

VIBS

Volume 205

Robert Ginsberg
Founding Editor

Leonidas Donskis
Executive Editor

Associate Editors

G. John M. Abbarno	Matti Häyry
George Allan	Steven V. Hicks
Gerhold K. Becker	Richard T. Hull
Raymond Angelo Belliotti	Michael Krausz
Kenneth A. Bryson	Mark Letteri
C. Stephen Byrum	Vincent L. Luizzi
Harvey Cormier	Adrienne McEvoy
Robert A. Delfino	Peter A. Redpath
Rem B. Edwards	Arleen L. F. Salles
Malcolm D. Evans	John R. Shook
Daniel B. Gallagher	Eddy Souffrant
Andrew Fitz-Gibbon	Tuija Takala
Francesc Forn i Argimon	Emil Višňovský
William Gay	Anne Waters
Dane R. Gordon	James R. Watson
J. Everet Green	John R. Welch
Heta Aleksandra Gylling	Thomas Woods

a volume in
Studies in Applied Ethics
SAE

Gerhold K. Becker, Editor

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Intercultural Perspectives

Edited by
King-Tak Ip



Amsterdam - New York, NY 2009

CONTENTS

Editorial Foreword	vii
Acknowledgments	ix
Environmental Ethics: Introduction KING-TAK IP	1
ONE The Normative Side of Nature ROBERT ELLIOT	11
TWO <i>Je Suis le Grand Tout</i> : Respect for Nature in the Age of Environmental Responsibility GERHOLD K. BECKER	23
THREE Environmental Ethics: An Aesthetic Approach INGMAR PERSSON	43
FOUR Empirical Environmental Ethics Y. S. LO	55
FIVE Perils and Dangers: Climate Change and Theological Ethics MICHAEL S. NORTHCOTT	75
SIX Global Ethics, Environmentally Applied: An Islamic View ANIS AHMAD	93
SEVEN In Search of an Environmental Ethics in Early Buddhism PRAGATI SAHNI	115
EIGHT Ecosystem Sustainability: A Daoist Perspective JONATHAN CHAN	133
NINE Healing and The Earth: Daoist Cultivation in Comparative Perspective LIVIA KOHN	147
About the Contributors	173
Index	175

Cover Design: Studio Pollmann

The paper on which this book is printed meets the requirements of "ISO 9706:1994, Information and documentation - Paper for documents - Requirements for permanence".

ISBN: 978-90-420-2595-0

© Editions Rodopi B.V., Amsterdam - New York, NY 2009

Printed in the Netherlands

NOTES

1. Bryan G. Norton, *Why Preserve Natural Variety?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).
2. Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, second edition, 1993), Ch. 3.
3. Ingmar Persson, *The Retreat of Reason: A Dilemma in the Philosophy of Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Pt. II.
4. *Ibid.*, Ch. 4.
5. Michael Tooley, *Abortion and Infanticide* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 67.
6. Paul W. Taylor, *Respect for Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).
7. Holmes Rolston III, *Environmental Ethics: Duties to and Values in the Natural World* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988).
8. Mark H. Bernstein, *On Moral Considerability: An Essay on Who Morally Matters* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 91.
9. J. Baird Callicott, "The Search for an Environmental Ethic," *Matters of Life and Death: New Introductory Essays in Moral Philosophy*, ed. Tom Regan (New York; London: McGraw-Hill, third edition, 1993), p. 365.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 375–376.
12. Immanuel Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, p. 429. Herbert J. Paton, trans., *The Moral Law* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1948).
13. Alan Donagan, *The Theory of Morality* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1977), Ch. 5.
14. Arthur Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. E. F. J. Payne, trans., *The World as Will and Representation* (New York: Dover Publications, 1969). And Arthur Schopenhauer, *Über das Fundament der Moral*; and also. E. F. J. Payne, trans., *On the Basis of Morality* (Providence; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995).
15. Lily-Marlene Russow, "Why Do Species Matter?" *Animal Rights and Human Obligations*, eds. Tom Regan and Peter Singer (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, second edition, 1989).
16. John Andrew Fisher, "Aesthetics," *A Companion to Environmental Philosophy*, ed. Dale Jamieson (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2001).
17. Tooley, *Abortion and Infanticide*, p. 95.
18. George Edward Moore, "The Conception of Intrinsic Value," *Philosophical Studies* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1922), p. 260.

Four

EMPIRICAL ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Y. S. Lo

1. Introduction

In popular terms, "moral relativism" refers to the view that no across-the-board moral standards exist: values and disvalues, rights and wrongs, are relative to different groups, and, in the extreme case, to individuals. The growing attractiveness of this position – especially to younger generations living in cosmopolitan societies – reflects the existence of wide and apparently irresolvable moral disagreements among people from different social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Relativism and its underlying skepticism to universality can sometimes function as an antidote to fundamentalism, challenging an authority's imposition of supposedly absolute and universal standards on the unwilling others. But when adopted as an automatic default position, relativism runs the risk of moral isolation, blocking external critique and diminishing internal reflection. Just as global superpowers can use the rhetoric of self-evident universal values (such as "universal human rights" and "fair trade") for imperialistic advancements, regional powers can use the rhetoric of relative values (such as "Asian values" and religious values) to sustain repressive practices.

Opposed to popular relativism and skepticism, and responding to the phenomenon of evaluative divergence, is an optimistic belief embedded in western liberalism, shared by many contemporary intellectuals. This is the universalist belief that human nature is sufficiently uniform across cultures and societies so that people with incompatible ethical and political stances, if put under favorable conditions (such as Juergen Habermas's "ideal discourse situations" (Habermas, 1974 and 1990), John Rawls's "veil of ignorance" (Rawls, 1971, 1985 and 1993), and Michael Smith's "full rationality" (Smith, 1994)), will eventually converge in their beliefs and attitudes (or achieving what Anthony Giddens calls "dialogic democracy" (Giddens, 1994), or what Richard Rorty calls "social solidarity" among "liberal and tolerant fuzzies" (Rorty, 1989 and 1991)).

The present project makes no assumptions about whether the optimistic liberal view on the uniformity of human nature is true. Instead, it regards that as an empirical matter which cannot be settled by theorists *a priori*. It notes that no systematic and commonly accessible methods presently exist for answering moral questions in the first place. It is the lack of such methods that has led to the growth of skepticism and relativism in the face of continuing moral disputes.

2. Objectives

As an antidote to moral skepticism, imperialistic universalism, and defensive relativism, the project's first general objective is to provide a conceptual framework within which systematic empirical methods can be devised for determining (1) whether a putative value is a genuine value, and if so, whether it is universal or relative, and then (2) how competing values are to be prioritized.

The idea of using concrete empirical methods to answer abstract moral questions is central to the recently emerged interdisciplinary area of empirical ethics. From an empiricist perspective, the project argues that many moral questions about good and evil, right and wrong, are ultimately reducible to empirical questions about some human psychological capacities, tendencies, and habits. Hence inquiries into value and morality require us to go beyond pure reasoning and logical arguments, and step into the empirical world to observe and investigate those aspects of the human being. This can only be done via collaboration among the psychological and social sciences, the biological and neurological sciences, and history and philosophy. By identifying particular aspects of the human psyche, and explaining how they are constitutive of the ethical domain, the project will define new directions for interdisciplinary researches in empirical ethics.

Because empirical ethics takes scientific methodology so seriously makes it suited to the robust character and naturalistic tradition of analytic philosophy. Little interest in this new area of research, however, has been showed by moral philosophers in such traditions. The project's second general objective is to communicate information about, and the development of, empirical ethics to the wider philosophical community in Hong Kong and Australia. Both are places where I have previously conducted relevant research.

3. Working Hypotheses

The project is humanist. It takes ethics to be fundamentally about human beings (instead of about God or some super agent devoid of human needs and weaknesses). The first working hypothesis is that the purpose of ethics is to answer how human beings can co-exist in sustainably happy and flourishing ways, and to assist them doing so (cf. Hume, 1739-40 and 1751; MacIntyre, 1984; Williams, 1985 and 1995).

The project is also dispositionalist. Its second working hypothesis is that core moral concepts can be analyzed and defined in terms of people's dispositions to give affective responses under a set of favorable conditions (cf. Lewis, 1989; Johnston, 1989; Smith, 1994; Elliot, 1997). A useful analogy is a form of dispositional account of colors, which understands an object as having a particular color (for example, red) on the basis that normal people are

disposed, under the favorable conditions for observing colors (for example, under normal day light), to experience the object as looking that color. Similarly, we can understand an object as having a particular moral property (for example, value) on the basis that normal people are disposed, under the favorable conditions for making moral evaluations, to have corresponding affective response (for example, approbation) towards the object.

The choice of the humanist hypothesis and the dispositionalist hypothesis will integrate well with the naturalistic and reductive approach of empirical ethics. It will also permit the project to contribute to the scholarship of David Hume, which is significant in its own right.

4. A Humanist Dispositional Theory of Value

Based on the second hypothesis just discussed, the project will develop a dispositional theory of value, which analyses the core moral concepts "value" and "disvalue" (and other interdefinable concepts such as "obligation," "right" and "wrong," "virtue" and "vice"). The schema of the theory is as follows:

T. X is (relatively/universally) valuable/disvaluable just if (some/all) human subjects are disposed, under favorable conditions {C}, to feel the sentiment of approbation/disapprobation towards X.

A parallel analysis of "obligation" will state:

The pursuit/avoidance of X is (relatively/universally) obligatory just if (some/all) human subjects are disposed, under favorable conditions {C}, to feel the sentiment of approbation/disapprobation towards X.

Using T as a general schema, we can also formulate parallel analyses for other interdefinable moral concepts. But let us focus on T and look at it in more details.

First, different kinds of things can be valuable/disvaluable. Character traits constitute one kind. Valuable character traits are virtues; disvaluable character traits are vices. Actions and behaviors can also be valuable/disvaluable. The morally right ones are valuable; the morally wrong ones are disvaluable. Similar considerations apply to material and abstract objects, events, and states-of-affairs. As an analysis of the general notions "valuable" and "disvaluable," T covers all sorts of things to which these notions can be sensibly applied.

Next, to say "we are disposed under such-and-such condition to do such-and-such" is just an abbreviated way of asserting "if we are (or were, or had been) under such-and-such condition, then we will do (or would do, or would have done) such-and-such." A standard way of testing a statement like this is

to meet the stated condition, and then check whether the expected result or something similar follows. So, given T, in order to find out whether X is a value, we need to find out whether we are disposed under conditions {C} to feel approbation towards X. In order to find out whether we are so disposed, we need to do two things. First, we try our best to meet the approximate conditions {C}. Second, while under those conditions, we see as honestly as possible what evaluative responses we have towards X. We may feel approbation/disapprobation towards it, or we may be indifferent. According to T, approbation/disapprobation under conditions {C} indicates value/disvalue, whereas indifference under such conditions indicates non-value.

Then, what exactly are the favorable conditions, which we must meet the approximate in order to make correct or close-to-correct moral evaluations? The project proposes the following three.

- C1. The condition of being empathetically aware of relevant facts and relations, *vis-a-vis* the object under evaluation. (Object-awareness Condition)
- C2. The condition of being empathetically aware of basic facts about human nature. (Human-nature-awareness Condition)
- C3. The condition of non-egocentrically considering one's particular interests and relations *vis-a-vis* the object under evaluation. (Decentering Condition)

These conditions are not dissimilar to those that a competent judge or jury in the court room is expected to meet. The project argues that the choice of the above conditions as favorable for making moral evaluations is directly supported by the humanist hypothesis (section 3 above). Suppose the hypothesis is right in taking ethics as a system conducive to happy and flourishing human lives. Then moral evaluations (which are supposed to give us guidance on how to live) must reflect the basic facts of human nature (for example, their basic needs and desires, weaknesses and strengths) that set the perimeters within which human beings can live happy and flourishing lives. This explains C2's emphasis on the awareness of basic facts about human nature. Suppose the hypothesis is also right in taking ethics as advantageous for human co-existence. Then, moral evaluations (which are supposed to guide our interactions with each other) must be capable of being adopted by different human individuals despite their diverse temperaments, interests, and circumstances. One obvious way to facilitate the sharing of views and attitudes is to incorporate the operation of empathy as part of the proper communication process. Empathy is the ability of entering into another's personality. It has two components. The cognitive component involves accurately detecting another's feelings and perspectives. The affective component involves using imagination to experience those feelings vividly and take for oneself those perspectives that one detects in another. As a result, the greater the empathy

people have for each other (both cognitively and affectively), the more likely they are to come to agreement. This explains C1 and C2's emphasis on empathic awareness. But a pre-condition for empathy is decentering – the ability to set aside temporarily one's particular attachments. Decentering must not be confused with self-denial. The second requires neglecting one's self-interests and relations. But the first requires considering and counting one's self-interests and relations, but in a non-egocentric manner – that is, count them as a third party would count them. This is what is meant by C3's requirement of non-egocentricity.

Now, given T's analysis of value in terms of people's dispositions to respond under the specified favorable conditions, we can see that a major source of evaluative error is that people make evaluations under less than favorable conditions. To use the analogy of color again. An inexperienced observer might mistakenly judge a red object to be brown because of dim lighting. Similarly, an inexperienced evaluator might fail to feel disapprobation towards a bad behavior and so judge it to be morally neutral. For this inexperienced evaluator might be evaluating it under less than favorable conditions. For instance, the evaluator might dislike, and so have low empathy for, the person at the receiving end of the behavior (that is, condition C3 not met). Just as not meeting the favorable conditions can cause error in our moral judgments, better satisfying those conditions can make our judgments more reliable. Due to new awareness of some basic facts of human nature (and so better satisfying condition C2), person might give up their originally negative moral judgment of some kind of behavior (for example, homosexuality). In short, the progress of our moral knowledge depends to a large extent on the progress we make on meeting those three favorable conditions. It is unrealistic to expect people to satisfy those conditions fully whenever they make moral evaluations. The main point of T, as we get better at meeting or approximating those conditions – by trial and error, accumulated knowledge and experience of human life, and continual practice of empathy – is that our sentiments of approbation and disapprobation will become better indicators of value and disvalue.

Note that T gives only a qualitative analysis of the concepts "value" and "disvalue," the function of which is to find out what values exist. But that is not enough for solving ethical problems about value. For even if we could identify all the values in the world, by testing people with methods based on T, we would still have the problem of how to prioritize conflicting values. For example, a pristine wilderness area free from human interference might have a value in itself that should be preserved; but the opening of the area to travelers, researchers, or developers might bring into being other values, such as aesthetic pleasure derived from visiting the area, improvement of human health because of the discovery of ingredients in the area for new medicines, or an increased standard of living for the local community due to the development of new infrastructure in the area. So, in order to solve the

problem of conflicting values, which is especially relevant to social policy-making, a quantitative analysis of value is also needed. Based on the two working hypotheses discussed before, the project proposes the following general schema for a quantitative analysis of value.

T*. X is (relatively/universally) more/less valuable/disvaluable than Y just if (some/all) human subjects are disposed, under favorable conditions {C*}, to feel more/less of the sentiment of approbation/disapprobation towards X than towards Y.

Since prioritizing different values is quite a different task from identifying them in the first place, the project will look into the possibility that testing people under condition T* may need a different set of “favorable conditions” from those associated with examining people under T. After both, possibly overlapping, sets of favorable conditions are fully specified, the complete versions of T and T* will then set the conceptual framework within which systematic and empirical methods can be developed for finding out (1) the values of a population of any size, and (2) the priorities over those values.

5. Applying the Theory

Building on my previous work on environmental ethics (Lo, 1999 and 2001c) and current work on bioethics, the project seeks to use the dispositional theory just described to analyze and assess value-conflicts in ethical debates concerning (1) conservation and land management, and (2) the application and development of biotechnologies.

We have seen that the proposed dispositional theory of value reduces the study of moral value and obligation to an empirical study of people – more precisely, their dispositions to give some kind of affective responses under the three humanist favorable conditions, C1, C2, and C3. In order to apply the dispositional theory to find out the conflicting values involved in a moral debate, the first thing we need to do is to assist the participants in the debate to put themselves under those three humanist favorable conditions. These conditions, as we have seen, are conducive to honest and empathic communication, which will in turn increase the chance of convergence in beliefs and attitudes. The process of using the theory to test the values of people from diverse backgrounds on divisive issues will itself facilitate (though not guarantee) conflict resolution. And its application targeted populations or groups facing particular social or ethical problems should promote community-based and ethically informed policy-making. The project argues that active application of the proposed dispositional theory to people in real life situations of social, political, and moral conflicts will assist the advancement of modern liberal

democracy towards its optimal forms, which can accommodate differences and yet retain standards – both within humanist boundaries.

6. Contemporary Metaethics

In the course of developing the dispositional theory of value, the project will also re-conceptualize and coherently answer a series of long-standing meta-ethical problems. In particular, the project defends the following four positions that are logical consequences of the dispositional theory. (1) It defends the view that value/disvalue is ontologically objective but conceptually subjective – that is, value/disvalue can exist in the absence of the evaluating subject’s positive/negative response, although the concept of value/disvalue cannot be analyzed or defined without reference to the evaluating subject. (2) It argues that immorality is a particular kind of emotional – instead of a rational – deficiency. While some level of rationality is necessary for moral behavior (as it is necessary for many other kinds of behavior), no amount of rationality is sufficient for an ethical or good human life. (3) It argues that *a priori* reasoning and logical arguments cannot rule out the empirical possibilities of moral relativism (that is, the view that there exist no universal values that are morally binding for all human beings), and that the truth/falsity of any claims about universal and relative values can only be determined by empirical tests based on the proposed dispositional theory. (4) It argues that the only unifying denominator, if any, in terms of which different values can be weighed against each other, is an emotion (or a range of emotions) that is quantifiable and can be experienced by human beings under the favorable conditions for assessing those different values. Whether there exists such an emotion (or range of emotions), is an empirical matter of fact to be investigated by the psychological and neurobiological sciences.

The combination of these positions represents a novel stance in meta-ethics, and offers a useful way to recast, reconnect, and resolve classic debates between objectivists and subjectivists ((1) above), between rationalists and sentimentalists ((2) above), between universalists and relativists ((3) above), and between monists and pluralists ((4) above). Given the limited space here, I will elaborate a little more only on (1) and (3).

A. Objectivism and Subjectivism

Give schema T, value is conceptually subjective in that it analyzes the concept “value” in terms of concepts of some features of subjects, and so makes the former conceptually dependent on the latter. But value is also objective in some senses under T.

In the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, objectivism of value is described as the view that “value is not a category distinctively attuned to

human concern but exists independently of human interests.”(Wallace 1998). In this sense, Humean value is objective. Given T, to say that X is valuable is equivalent to asserting the conditional statement that if people are, or were, or had been, in the favorable conditions C1, C2, and C3, then they will feel, or would feel, or would have felt, the sentiment of approbation towards X. This conditional assertion can be true even if no one has the sentiment of approbation towards X. For it might be the case that no one has yet met all the favorable conditions for giving reliable sentiments, but if they had met those conditions they would have approved of X. As lack of approval from people towards X does not imply that X is not valuable, similarly, T allows the possibility that people might incorrectly approve of something that is not genuinely valuable because they are not evaluating under the favorable conditions. For T allows that value can exist in the absence of subjects’ positive evaluative response and that things can be valuable without being valued. This means that value is ontologically objective. Since T reduces facts about values to objective facts about the psychological dispositions of subjects, it is a form of cognitivism that makes a place for truths and mistakes about values. It explains how such mistakes come about and tells us how to improve.

In short, if T is correct, then value is both objective and subjective, but in ways compatible with, and complementary to, each other, which is, in my view, an advantage of the theory.

B. Universalism, Relativism, Nihilism

Under schema T, all values are relative. Because universal values are just one particular kind of relative values – namely, values relative to all people. T implicitly allows metaethic relativism, the view that non-universal relative values are nonetheless as genuine values as universal ones. But whether a putative value is universal (or for that matter, whether it is a genuine value) remains an empirical question.

Now, unless moral universalism (the view that some values are universal) is held as a closed theory, we must not rule out the possibility of a genuine other, someone who has genuinely different evaluative dispositions from ours – that is, different moral sentiments even under the same favorable conditions. The possibility of a genuine other sets a limit to the universalist optimism. As no *a priori* reason exists for thinking that all people must invariably share the same set of evaluative dispositions, it would be unreasonable to insist that whenever someone evaluates differently from how we would evaluate, she must have failed to satisfy the ideal conditions. It is not true that people must belong to each other come what may! The possibility of evaluative diversity under favorable conditions is just as real as the possibility of evaluative convergence under those conditions.

Despite its allowance for moral relativism (the view that some values are non-universal), schema T in no way suggests that we should not act according

to our values or take measures to encourage others to adopt them even if they are not universal. People’s evaluative dispositions are evolutionary and cultural products, and the products of personal history. They are not fixed absolutes but malleable to some extent. If T is right in understanding values as fundamentally anchored by people’s evaluative dispositions, then values can be created and relative values can become more universal, to the extent that people can cultivate, negotiate about, and converge in, their evaluative dispositions.

7. Hume Scholarship

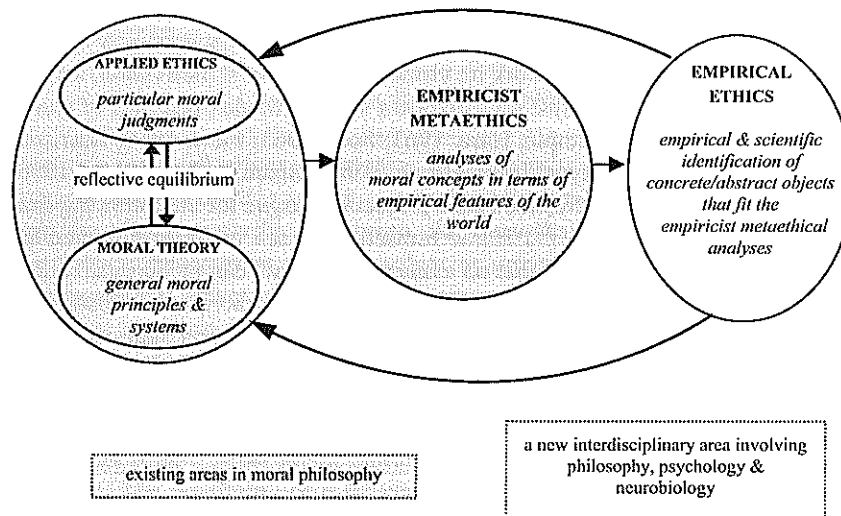
The project is Humean as much as it is humanist. It aims to contribute to contemporary scholarship on the 18th century empiricist philosopher David Hume, whose work has been a major influence on the development of modern analytic and empiricist philosophy. Building on my previous work on Hume (Lo, 2001a, 2001b, and 2006a), the project seeks to update his work on moral philosophy through its engagement with recent debates in metaethics and the new findings of empirical ethics.

In the course of developing the dispositional theory of value, the project draws upon theoretical resources from Hume, and advances a new controversial interpretation of his work on virtue and vice, moral motivation, and the purpose of morality. Against a well-known set of orthodox readings of Hume since the 1960s (for example, Hare, 1963; Foot, 1963; Flew, 1969; Harrison, 1976; Mackie, 1980; Ayer, 1980; Brown, 1988; Snare, 1991; Bricke, 1996; Wallace, 1998; and Baillie, 2000), the project will argue for the following four interpretations of Hume. (1) Hume himself does not endorse the so-called “Hume’s Law” – the thesis that no evaluative “ought” can be derived validly from any empirical “is.” (2) He is a cognitivist and a descriptivist – that is, he thinks that moral judgments (unlike expressions of emotion such as “boo,” “hurrah”) are capable of being true or false, and that they describe some matter of facts about the world. (3) He is neither an internalist nor an externalist – that is, he does not think that all moral judgments by themselves can motivate people who make those judgments to behave accordingly, nor does he think that no moral judgment can do that. For him, only a special class of moral judgments is intrinsically motivating without any external help. (4) Finally, he upholds a version of the dispositional theory of value as previously described.

This scholarly aspect of the project is intended to confirm Hume’s pioneering empiricist and quasi-scientific approach to ethics, and argue that it provides a historical precedent for the recently emerged interdisciplinary researches in empirical ethics.

8. Approach and Methodology

The project argues for, and employs, a general model for effective ethical inquiry, which assigns a particular role to empirical ethics in relation to existing areas of moral philosophy. This general model distinguishes four main areas of ethical inquiry. They are: (1) applied ethics, which seeks to come up with particular moral judgments about concrete moral issues (for example, abortion in the case of deformed fetus); (2) moral theory (or normative ethics), which seeks to come up with general moral principles about what kinds of things are valuable/disvaluable, or what kinds of behaviors are right/wrong; (3) empiricist metaethics, which seeks to analyze core moral concepts in empirical terms, and so reduces moral properties to empirical features of the world; and (4) empirical ethics, which seek to verify particular moral judgments and general principles, by empirically and scientifically identifying concrete or abstract objects that fit the empiricist metaethical analyses. The diagram below shows the interactions among the four areas of ethical inquiry:



Under this model, effective ethical inquiry begins with some debates on particular moral issues. Such debates usually contain a mixture of (1) particular moral judgments in area of applied ethics (for example, in the abortion debate, the conservative judgment "abortion is wrong even if the fetus is severely deformed") and (2) general moral principles used in building systematic moral theories (such as "human life is valuable," "we should always act in such a way that maximizes values"). The ideal state of this

mixture is the so-called "reflective equilibrium," where one's particular moral judgments are maximally consistent with one's general moral principles (cf. Rawls, 1971).

Then, based on the moral language(s) that we use to carry out the moral debates in the first place, we proceed to (3) empiricist metaethics, where we examine the core moral concepts (such as "value" and "obligation") used in those debates and other types of ethical discourse including those in fictions and films. In particular, we analyze the core moral concepts in empirical terms, and so reduce the corresponding moral properties to some empirical features of the world. For instance, the dispositional theory of value posited in the present project reduces the moral property of value to some empirical features of human beings. It is crucial to recognize that a good conceptual analysis needs to capture "folk platitudes" about the concept being analyzed (Jackson, 1998). These platitudes about moral concepts can be found in real ethical debates in the society, and also in debates among applied ethicists in more academic venues. But folk platitudes about apparently the same concept might be diverse. So the study of people's real reactions in ethical debate is essential for deciding which set of platitudes are more central than others. In cases where conflicting platitudes appear to be equally central, the concept in question may be vague or ambiguous, so requiring further analysis (cf. Brennan, 2004).

Next, building on the empiricist metaethical analyses of moral concepts, we proceed to (4) empirical ethics, where we employ empirical and scientific means to identify which objects fit or do not fit the metaethical analyses. We find out whether an object (be it concrete, say, a forest, or abstract, say, a form of life) has some moral properties (for example, the property of being valuable) by finding out whether it has their empirical equivalents (that is, whether it is such that people are disposed under favorable conditions to approve of). To use an anti-abortion and anti-euthanasia premise as an illustration: the analysis given by the project tells us that the only way to assess the moral principle "human life is always valuable no matter what" is to put people under conditions C1, C2, and C3, which are favorable for making evaluations, and then to check their subsequent responses towards different forms of human life. Human life is always valuable no matter what if and only if people are disposed under those favorable conditions always to value human life no matter what.

In term of the methodology for theory application, a useful comparison is Rawls's dispositional analysis of distributive justice. It says that "just" or "fair" principles of distribution of social goods are exactly those principles that people are disposed, under favorable conditions, to choose. The favorable conditions, he argues, are the conditions of being "behind a veil of ignorance" – that is, to lack information about one's particular characteristics, attachments, and position in society, and so be unable to make choices that are calculated solely to advance one's own self-interest. In the early 1990s,

systematic empirical work in social and political sciences was carried out in the United States, Canada, Poland, and South Korea (Bond and Park, 1991; Frohlich and Oppenheimer, 1992) to test the Rawlsian analysis of justice. This involved using social psychological experiments with focus groups to locate people's preference behind a simulated "veil of ignorance." Similar empirical studies have been carried out recently in Beijing, Taipei, and Hong Kong (Chan, 2004; Lai, *et al*, 2003).

Consider the following parallels between Rawls's analysis and the one proposed here. In order to find out what principles (or objects) are just (or valuable), we need firstly to put people behind the "veil of ignorance" (or under "favorable conditions" C1, C2, and C3), and secondly see what principles (or objects) they choose (or approve of). Although, the Rawlsian veil of ignorance is quite different from the favorable conditions specified by the present project, the research methods and techniques employed in previous applications of Rawls's analysis of justice can be borrowed and modified for the applications of the project's analysis of value. Comparative researches into people's evaluative dispositions under those favorable conditions promise to inform the debate between universalism and relativism, and answer the crucial questions about whether values are relative to social and cultural backgrounds, and the scope of any universal values. In addition, the project's analysis of value will supplement recent interdisciplinary research into the neurobiological mechanisms of moral cognition and evaluative responses (see, for example, Greene *et al*, 2001; Montague *et al*, 2002; Casebeer, 2003, Casebeer and Churchland, 2003). By specifying the conditions favorable for making sound moral judgments, the project will advance the design of neurobiological experiments so as to study people's values proper, not merely their initial, unconsidered evaluative attitudes.

Equipped with the findings in empirical ethics about people's evaluative dispositions (whether they are delivered by social-psychological sciences or neuro-psychological sciences), we can go back to assess the moral debates that originally started this process of ethical inquiry. The empirical evidence from using the metaethical analyses to test real people's evaluative dispositions might confirm the applied-ethical judgments and the general moral-theoretical principles that we have in the beginning of the debates. Or the empirical evidence might disconfirm them and require their revision. For example, if findings from empirical ethics suggests that people are disposed, under the favorable conditions C1, C2, and C3, to value only some forms of human life but not others, then we will need to replace our initial moral principle "human life is always valuable no matter what" by a more restricted claim like "only some forms of human life are valuable." And depending on whether the deformed fetus in question is likely to have some valuable form of human life, we will also need to revise our initial applied-ethical judgment about whether abortion in the case of deformed fetuses is wrong.

Under the present model of effective ethical inquiry, the interchange among (1) applied ethics, (2) general moral theory (or normative ethics), (3) empiricist metaethics, and (4) the newly emerged empirical ethics, is an ongoing and expanding process of positive feed backs, constantly aiming at a coherent viewpoint for connecting and assessing a diverse range of social ethical problems.

By advancing empirical ethics in different communities, and providing a framework for developing systematic methods of resolving moral disputes, the project aims to ameliorate the problem of moral skepticism characteristic of contemporary society. As previously explained, the applications of the project's humanist framework to find out people's evaluative dispositions (for example, regarding conservation management and the use of biotechnologies) will raise public participation, and awareness of the importance of ethical considerations, in the process of policy-making. Such applications will also increase the likelihood of people's convergence in beliefs and attitudes, and assist the progress of liberal democracy.

9. From Environmental Virtues to Environment Values: An Open Question

Hume has argued that in the case of the virtue of justice, relevant moral sentiments can be cultivated and solidified via the communicative mechanism of sympathy (see Lo, 2001a). If that is the case, then it is plausible that those sentiments can also be internalized via the same mechanism to such an extent that they will survive the reflections under the conditions C1, C2, and C3, which are favorable for having reliable moral sentiments. Our moral psychology is malleable regarding not only our surface evaluative attitudes, but also our latent evaluative dispositions – though it is reasonable to expect the attitudes to be more flexible than the dispositions. In short, if schema T is correct in grounding values on people's evaluative dispositions, then values are to some extent to be made.

Hume's account of justice as an artificial virtue is a useful model for practical environmental ethics. Just as Hume conjectures that justice is a virtue partly because we have made it a virtue out of necessity and keep it so by continually participating in its conventions with both our moral sentiments and behaviors, one may reasonably argue that we need to make some environment-friendly character traits virtuous so to ensure the continuation of human prosperity. Examples of prospective "environmental-virtues" are modesty and thoughtfulness regarding the Earth's natural environment, which are expressed in activities such as recycling and reducing the consumption of petrol and other products that cause air and water pollutions. Like the virtue of justice (the scope of which is defined by its social conventions and the initial motive for participating in which is people's regard to self-interest), the

emergence of some environment-friendly character traits as social virtues must be supported by conventions; and the initial motive in society for environment-friendly behaviors is likely to be egocentric and anthropocentric. On the necessity of justice as a virtue, Hume writes:

[H]owever single acts of justice may be contrary [. . . to] private interest, "tis certain, that the whole plan or scheme is highly conducive, or indeed absolutely requisite, both to the support of society, and the well-being of every individual." Tis impossible to separate the good from the ill. [. . . E]very individual person must find himself a gainer, on balancing the account; since, without justice, society must immediately dissolve, and every one must fall into that savage and solitary condition, which is infinitely worse than the worst situation that can possibly be suppos'd in society. (Hume, 1739-1740, 3.2.2.22 (cited by paragraph, section, part, and book))

Analogously, the necessity of environmentally-virtuous conventions can be put as follows:

However much a single exercise of environmental virtues, such as modesty and thoughtfulness, may be contrary personal interest and short-term human interests, it is certain that the whole plan or scheme is highly conducive, and indeed absolutely requisite, to the support of the Earth's natural environment, the human civilization, the survival of the *Homo Sapiens* species, and the well-being of every human individual. It is impossible to separate the good from the ill. Every individual person must find themselves a gainer, on balancing the account; since, without the rules and conventions of those environmental-virtues, the natural environment and human society must soon dissolve, and every one must soon fall into that savage and impoverished condition, which is infinitely worse than the worst situation that can possibly be supposed in an environmentally-virtuous society.

Arguably, the egocentric and anthropocentric justifications for environment-friendly behaviors are only the beginning of any durable environmentally-ethical practice. As Hume points out, the continual practice of the conventions of justice in larger societies requires the development and internalization of a non-egocentric sense of justice as a virtue, which motivates just behaviors even when that happens to be against self-interest. Similarly, if environment-friendly conventions are to survive in modern cosmopolitan societies where community ties and sanctions are weak and the temptation of environment-damaging life styles is constant, then it is likely that people will need to develop not only a non-egocentric sense, but also a non-anthropocentric sense of virtue in following those conventions and vice in violating

them. This non-anthropocentric sense of different environmental virtues and vices is in effect a set of internalized dispositions to experience different moral sentiments, under the favorable conditions C1, C2, and C3, towards different objects and behaviors. For instance, to have a non-anthropocentric sense of environmental-modesty as a virtue, and environmental-wastefulness as a vice, is, among other things, to be disposed to feel proud for taking the trouble to switch to solar energy, or for reducing the use of private vehicles by taking public transport instead, or to feel guilt and shame for forgetting to turn off the air-conditioning before leaving home or office, or for making unnecessary photocopies – even if the effects of such activities on oneself or other human beings are negligible. For another example, to have a non-anthropocentric sense of respect for nature as a virtue is to be disposed to feel the moral sentiments of disapprobation towards activities that endanger other species or destroy their natural habitats, and approbation towards activities that preserve those things – even if their destruction will cause little inconvenience to the human species.

The different moral sentiments that the environmentally-virtuous person is disposed under the Humean conditions to feel will then motivate her to behave virtuously towards the environment. Given schema T, because the environmentally-virtuous person is disposed under the favorable conditions to non-instrumentally approve of the preservation of the natural environment and its nonhuman inhabitants, in effect, constitutes the moral fact that these natural nonhuman entities are intrinsically valuable. The cultivation and internalization of a non-anthropocentric sense of environmental virtues not only produce environment-friendly behaviors but also create intrinsic values in the natural environment. Given T, (relative/universal) intrinsic values exist in nature if and only if some things in nature are such that (some/all) people are disposed, under the favorable conditions, to experience the moral sentiments of approbation towards them. Likewise, people can create (relative/universal) values in nature if and only if (some/all) people can successfully cultivate and internalize the corresponding psychological dispositions. But can people create whatever value they will? Regarding the development of the moral sentiments and dispositions that make justice a valuable character trait, Hume writes:

[I]f nature did not aid us [. . .] twou'd be in vain for politicians to talk of honourable or dishonourable, praiseworthy or blameable. These words wou'd be perfectly unintelligible, and wou'd no more have any idea annex'd to them, than if they were of a tongue perfectly unknown to us. The utmost politicians can perform, is, to extend the natural sentiments beyond their original bounds; but still nature must furnish the materials, and give us some notion of moral distinctions. (Hume, 1739-1740, 3.2.2.25)

The same point applies to environmental ethics – especially the non-anthropocentric theories that attribute intrinsic value to the nonhuman nature. If valuable things are those towards which we are disposed to feel the pleasing sentiments of approbation, but if we are not already bestowed with some natural tendency to appreciate the natural world and/or its nonhuman inhabitants as ends-in-themselves, then it will be in vain for philosophers to argue that those things have intrinsic value and moral standing – these notions will be perfectly unintelligible and will not have any sense annexed to them. So, if schema T is correct in reducing values to human evaluative dispositions, then the most that non-anthropocentric environmental philosophers can do is to be informed and realistic about human evaluative psychology, and try to excite the relevant moral sentiments from us towards the objects of environmental concern by catching our imagination and sympathetic understanding with their philosophical arguments, and hope that those sentiments will endure our reflections under the conditions favorable for making moral evaluations. But after all, this can happen only if there are already some original materials of our moral psychology that underline our dispositions (if any) to appreciate, respect, and care for those things, and give us some notion of their moral significance. Whether, and to what extent, there are any such original ingredients of the human psychology, however, are more properly seen as empirical (and therefore open) questions, which are not single-handedly answerable by philosophers *a priori*.

WORKS CITED

- Ayer, A. Jules. (1980) *Hume*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baillie, James. (2000) *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Hume on Morality*. London: Routledge.
- Beauchamp, Tom L. (ed.) (1998) *David Hume: An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bond, Doug and Jong-Chul Park. (1991) "An Empirical Test of Rawls's Theory of Justice: A Second Approach, in Korea and the United States," *Simulation & Gaming*, 22, pp. 443–462.
- Brennan, Andrew. (2004) "Biodiversity and Agricultural Landscapes: Can the Wicked Policy Problems Be Solved?" *Pacific Conservation Biology*, 10, pp. 124–144.
- Bricke, John. (1996) *Mind and Morality: An Examination of Hume's Moral Psychology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Brown, Charlotte. (1988) "Is Hume an Internalist?" *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 2, pp. 69–87.
- Casebeer, William D. (2003) *Natural Ethical Facts: Evolution, Connectionism, and Moral Cognition*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- _____ and Patricia S. Churchland (2003) "The Neural Mechanisms of Moral Cognition: A Multiple-Aspect Approach to Moral Judgment and Decision-Making," *Biology and Philosophy*, 18, pp. 169–194.
- Chan, Ho-Mun. (2004) "The Ethics and Care and Political Practices in Hong Kong." In: Beng-Huat Chua (ed.), *Communitarian Politics in Asia*, pp. 102–121. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Elliot, Robert. (1997) *Faking Nature: The Ethics of Environmental Restoration*. London: Routledge.
- Flew, Antony. (1969) "On the Interpretation of Hume." In: William Donald Hudson (ed.), *The Is-Ought Question: A Collection of Papers on the Central Problem in Moral Philosophy*, pp. 64–69. London: Macmillan.
- Foot, Philippa. (1963) "Hume on Moral Judgment." In: David Francis Pears (ed.), *David Hume: A Symposium*, pp. 74–80. London: Macmillan.
- Frohlich, Norman and Joe A. Oppenheimer (1992) *Choosing Justice: An Experimental Approach to Ethical Theory*. Berkeley; Oxford: University of California Press.
- Giddens, Anthony. (1994) *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Greene, Joshua D., et al. (2001) "An fMRI Investigation of Emotional Engagement in Moral Judgment," *Science*, 293, pp. 2105–2108.
- Habermas, Jürgen. (1974) *The Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Thomas McCarthy. Vol. I. Boston: Beacon Press.
- _____. (1990) *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry W. Nicholsen. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Hare, Richard Mervyn. (1963) *Freedom and Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harrison, Jonathan. (1976) *Hume's Moral Epistemology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Hume, David. (1739–40) *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Edited by David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton, Oxford University Press, 2000.
- _____. (1751) *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. Edited by Tom L. Beauchamp, Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Jackson, Frank. (1998) *From Metaphysics to Ethics: A Defence of Conceptual Analysis*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Johnston, Mark. (1989) "Dispositional Theories of Value," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supp. Vol., 63, pp. 139–174.
- Lai, Julian C., et al. (2003) "Dispositions toward Environmental Hazards in Hong Kong Chinese," *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 23, pp. 369–384.
- Lewis, David K. (1989) "Dispositional Theories of Value," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supp. Vol., 63, pp. 113–137.
- Lo, Yeuk-Sze (1999) "Natural and Artifactual: Restored Nature as Subject," *Environmental Ethics*, 21, pp. 247–266.
- _____. (2001a) "Non-Humean Holism, Un-Humean Holism," *Environmental Values*, 10, pp. 113–123.
- _____. (2001b) "A Humean Argument for the Land Ethic?" *Environmental Values*, 11, pp. 523–539.
- _____. (2001c) "The Land Ethic and Callicott's Ethical System (1980–2001)," *Inquiry*, 44, pp. 331–358.
- _____. (2006a) "Making and Finding Values in Nature: From a Human Point of View," *Inquiry*, 46, pp. 123–147.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair C. (1984) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, second edition. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Mackie, John L. (1980) *Hume's Moral Theory*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Montague, P. Read, et al. (2002) "Hyperscanning: Simultaneous fMRI During Linked Social Interactions," *Neuroimage*, 16, pp. 1159–1164.
- Norton, David F. and Mary J. Norton (eds.) (2000) *David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rawls, John. (1971) *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- _____. (1985) "Justice As Fairness: Political Not Metaphysical," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 14, pp. 223–251.
- _____. (1993) *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Rorty, Richard. (1989) *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- _____. (1991) *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, Michael. (1994) *The Moral Problem*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Snare, Francis. (1991) *Morals, Motivation and Convention: Hume's Influential Doctrines*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wallace, R. Jay. (1998) "Moral Motivation." In: Edward Craig (ed.), *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. London: Routledge.

- Williams, Bernard. (1985) *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*. London: Fontana Press.
- _____. (1995) *Making Sense of Humanity and Other Philosophical Papers, 1982–1993*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.