of cheese and carried his spoils up to his perch high in a tree. A fox came up and walked in circles around the raven, planning a trick. "What is this?" cried the fox. "O raven, the elegant proportions of your body are remarkable, and you have a complexion that is worthy of the king of the birds! If only you had a voice to match, then you would be first among the fowl!" The fox said these things to trick the raven and the raven fell for it: he let out a great squawk and dropped his cheese. By thus showing off his voice, the raven let go of his spoils. The fox then grabbed the cheese and said, "O raven, you do have a voice, but no brains to go with it!"*
> *If you follow your enemies' advice, you will get hurt* (Gibbs 2002, 134).

In the French version, La Fontaine transformed the story into verses:

> *Perched on a treetop, Master Crow*
> *Was clutching in his bill a cheese,*
> *When Master Fox, sniffing the fragrant breeze,*
> *Came by and, more or less, addressed him so:*
> *"Good day to you, Your Ravenhood!*
> *How beautiful you are! How fine! How fair!*
> *Ah! Truly, if your song could but compare*
> *To all the rest, I'm sure you should*
> *Be dubbed the rara avis of the wood!"*
> *The crow, beside himself with joy and pride,*
> *Begins to caw. He opens wide*
> *His gawking beak; lets go the cheese; it*

> *Falls to the ground. The fox is there to seize it,*
> *Saying: "You see? Be edified:*
> *Flatterers thrive on fools' credulity.*
> *The lesson's worth a cheese, don't you agree?"*
> *The crow, shamefaced and flustered, swore—*
> *Too late, however: "Nevermore!"* (Shapiro 2007, 5)

As you can see the story has slight changes introduced apart from the translation of the prose into verse. La Fontaine used verses to make it easy to memorize and recite the fable, in addition to gain public's attention by aesthetic and delightful means—rhetorical means. But taking that into account, in this version the moral is diluted in the fashion of an inner dialogue—reflection—by the crow, that now takes on some more protagonism.

Now read the version that Gotthold Ephraim Lessing wrote:

> *A raven bore away in his talons a poisoned piece of meat, which an angry gardener had provided for certain annoying rats. Perched on an old oak tree, he was just ready to devour it, when a fox appeared beneath, and exclaimed, "Heaven bless you, bird of Jupiter!" "For whom do you take me?" asked the raven. —"For whom do I take you ?" rejoined the Fox. "Are you not the stately eagle which daily descends from the right hand of Jupiter to this oak tree, to feed me, the poor fox? Why would you conceal yourself? Do I not behold in your victorious claw the prayed-for gift which Jupiter continues to send me through you?"*
> *The raven was surprised, and felt an inward pleasure at being mistaken for the eagle. "I must not undeceive the fox," said he to himself, and stupidly dropping his prey, he proudly flew away. The fox received the prize with a grin, and devoured it with malignant joy. That joy, however, was soon turned into sorrow; the poison operated, and he died.*
> *Abominable flatterers! Would that you were all thus rewarded with one poison for another!* (Lessing 1825, 43-44).

The raven and the fox now have now slightly different roles within the plot. What are the distinctions you can identify? Their roles are also subtly diminished by adding a strong circumstance from the beginning: the cheese is a new actor to the play. In fact, it is the most important one as it conceals the power to erase a character, the one who feeds on it. Both raven and fox are deceivers according to the set-up of Lessing's fable, both equally guilty of this vice. What is then the plot twist that casts a final judgment on one of them?Is the raven responsible in any sense of the presumed fox's demise once he has eaten the cheese? If not, how does Lessing's depiction of the actions of his characters transform the modalities into play?

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VII

Teaching ethics in high school:

Alternatives to the exclusive use of debate

Stelios Virvidakis

Chapter 7
Teaching ethics in high school: Alternatives to the exclusive use of debate

Stelios Virvidakis

1 Introductory remarks

There are many reasons one can invoke in support of introducing the practice of debate as a basic way of teaching ethics in high schools. However, one may also express certain qualms about the exclusive adoption of debating as a method for the study of most issues presented in ethics courses and in the relevant modules of philosophy courses. Hence, it is worth exploring alternative approaches which may be regarded as equally, if not more suitable for the pursuit of the educational goals aimed at.

In what follows, I shall try to outline some of these approaches. I will proceed by first summarizing the main goals to be attained, as they are usually described in the curricula of upper division or senior classes of secondary schools, and by venturing a sketch of the core elements of their content, before examining some of the teaching methods which could be employed. My discussion refers mainly to ethics conceived as a basic, autonomous course, or as an integral, substantial component of comprehensive introductions to philosophy. Thus, I am not going to deal with ethics designed for curricula of either religious or civic education. I shall also draw on introductory courses offered to College and University students (at the freshman or sophomore level).[1]

1 My personal teaching experience comes for the most part from mandatory introductory ethics courses (as well as from advanced electives) included in undergraduate programs of Colleges and Universities. However, as the author of ethics chapters of high school philosophy textbooks, I have also consulted and interacted with colleagues in secondary education, whose classrooms I have visited on many occasions. Thus, the primary object of my analysis is the syllabus for the main philosophy course originally designed for Greek high schools, which has just been revised by a committee of the state Institute for Educational Policy.

2 Goals and general guidelines of ethical education in high schools

It is generally agreed that an ethics course, even when it is designed primarily for students who want to major in philosophy is not of purely theoretical interest. Most documents setting goals and guidelines for its successful integration in a secondary education curriculum point to its practical purport. The course doesn't aim simply at putting forth moral principles, or at highlighting the values they express and at advancing arguments for their justification, but also at enhancing the ethical sensitivity of students, if not at inculcating and cultivating particular virtues presumably contributing to living well.[2] In any case, it is supposed to provide a framework for thinking about moral issues with a view to indicating patterns of right action, which could lead to the effective resolution of more or less familiar moral dilemmas.[3]

2 In what follows, I shall be using the terms "ethical" and "moral" interchangeably. However, it must be noted that various philosophers, including Jürgen Habermas and Paul Ricoeur, seem to agree on stipulative definitions of the common terms "ethical" and "moral," presented as denoting, respectively, broader issues concerning how one should live and norms of other-regarding duties. See Habermas (1996). For a detailed discussion, see also Ricoeur (1993) and Dworkin's construal of the distinction (2011). Ricoeur is inclined to endorse the priority of the good over the right, while Habermas defends the opposite normative priority. Dworkin provides an interesting synthesis of axiological perspectives. The contrast is sometimes drawn in terms of the distinction between "thick," concrete, and "thin," abstract, evaluative or normative concepts, respectively emphasizing character and virtue or duty and obligation (cf. the analogous, though different, Hegelian distinction between *Sittlichkeit* and *Moralität*).

3 To a certain extent, the course seems to reflect Aristotle's remark in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that the treatise at hand "is not written for the sake of theory, but so that we become good" (1103b26-8). Of course, it is generally assumed that moral reflection with a practical intent involves conceptual analysis and theoretical justification of premisses and conclusions through the use of principles. There are different methodological options, which rely on reasoning both "from below" and "from above" leading to a form of "reflective equilibrium" of principles and well-considered judgments. On the method of reflective equilibrium elaborated by John Rawls, see Virvidakis (2015).

3 The core syllabus (content and structure of exposition)

The syllabus of such a course—the content of which could be condensed in the format of a book chapter—should ideally include the following sections: a) a short discussion of queries pertaining to the scope and the justification of moral judgments, their claims to objectivity and their alleged motivating role in our lives; b) an exposition of normative principles for the guidance and the moral assessment of action (derived from traditional and contemporary normative theories); c) the analysis of examples from different fields of applied ethics. In fact, the reference to metaethical issues regarding the objectivity and the practicality of moral judgments could be limited to very few important considerations that do not come at the beginning of the course, but follow the central, normative part.

Now, one could proceed to the further specification of the above parts or sections of the course by focusing on certain themes and questions: a) As we have just noted, to the extent that metaethical discussions involve rather advanced philosophical reasoning, they could perhaps be presented after the core section on principles and on the respective values which must be taken into account. The teacher will eventually have to address common sceptical, relativistic and other challenges to morality as a whole, in order to defend the need to adopt a moral point of view or stance as a whole, in trying to offer a tentative answer to the question: "Why be moral?"[4] However, what should be provided as a general introduction is an elementary elucidation of the notion of ethics, which would not rest so much on abstract definitions, as on an examination of real life situations and pre-theoretical intuitions giving rise to moral judgments. It is important that the students learn to recognize and identify the relevant issues, distinguishing clearly ethics from other normative domains, including religion, law, politics and aesthetics; b) criteria of moral goodness and rightness can be examined through a comparative study of consequentialist, deontological and virtue-theoretical principles and conceptions, casting light on values, such as happiness and well-being, justice and equality,

4 A good example of a simple comprehensive approach to key metaethical and normative issues can be found in Blackburn (2001). Blackburn deals with "challenges" to ethics at the beginning of his analysis.

and of norms ensuring the protection of human rights and promoting the pursuit of excellence; c) finally, the principles and the values that will have been highlighted should be tested in dealing with particular dilemmas which arise in private and public life, focusing on a variety of issues related to medicine, genetics and biotechnology, to ecology, the protection of the environment and the treatment of non-human animals, to business and the growth of the economy, as well as to ethical concerns about artificial intelligence and the use of the internet, and to the current sociopolitical challenges of globalization and multiculturalism.

In fact, in so far as the textbook on which our teaching is going to be based will be used in an introductory course by high school students, the majority of whom are most probably not going to pursue advanced philosophical research, care must be taken to avoid technical jargon, entailing the use of excessively abstract concepts and formulations and too many names, titles and bibliographical references. To be sure, basic information about the philosophers who have proposed moral principles and constructed theories to defend them, as well as about some of their main works, cannot be omitted. However, it is preferable to provide it at some point *after* the elaboration of ideas and examples easily accessible to the students.

4 Approaches and methods of teaching: good practices in the classroom

At this point, we can turn to more concrete suggestions arguably regarding the most suitable and effective approaches to be adopted in teaching the material at hand. It is obvious that the methods which will be selected shall conform to our basic understanding of the purposes and the nature of ethical inquiry and have to be adjusted to the goals we expect to attain.[5] The account that follows reflects the commitment to a particular cognitivist conception of the study of ethics.

5 Concerning methods to be adopted in the classroom, see the “three step” approach in Teke (2021).

4.1 Reservations about the excessive emphasis on the use of debate

Despite the obvious advantages of the extensive use of debate in teaching ethics, which are made prominent, directly or indirectly, in most chapters of this book, there are also serious shortcomings that must be taken into serious consideration. Thus, before exploring alternative possibilities, it is worth reiterating worries regarding some of the main aspects of debating, at least as it is widely practiced as an extracurricular activity of students in both secondary and higher education.[6]

To begin with, it may be observed that the adversarial format usually adopted in the context we are examining is designed as a competition between participants in a debate one of whom will be the winner. In other words, it is not guided so much by norms of truth, correctness or reflective equilibrium, but rather by norms and rules of successful persuasion. The topics selected in most cases involve hard dilemmas, the resolution of which will eventually depend on the argumentative, but also on the rhetorical skills of the two parties. In fact, debaters are supposed to be ready to defend either position, including views they may strongly disagree with.

Indeed, most cases in applied ethics which take the form of dilemmas cannot be adjudicated without a critical scrutiny of the arguments and counterarguments which could be deployed on either side. Usually, there seems to be an equipollence of reasons and we should be able to see the force of both the thesis and the antithesis in the confrontation in which we are involved.[7] However, there are also disagreements in which careful analysis shows that one of the positions turns out to be more plausible according to objective epistemic criteria. These do not fit the classical debate format in so far as

6 Here, I draw on my personal experience of over thirty years, originally as a coach of the debate society of the American College of Greece, and subsequently as a referee in many high school debate tournaments both in Greece (sponsored by the Ministry of Education and the International Cultural Center at Delphi) and abroad. Undoubtedly, the structure and style of debating may be modified and adjusted to the purposes of teaching, but in so far as it retains most of the features established by current practices, I believe that the qualms to which I want to draw attention are justified.

7 An interesting typology of debates in philosophy is proposed in Dascal (2001).

the rightness or wrongness of the conclusions reached is independent of the powers of persuasion displayed by those who reach them. In an ethics course, one may precisely want to eschew presumptions of thorough-going relativism and uphold some form of cognitivism, if not metaethical realism, regarding norms and values.[8]

Moreover, even where the arguments on both sides are equally strong, the aim of the exercise in which the debaters are expected to engage doesn't have to consist just in finding out which position is going to prevail at the end of the day, but rather in trying to overcome the apparent antinomy and reach some form of balancing, compromise or even dialectical synthesis of opposed evaluative or normative claims. The use of basic and auxiliary principles invoked in moral and legal reasoning serve goals which go beyond the purposes of debating, conceived as an adversarial practice.[9] Although such principles can be applied to the adjudication of issues in the context of a disputation, philosophers do adjust them to the constructive pursuit of a common inquiry seeking convergence.

To be sure, one may try to counter the objections implied by these remarks by stressing the fact that the students who participate in debates learn how to recognize, appreciate and rebut arguments against their own positions and are also asked to respect objective logical, conversational and rhetorical rules sufficiently robust to buttress a minimal ethical framework. Still, it can be insisted that there are alternative approaches to the systematic study of ethics which should be regarded as important practices to be tried in the classroom.

8 For a brief survey of metaethical positions, and for the defense of a moderate rationalist form of cognitivism and realism, see Virvidakis (1996). A recent, comprehensive account of the evolution of metaethical debates is provided in McPherson and Plunkett (2018).

9 These include *utility* or *beneficence*, *autonomy*, *justice*, *equality* and *fairness*, but also particular principles, some of which may be traced back to the ical tradition, such as the doctrine of *double effect*, *proportionality* and *slippery slope* considerations. For an example of the employment of a casuistic method without any strong relativistic implications, see Bedau (1997).

4.2 A broad preliminary sketch of teaching perspectives

After a brief introduction to the main themes, principles and arguments in philosophical ethics, through some concrete examples of crucial issues, the students could be advised to engage in further study and research, individually or in groups, and present the results of their work for critical discussion with their teacher and fellow students. More particularly, they could explore multiple sources and undertake a number of parallel and complementary tasks, such as the following:

4.2.1 Focus on real life examples of moral problems prominent in public discussions

The students will be asked to dwell on contemporary ethical quandaries, as they are presented in public discussions usually reported in the media, including radio and TV programs, newspaper and magazine articles and websites. They will learn to identify, describe and analyze accurately moral issues arising from particular events and circumstances and to take into account basic intuitions regarding the importance of values and principles which shall be invoked in examining possible solutions.

The teacher may propose a critical survey of views put forth not just by philosophers, but also by social scientists, theologians, politicians, journalists and other public intellectuals taking part in the relevant discussions. The students will thus have a chance to isolate alternative formulations of positions and attitudes towards more or less traditional problems, and new concerns, such as those regarding the ethical challenges of terrorism, global warming, artificial intelligence, cloning, gender identity, or migration. The cases to be investigated may take the form of dilemmas, but their adjudication doesn't have to conform to standard debating procedures, in so far as the parties involved could seek agreement through the careful scrutiny of premises and the comparative weighing of conflicting claims.

In fact, a clear example of a policy where it is difficult to contest the arguments supporting a morally significant position is provided by the controversy about mandatory vaccination prompted by the

Covid-19 pandemic. The students have to understand that the ongoing dispute can be resolved through sustained philosophical and legal reasoning, regardless of persuasion and influencing skills displayed by supporters of the alleged rights of members of anti-vaccination groups. If one endorses a common framework of norms and values imposed by most liberal constitutions, it is generally recognized that there are rights, but also obligations to be respected, and, at the end of the day, certain correct conclusions regarding the proper course of action are reached by the force of cogent argumentation. The relevant texts which lend themselves to critical discussion include not only articles by journalists, politicians, medical experts, and sociologists, addressing concerns of the wider public, but also more technical statements by public health officials and bioethics committees in different countries.[10] Thus, it can often be shown, more or less clearly, that some views have to be rejected, even if it is not always easy to establish which position overrides the other. As has been already implied by our preliminary analysis, it is particularly important at a time of post-modern relativist challenges to uphold and convey to the students a cognitivist stance in moral epistemology.[11]

10 Here, one could focus on the report of the Greek national committee on bioethics summarizing the necessary conditions for drafting legislation which would mandate vaccination for healthcare professionals, civil servants and employees interacting in person with the wider public and risking to spread the Covid-19 virus. (It should be noted that the Italian government did enforce an analogous decision at the peak of the third wave of the pandemic). The main conditions underlined by the committee are: a) availability of a variety of vaccines; b) accessibility of many vaccination centers; c) an articulate, open and unequivocal explanation by the government of the scientific rationale for implementing the state vaccination policy. It must be pointed out that the measures in question do not involve any direct coercion, infringing on the autonomy of the people concerned. The sanctions to be imposed on those who refuse to be vaccinated (such as temporary suspension from employment and witholding salary) have to conform to a principle of proportionality, with a view to avoiding any serious violation of rights, or excessive punishment. Here, the students can be asked to isolate the basic principles appealed to and to reconstruct the reasoning which leads to the conclusions of the committee. In any case, it should be made clear that the state is not going to engage in debate with defenders of irrational conspiracy theories.

11 See above, note 8. An interesting version of strong cognitivism in ethics and in law is exemplified by Ronald Dworkin's interpretive approach (Dworkin 2011, 123-90).

4.2.2 Read and discuss fiction

Literary works are an excellent source of examples and thought experiments and can clearly be used in both theoretically and more practically oriented ethics courses at all levels.[12] In fact, one can draw attention to ways of studying literature as a means of engaging in advanced ethical reflection. Here, we shall refer just to a few proposals for drawing on literature, mainly with a view to complementing and supporting the syllabi of introductory courses. It must be noted that what counts most is not the stylistic quality and the formal properties of the texts selected for the teaching of ethical issues, but rather their content and the themes that they develop, although, of course, there are many literary masterpieces which can be adjusted to the educational goals aimed at.

To begin with, the teacher may propose short stories and novels describing moral perplexities in concrete situations one may be confronted with, and ask the students to read them, examine the plot, and eventually present in the classroom their judgment on the options considered and the decisions made by the main characters in the narrative at hand. The imaginary cases to be analyzed may be provided by more or less realistic texts, belonging to different genres and traditions, including science fiction. For obvious reasons, it would be easier to assign the study of short stories and novellas, rather than novels, unless the entire course is based on literature.[13]

Fiction could be invoked at the first meetings of the course in order to highlight some of the central issues that will be examined further in subsequent discussions, but also towards the end, as a supplement to the applied ethics part. Thus, the students may turn to Sophocles' *Antigone* for a classical instance of contrasting "natural law" moral principles emerging from religious traditions to

12 Here, one may draw on the miscellaneous material provided in Singer and Singer (2005). Teachers can also profit from Martha Nussbaum's works, especially, her *Love's Knowledge* (1990) and take into consideration her extensive arguments regarding the contribution of the study of literature to moral philosophy.

13 Here, we are offering only a few examples of literary texts, with some references to selected passages on which one may focus. A bibliography of philosophical works and articles is provided at the end of this book. However, we trust that the reader can find the literary works and films referred to without further bibliographical details.

legislation established and enforced by state authorities.[14] They could read *An Enemy of the People* by Henrik Ibsen, which emphasizes the need to stand up against hypocritical and immoral conceptions of the alleged public interest, or “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” by Ursula le Guin, as a striking thought experiment making clear the counterintuitive implications of utilitarianism,[15] as well as parts of Stephen Lukes’ *The Curious Enlightenment of Professor Caritat*.[16] They could explore the deeper existential dimension of ethical concerns in front of imminent death in *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* by Tolstoy, try to reflect on the problem of evil as it is presented in Joseph Conrad’s *The Heart of Darkness*, and in William Golding’s *The Lord of the Flies*, and study the altruistic stance and the virtues exemplified by the main characters of Albert Camus’ *The Plague*.[17]

Moreover, if the syllabus allows the accommodation of more ambitious projects, students could be encouraged to read novels by Henry James or Charles Dickens, which help sustain a neo-Aristotelian, more or less particularist moral epistemology, along the lines indicated by Martha Nussbaum. Fiction can also offer an abundance of imaginary situations, which cover a wide range of possible cases in applied ethics, from biomedical issues, to business and other professional codes, animal rights, ethics of artificial intelligence, just war, terrorism, race, identity, sexual harrassment and political correctness, etc. Students may thus have a chance to isolate and assess dilemmas and general moral concerns in contemporary novels, such as *The Joke* and *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by Milan Kundera, *Soldiers of Salamis* by Javier Cercas, the metafictional

14 See especially the exchange between Antigone and Creon in Sophocles’ *Antigone*, lines 445-550.

15 The idea that the pursuit of the happiness of a vast majority of people is unjustifiable if it entails the intense suffering of one innocent child is also expressed through analogous reasoning in a discussion of the problem of evil and divine justice in Dostoyevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*. The students could also ponder the philosophical implications of the “Myth of the Grand Inquisitor” in Dostoyevsky’s novel.

16 Here, the teacher can dwell on the chapter describing life in the imaginary country of Utilitaria, visited by the main hero of the philosophical novel.

17 The students could be asked to study the dialogues among Dr. Rieux, Tarrou and Rambert, where it is made clear that the moral qualities which count in confronting the plague are not extraordinary heroism or sainthood, but humanity and common decency.

novella *The Lives of Animals*, by J.M. Coetzee,[18] *The Human Stain* by Philip Roth, *The Attack* by Jasmina Khadra, *Saturday*, *The Children Act* and *Machines Like Me* by Ian McEwan, *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro.[19]

A careful reading of the above texts doesn't simply allow us to enrich the selection of examples necessary for identifying conflicting values and for applying principles in order to undertake the assessment of competing normative theories. It also contributes to highlighting the complexity of the moral domain and to making prominent nuances which might otherwise remain undetected. Hence, the use of literature makes an important difference in teaching which should aim not so much at imparting information and at enabling the development of intellectual and reasoning skills, but rather at cultivating the sensitivity of students and at enhancing their capabilities for empathy, essential for moral judgment.[20]

4.2.3 Watch and discuss films

Teachers can also use the resources of the cinema in teaching ethics (as well as in other introductory philosophical courses).[21] There are many movies (and TV series) which provide examples and thought experiments to an important extent analogous to those that we encounter in literature.[22] Once more, we are not so much interested in

18 For a philosophical discussion of moral issues concerning the treatment of non-human animals appealing to literary works, one could also study Crary (2016).

19 There are many moral dilemmas and more general issues highlighted in these works which can give rise to interesting discussions at different levels. For example, the students may be instructed to study the behavior and the moral significance of feelings exemplified by androids in McEwan's *Machines like Me* and Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*, drawing conclusions about the ethical life of human beings.

20 See also Cunningham (2001) and Choo (2021). Cf. Crary (2007).

21 For a general introduction and a variety of examples, see Litch (2010), and more particularly for ethics, Teays (2012).

22 Actually, there are movies inspired by some of the novels mentioned in the previous section, including *Children Act* and *Never Let Me Go*. The teacher can draw attention to similar themes and analogous responses in literature and in films. For example, students who read *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, may also be asked to watch Akira Kurosawa's *To Live* (Ikiru)—and *Living*, the recent British remake by Oliver Hermanus—and compare the ethical implications of two different, but analogous attitudes towards death.

the high quality of films recognized as cinematic masterpieces, but mostly in the content, the ideas, the characters, the plot, offering material for thought experiments of various kinds. Thus, many popular action movies and social dramas, crime and war films, often based on real life and on historical events, and science fiction adventures, display a dramatization of serious dilemmas in applied ethics, including medical ethics, business ethics, the morality of war and the ethics of journalism, as well as of ethical and social problems caused by the rapid growth of new technologies, especially by the expanding horizon of artificial intelligence.

Among many films which could be considered for integration in the supplementary teaching material conducive to ethical reflection one could draw attention to the following: *The Truman Show* by Peter Weir, as a thought experiment highligting the importance of autonomy; *Sophie's Choice* by Alan Pakula as an instance of a tragic dilemma and *Sophie Scholl: The Final Days* by Marc Rothemund, an adaptation of a real story, making clear the possibility of a heroic adherence to the commands of conscience and the moral law at the price of death; *Poetry* by Lee Chang Dong, as a complex and moving elegy of seeking, among other things, justice for a terrible crime, through appealing to law and morality, but also of finding consolation in art; *Leviathan* by Andrey Zvyagintsev and *The Fool* by Yuri Bykov as realistic but also allegorical morality tales of upright characters fighting corruption to no avail; *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, by Robert Guédiguian as a simple real life parable, exemplifying the power of goodness. Woody Allen's *Crimes and Misdemeanors* and *Matchpoint* may be regarded as eloquent, sceptical introductions to an array of ethical and metaethical issues, culminating in the question "Why Be Moral?," while his less successful *Irrational Man* could also incite to philosophical reflection through parodies of some existentialist and utilitarian themes. A lighter, humorous and imaginative approach to ethical theories is provided by the TV series, *The Good Place*, which can be recommended as a supplement to the study of normative ethics.[23]

One could also select other movies, simpler in some ways and more directly related to dilemmas in applied ethics, which can be adapted

23 One could recommend especially the episode of the series (aired on October 19, 2017), presenting the thought experiment of the "trolley problem." For a technical discussion of the issues, see Kamm (2016).

for projection and discussion in the classroom, or assigned for further study. Thus, the teacher can engage in the critical elaboration of particular positions and arguments by appealing to the stories in the following: *Eye in the Sky* by Gavin Hood, concerning war ethics, *The Sea Inside* by Alejandro Amenábar, based on a real case of euthanasia, *Four Months, Three Weeks and Two Days*, by Cristian Mungiu, dramatizing the sociopolitical dimension of abortion, *Gattaca* by Andrew Niccol, inspired by cloning, *Dead Man Walking* by Tim Robbins, casting light on the moral assessment of death penalty, *The Insider* by Michael Mann, dealing with whistle blowing and with ethical aspects of journalism, *Erin Brockovitch* by Steven Sonderbergh, portraying the deeds of a brave environmental activist, and *Dersu Uzala* by Akira Kurosawa, *Dances with Wolves* by Kevin Costner and the Netflix documentary *My Octopus Teacher* by Craig Forest,[24] stimulating thoughts on our relations to wild nature and to non-human animals. Among many examples of science fiction films that could be included in such a list, the most famous is perhaps *Blade Runner* by Ridley Scott, which, apart from offering material for the analysis of deep existential and anthropological queries, explores the ethical issues of the creation of androids and of our interaction with them.

Here, we don't have to dwell on the special advantages of cinema as an entertaining and multifaceted art form, which lends itself to pedagogical and philosophical uses. It suffices to observe that an ethics course could be designed in a way that makes the structure of presentation rely almost entirely on a series of films. To be sure, concepts, positions and arguments have to be formulated at some point, more or less independently of the films viewed. The students will eventually have to turn to the theoretical discourse in terms of which they learn to express their reasoning and defend their positions. Movies are no substitute for the philosophical texts they help to illuminate in unexpected, creative ways.

24 Here, the teacher may also recommend the parallel study of Mark Rowlands' *The Philosopher and the Wolf* (2008).

4.2.4 Draw on philosophical texts: reconstruct arguments

The students must also be exposed to classical and contemporary philosophical texts. These should include excerpts from the main works by the thinkers whose theories are discussed in the course, but also from more or less recent commentaries and essays expanding on their ideas. They must develop skills in interpreting positions and reconstructing arguments, with a view to employing them in the study of cases in applied ethics and in moral decision making.

We should not forget that the courses we are talking about are designed for students of high schools, not of colleges and universities. Therefore, excessive technical sophistication and complexity are to be avoided. We are not trying to train prospective professional philosophers, but simply help young people develop their intellectual and emotional faculties, indispensable for moral thought and action.

Now, the teacher could select central passages from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, *The Critique of Practical Reason* and *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Bentham's *The Principles of Morals and Legislation*, and J.S. Mill's *Utilitarianism*. The definition of moral virtue, the main formulations of the categorical imperative, the principle of utility, ancient and modern conceptions of human flourishing and happiness, are some of the main topics that the students will be asked to approach as objects of philosophical reflection, drawing on the relevant texts for their philosophical articulation and defense. Concepts, theories, principles and arguments will thus be presented through a comparative analysis which may be undertaken as homework and will be eventually discussed in the classroom. The format of a debate may be adopted, not in order to decide whether a Kantian or a utilitarian will be the winner, but with a view to casting light on the advantages and disadvantages of alternative views, and to exploring the possibility of their combination and integration in a mixed normative account, for instance by focusing on similarities between certain rule-utilitarian and Kantian approaches.[25] In any case, controversies cannot be fully adjudicated at the level of abstract theoretical argumentation, but may appear in a new light through the construal and application of principles in the field of applied ethics.

25 See a.o. the synthesis proposed in Frankena (1973).

The teacher may want to refer to a broader variety of traditional or contemporary theories and ethical frameworks and could introduce texts supporting religious conceptions of natural law or divine command, or a more politically oriented contractualism, or an ethics of care, as well as propose for critical scrutiny works which aim at debunking the entire modern ethical tradition, such as Nietzsche's *The Genealogy of Morals*. Moreover, she may encourage more advanced students, who want to understand new versions of the consequentialist, deontological or virtue-ethical positions, to study contemporary forms of utilitarianism, Kantianism and Neo-Aristotelian accounts of virtue, in works such as Peter Singer's *Practical Ethics*, Onora O'Neill's *Constructions of Reason*, Rosalind Hursthouse's *On Virtue Ethics* and Michael Sandel's *Justice*.[26] To be sure, what should be avoided in basic ethics courses for high school students are intrepretive disputes, which often constitute the core of syllabi of graduate seminars. The secondary literature which shall be used and may be recommended for further study must be chosen carefully in order not to burden their minds and complicate their understanding of moral thinking. The ultimately practical purposes of the teaching of ethics in high school should not be forgotten at any point.

5 Aiming at complementarity

The above sections provide a rough outline of approaches which should be regarded as complementary and could contribute in different ways to the pursuit of the goals of an introductory ethics course. As we have pointed out in our analysis, the practice of debate is useful in so far as it does help the students learn to respect the rules of dialectical exchanges, develop their reasoning skills and test the strength of their own initial positions and of views with which they may disagree. Nonetheless, we have argued that the rightness of conclusions regarding the validity of *prima facie* equipollent claims cannot depend mainly on talents of rhetorical persuasion.

However that may be, the multiperspectival training which we would like to see implemented makes it possible to expand the sources

26 Singer (2011), O'Neill (1989), Hursthouse (1999), Sandel (2010).

of intuitions, enrich the range of premises to be considered in practical reasoning and enhance sensitivity to the main aspects of issues to be examined in the classroom. The teacher will have a chance to draw on texts of all kinds (philosophical, scientific, journalistic, fictional, etc.), as well as on a variety of films, instructing the students to engage in thought experiments which will contribute to the evaluation of moral principles, arguments and theories. Of course, special attention should be given to the selection of the relevant material which will be regarded as most suitable for the level of preparation of each class and for the orientation set by the goals of particular courses, eventually laying emphasis on certain themes, case studies and actual real life dilemmas.

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Index

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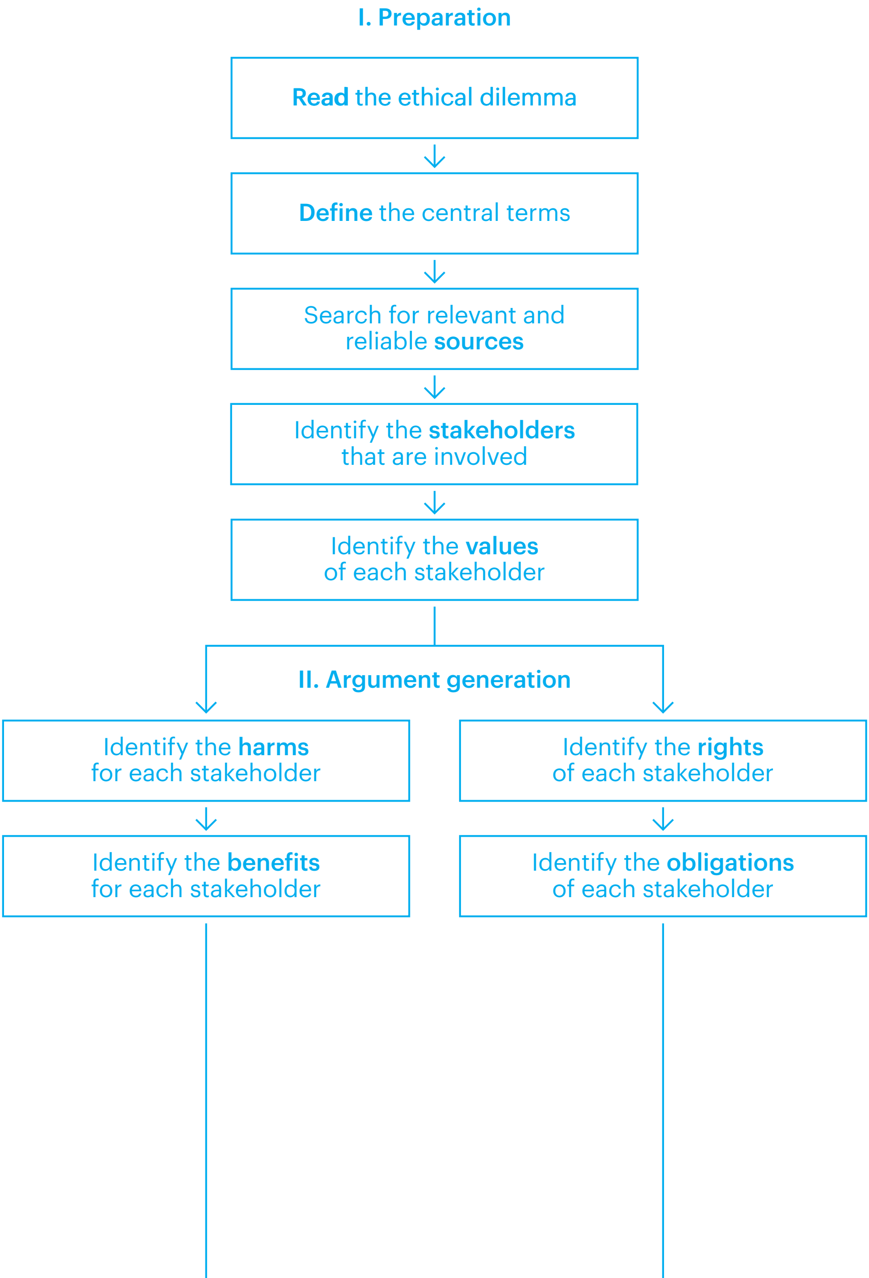
Worksheets

1. How to approach ethical dilemmas
2. Stakeholder analysis
3. Flow sheet
4. How to evaluate arguments
5. Jury form


I. Preparation
Read the ethical dilemma
Define the central terms
Search for relevant and reliable **sources**
Identify the **stakeholders** that are involved
Identify the **values** of each stakeholder
II. Argument generation
Identify the **harms** for each stakeholder
Identify the **benefits** for each stakeholder
Identify the **rights** of each stakeholder
Identify the **obligations** of each stakeholder

III. Argument development

Determine the **likelihood** of the harms and benefits

Determine the **severity** of the harms and benefits

Determine the **magnitude** of the harms and benefits

Determine the **rationale** of the rights and obligations

Determine the **applicability** of the rights and obligations

Determine the **importance** of the rights and obligations

IV. Argument evaluation

Compare the harms and benefits based on likelihood, severity, and magnitude

Determine which rights and obligations should be **prioritized**

V. Conclusion

Determine the **trade-off** between harms, benefits, rights, and obligations

Decide on the **outcome** of the ethical dilemma

Worksheet 2 Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholders	Examples	Values

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	Harms	Benefits	Rights	Obligations

Worksheet 3 Flow sheet

	1st speaker of the Proposition	1st speaker of the Opposition	2nd speaker of the Proposition	2nd speaker of the Opposition
1st argument of the Proposition				
2nd argument of the Proposition				
3rd argument of the Proposition				
1st argument of the Opposition				
2nd argument of the Opposition				
3rd argument of the Opposition				

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3rd speaker of the Proposition	3rd speaker of the Opposition		Reply speech by the Proposition	Reply speech by the Opposition
		1st clash		
		2nd clash		
		3rd clash		

Worksheet 4 How to evaluate arguments

	Is it a practical argument… / …or a principled argument?	What is the likelihood of the harms and benefits? / How is the rationale behind the right or obligation explained?	
1st argument of the Proposition	○ Practical ○ Principled		
2nd argument of the Proposition	○ Practical ○ Principled		
3rd argument of the Proposition	○ Practical ○ Principled		
1st argument of the Opposition	○ Practical ○ Principled		
2nd argument of the Opposition	○ Practical ○ Principled		
3rd argument of the Opposition	○ Practical ○ Principled		

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	What is the severity of the harms and benefits?	What is the magnitude of the harms and benefits?	How strong is the argument, in terms of likelihood, severity, and magnitude?
	How is the applicability of the right or obligation substantiated?	How is the importance of the right or obligation made clear?	How strong is the argument, in terms of rationale, applicability, and importance?

Worksheet 5 Jury form

First clash

Argument of the Proposition

Which is the overriding argument, and why?

Second clash

Argument of the Proposition

Which is the overriding argument, and why?

Third clash

Argument of the Proposition

Which is the overriding argument, and why?

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Argument of the Opposition

Argument of the Opposition

Argument of the Opposition

Colophon

Publisher:
ISVW Uitgevers
Dodeweg 8
3832 RD Leusden, The Netherlands
www.isvw.nl

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Design: Paul Swagerman & Quinten Swagerman
Typefaces: Aperçu Mono, Graphik, Tiempos Text
Paper: Munken Lynx Smooth Natural (FSC)
Printing: Wilco, Amersfoort, NL

Funded by
the European Union

This book is a valuable resource for educators looking to foster critical thinking and ethical reasoning in their students. It presents a variety of thought-provoking ethical dilemmas and offers structured debate frameworks to help students develop the skills to articulate and defend their viewpoints. While debating values, principles, harms and benefits, students will not only learn how to analyze and evaluate ethical issues, but also how to respect and consider the perspectives of others.

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ISBN 978–90–832623–8–3

9 789083 262383

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