

Editorial Note

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To which extent are we obliged to inform ourselves about the impact of our actions in the world? *Steve Vanderheiden* argues, in the article that opens this issue, that persons have a limited obligation to know which requires that they inform themselves and others about their role in harmful social practices, with a view toward challenging the norms that sustain such practices. Vanderheiden explores this obligation to know, and the related idea of excusable ignorance, offering accounts of the epistemic burden that it entails for persons in their capacities as citizens and in the context of global climate change and of reproach as a potentially effective tool for rectifying rather than excusing ignorance.

The next article discusses grounds for humanitarian intervention. Michael Walzer finds that the just cause for intervention is not met if there are only ‘ordinary’ levels of human rights abuses because he believes that respecting the right to collective self-determination is more morally important than protecting other individual rights. *Eamon Aloyo*, however, argues that justified interventions can actually promote rather than undermine collective self-determination because just interventions allow innocents, who otherwise would have excluded from this process, the opportunity to contribute to collective choices.

Actions are usually grouped into of several moral categories such as the morally required, the morally permitted, and the morally prohibited, but also the supererogatory and the suberogatory. Some eschew deontic categories such as the above, but nevertheless allow the existence of two comparative moral categories, i.e., the morally better or morally worse. In his article, *Dale Dorsey* wants to explore the possibility of a further category, viz., amoral action, or actions that, strictly speaking, lack any moral status whatsoever. He thinks admitting the existence of amoral actions is not only plausible in its own right, but has consequences for our understanding the nature of moral obligation.

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Much has been written in the last decade about the situationist attack on virtue ethics. *Philip A. Reed* discusses what can be meant when saying that virtue ethics is empirically inadequate in order to see to what extent virtue ethics might fail to meet this standard. He argues that the situationists frequently misconstrue the empirical commitments of virtue ethics. More importantly, depending on what we mean by empirical adequacy, either virtue ethics has no need to be empirically adequate or where it does have such a need, the psychological evidence fails to show that it is empirically inadequate.

John Danaher's topic are human enhancement technologies. He tries to clarify, strengthen and respond to two prominent objections to the development and use of human enhancement technologies that express concerns about the link between enhancement and the drive for hyperagency (i.e. the ability to control and manipulate all aspects of one's agency). The first is concerned with the negative impact of hyperagency on social solidarity. The second objection is concerned with the impact of hyperagency on the burden and distribution of responsibility.

Daniel Crow discusses two epistemological critiques of non-naturalism that are not always carefully distinguished. According to the Causal Objection, the fact that moral properties cannot cause our moral beliefs implies that it would be a coincidence if many of them were true. According to the Evolutionary Objection, the fact that evolutionary pressures have influenced our moral beliefs implies a similar coincidence. After distinguishing these epistemological critiques, Crow provides an extensive defence of the Causal Objection that also strengthens the Evolutionary Objection.

Quentin Gee raises the question whether a corporation has moral right to lobby on government officials. He argues that group agents such as corporations have no moral rights, and thereby cannot have the right to lobby. Gee argues that, although there may be a basis for some legal rights for corporations, that lobbying cannot be one of them legal rights, even by reference to the rights of the individuals that make up the corporation. According to Gee, how this argument applies to all private organizations, including public interest organizations.

Against the traditional medical paternalism, it is now widely accepted that patients have the right to know the truth about their medical conditions, along with the risks and benefits of proposed treatments. But do they also have a right not to know? *Emma Bullock* argues that, depending on the context, the disclosure of medical information can undermine the patient's ability to exercise her autonomy or have therapeutically detrimental effects. In the light of these insights Bullock develops a context-sensitive approach to medical disclosure that allows that in some cases medical information ought to be withheld, while acknowledging that patients do not have an exercisable 'right not to know.'

Kristina Meshelski's subject is affirmative action. Many believe that affirmative action is morally problematic, only justified to the extent that it brings us closer to the time when we will no longer need it. In other words, those that support affirmative action believe it is acceptable in nonideal theory, but not ideal theory. Defending a new analysis of Rawlsian procedural justice according to which it is permissible to interfere in the outcomes of procedures, Meshelski shows that affirmative action is not morally problematic in the way that many have supposed.

What is solidarity? According to *Nicolas Bommarito* it is natural to think of acts of solidarity as being public acts that aim at good outcomes, particularly at social change. He argues that not all acts of solidarity fit this mold – acts of what he calls 'private solidarity' are not public and do not aim at producing social change. After describing paradigmatic cases of private solidarity, Bommarito defends an account of why such acts are themselves morally virtuous and what role they can have in moral development.

According to *D. Justin Coates* it is inappropriate for us to blame others if it is not reasonable for us to believe that they are morally responsible for their actions. The argument for this claim relies on two controversial claims: first, that assertion is governed by the epistemic norm of reasonable belief, and second, that the epistemic norm of implicatures is relevantly similar to the norm of assertion. Coates defends these claims, and concludes by briefly suggesting how this putative norm of blame can serve as the basis for general norms of interpersonal generosity.

Neither the liberal nor the radical feminist view on prostitution is right, says *Agustin Vicente*. The typical liberal view is associated with decriminalization and normalization of prostitution; radical feminism stands in favour of prohibition or abolition. Conceding to liberals that prostitution is not harmful in itself, Vicente argues that prostitution cannot be thought of as 'just another job'. Even if prostitution is not harmful in itself, it can do much harm. He defends a policy of vigilance tries to discriminate between those who exercise their genuine will, and those who are openly or subtly coerced.

Is communicating in an authentic manner is an impossible political ideal, as Judith Shklar, David Runciman, and others argue? In his article, *Ben Jones* challenges the characterization of authenticity as unrealistic. First, he shows that authenticity has greater flexibility than many assume in accommodating practices common to politics, such as deception, concealment, and persuasion through rhetoric. Second, he argues that a concern for authenticity in political discourse represents a virtue, not a distraction, for representative democracy. Authenticity takes on heightened importance when the public seeks information on how representatives will act in contexts where the public is absent and unable to influence decisions.

Should our factual understanding of the world influence our normative theorising about it, asks *Enzo Rossi* in the last article of this issue. G.A. Cohen has argued that our ultimate normative principles should not be constrained by facts (e.g. about feasibility, human nature, and so on). Many others have defended or are committed to various versions or subsets of that claim. Rossi disputes those positions by arguing that, in order to resist the conclusion that ultimate normative principles rest on facts about possibility or conceivability, one has to embrace an unsatisfactory account of how principles generate normative political judgments.