The **PURPOSE** of *Encompass Magazine* is to renew an ethical dialogue among all disciplines of the Duke community. We hope to show that ethics isn’t just for philosophers, priests, or obnoxious goody-two-shoes.

The following survey was taken from a diverse mix of students, faculty, and staff who have no specific relation to the study of ethics.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Subtitle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Letter from the Editors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>The Moral of the Story</td>
<td>How fairy tales and ethics do and don't coincide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>When Academic Performance is Not Enough</td>
<td>Charting your way through institutional hoops in education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Choice in Education</td>
<td>Student opinions about the Duke curriculum; exploring the alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Power of Invisibility</td>
<td>Trust and responsibility in the art of translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>When Talk is Not Cheap</td>
<td>Why should we bother to talk about ethics?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Moral Media</td>
<td>The historical role of The Chronicle in ethical dilemmas at Duke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Haiti: Will You Remember?</td>
<td>Cautioning against a short-term ethical memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The Power of 10</td>
<td>How a little money can go a long way in global health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Lending Aid: Thinking Globally, Acting...</td>
<td>Theory in practice: the philosophy behind DukeEngage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Jimmie Banks: Art, Humanity, Conversation</td>
<td>Starting conversations from art: profiling a Duke artist and employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The Ethics of Being Greek</td>
<td>Ethical and Greek at Duke: can you be both?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Kenan Institute for Ethics Profile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>“Life is Short, Have an Affair”</td>
<td>A look into an online dating site for extra-marital affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Kicking Up a Fuss</td>
<td>We've all heard it, we've all done it—Duke students love to complain!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>The Social Role of Business</td>
<td>Corporate citizens with social responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>You First: The Me-We Conundrum and the Environment</td>
<td>Individual steps towards global environmental solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Good to Great: Social Action Leadership at Duke</td>
<td>The need for collaboration in service organizations at Duke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Does Good Need God?</td>
<td>Two perspectives on the relationship between God and morality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In our first issue, ethics is everywhere, Encompass Magazine aimed to demonstrate that you can never get away from ethics. Whether you’re in church, in the courtroom, or watching a comedy on TV, ethics truly is everywhere. Now, Encompass is back to show that ethics is not only everywhere, but it is also everyone. The theme summarizes the energy of Socrates’ insistence on questioning, saying “an unexamined life is not worth living.” This issue is about remembering that contemplating, discussing, and participating in ethics only exists if it is executed by people—by you and by me. We are all implicated in ethics.

The content of ethical dialogue is important, but so is the medium. In this issue we uncover the many media that can carry moral messages. Consider how morality moves through art (p. 23) and stories, even fairy tales (p. 6)! Even the act of translating such stories is filled with moral implications and dilemmas (p. 12). Divergent views on truth and what is ‘right’ thrive in this issue; from lifestyle differences of participating in Greek culture (p. 26) or having an affair (p. 30) to arguments over belief in God (p. 40), we see that ethics is anything but a monolithic thing practiced by a homogenous group.

To better understand our similarities and differences, it is often helpful to appeal to our collective history: both past and present. For example, knowing the history of *The Chronicle* as a moral medium on campus can show the potential it has today (p. 16), and thinking about the current tragedy in Haiti can warn us of the dangers of a short memory (p. 18).

We hope this issue will help you in your journey of ethics—both in thinking about perennial issues in new ways, and also in recognizing new issues as ethical ones. However, we will only succeed in doing so if you realize that you are a part of ethics too. It’s your time to read, think, talk, engage, and act. Ethics is everywhere, and now, ethics is everyone.

Enjoy, engage, and encompass ethics!

Melissa Wiesner and Michael McCreary
I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! -Luke 12:49, New International Version (1984)

In this future world, a special police unit arrests would-be murderers before they actually commit the murder, thanks to the visions of three genetically altered human beings who can see the future. In the beginning of the film, Chief John Anderton ardently pursues his profession, believing that he was saving hundreds of lives until John himself is accused of a future murder. If someone is arrested before the murder is committed, can the person be accused of the murder, which—because of the arrest—never took place?

MUST WATCH!

- Crime and Punishment, Dostoevsky
- The Count of Monte Cristo, Alexandre Dumas
- The Remains of the Day, Kazuo Ishiguro

Ethics in Movies

- The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind
- In the alternative universe in which this movie is set, you can pay to entirely eliminate people and past actions that you deem unworthy of your memory. This begs the question: if you don't remember it, did it happen? Are you responsible for it?

Crash

- tells the story of the intersecting lives of strangers in LA over a space of two days. As the characters face racial profiling and discrimination, they also learn to confront their own prejudices.

To Kill a Mockingbird

- Crime and Punishment, Dostoevsky
- The Count of Monte Cristo, Alexandre Dumas
- The Remains of the Day, Kazuo Ishiguro

Maturity Report

In this future world, a special police unit arrests would-be murderers before they actually commit the murder, thanks to the visions of three genetically altered human beings who can see the future. In the beginning of the film, Chief John Anderton ardently pursues his profession, believing that he was saving hundreds of lives until John himself is accused of a future murder. If someone is arrested before the murder is committed, can the person be accused of the murder, which—because of the arrest—never took place.

“Cowardice asks the question, ‘Is it safe?’ Expediency asks the question, ‘Is it politic?’ Vanity asks the question, ‘Is it popular?’ But, conscience asks the question, ‘Is it right?’ And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular but one must take it because one’s conscience tells one that it is right.” -Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Bahold the turtle: He only makes progress when he sticks his neck out.” -James Bryant Conant

“In matters of style, swim with the current. In matters of principle, stand like a rock.” -Thomas Jefferson

“Yeah I’m a rich b****. Yeah my parents pay for everything...My life isn’t meaningless. I just do what I have to and play the game. You don’t get anywhere without it.” -CollegeACB.com, Anonymous

“Do or do not. There is no try.” -Yoda

“Yeah I’m a rich b****. Yeah my parents pay for everything...My life isn’t meaningless. I just do what I have to and play the game. You don’t get anywhere without it.” -CollegeACB.com, Anonymous

“Behold the turtle: He only makes progress when he sticks his neck out.” -James Bryant Conant

“In matters of style, swim with the current. In matters of principle, stand like a rock.” -Thomas Jefferson

“Yeah I’m a rich b****. Yeah my parents pay for everything...My life isn’t meaningless. I just do what I have to and play the game. You don’t get anywhere without it.” -CollegeACB.com, Anonymous

“Do or do not. There is no try.” -Yoda
very morning as a kid, I used to spend my mornings in front of the TV watching Disney’s Aladdin, Mulan, and Cinderella until I was shocked to discover an underlying aspect of these tales; a truth that would ultimately lead me to my Program II major: fairy tales of Disney are not truly fairy tales.

Now, let me amend that statement before all the Disney die-hard fans attempt to burn me at the stake. Fairy tales by Disney can still represent our nostalgic time of innocence and can have magical plots. They still contribute to our carefree childhood and sense of story. Their many fans are a sign of these fantasy tales’ successful nature. Yet, at the end of the day, these tales are not children, revisiting these stories are not authentic; they are adaptations of older popular moral tales. Now that we are not children, revisiting these stories under a renewed lens of ethics makes them all the more fascinating.

Take for example the collection “Grimm’s Tales for Young and Old.” There is a short section at the end of the anthology that contains stories specifically set aside for child readers, but the majority of the book is for teaching adults, and these stories are worth examining. A few of note are “Snow White,” “Little Red Cap,” and “Rapunzel”—all these have changed significantly, but they maintain their qualities as teaching stories. “Snow White” originally was a story implicating two daughters that ended violently. Today, the story has been sterilized to suit the audience. Likewise, “Little Red Cap” was changed into the relatively innocent tale of “Little Red Riding Hood,” and the “Rapunzel” of today doesn’t even mention the violent fate of the evil stepmother. But even though each has been watered down, traces of more heavy and serious narratives remind us of the original purpose of these stories.

For many people, fairy tales are mere fantasy, a chance to escape into an entertaining respite. Yet upon delving into the extended study of fairy tales I discovered that behind most of the folklore lies a deeper history of purposeful moral education. In fact, most of these stories were meant to direct adults in the face of deep and complex ethical dilemmas. Values imparted by these stories include honesty, frugality, bravery, and other central character traits. The lessons of ethics have stuck and remained on the forefront of every issue from familial to political.

Modern fairy tales are malleable, trendy stories now and lost almost as quickly as they come. The exception consists of the Disney movies, and even these are changing with the appearance of graphic novels involving Disney characters in new and thoroughly modern situations. Modern fairy tales retain some of their old qualities and are never devoid of lessons; if these are lost, fairy tales will cease to exist in the classical term. The new tales nectar to reflect similar value systems that are contained in old tales. “Cinderella” is an almost entirely sterilized version of “Ashpuntle”—the story Disney gives us is both one-dimensional in its portrayal as a cartoon and in its singular loss of a moral more important than being pretty and persistent to marry a wealthy prince. While this can certainly be an important

This is to say, fairy tales maintained their ethical qualities but changed in shape as the genre was manipulated into something more palatable for younger audiences. An example of this is a tale from the Brothers Grimm: “Little Red Riding Cap,” known today as “Little Red Riding Hood.” While the messages and ethics of both tales are very similar (don’t trust just anyone you meet by the side of the road, and don’t get put off from your original task no matter what), the shape of the stories has changed. The older story is gruesome with a savage ending that wouldn’t lend itself well to popular reproduction. The newer story has a happier ending that does not consist of gutting a wolf and then filling him with stones. While the morals and the fundamental stories have not changed at all, the way these tales are presented have been manipulated.

Fairy tales have transitioned from complicated stories into stories with a value that hinges on their entertainment ability. Modern fairy tales are malleable, trendy stories now and lost almost as quickly as they come. The exception consists of the Disney movies, and even these are changing with the appearance of graphic novels involving Disney characters in new and thoroughly modern situations. Modern fairy tales retain some of their old qualities and are never devoid of lessons; if these are lost, fairy tales will cease to exist in the classical term. The new tales nectar to reflect similar value systems that are contained in old tales. “Cinderella” is an almost entirely sterilized version of “Ashpuntle”—the story Disney gives us is both one-dimensional in its portrayal as a cartoon and in its singular loss of a moral more important than being pretty and persistent to marry a wealthy prince. While this can certainly be an important

This is to say, fairy tales maintained their ethical qualities but changed in shape as the genre was manipulated into something more palatable for younger audiences. An example of this is a tale from the Brothers Grimm: “Little Red Riding Cap,” known today as “Little Red Riding Hood.” While the messages and ethics of both tales are very similar (don’t trust just anyone you meet by the side of the road, and don’t get put off from your original task no matter what), the shape of the stories has changed. The older story is gruesome with a savage ending that wouldn’t lend itself well to popular reproduction. The newer story has a happier ending that does not consist of gutting a wolf and then filling him with stones. While the morals and the fundamental stories have not changed at all, the way these tales are presented have been manipulated.

Fairy tales have transitioned from complicated stories into stories with a value that hinges on their entertainment ability. Modern fairy tales are malleable, trendy stories now and lost almost as quickly as they come. The exception consists of the Disney movies, and even these are changing with the appearance of graphic novels involving Disney characters in new and thoroughly modern situations. Modern fairy tales retain some of their old qualities and are never devoid of lessons; if these are lost, fairy tales will cease to exist in the classical term. The new tales nectar to reflect similar value systems that are contained in old tales. “Cinderella” is an almost entirely sterilized version of “Ashpuntle”—the story Disney gives us is both one-dimensional in its portrayal as a cartoon and in its singular loss of a moral more important than being pretty and persistent to marry a wealthy prince. While this can certainly be an important
lesson, it is clearly much less important than the lesson of internal growth the original tale exemplifies. Furthermore, tales that were once orally told and constantly changing had a better way of keeping up with the social climate, whereas stories are snapshots of what a society thinks is important. Within this set of constraints, the tale loses some of its dimensionality.

It is not until we truly understand fairy tales and folklore that they broaden our imaginations. It is nearly impossible to explain the morals the stories teach without delving into their history a bit. Yes, the film fairy tales of today are full of magical powers and abilities that free the regular person from the hum-drum of life, but the real intrigue lies in the more mundane yet graphic stories of yesteryears. These tales shaped the newer stories, which shaped our stories, which in turn arguably shape how we live day to day. Forgetting this would be to forget our understanding of principled decisions based in rationality.

It is imperative that we recognize and not abandon the full history of fairy tales and folklore, for this history is the basis of our moral knowledge. The stories changed the entire horizon for the population when they were compiled. The Brothers Grimm composed an anthology of fairy tales to reconnect with the Germanic culture that had seemingly been lost to the high French court culture; most of the upper class didn’t recognize folklore as a worthwhile study topic. When the Grims elevated it to the level of a published anthology, they created an awareness of original cultural identity. These tales still influence our perception of reality and keep us tied to our cultures. In short, the choice of fairy tales and folklore as a major does not just include the literature of the subject matter. They are inherently important to our moral compasses for they are the byproducts of our understanding of society. Tales both young and old hold deep societal significance: they affect almost everyone alive in some shape or form, especially when it comes to the ethicality of one situation as compared to another. They are our moral compasses; they always have been.

At the end of the day, I rejected most modern fairy tales in favor for the authenticity of the Brothers Grimm and other classic tales. I recognize that all permutations of the folktales have importance: if one holds to the moral compass of fairy tales and seeks to understand that they have helped shape many of the events that happen today, then the ethical issues we face will not be as menacing as they seem—instead they will be simplified in their way of the tales—each decision will be logical, complete, and thoughtful.

Be logical, complete, and thoughtful. They way of the tales—each decision will instead be simplified in the real intrigue lies in the more mundane yet graphic stories of yesteryears. These tales shaped the newer stories, which shaped our stories, which in turn arguably shape how we live day to day. Forgetting this would be to forget our understanding of principled decisions based in rationality.

It is imperative that we recognize and not abandon the full history of fairy tales and folklore, for this history is the basis of our moral knowledge. The stories changed the entire horizon for the population when they were compiled. The Brothers Grimm composed an anthology of fairy tales to reconnect with the Germanic culture that had seemingly been lost to the high French court culture; most of the upper class didn’t recognize folklore as a worthwhile study topic. When the Grims elevated it to the level of a published anthology, they created an awareness of original cultural identity. These tales still influence our perception of reality and keep us tied to our cultures. In short, the choice of fairy tales and folklore as a major does not just include the literature of the subject matter. They are inherently important to our moral compasses for they are the byproducts of our understanding of society. Tales both young and old hold deep societal significance: they affect almost everyone alive in some shape or form, especially when it comes to the ethicality of one situation as compared to another. They are our moral compasses; they always have been.

At the end of the day, I rejected most modern fairy tales in favor for the authenticity of the Brothers Grimm and other classic tales. I recognize that all permutations of the folktales have importance: if one holds to the moral compass of fairy tales and seeks to understand that they have helped shape many of the events that happen today, then the ethical issues we face will not be as menacing as they seem—instead they will be simplified in their way of the tales—each decision will be logical, complete, and thoughtful.

Pinocchio

Pioneered by Italian author Carlo Collodi in the 1880s. Despite being geared towards children from its start, the story introduces very un-childlike and hard-realities of life, the need for food, shelter, the lure of temptation and the challenge of single-parenting. Collodi wrote the story as Italy was becoming a nation-state, so commentaries on class are ubiquitous: it warns us not to act like the tricky fox and cat who reflect the concealing noble class. Instead, it teaches us to work hard for money and to gain an education, lest one end up like the ‘asses’ who reflect the working class. Due to class allusions such as these, this book was well-received by upper class families who hoped it would help their children stay in line. The main lesson many recall from this story is, of course, ‘don’t lie.’ The very visual effect of lying, an ever-growing long nose, sticks with us even today.

Hunchback of Notre Dame

This story, inspired by the French Victor Hugo novel, tells of a secluded hunchback, Quasimodo, who lives in Paris’ Notre Dame Cathedral. Ethics is debated along the lines of determinism, revolution, religious fanaticism and social strike. Social class is questioned, as Quasimodo and Esmeralda are contrasted to higher caste people in the book.

In the last decade, this story has been revisited by political commentators who believe its framework parallels recent discrimination in France against African immigrants. When the good captain of the guards whispers ‘Demand the right of asylum’ to Esmeralda, many agree that applies to the asylum-seekers from Africa.

Snow White

Snow White is a tale that draws its origins from many European countries. Originally Snow White is poisoned by her own mother, but in the Disney version it is the stepmother. Jealousy is at the heart of this story. The tale has been identified with female passivity that only seems to fall away when there is a great amount of beauty: i.e. the stepmother queen is compelled to her jealous act because she wants the more beautiful stepmother, and the prince is attracted to Snow White because of her beauty. The tale is also often commented on because of its representation of necrophilia and what seems to be its sick indulgence of that guilty pleasure. How do we value physical beauty in our own society and what ‘evil’ sides does it bring out in us?

Cinderella

This story, originally a French fairy tale, revolves around the life of a teenage girl who was oppressed by her evil stepmother and two stepisters before marrying a prince. The tale questions social class and familial hierarchy as well as the marriage process. Cinderella also can be seen as a coming-of-age tale.

In recent years, Cinderella has been questioned by feminist commentators who note the tale is very clearly sexist. They point to the ‘glass ceiling effect’ that pervades the storyline for proof, even though the protagonist is empowered during the majority of the tale.

Happily Ever After?

We’ve heard it many times before: “and they all lived happily ever after.” What are the pros and cons of wrapping up complex stories in a simplistic “happily ever after” packaging? Reward-based ethics assumes that all good behaviors is proportionally met with good results in return. Is it a good idea to teach children this way? Disney movies tend to think so. The prince wins the princess, or vice versa, and the good guys always win over the bad guys. Yet many of the original stories behind Disney versions are actually more nuanced and even tragic with their own endings. The Book of Job, a story used in the intro to Ethics course at Duke teaches that despite good deeds we may find that the equation of life may still spit out unfavorable outcomes. A child might respond to this, “but it’s not fun!” An adult might just mutter ‘that’s life. What would you say? How have fairytales formed your view on ethics and your worldview?
There is, or at least ought to be, a vague sense of dissatisfaction and uneasiness environing the experience of both students and faculty here at Duke and beyond. In those increasingly rare moments when we really stop to reflect on our daily activity in the academy, we (if we are honest with ourselves) are haunted by a nagging feeling that we are not fully meeting our promise either as individuals or as a university community. One of the prime symptoms and manifestations of this underlying uneasiness is the extent to which we, faculty and students alike, have come to rely almost exclusively on quantifiable and practically accessible standards of “performance”—and in fact have come to accept academic performance as a necessary surrogate for genuine intellectual engagement. The one should never be confused with the other.

Performing well is on the whole probably preferable to performing poorly, but in even the best performance we are really doing little more than jumping through hoops provided by our professors, parents, or others. If the limit of our horizon is defined by the context of performance, we simply content ourselves with responding to questions and issues raised by others and never get around to the constitutive challenge of the authentic educational process: coming to grasp the crucial importance of our daring to ask questions for ourselves.

Genuine intellectual engagement in the truest sense is in many ways the very antithesis of an ethic of mere performance. Its basic tendency is precisely to resist and rebel against the kind of packaging, compartmentalization, and artificial, arbitrary constraints that make performance such a superficially attractive ideal. Its nature is to overflow, to transcend the particular context in which it happens to originate, and to challenge those very bound-aries and conventions that we have been trained to accept as necessary conditions of proper performance. Such engagement invariably leads us to run personal, social, academic, and professional risks of a sort that run directly against the grain of the prevailing performance ethos.

In Book II of Plato’s “Republic,” after Socrates and Adeimantus have together constructed in words the “true, healthy city,” Adeimantus’ bolder, more courageous brother, Glaucon, interrupts to dismiss what they have come up with as a “city of sows.” Socrates of course feigns surprise, but he understands very clearly that a city predicated exclusively upon material production and the satisfaction of physical needs does not begin to engage the broadest and deepest dimensions of the human experience. For one thing, there would really be no room in such a city for Socrates himself, whose fundamental identity as gadfly or lover of wisdom is in no way anchored in or validated by any material benefit to society.

The virtues of this “true, healthy city” are of course precisely those that are the...
Genuine intellectual engagement is not a Hallmark of the ethic of performance. It is a reduction to a readily quantifiable or measurable standard, comparability, and fundamental limitations in the governing terms of discourse so as to ensure precisely such measurability and comparability. The theory and practice of intellectual engagement present themselves to us on a regular basis. In particular, the challenge to students is to find the secret of turning oblations into opportunities. Virtually all of undergraduate academic life presents itself initially under the guise of “obligation”; there are required course readings, required papers and other projects, required attendance. But what presents itself initially under the guise of obligation does not have to remain there. The student who initially tackles a reading assignment with a heavy sense of distensibility and obligation—he would much rather be doing something else—may suddenly find himself so absorbed in the reading that he is transformed and loses any sense of time. A paper that begins as essentially a response to an assignment may to our surprise become something much more as we take real ownership of the “assignment,” appropriate it to our own purposes, and come to see it as an opportunity for self-exploration. Regrettably, these magical acts of transformation seem all too rare in the modern academy, and the opportunity is lost under the weight of an overwhelming performance ethos.

The challenge is for us to resist the temptation to view our particular institutional setting (the university) either as a sanctuary/retreat (affording protection from the outside world and an escape from genuine engagement and personal responsibility) or as a thoroughfare (as a frenzy or whirlwind of movement, a simple point of contact or range of encounters without any lingering or depth of connection). We must also summon the energy, imagination, and creativity to resist the seductions of mere vocationalism (grabbing our educational experience solely or primarily in terms of the requirements of a particular job or career), fundamentalism (unreflective and uncritical acceptance of the beliefs and traditions that have been passed on to us), or indeed professionalism (passive acceptance of the authorized and established routes of performance, along with the neutral and “objective” standards of behavior generally associated with them). All three of these provide fairly easy answers and clearly defined pathways that offer familiar and reassuring criteria of performance. But if left unchecked and unchallenged, they all ultimately deprive us of that sense of adventure, real encounter, and personal appropriation that alone leads to genuine self-discovery and sets us on the path of the true (and inherently risky) life of the mind.

The first step beyond Plato’s cave lies in a growing sense of the hollowness and brittleness of an exclusive reliance on an ethic of performance. But true intellectual engagement does not come with a road map or any guarantee of “success.” The only thing that we can look forward to with confidence is a turbulent journey that shakes us to the very core of our being. Such are the fruits of the authentic educational venture.

Benjamin F. Ward

Quantity or Quality?

Remember, giving beyond academic performance is not the same thing as going beyond academics. Instead, it could mean improving the quality of your perspective about opportunities you already have.

Plug into Ethics

“What I enjoy about some of the ‘easy A’ classes at Duke is that taking the class can become an opportunity to learn for the sake of learning rather than just for the grade. For example, Dynamic Oceans (EOS 12) is a requirement for my major and I love the fact that I can attend class and engage in the material without having to stress about constant due dates or an upcoming test where the class average is below 50%. We’re Duke students, many of us came here because of the academic reputation, but our education should mean more to us than just a number on our transcript.”

“See more about our online survey concerning the Duke curriculum on the following page.

Benjamin F. Ward has taught various courses in philosophy, German studies, and Arabic language at Duke since 1980. He is a pianist and the founder of The Pitchforks, Duke’s oldest a cappella singing group. He is a longtime volunteer in the kitchen at Urban Ministries of Durham and in the Rites of Passage mentoring program for young African-American males.
Plug into Ethics:

How much freedom do we actually have in choosing what to study at Duke?

Is our course selection always determined by our interests?

Here is what over 130 replies told us...

Have you ever taken a class at Duke that didn’t really suit your interests but guaranteed an easy A?

YES 31%  79%

Have you ever taken a class in a subject that you already knew, just to boost your GPA, like a course in a language that you were already fluent in?

YES 11%  89%

Did you ever take a class just to fulfill a graduation requirement and end up doing poorly in it?

YES 68%  32%

Should you be able to fulfill graduation requirements on a pass/fail grading system?

YES 77%  23%

Are you in Pratt or Trinity?

Trinity 82%  Pratt 18%

Among those who did not do well in a class they took to fulfill a grad requirement, 68% said the class was math or chemistry.

Thoughts about Duke Curriculum

“Pratt needs to work in more electives. The curriculum focuses so much on pre-requisites in the first 2 years that it’s hard to be exposed to enough engineering classes to really decide if that’s what you want to do.”

“Introduce an Econ course for non-majors who are simply interested in the basics of economics but don’t want to have to take Econ 510 because of its tendency to kill GPAs and induce unhealthy levels of stress.”

“Duke shouldn’t allow students who are familiar with a course’s material to take the course. They mess up the curve and screw over other students who are learning the material for the first time.”

“Writing 20 is a waste of time for those of us who actually earned our admittance. It’s clear that there are certain groups that need help with their writing: many recruited athletes, some legacies, development admits, and, yes, I hate to say it, but minorities as well. I resent the fact that I am forced to waste a semester so that other people’s failings can be addressed.”

“We’re paying gobs and gobs of money to take (often) extremely stressful classes we don’t want to take at all, with no recourse for getting out of them as they simultaneously do significant harm to our GPAs and in no way help us get a job after graduation. It’s astonishing that we put up with this, and it’s more astonishing that there’s no particularly good way to fight back.”

[ABOUT T-REQS]

“It’s a pain, but I know why it’s there :-( ”

We could not possibly fit all the insights we got into what you think about Duke education here. Check out dukeethics.org/encompass for more!
Evolution of Human Culture
EVANTH 108/PHIL 108

How much of your behavior can be explained by biology and Darwinian mechanisms? This class allows you to explore the evolution of mankind in order to understand why we are the way we are today. You will discuss things such as why humans are inclined to marry and why many people are afraid of spiders.

Animals and Ethics: Rights, Welfare, and Beyond
WST 101

Explore the realms of ethical thinking in relation to non-human animals. Animal advocacy is discussed beyond the stereotype of emotionally-volatile vegan squares hugging extracurricularly to seriously consider ethical frameworks involving the interests and preferences of non-human creatures.

Evolution of Human Culture

Animals and Ethics: Rights, Welfare, and Beyond

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES?

“No one should have to take classes that don’t interest them. Being ‘well rounded’ is an extremely outdated idea.”

But what if we weren’t allowed to explore outside of our majors at all? Or, even worse, we had to decide on our career goals at the age of 12?

In the Netherlands, right at the end of elementary school, children take a special test that decides which high school track out of three possible ones they will be assigned to. One of them takes 4 years and prioritizes vocational training over theoretical education in math, languages, and the like. The second track goes from the ages of 12 to 17, and paves the way to polytechnics, where you will be trained for a certain profession. But it is only the third track, which lasts for 7 years, that gives you access to a proper university education, the way we think of it in the U.S.

Therefore, if you are planning to go on to college after high school, you better know it when you are twelve.

The Challenges of Living an Ethical Life
ETHICS 100D/POLSCI 107D

What is a “good, just, and worthy” life, and how is it lived? This class has the potential to shake the very foundations of even the most moral of Blue Devils. It will challenge you to examine the forces in your life that have shaped your worldview. You may walk out of this class insulted and incensed and inspired—or perhaps with the worst intellectual headache Duke can offer.

Anthropology of Race
CULANTH 144/AAAS 144

What is “race” today and what did it used to be? This course discusses the scientific, historic, and cultural bases of race and helps you come to grips with how the social construct of race has developed over time, and how it is functioning today. Finally, it lets you theorize about how race should be perceived.

Human Rights Activism
CULANTH 161S/POLSCI 124S

This class begins by exploring the theoretical concept of human rights and the development of the human rights movement. Case studies of both human rights atrocities and the advocates who have spoken out against these are examined. Themes related to mass violence and social conflict, U.S. foreign policy and international humanitarian law, and the challenges of justice and reconciliation both domestically and around the world are covered.

The Challenges of Living an Ethical Life

Anthropology of Race

Human Rights Activism

Bookbagging Ethics

“I think students should be more aware of all the different choices they have when trying to fulfill graduation requirements. I feel like students’ choices are sometimes very narrow or original, and there is little incentive to explore outside of your major/minor/certificate. Many students just want to take a class that will give them that easy A.”

The Challenges of Living an Ethical Life
Let us start with a comparison. Think of a tribute band. At first, it looks like the worst kind of plagiarism: not only do they steal someone else’s music, they also shamelessly become famous and make money off it! There is a catch though. They put their own spin on old songs; they give them a fresh, modern, yet rarely completely different sound. They perform, and thus can be considered true artists in their own right. Through their performance, they create, rather than interpret. Even so, their creation still remains an attempt at perfect imitation.

Now to the main point. A literary translator seems to be doing just what a tribute band does. Translators submit themselves to someone they hold in high esteem, a foreign author. They pick up texts that are sometimes hundreds of years old and, using the words of the German philosopher Walter Benjamin, give them their “after-life.” It’s a hard, laborious job. Yet, unlike tribute bands, rarely do the translators get recognition for their work. There is no tenure in store for professors interested in doing translations. Translators never receive critical acclaim. Moreover, they are almost never mentioned in reviews of works that they translated. The paradox is, the translator’s highest merit lies in her being absolutely invisible. A translator can only be seen when she err. Yet, it is in this very invisibility where the translator’s real power is—the power to guide the reader. A translator’s work clearly includes more than what Google Translate does; neither is it simply interpreting the foreign text and laying out one’s understanding of it. Venturing to deliver a novel from one language into her own, a translator takes on a huge task of not just demonstrating an understanding of a foreign language, but, more importantly, of getting herself familiar with the cultural context of the work, the rigorous interpretation of the author’s art, and of identifying herself with the author so deeply as to be able to convey his or her thoughts, ideas, beliefs, feelings – the spirit of his or her work - in such a way that a foreign audience could appreciate the work in the same way as the native readers could. The translator then becomes both the writer and the critic simultaneously.

Yet, the crucial quality of a “good” translator is the overwhelming desire to make the work so dear to her heart, accessible to her compatriots. That desire must be so strong as to force the translator to sacrifice her aspirations of creating her own original work in order to honor someone else’s art. Just like a tribute band, a translator must demonstrate complete devotion to her chosen author.

Interestingly, translation doesn’t occur exclusively between languages. The first book in the Harry Potter series is originally called “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone.” Yet, in the U.S., it appeared as “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone” (plus, other terms pertaining to the British culture were changed, like crumpets to muffins). American publishers thought the children would not want to read a book with the word “philosopher” in it. J.K. Rowling regretted the changes and did not allow any in the following books.

It took Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, the most popular contemporary translators of Russian classics, about 6 years to translate “Brothers Karamazov,” about twice as long as it took Fyodor Dostoevsky to write the novel.
As one critic said, she turned “Russian literature into English.” Constance Garnett, who gave English readers a fresh encounter with Russian authors such as Pushkin, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy, would often smooth over difficult parts of the text, even omitting confusing syntax of Dostoevsky’s and Chekhov’s works. She sacrificed the rhythm, meter, lightness, and beauty of Pushkin’s verse to deliver word-for-word equivalence in English. The 300-page novel was accompanied by an over 1000-page long collection of commentary.

However, as we progress into the age of more globalized literature, more transcultural works emerge. In their quest to make the work of the original language accessible to new audiences, the challenges faced by translators are greater than ever. They attempt to eliminate all the poetry, all the foreignness into the rendered text? Ask yourself, what is it that you expect from a good translation? Do we want to hear foreign authors speak in our own language or understand them speaking in their own? Is “English” Tolstoy still Tolstoy?

The important point is, whether the translator chooses the literal path or the method of free translation, chances are that the eventual reader will never know. With tribute bands, one can always lock up the original song and make her own judgment as to the adequateness or “goodness” of the band’s rendition of it. It is hardly the case with literary translations. When reading Aristotle’s “Republic” or Cervantes’ “Don Quixote” in English, one never acknowledges the presence of the translator, the second artist in the text, whose voice is expected to remain unheard. The audience forgets that what they read is not the original work, one of the reasons being that translations are often published as the original text. This way, one fully and utterly submits herself to the judgment of the translator.

With such great power in the translator’s hands comes great responsibility. In Garnett’s case, many critics blamed her for being a purist, as she was unaccustomed to translating works that were already published. The translation of a great work is not a task to be taken lightly, as the translator must consider the audience, the original work, and the original author. The reader, therefore, must choose one of two paths: either “move” the writer toward the reader by means of literal translation, or “move” the reader toward the writer by means of free translation. It is usually the case that a translator must prefer one to the other. A “perfect” translation, where both the literal rendering of the language and the exact meaning of the original are preserved, is virtually impossible. She must choose one of two paths: either “move” the writer toward the reader, or “move” the reader toward the writer, creating a translation that reads just as if the author herself wrote the original in that language. Therefore, a translator has to decide what is more important to her, the reader or the original, and thus determine how the text will be represented in her own language.

Often translators prefer readability, user-friendliness of the text, to fidelity to the original form. To them, the very idea of translating is that the text will be perceived in her home country. Meet Saint Jerome, the patron saint of translators. He’s best known for translating the Bible from Greek into Latin in the 4th century. That’s right, the Bible is also a translation! It was first translated from Hebrew into Greek, then from Greek into Latin, and only a thousand years later from Latin into Early Modern English. William Tyndale, who made the first attempt of making the Holy text available to ordinary folk, was tried for heresy and burned at the stake in 1535. Translation is a dangerous profession after all.

A translator, especially a pioneer in translating the art of a certain culture or even a single author, has an immense power to decide how the literature she’s translating will be perceived in her home country. She has a final say in the content and form that the English (or any other language) “original” will take on. With tribute bands, they always know there will be others; moreover, they can always use an excuse of their renditions being the original production. With literary works, translators carry a huge burden of having to be someone’s spokespersons in front of a trusting audience. And they better not screw up. Because if they do, we’ll never know.
Talk is cheap, the saying goes. Is talking about ethics a waste of time?

People often complain:
- There are too many questions and not enough answers.
- Talking about ethics is solipsism.
- I already have a system of personal ethics. I go to church.
- I don’t like arguing about something that won’t change.
- Ethics is too theoretical. I can’t see it!
- The dilemmas in ethical discussions never happen in real life.
- Actions speak louder than words.

Since they rarely result in consensus, discussions about moral choices often become what-if games, passing anecdotes at a dinner party, vague memories from a college requirement course. Why study and talk about ethics at all?

To better understand why engaging in ethical discussion is critical in our lives, we need to understand what ethics is, and what it is not.

According to The American Heritage Dictionary, the word “ethics” comes from the Greek “thik,” from “thikos,” and concerns “the study of the general nature of morals and of the specific moral choices to be made by a person; moral philosophy.”

In other words, talking about ethics concerns principles that address good and bad. These principles often make up frameworks from which we derive reasons for what to do in a given situation. But how is ethics different from religion, which also gives us a set of guidelines for action? Why do we need to discuss ethics if we have a legal system, and if we can already understand human actions through psychology and economics?

Under ethics, the principles of moral action are determined by the individual, whereas under religion, guidelines are determined by a spiritual leader. In many instances, guidelines from religion can help us learn how to act but are sometimes not sufficient to help us decipher what to do when values are nuanced and conflicting. Religious standards are like the rocks in the jar, and ethics is the water that fills in the cracks.

Legal systems are skeletons that create disincentives for actions that harm society’s well-being, but like religious decrees, laws are not necessarily all-inclusive. Many people find little moral attachments to the legal drinking age or jaywalking, but they do find ethical imperatives to help a drunk friend or run across the street to save a kitten from being hit by a car. Similarly, laws over issues such as euthanasia, abortion and gay marriage are not necessarily reflective of all members of a community.

Finally, psychology and economics help us understand what motivates people and therefore how we tend to act. But this is hardly sufficient for understanding how people should act. Science assumes that people are rational, self-interested actors, but anyone who has spent a day around others are privy to empirical evidence that people hardly act rationally.

What does a discussion about ethics have that religion, law, and science don’t? Religion focuses on ends that are predetermined; therefore, it is static. Laws reflect agreed-upon assumptions of ends, and science documents the process.

Ethics is unique because it refers to both the means of attaining an end as well as understanding how to distinguish why that end is worth attaining. In other words, ethics teaches us the tools to attain the right action and helps us decide why we believe that action is right.

And ethics, like culture, like language, is a living thing. Despite deep-rooted religious and cultural norms, India recently decriminalized homosexuality. In the western music industry, mash-ups, made entirely of pieces of other songs, have challenged copyright laws and gained recognition in the mainstream: “Feed the Animals” by mash-up artist GirlTalk received a 4th place ranking in Time magazine’s Top 10 Albums of 2008.
and 24th place in Rolling Stone. In literature too, the boundaries of intellectual property are being redefined. Although all copies of Kaavya Viswanathan’s 2006 book were destroyed by its publisher, Little Brown, after plagiarism accusations surfaced, 17-year-old Helene Hegemann’s similarly controversial book went on to win a $20,000 prize from the Leipzig Book Fair after she called her strategy “mixing,” not plagiarism.

Since ethics is flexible, it can interpret ambiguous religious rules, revise laws, and influence scientific understanding. There may be no getting around ethics, but what value does talking about it add to our lives?

As it turns out, discussing ethics is not an exercise in naval-gazing, but one that can have practical value. First, ethical discussion prepares individuals for global citizenship. It can do so by increasing our exposure to various motivations behind people’s choices, which helps us empathize, connect with one another better and raise our emotional IQs.

It also helps us know ourselves better. Having a discussion on ethics can be compared to visiting a room full of mirrors at the state fair. We are forced to see ourselves warped and stretched from various angles, which enables us to find the mirror we want to be looked into. Since discussing ethics forces us to defend our motives, the practice helps reduce indecision and stress off regret. This is because the study of ethics is the study of making wise choices. Particularly, in the 21st century, where global economic integration is inundating society with a plurality of opinions seemingly ad infinitum, making decisions with conviction helps us live with greater satisfaction.

Studying ethics helps us defend ourselves from false advertising and weak arguments. As Harvard psychology professor Stephen Pinker argues in “The Moral Instinct,” “Our habit of moralizing problems, merging them with intuitions of purity and contamination, and rendering content when we feel the right feelings, can get in the way of doing the right things.” By understanding what moral imperatives are called upon to justify arguments and decisions, we can better avoid relying on moral impulses to recognize when moral reasoning is abused.

To reap the value of ethical discussion, you must practice. In high school, my water polo coach liked to remind us to visualize how we would play before games to visualize how we would before games to visualize how we would play. It became a tradition in our pre-game discussions, where he reminded us that extraordinary things appear to be impossible initially, so one must start by visualizing the goal into little details and playing the steps over and over in one’s mind as if it were a memory rather than a dream. Like visualizing a game victory, envisioning specifically how we would act in various future situations helps us prepare for them.

As a last note, I want to emphasize that not only do we need ethical discussion, it needs us more than ever. Since public perception of what is ethical changes over time, ethics can become extinct with dispute.

In his award-winning book, Black Atlantic Religion, cultural anthropologist J. Leonard McEwen argues that certain ethnic cultures have managed to survive European influence because intellectuals within that culture pushed back with arguments. Similarly, intellectual discourse can preserve the study of moral choices. We must keep ethics alive by speaking it, publicizing it, imagining it and questioning it through consistent dialogue.

Through ethical discussion, the most challenging dimensions of our common human heritage not only survive, but help us live with greater conviction. Although it may appear counter-intuitive, talking about ethics can be one of the most productive ways to spend our time, because by creating a hierarchy of morals, we can overcome the ambiguity of what is good and bad most of the time, and do what is appropriate all of the time.

In his award-winning book, Black Atlantic Religion, cultural anthropologist J. Leonard McEwen argues that certain ethnic cultures have managed to survive European influence because intellectuals within that culture pushed back with arguments. Similarly, intellectual discourse can preserve the study of moral choices. We must keep ethics alive by speaking it, publicizing it, imagining it and questioning it through consistent dialogue.

Through ethical discussion, the most challenging dimensions of our common human heritage not only survive, but help us live with greater conviction. Although it may appear counter-intuitive, talking about ethics can be one of the most productive ways to spend our time, because by creating a hierarchy of morals, we can overcome the ambiguity of what is good and bad most of the time, and do what is appropriate all of the time.

In his award-winning book, Black Atlantic Religion, cultural anthropologist J. Leonard McEwen argues that certain ethnic cultures have managed to survive European influence because intellectuals within that culture pushed back with arguments. Similarly, intellectual discourse can preserve the study of moral choices. We must keep ethics alive by speaking it, publicizing it, imagining it and questioning it through consistent dialogue.

Through ethical discussion, the most challenging dimensions of our common human heritage not only survive, but help us live with greater conviction. Although it may appear counter-intuitive, talking about ethics can be one of the most productive ways to spend our time, because by creating a hierarchy of morals, we can overcome the ambiguity of what is good and bad most of the time, and do what is appropriate all of the time.
FACT CHECKER HERE. ✓

DURHAM, NC—Precisely half a century ago, Bill Griffith ’50, who devoted his vast energy and career to enhancing student life at Duke and rose to be a university vice president, told the editor that, “The Chronicle is the conscience of this campus.” The context was the struggle to end racial segregation at Duke.

While some individuals had spoken discreetly, Divinity School students, at commencement 1948, were the first to collectively petition against discrimination. They made a Christian appeal to the Trustees to allow black students to study the Bible alongside them, although quickly qualifying that these students would eat lunch in a separate room in the Union and leave campus by nightfall.

The Chronicle failed to cover this appeal or what happened next: the Divinity Dean hid the petition in his desk for a year. The Divinity faculty then voted 16-1 that they would not “personally feel any objection or embarrassment” to teaching blacks. Then, the university president sat on it for nine months. And finally, the Trustees rejected it—the first of four votes over 11 years retaining segregation.

Months after a second vote became known, the editorial page broke its silence by outlining a moral imperative, unequivocally and expansively supporting desegregation of the student body as well as equal opportunity for all employees, including hiring the first black professors.

The battle to rid the campus of racism and then its vestiges was long and hard, with the newspaper now opening its news columns and editorial page at every turn: the barbers in the Union who contended they did not know how to cut Negro hair; the signs at the football stadium specifying “Negro section”; and of course sit-ins at lunch counters and boycotts of movie theaters. One of the most blistering editorials came when a Divinity student, driven by conscience to join black students at a Woolworth’s lunch counter, was stripped of his position as a House Master, a dean explaining that undergraduates should not be entrusted to someone who had been arrested.

Chronicle staffers needed great fortitude to write these stories, much less endorse a position. There was an atmosphere of intimidation. A vote of students in Women’s College asking Trustees to end segregation brought the KKK to campus to burn a huge cross through the night in front of the East Campus auditorium where students had met. The KKK was also provoked by the sit-ins to march regularly in full regalia through downtown Durham in the daylight.

The newspaper encountered great hostility in producing a special multi-page report on race, its contracted printer refusing at first to set type and after relenting, refusing to make corrections. Typos intact, the report was published. On campus, those who wrote about the aspiration of blacks were subjected to musmurs, and there were even inappropriate posters depicting Chronicle staffers with “kinky” hair.

The paper persisted and grew stronger. What interests your Fact Checker particularly is that on a campus so polarized by racial issues, the newspaper’s voice, determined solely by the editor in that period, was steady and stentorian year after year, no matter whether the editor came from the panhandle of Florida, the suburbs of New Jersey, or Chattanooga or Charleston, no matter if he spoke with a clipped New York accent or she with a Southern drawl. Duke was very fortunate.

Sometimes ethical decisions that Chronicle journalists had to face resulted in no story at all. Tipped about a scheduled vote on desegregation of the graduate and professional schools at an upcoming Trustee meeting, the paper sought confirmation from the president and provost, who judged the atmosphere was so volatile that any article might be incendiary and defeat the proposal.

This touched off a great debate on the third floor of Flowers Building. Some argued that the paper was entrusted to report what it knew regardless of consequences, that its support of desegregation should not influence its coverage of hard news. No story appeared.

The debate flared anew when the paper considered explosive news that the Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences had lined up two other administrators—never identified—to defy the Trustees and admit blacks no matter how the board voted. Again, no story.

The paper persisted and grew stronger. What interests your Fact Checker particularly is that on a campus so polarized by racial issues, the newspaper’s voice, determined solely by the editor in that period, was steady and stentorian year after year, no matter whether the editor came from the panhandle of Florida, the suburbs of New Jersey, or Chattanooga or Charleston, no matter if he spoke with a clipped New York accent or she with a Southern drawl. Duke was very fortunate.

Sometimes ethical decisions that Chronicle journalists had to face resulted in no story at all. Tipped about a scheduled vote on desegregation of the graduate and professional schools at an upcoming Trustee meeting, the paper sought confirmation from the president and provost, who judged the atmosphere was so volatile that any article might be incendiary and defeat the proposal.

This touched off a great debate on the third floor of Flowers Building. Some argued that the paper was entrusted to report what it knew regardless of consequences, that its support of desegregation should not influence its coverage of hard news. No story appeared.

The debate flared anew when the paper considered explosive news that the Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences had lined up two other administrators—never identified—to defy the Trustees and admit blacks no matter how the board voted. Again, no story.
Debates like these ennobled The Chronicle. They illuminated hours and hours of hard work by its staff, rendering the time more interesting and challenging. They elevated undergraduate journalism and infused it with a special obligation beyond that of conveying what others speak and write and do.

After desegregation, the editors weighed in on a series of increases doubling tuition in seven years, albeit only from $600 to $1200 per year. An editorial foresaw that Duke, while still below comparable schools in cost, was replacing racial segregation with another barrier built around the economic happenstance of one’s birth. Some issues never die: President Brodhead has taken the lead in expressing precisely the same warning, at the heart of the Financial Aid Initiative.

The paper also played a leadership role in other efforts to build a more diverse Duke, giving enthusiastic support to women’s initiatives and demanding an end to “social standards” that dictated dress codes and set 10:45 PM weekdays as the time for women to be locked in their dorms. That is not a metaphor, the outside doors were actually locked.

When a dean ran a “personal pogrom,” after declaring “there are two things we can’t have around here, homosexuals and thieves,” The Chronicle became a decisive voice to end homophobia on campus. By 1990 the paper—nine years ahead of breakthrough civil unions legislation in Vermont—advocated gay marriages in Duke Chapel. It even identified the argument that would silence the Dean of the Chapel and overcome Methodist Church opposition: the chapel had never been a Methodist church. In fact, its first Dean was of another denomination and affirmed the Chapel interdenominational at its dedication. Thus, President Koehane concluded that, as a university building, the Chapel must fully embrace Duke’s pledge of equality. The Chronicle’s editorial supporting her was one of the paper’s strongest proclamations.

And then there was the day Koehane donned the first edition of t-shirts reading “Gay? Fine by me” and jogged the campus, prompting the newspaper to declare itself fully an “ally.” a term taken from the name of a gay support group.

Oh yes, over the years there were crazy moments too. Every year Duke compiled two lists, winners and losers of the Angier B. Duke Scholarships. One year, Duke sent the wrong form letter to each list. The president decided to live with it, and the newspaper came under his intense pressure to keep the decision hush. No story appeared. Hmm. That’s actually more difficult than the decision to withhold news that might rock an upcoming Trustee vote. Yes, the scholarship folly might tarnish Duke, but the paper is not a house organ designed to filter the news on every issue.

More recently, a column focused on Duke Health and the different prices insured and non-insured patients pay. The insured, generally better off, get hefty discounts negotiated by insurance companies, while people without insurance—typically minorities and the poor—pay full freight. Despite the recent highlight of the powerful and original journalism by Kristin Butler ’08, I see erosion in the Chronicle’s willingness to embrace the moral and ethical magnitude of the stories it covers. Be careful please: I am not questioning the paper’s journalistic standards, for I have no doubt it strives to be fair, accurate, and inclusive. However, in this case, The Chronicle let the torch die, never raising the issue of Duke Health costs again.

On the topic of the fiscal crisis, the writings of The Chronicle again did not extend to deep and troubling issues. All Duke employees have had their salaries frozen, but should higher paid employees sacrifice more? In an article printed on Duke’s budget cuts, a philosophy professor allowed his two cents—or more accurately, two sentences—on the issue.

“We are balancing the budget on the backs of people who are at the bottom of the food chain because we will not cut faculty salaries,” said Alexander Rosenberg, chair of the Philosophy Department and professor of philosophy. “Administrative-support employees make the smallest amount of money and are the most vulnerable.” reported The Chronicle, in the article’s 20th paragraph.

It took a brave employee to confront Dr. Brodhead at a February 16th forum, asking why salaries over $300,000 had not been cut. He had a weak answer. And the paper never reported this exchange.

Indeed, The Chronicle has put out other numbers on the budget crisis: the housekeeping staff in the dorms has been cut from 120 to 88 staff members. Yet, it has not explored how the burden of greater work has fallen disproportionately on our lowest paid employees while the faculty has retained a steady workload.

For a century, The Chronicle proclaimed its mission across the top of page one: “Our campus thoughtful people in action.” The editor this year viewed those words as “pompous” and chose to remove them. Future Fact Checkers will have to evaluate whether the paper nonetheless has lived up to its proud moral history.

As I end my Chronicle website posts, thank you for reading Fact Checker and have a good day.
HAITI
will you remember?

By Leonard Ngʻeno
Trinity '13

all photos by Zorah via Flickr
For many of us, Haiti was just another blip on our geographical maps prior to January 12th, 2010. It required an earthquake of magnitude 7.0, a death toll of over 200,000 people, and the displacement of a third of the Haitian population to draw our attention to it. Even then, our attention, like other humanitarian efforts, was shortly tested away from our immediate memory. When the tsunami hit the Indian Ocean on December 26th, 2004, it got so much coverage that even I, a village boy in a remote part of Kenya at that time, got wind of it. Fast forward to 2010; how many times in a month do memories of the tsunami flash through your mind, or even more appropriately, how much coverage does it receive on television these days?

To be frank, the only reason I remember the tsunami is that I needed an apt example to compare to the catastrophe in Haiti. What about you, how many times has the thought of the 2004 tsunami flashed through your memory this year? It would thus be no wonder to any of us if by this summer the misery of Haitians has been pushed to the periphery of our memories. A short memory span is a common human characteristic; however, is it acceptable to our conscience that we should forget such things so easily? Surely, it would be very absurd if our government does not suffer as a result of corruption, yet that was not the case for Haiti. Haitian history is a chronicle of suffering so Job-like that it eventually came to an end, and so must Haiti’s. Although God brought an end to Job’s misery, we should not look up into the sky and just expect the same for Haiti. Miracles are a thing of the past. It is incumbent upon us as the international community to lend a helping hand to Haiti. It will not be the first time that the international community rushes to Haiti’s side, but my hope is that this time around, the efforts of the international community shall bear fruits. Success in this mission will only be guaranteed by long term, genuine, and well-coordinated international aid. So next time we hear at a potentially disastrous situation, whether in our locality or some foreign place, we should not just brush it out of our minds and wait for an earthquake or severe famine to jolt us out of our slumber. We should each give the situation a little thought, for it would be a miracle and an absurd violation of the laws of probability if not even one of us shall stumble across a solution that will prevent another potentially disastrous situation like the one in Haiti from occurring.

The earthquake seemed to follow a malignant design. Haitian history is a chronicle of suffering so Job-like that it inevitably inspires arguments with God, and about God. The following comments regarding the earthquake in Haiti were taken from the New York Times magazine:

- The earthquake was a test of its resilience.
- Haitian history is a chronicle of suffering so Job-like that it inevitably inspires arguments with God, and about God.
- If God exists, He’s really got it in for Haiti.
- After suffering so much for so long, to face this new horror must cause some to look up and ask, have we somehow been forsaken?
As I finish up my shopping at Target, I feel like I’m forgetting something. I glance at my shopping list and realize I’ve neglected to pick up my dad’s cholesterol medicine, so I wander over to the pharmacy, show the prescription to the pharmacist, and voilà! The bag containing the bottle of quintessential pills appears. I grab the pills, the pharmacist rings them up, and I head back to my car to go home.

My dad suffers from high cholesterol, making these fairly expensive pills a daily necessity. Thanks to his insurance, he can get his medication without having to spend a significant portion of our family’s income. Unfortunately, this is not the case for much of the world.

According to a 2007 United Nations report, two billion people – that’s one-third of the world’s population – live below the World Bank’s poverty threshold of US $2 a day. These two billion are the main victims of the world’s deadliest, yet most easily treatable, diseases. Diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, and cholera ravage the world’s poor, each killing between twenty and fifty percent of its untreated victims. A dose of medication for each disease generally costs no more than US $10 – an insignificant amount for most of us, but a vast sum for those who make less than that in a week. Indeed, the UN estimates ten million lives are lost each year solely due to unaffordable drugs.

In addition to the tragedy of these lives being taken due to inaccessible drugs, ten million lives constitute a valuable part of the workforce in developing countries. Those who pass away from these illnesses are often in the prime of their life, and they constitute the workforce of their countries. When they die, this workforce – already shattered by the AIDS pandemic and starvation – becomes even smaller, and the economies of these already-struggling countries shrinks further. This, in turn, sends more people into poverty and hunger, and so the cycle continues.

What can we, ordinary college students, do to address this problem? The first step is to become aware of these issues; you’ve already taken that step by reading this article. The second step is – yes, you guessed it – to donate! There are so many funds and NGOs that exist solely to increase access to medication in developing countries. Among these are The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, better known as the Global Fund. Another fund, the Malaria Vaccine Initiative (MVI), aims to speed up the development of malaria vaccines and also to ensure their accessibility in the developing world.

By donating one ten dollar bill each year, you are providing someone with a dose of lifesaving medication. If every person who could afford to give ten dollars a year did so, the amount would add up, and ten million people could be cured. Ten million parents, children, husbands, and wives would be able to enjoy a full life. And, honestly, isn’t it worth giving up one night at Shooters for that?
The rapid economic growth in Asian countries, especially China, has created grounds for advancement in many fields. However, this has raised many ethical challenges that beg to be addressed. Official corruption and Internet freedom are the two pressing issues. A while ago, Yahoo was accused of aiding and abetting torture when it helped the Chinese government identify a reporter who leaked state secrets online. This year, Google e-mail accounts of human rights activists were hacked, prompting Google to reconsider its continued existence in China, where the government actively installs censoring programs in PCs sold in the country as well as blocks sites that have discussion forums. In other news, a website set up by the Chinese government that enables its citizens to report corruption complaints crashed after being swarmed by thousands of visitors on its first day.

Homosexuality in traditional African cultures is virtually non-existent, but as Africans are increasing exposed to the world, more people are becoming open about their sexual orientation. This has been met with diverse reactions, from calls to expel gay people from their societies to calls for equal rights for gay couples. In Malawi, homosexuals face a jail term of 14 years, while in Uganda, a bill that seeks to raise the punishment for homosexuality from 14 years to lifetime imprisonment has been brought before the legislature. The member of parliament sponsoring the bill believes that homosexuality is a sin and is not an inborn orientation, hence it can be unlearned. South Africa is the only African country that has comprehensive rights for homosexuals, beyond in addition to hold an annual Gay and Lesbian Parade. There, gay couples are allowed to adopt children.

Of late, the Roman Catholic Church has come under intense scrutiny in Europe as news emerges that some of its priests have engaged in child molestation. Of notable mention are the cases involving a priest in Germany and another in Ireland. These cases are alleged to have occurred in the 70s and 80s, and the priests were simply transferred out of their parishes to new ones without any legal action being taken against them. The victims were urged not to report the priests for the good of the church. The Pope is especially under pressure to explain himself after having transferred one of the priests when he was a cardinal. These cases have generated a lot of debate, given the Catholic Church’s preaching of an ethic of sexual restraint.

The health care debate in the U.S. predates much of the current U.S. population, and throughout its history, it has generated heated arguments between Republicans and Democrats. The recent bill finally got a majority vote, but only after it had dragged an eleven-year-old boy through inhuman politics. Marcelas Owens, whose mother died as a result of sickness after losing her job and health care plan, has been ridiculed by Republicans as having been used by Democrats to gain more support for the health care bill. As this incident demonstrates, the bitter differences drawn by this debate defy ethical boundaries.

The health care debate in the U.S. predates much of the current U.S. population, and throughout its history, it has generated heated arguments between Republicans and Democrats. The recent bill finally got a majority vote, but only after it had dragged an eleven-year-old boy through inhuman politics. Marcelas Owens, whose mother died as a result of sickness after losing her job and health care plan, has been ridiculed by Republicans as having been used by Democrats to gain more support for the health care bill. As this incident demonstrates, the bitter differences drawn by this debate defy ethical boundaries.

Homosexuality in traditional African cultures is virtually non-existent, but as Africans are increasing exposed to the world, more people are becoming open about their sexual orientation. This has been met with diverse reactions, from calls to expel gay people from their societies to calls for equal rights for gay couples. In Malawi, homosexuals face a jail term of 14 years, while in Uganda, a bill that seeks to raise the punishment for homosexuality from 14 years to lifetime imprisonment has been brought before the legislature. The member of parliament sponsoring the bill believes that homosexuality is a sin and is not an inborn orientation, hence it can be unlearned. South Africa is the only African country that has comprehensive rights for homosexuals, beyond in addition to hold an annual Gay and Lesbian Parade. There, gay couples are allowed to adopt children.
Philosophers who work in ethics are often concerned not with specific normative issues but with more esoteric issues of the meaning of ethical terms, the ontology of the good, the unit of goodness, etc. Accordingly, students often have a hard time relating these issues and the figures of philosophical ethics to the problems of their everyday lives. Here, I try to bring to light various canonical issues in philosophical ethics relevant to a specific, practical matter. Specifically, the DukeEngage program raises canonical issues of concern for philosophers: whether we can be justified in privileging certain special projects or those nearest and dearest to us; issues of distribution; desert; psychological realism; and so on.

DukeEngage funds Duke undergrads to assist needy communities. Among these communities are Durham, six other U.S. cities, and a large number of international communities. Thus, some of the aid given by DukeEngage is local (Durham, D.C., New Orleans) while other is given to communities as far away as Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (about 9,200 miles). Duke also lends local aid via other projects (e.g., Project Change). The question of concern is not whether Duke should send aid across the globe but rather what factors are relevant to such considerations. Thus, considering what a number of great moral philosophers might say on the issue can be instructive.

We might, along with Hume, take global philanthropy to be the natural and moral result of living in a global world of instant news, television, and text. Many, including Mencius, take morality to be built upon certain natural, intuitional reactions to specific cues: witnessing suffering in others strikes a chord, issues a moral intuition in most. But today, it is as easy (or easier) for a would-be-philanthropist to see the destruction in Haiti as it is to see the homeless on Ninth street. Thus, we might come to believe, along with Mill, that any suffering, whether local or global, all things equal, demands aid.

David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, 3.1

“Suppose, that several distinct societies maintain a kind of intercourse for mutual convenience and advantage, the boundaries of justice still grow larger, in proportion to the largeness of men’s views, and the force of their mutual connexions.”

Mencius, *The Mengzi*

“Humans all have hearts that are not unfeeling toward others...Suppose someone suddenly saw a child about to fall into a well; everyone in such a situation would have feelings of alarm and compassion.”

John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*

“(The principle of utility) is a mere form of words without rational signification unless one person’s happiness... is counted for exactly as much as another’s.”

By Robert Williams
Philosophy, Graduate Student

LENDING AID: THINKING GLOBALLY, acting...
Kant considered the moral requirement to lend aid an imperfect duty such that, while we are bound by moral law to lend aid, to whom and how we lend aid is largely left open to us. If Kant is right that whom we aid is up to us or if everyone has equal right to aid, we might be motivated (though Kant would object) to take such practical considerations as distribution cost and the psychology of moral development into account. These are issues that surface in Mengzi’s defense of local aid, the rule might tell us to aid locally because we would have others do unto us. If we are already concerned with local aid, the rule might tell us to aid locally because we would want anyone exposed to our suffering to aid us but only if they could do so practically. But, the Silver Rule (the negative form of the Golden Rule: we should not do unto others as we would not have them do unto us) based on universalist considerations might tell us not to aid locally because we would not want anyone to aid us at the expense of those more in need based solely on a special relationship with us.

In a more contemporary debate of similar issues, Frank Jackson suggests decisions about lending aid can be fruitfully thought of as analogous to crowd control. If a group of us take as our task crowd control (lending aid), we quickly find two promising strategies: we can each watch the entire crowd and lend aid everywhere equally (or to those most in need), or we can divide the crowd into sectors and place each individual in charge of a given sector. If the two strategies are carried out well, it seems we adequately control the crowd (lend aid) and thus that localized aid can be consistent with universalist considerations of equal right to aid for all. But, again, we might take there to be practical differences in the two strategies.

Jeremy Bentham, Principles of Morals and Legislation
"When the individuals [affected] are uncertain, and altogether out of sight, no alarm can be produced: as there is nobody whose sufferings you can see, there is nobody whose sufferings you can be alarmed at."

Mozi, The Mozi
"[T]he good consequentialist should focus her attentions on securing the well-being of a relatively small number of people, herself included, not because she rates their welfare more highly than the welfare of others but because she is in a better position to secure their welfare."

Frank Jackson
Decision-theoretic Consequentialism and the Nearest and Dearest Objection
"[T]he good consequentialist should focus her attentions on securing the well-being of a relatively small number of people, herself included, not because she rates their welfare more highly than the welfare of others but because she is in a better position to secure their welfare."

Mozi’s and the Mengzi
"Now suppose there is someone from your household involved in an altercation outside. It is acceptable to go and help even though you are disheveled and not fully dressed. But if there is someone from your village involved in an altercation outside, it is foolish to go and help when you are disheveled and not fully dressed. Even bolting your door is acceptable in this case."

Frank Jackson suggests decisions about lending aid can be fruitfully thought of as analogous to crowd control. If a group of us take as our task crowd control (lending aid), we quickly find two promising strategies: we can each watch the entire crowd and lend aid everywhere equally (or to those most in need), or we can divide the crowd into sectors and place each individual in charge of a given sector. If the two strategies are carried out well, it seems we adequately control the crowd (lend aid) and thus that localized aid can be consistent with universalist considerations of equal right to aid for all. But, again, we might take there to be practical differences in the two strategies.

If we believe morality is built from certain intuitions, then it is an empirical question as to what intuitions are and how they can be triggered by various cues. It could be that lending aid globally opens us up to negative intuitions triggered by the locals in need, or that lending aid locally opens us up to negative intuitions triggered by considerations of equality, or, with Bentham, we might find our moral intuitions to be triggered primarily by the up-close-and-personal. Alternatively, if we believe morality to be cashed out in terms of a decision theory (be it an exemplar, rule, or computational theory), then what we ought to do will depend on what we take to be the relevant issues. Consider a simple rule that is found in the writings of almost all great ethicists: the Golden Rule tells us to do as we would have others do unto us. If we are already concerned with local aid, the rule might tell us to aid locally because we would want anyone exposed to our suffering to aid us but only if they could do so practically. But, the Silver Rule (the negative form of the Golden Rule: we should not do unto others as we would not have them do unto us) based on universalist considerations might tell us not to aid locally because we would not want anyone to aid us at the expense of those more in need based solely on a special relationship with us.

While the ambiguity of the above may not be an entirely happy conclusion, the point of the philosophical study of ethics is not to provide us with one right answer to normative problems but to bring to light the various factors relevant to a given normative consideration. Recognizing the relevant factors of various systems of morality can bring to light considerations often missed, the relations between various systems, and make clear how an ethical agent could end up with a result different from the one we (clearly moral agents) end up with. Moreover, understanding the relevant factors and the relationship they have to the things we hold important allows us to make a more informed, more genuine decisions on specific issues.
Though conscious of a creative itch as a young boy, it was a paint-by-numbers set from his mother that sparked Jimmie Banks's love of art. He found delight in mixing colors and blending oil and, as Banks tells me, “Pretty soon I did not need the numbers.” Banks’s parents encouraged their son’s passion and, while other kids spent their energy outside, the budding painter preferred to channel his enthusiasm into a more creative medium—a preference that, growing up in Richmond, Virginia, ultimately kept him out of trouble.

Banks was first recognized for his talent in a high school cultural art contest where his entry won second place. A senior electrician in the facilities management department and a Duke employee for the past twelve years, Banks has balanced his duties on campus with promoting his original sketches, paintings, and collages. He has won several awards in Duke employee art contests and hosted shows at the Mary Lou Williams Center and the Duke Hospital. On one occasion, a student who regularly challenged him to pool in the Bryan Center, upon graduating, bought several pieces of Banks’s work. Additionally, Banks’s portrait of the late Reginaldo “Reggie” Howard, the first African American president of the Associated Students at Duke, currently displayed in the Department of African American Studies in the Friedl building. Two more of his paintings can be found in the Multicultural Center.

Although Banks has never had any formal art education, his informal background and self-developed style have never discouraged him from tackling whatever subject strikes his fancy. Preferring portraits, he paints anything from commissioned wedding portraits to a formidable spec-

High school sweethearts, Jimmie Banks and his wife Linda have been married for twenty-five years. Although Banks's two sons are now grown, he can still enjoy the rambunctiousness of his two-year-old grandson, who has yet to express an interest in painting with his grandpa, though I am told, “Oh, he will!” Banks has requested that I include “To my wife Linda, thanks for her support!” This painting was done in 1990.
trum of celebrities and politicians. Mari-

ah Carey to Oprah, Princess Di to Con-
doleezza Rice—“Whatever comes to my
head.” His motivation derives from the
challenge of capturing the “person” in
the face of his subject. “People are the
hardest to paint,” Banks says.

In the article “Art as a Moral Medium”
from the Fall 2009 issue of Encompass
Magazine, Alex Burns asked, “What do
our instinctive emotional reactions to art
tell us about ethics?” Burns asserts that
art acts as a “moral adhesive…because
moral sense and artistic imagination are
human intelligences independent of cul-
ture.” According to Burns, “The reflec-
tion of a common humanity enables art
to influence empathy and relate to ethics
regardless of cultural boundaries.”

Paging through his bursting portfo-
lio, I find Michael Jackson on one page
and Banks’s son as a little boy on the
next. After that, Banks painting in his
living room—a sketch made while the
artist was actually far from home, sup-
porting his family as a traveling me-
chanic. Then a flower girl, cousins, and
brothers, followed by flowers, Southern
landscapes, collages that jump from the
page, abstract spatters, and sitting rooms
that welcomed my eyes in for a flop on
the couch. The portfolio demonstrates
Burns’s idea of “a common humanity” in
art; inside could be found a painting for
everyone. On the back of one page was
a portrait of a woman who at first glance
I had missed. Before turning to the next
painting, Banks pointed to her and ex-
plained how he painted Tyra Bank’s eyes
for her. “Those are Tyra’s eyes!” I ex-
claimed, unable to contain my astonish-
ment. Each piece seemed to possess an

of the faces, cameos, lovers, chil-
dren, celebrities, politicians, family, and
friends painted into Banks’s work are all
on the verge of striking up a conversation
with their respective viewers. It is Banks’s
hope that his audience can identify with
this “realness.” Says Banks, “I like to make
people feel happy. People like looking at
stuff and finding beauty in it.” The focus of
his work is to make that beauty come out
so that others can connect with and take
pleasure in his passion.

For this collage, made with paint and
magazine clippings, the theme is warmth.
Banks says that he imagined the feeling
as “looking in there like you were just sit-
ting and being cozy.” Banks said his goal
for the collage was to create something
that “you can just walk into.”

Jimmie Banks has 302 paintings, prints,
and photos listed for sale at www.yessy.
com/jimmieart. He has sold paintings
all over the world: as far as Hollywood,
Paris, Peru, and Turkey. A book of his
work, Jimmie’s Artwork: Art by Jim-
nie Banks, is for sale on Amazon.com.
Duke students, myself included, typically come to Durham with a whole list of activities to which they have devoted time and energy. Perhaps one of the most valuable aspects of the college experience is, then, to explore these interests, entertain new ones, and eventually align them into a particular fashion that satisfies the person one wishes to be. Duke has proved an invigorating environment in which to dabble and align. I started freshman year interested in Environmental Science and ended up an English major. The sports that consumed so much of my high school career slowly faded after some fun freshman intramural teams, although my support for Duke athletics has certainly not waned. After playing the violin since age four, I knew I wanted a musical outlet, but switched from playing in the orchestra to singing in the Duke University Chorale. Two of the commitments that I have most closely pursued, however, and which are of particular interest for their points of intersection, are my participation in Greek life and my work with the Kenan Institute for Ethics through the Ethics Certificate Program. While these two outlets contain possible contradictions, for me they illustrate the combination of a liberal arts education and a vibrant campus culture that makes Duke the wonderland that I never want to leave.
To examine the intersection of Greek life and ethics, I must directly address the stereotypical social scene attributed to Greek life. While stereotypes are often established from grains of truth, many of the negative viewpoints unfortunately stem from self-perpetuated gossip and ridiculous rumor mills such as collegerush.com. By far the biggest association with Greek life is a party scene fueled by alcohol and questionable sexual mores, and the association cannot be denied. Yes, Greek men and women have drunk while underage in college, many times through Greek organized events. We think more about our contact with the opposite sex before a night out than before heading to class. Such strategies are perhaps an unhealthy turn that young adults make regarding their social interactions, but not, I believe, a positive use of a moral compass.

My particular organization, Alpha Delta Pi, follows a creed that has become one of my favorite documents and a compass for me as a leader in the sorority. We are to follow the four points of our symbol, the diamond, by first, strengthening (our) own character and personality; second, watching (our) attitudes toward (our) fellow beings; third, recognizing the value of high educational standards; and fourth, developing faith and loyalty.

It strikes me that these are the qualities I see in my sisters around campus and in their lives, and that these are the qualities we should value for membership. I have more fun with these girls than probably anyone else on campus, yet it is equally if not more fulfilling to be challenged, motivated, and inspired by my sisters and their pursuits.

A particular correlation between ethical enquiry and moral compass lies in bringing together excited young people at a formative time in their lives, who then grow with each other as they serve, to the best of our ability, our college community. With close to one third of Duke undergraduates claiming Greek affiliation, it is easy to count ways in which Greeks are making strides for the college, and the broader, community. Last fall, the Panhellenic body united to disband Derby Days, an event that we did not feel portrayed adequate respect for women, and this spring we have campaigned for Panhellenic housing to promote relations among our women and facilitate ritual and programming for our further enrichment. Greeks act as leaders for this college community in a way that examines and promotes what we want out of a college experience, and enhances that experience for all.

"To me, the distinction lies in using a moral compass to decide for oneself what is appropriate instead of blindly participating in one's surroundings."

While I am incorporated with an amazing group of individuals, I would also advocate on behalf of the system as a whole as one that builds ethical character. We have a respect for history and tradition that is somewhat unique in this fast-paced and forward-moving world. We each have specific ways of giving back to the community that make us look beyond a center university lifestyle. The loyalty cultivated for a brother or sister is naturally character building, and learning to help one another make ethical distinctions regarding our actions or decisions only strengthen the bond.

The Ethics Certificate Program has facilitated my most stimulating academic experiences through interdepartmental class combinations and interactions with notable faculty and guests, the embodiment of a healthy liberal arts education. My sorority, meanwhile, is my most significant social outlet as well as a support system of my closest friends. I believe strongly that the two are not incompatible, but rather the moral compass being cultivated through my studies is also developed through the experience of being Greek. The beauty of the Greek system lies in bringing together excited young people at a formative time in their lives, who then grow with each other as they learn who they want to be.
"Life is short, have an affair"?

Some of us view online dating services as the last resort for desperate, middle-aged, single people to find love. Indeed, why look for eHarmony when we, as socially capable individuals, can meet our lovers in person? Noel Biderman, the CEO of the online dating service Ashley Madison Agency, replies that society should not attach a stigma to online dating. Biderman notes that such practices had already existed in the form of newspaper personal ads, long before the advent of the Internet. The Internet technology, then, is only an improvement, not an innovation. Furthermore, for each of us, our networks of friends and acquaintances extend only so far, and Biderman thinks it perfectly acceptable for us to use the Internet to expand our circle and potentially find “the one.”

Case closed? Not quite. The Ashley Madison Agency is not the typical online dating site. Advertised as the “world’s premier discreet dating service,” the Ashley Madison Agency provides an opportunity for those in relationships to explore other options of love. With a slogan—“Life is short, have an affair”—that is at once inviting and provocative, the agency revolutionizes the popular conception of relationships, providing a service that is not provided by other online dating sites.

Or so it seems. One of the motivations behind Ashley Madison Agency’s philosophy, Biderman claims, is that more than 30% of the people who use dating sites “for singles” are, in fact, not single. In a sense, then, Ashley Madison only brings to light a previously existing practice. Biderman sees the value in creating a community of “committed” people, since infidelity, he says, is “a part of the human condition. It happens all the time.” Ashley Madison Agency only replaces the practices of strip club visits, “office romances,” and so on. The Agency provides a means to infidelity that is safer and, to Biderman, more “acceptable.”

...INFIDELITY, says Biderman, is “a part of the human condition. It happens all the time.”

But how can infidelity be acceptable? Biderman asserts that, for most couples, infidelity does not destroy their marriage (indeed, it is rarely discovered!). Biderman believes that key to marriage is the sort of constructive family life that keeps the marriage together as a social unit. Love and intimacy, while desirable, are not necessary for the cohesion of a family. Any idea of tying marriage to romantic love is a symptom of over-romanticizing. Paradoxically, Biderman suggests that “safe infidelity,” as offered by Ashley Madison, actually saves marriages, for it removes the potential friction that arises from unfulfilled desires for intimacy. With their physical needs addressed through the Agency, couples are more able to focus on building and maintaining a family.

If we accept Biderman’s argument, we might still have reservations about Ashley Madison’s advertisements, which seem to actively promote infidelity to the general public. To this, Biderman responds that no TV commercial directly leads someone to be unfaithful. Like other products perceived to be “bad”—alcohol and tobacco come to mind—Ashley Madison advertises only to suggest that the option is out there, and individuals are responsible for their own choices. Biderman asserts that we are not going to “legislate” people on their sex lives. Since infidelity happens anyway, there does not seem to be an issue with its advertisement, especially since the organization in question specifically provides “discreet” services.

Infidelity might always exist in society, and Noel Biderman wants us to consider it natural and compatible with marriage. If we accept this, then it seems the Ashley Madison Agency is not so outrageous an organization. Instead, we should treat it as any other online dating service: a high-tech means for people to find love.

By Eddie Wu
Philosophy ’12
Is it worse to cheat in a marriage than to cheat in a boyfriend-girlfriend relationship?

70% said marriage

25% said both are equally unethical

5% said bf-gf relationship

Here is what we heard ...

...on Ashley Madison Agency:

“On purely moral grounds, I am appalled that an organization exists to promote something that our society universally agrees to be wrong. Although it has the legal right to exist, I am saddened that there are people out there who are willing to exploit and harm others for their own monetary gain. At the same time, exploitation happens all the time anyway.”

“I would want to say that it is unethical, but there are many different types of people and needs. Some may have a psychological block that they need to make sure they are not missing out on something else. Having an affair may end up strengthening their love for their intimate partner, and keeping something lasting that will be better than a divorce if they have children or a very involved life.”

“It should exist, because it can help some people and that’s good enough.”

“The website should be allowed to exist - we cannot make moral decisions for others.”

“I think it should not exist because it’s completely and ethically immoral; however, it really is true that cheating is ingrained in human nature, so I can see how an agency like that can exist.”

...on the statement, “Marriage is not about physical intimacy; it’s about building and sustaining a family and raising kids.”:

“That statement is complete crap. Physical intimacy is number one in a marriage. I’m not sure that I will ever want kids, but I would still consider marrying someone if I thought that I would be interested in continuing to [have sex with] them for the rest of my life. If you can’t be physically intimate and open with your partner then you don’t really want to marry them. Part of what marriage is about is completely trusting someone, even with your deepest and dirtiest desires.”

“It is not possible to give a set purpose for marriage because it is such a social norm. Whether it is based on security, reproduction, or intimacy is dependent on the personal values and goals of the couple.”

“Intimacy is another form of communication with your partner; it’s a way to express your love, commitment, and devotion to your significant other. To call physical intimacy another means to fulfill a base, primal instinct, submerged in our primordial unconscious, is to mock the holistic quality of a well-rounded, healthy relationship. We express love in all our words, our actions, and, in equal importance, our bodies.”

86% think that physical intimacy is critical in a healthy marriage
Dissatisfaction with the status quo is often preferable to complacency. On page 8, Professor Benjamin Ward states, “There is, or ought to be, a vague sense of dissatisfaction and uneasiness enveloping the experiences of both students and faculty here at Duke and beyond.” Approaching our experiences critically rather than passively, in effect, defines who we are. To be uncritical is to accept what has been put in place by others. Very few of the great accomplishments in human history are achieved without a little grumbling. In science, the lack of physical and naturalistic explanations cause many to investigate; in politics, the want for justice and equality makes way for not to protest, vote, and call for change; in the humanities, the unsatisfied bank of ideas and expressions leads many to contribute more and more. This kind of dissatisfaction with the status quo that leads to something new, fresh, and exciting is a virtue indeed.

We see this kind of kicking-up-a-fuss as positive when it identifies some problem and then makes way for a solution. But dissatisfaction can also become a vice. Sometimes, complaining is ugly and unhelpful and sometimes it is unwarranted. So next time you’re about to gripe, think about these two dimensions to help determine if your protest is in the spirit of Martin Luther King, Jr. or if you’re really just being a Moaning Myrtle.

1. Is this really a problem? Maybe it seems like one, but how sure am I? Am I being careful about what I wish for?
2. If there really is a problem, is my dissatisfaction working to solve the problem or is it merely identifying it? What can I do to address the source of my complaints?

There is a lot of dissatisfaction at Duke over what we students are getting for our tuition. Here are some responses we received in an online survey.

**What services are you paying for that you do not feel you should be?**

- “Does Wilson gym really need new flat screen TVs every year? I don’t know if we pay for that though. Or Duke Police Segways? If we are paying for things like that (or at least our money is trickling down somewhere) I don’t think that is necessary.”
- “CAPS Academic Resource Center. All the flowers that are planted once every two weeks. The budget for all the clubs on campus. The dining deficit.”
- “For sports players to be hosted in fancy hotels and be given TVs, etc. General inefficiency (for example, why do we have like 30 LCD screens on the wall of The Link that do nothing?).”

**What services do you think you should get more of with the same amount of money?**

- “Laundry. Considering that I have had brand new clothes get holes after washing them in the horrible washers and dryers available here, doing laundry should definitely be cheaper.”
- “Better dining and more dedicated housekeeping”
- “Green grass, maybe?”
- “Better bus transportation. Better gym facilities, especially Wilson gym.”
- “It would be nice to have help (as in TAs) for classes from people who actually speak English.”

**The Ethics of...**

**Loudmoansing**

whining

complaining

and kick-up-a-fussing

protesting

groaning

FUSSING

GRIPPING

Plug into Ethics:

There is a lot of dissatisfaction at Duke over what we students are getting for our tuition. Here are some responses we received in an online survey.

**Criticism and Generosity**

In the university setting in particular, criticism is held in high regard. Few become renowned academics by agreeing with what people have said in the past. However, in the race to come up with something new and to inject our opinion into topics of the past, we should first genuinely consider what has been said before in order to identify what the problems or where the cracks really are. In essence, we should read an argument first generously and then critically.

**Are you getting your money’s worth at Duke? Why or why not?**

**YES:**

“One on one access to tons of internships and database. Resources to answer my every call...all you have to do is reach out. Networking is amazing. Opportunities unheard of. Heck yeah. Safe rides. Duke transits to like everywhere. WHAT! Of course I am.”

**NO:**

“Even though it can be hard to think about paying over 50k a year for tuition and student loans in the future, I think the Duke education is worth it. It opens up so many opportunities that can be capitalized on for the future. We are paying a lot now, but we will also get a return on our investment in the future.”

“$50,000 + per year x 4 =$200,000. Duke is not providing a $200,000 education.”

“I can’t imagine that my increase in knowledge from attending Duke is proportionately that much higher than other schools with lower tuition.”

“Meal plans rip us off. We have to pay for everything to go here.”
TOP 5 THINGS STUDENTS THINK THEY SHOULD BE RECEIVING:

1) Classes taught by professors (not TAs)
2) Freedom to choose where you live (off/on campus requirement)
3) More study spaces
4) Increased buses
5) Better performances at LDOC

SOUND FAMILIAR...?

So how has your day been?

You have any summer plans?

Hey, want to go to the event advertised on the poster behind me?

Good, but tiring… I got 7 minutes of sleep last night. I went to bed at 9:48 am and just made it to my 10:05. Much better than the all-monther I pulled in February.

Actually, I have an internship lined up with a consulting think-tank firm for investment banking doing research analyzing the effects of finance economics on bank lab publications internships. So I am going to D.C. with my congressman.

OMG, I can’t! I have soo much work I’m dying!
The Social Role of Business

By Chris MacDonald, Ph.D.
**What is the social role of business?** Corporations (and other firms) are undeniable potent engines for generating prosperity, but can they be more than that? Should they engage in projects designed to make the world a better place in more specific ways? Should corporations think of themselves in terms of rich ethical notions like “corporate citizenship?”

On March 15 and 16 of this year, I was part of a conference on corporate citizenship, put on by The Economist and held at New York’s Public Library. It was an honor to be there—and to be the only “ethics professor” on the list of speakers. And an impressive list it was! Steve Case, the billionaire co-founder of America Online, spoke. So did Ben Cohen (Co-Founder of Ben & Jerry’s ice cream). So did senior executives from corporate giants like Coca-Cola and Proctor & Gamble. There were also executives from smaller, socially- and environmentally-oriented companies like Seventh Generation and Method Products, as well as representatives of important nongovernmental organizations, including Water.org and the Environmental Defense Fund. Oh, and another guy you may have heard of: President Bill Clinton.

We were gathered there to talk about corporate citizenship. Very roughly, the organizers of the conference used the term “corporate citizenship” to refer to the idea that corporations have not just obligations to their shareholders, but broader obligations to society more generally. The fact that the event was hosted by The Economist is itself interesting: historically, The Economist—a leading business and current-affairs magazine—has been skeptical, to say the least, of at least some approaches to such issues. As recently as 2005, for example, it published a Special Report that was deeply critical of the notion of “Corporate Social Responsibility,” or “CSR.” The report suggested that most corporate efforts at being (or looking) socially responsible are either a misuse of shareholders’ money or else simple duplicitous window-dressing. Then, in 2008, The Economist published its second report on CSR, in which the editorial position had softened only slightly. The 2008 report remained relatively skeptical about CSR, but seemed to allow that, in some cases, if done carefully and strategically, efforts at CSR could be both genuinely socially beneficial and a way to build sustainable profits. But still, the skepticism remained.

But as of this year, the tide may have turned—not just at The Economist—but maybe also in business world more generally, where The Economist is so widely read and listened-to. The event in New York made clear that even among ardent believers in free-market capitalism, the idea that businesses can take on social missions beyond the goods and services they produce is gaining considerable traction.

Now, The Economist prefers to think about the social role of business in terms of “citizenship,” rather than “social responsibility.” And that makes a certain amount of sense. “Social responsibility” is a broad and vague term, whereas “citizenship” implies a relatively well-defined set of rights and responsibilities related to how we conduct ourselves in a democratic community. But as Duke’s own Professor Wayne Norman has pointed out in his published work (co-authored by Paerle-Tye Néron), we ought to be a little careful about how we toss around a word like “citizenship,” precisely because it’s a word that implies more than just a vague sense that a range of stakeholders matter in the way a business conducts itself. Just what it means to be a good corporate citizen—taking that word seriously—is still very much open to debate. And “citizenship” may end up being the wrong word, in the end. Those are good debates, ones that we in the university can contribute to. And events like the one hosted by The Economist in New York, with its combination of academics, NGOs, and corporations big and small, give reason for hope—hope that there is a growing interest on the part of business in making the world a better place, and hope that creative ways can be found not just to badger businesses into giving out a few charitable donations, but to help them find more of those win-win solutions that will be both sustainably profitable and genuinely good for our communities.

**Different Kinds of “CSR”**

There are many ways for a company to demonstrate social responsibility. The question is, what exactly are they ethically obligated to do?

**Operational** - A company can demonstrate its social responsibility by making ethical decisions in its everyday operations, paying fair wages, opting for the most efficient processes possible. This kind of responsibility is clearly necessary, but how far do you think it should go? Going green isn’t cheap!

**Motivational** - Some companies go above and beyond when it comes to social responsibility. Very roughly, the organizers of the conference used the term “corporate citizenship” to refer to the idea that corporations have not just obligations to their shareholders, but broader obligations to society more generally. The fact that the event was hosted by The Economist is itself interesting: historically, The Economist—a leading business and current-affairs magazine—has been skeptical, to say the least, of at least some approaches to such issues. As recently as 2005, for example, it published a Special Report that was deeply critical of the notion of “Corporate Social Responsibility,” or “CSR.” The report suggested that most corporate efforts at being (or looking) socially responsible are either a misuse of shareholders’ money or else simple duplicitous window-dressing. Then, in 2008, The Economist published its second report on CSR, in which the editorial position had softened only slightly. The 2008 report remained relatively skeptical about CSR, but seemed to allow that, in some cases, if done carefully and strategically, efforts at CSR could be both genuinely socially beneficial and a way to build sustainable profits. But still, the skepticism remained.

But as of this year, the tide may have turned—not just at The Economist—but maybe also in business world more generally, where The Economist is so widely read and listened-to. The event in New York made clear that even among ardent believers in free-market capitalism, the idea that businesses can take on social missions beyond the goods and services they produce is gaining considerable traction.

Now, The Economist prefers to think about the social role of business in terms of “citizenship,” rather than “social responsibility.” And that makes a certain amount of sense. “Social responsibility” is a broad and vague term, whereas “citizenship” implies a relatively well-defined set of rights and responsibilities related to how we conduct ourselves in a democratic community. But as Duke’s own Professor Wayne Norman has pointed out in his published work (co-authored by Paerle-Tye Néron), we ought to be a little careful about how we toss around a word like “citizenship,” precisely because it’s a word that implies more than just a vague sense that a range of stakeholders matter in the way a business conducts itself. Just what it means to be a good corporate citizen—taking that word seriously—is still very much open to debate. And “citizenship” may end up being the wrong word, in the end. Those are good debates, ones that we in the university can contribute to. And events like the one hosted by The Economist in New York, with its combination of academics, NGOs, and corporations big and small, give reason for hope—hope that there is a growing interest on the part of business in making the world a better place, and hope that creative ways can be found not just to badger businesses into giving out a few charitable donations, but to help them find more of those win-win solutions that will be both sustainably profitable and genuinely good for our communities.

**The Triple Bottom Line**

Nowadays, companies measure success by more than just pure profit. These are the three new pilers of corporate success.

**People** - How does the company treat its employees? Does it pay fair wages? Does it avoid child labor? Does it provide necessary benefits to its employees?

**Planet** - How eco-friendly is the company? How much waste do they produce, and what do they do with it? How efficient are their processes? What is the environmental impact of their products?

**Profit** - The age-old question: how much money are they making? Whether for PR concerns or because they actually care, companies are becoming more careful about their social and environmental impact.
The crisis of the day is climate change; it is what experts tout as the over-arching behemoth of environmental problems. Without limits on the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, climate scientists predict a range of catastrophic futures. But, the experts tell us, climate change is a global problem—one that will take a collective effort across continents to change the course of future events. As nations come together to address the problem, the mindset is orders of magnitude greater than any one individual’s day to day choice to live a greener life. But even so, these experts tell us, our daily decisions hold a critical weight.

So what is the Me-We conundrum? It is not just about what we can do versus what I can do. It is also about what’s in it for me when the conversation turns to “we.”

It’s not hard to find examples of the tensions that develop as we move down in scale. On a national level, it’s a battle between states. For example, there has long been controversy over water resources that flow across state lines. Two cases come to mind, one on the West Coast, over the water in the Colorado River, or the lack thereof according to Arizona, and one closer to home, over the water that flows in the Catawba River which runs from North Carolina to South Carolina. In both cases, the resolution of the legal questions will have consequences that reach far beyond the entities that win. The decisions affect water quality and quantity, elements that carry a tremendous significance for the people who survive by this limited resource, as well as the health of the surrounding ecosystems.

Let’s now come home to North Carolina at the intrastate level. Each county in North Carolina has the right to set its own emissions standards for cars. This depends on population density, more thickly populated counties often have more aggressive standards than the regulations of rural counties. This lack of a statewide standard is why one will continue to hear, see, and smell that old pick-up truck—the one that would never pass an emissions check in California (known for stricter standards)—spewing exhaust as it clunkers around.

Finally, we face the conundrum at a personal level in many of our everyday decisions. Take, for instance, transportation. When getting around, the world relies on many options including walking, biking, public transportation, and the personal vehicles so conveniently sitting in our garages. The distance we must travel to work or school might limit walking as a viable option because it would take too long, or due to a limited availability of sidewalks. Resulting from a perceived safety risk, we may also choose not to commute by bike. And, if it means relinquishing a personal sense of freedom and convenience, we might reject public transit or organized carpooling.

These decisions seem simple, but they are orders of magnitude from where we started with the global issue of the day. The contrast is striking if not incomprehensible. At the top, as nations, we are...
asked to come together to solve environmental problems that span the globe, but each nation has its own interests and perspectives. The same can be seen at the bottom; we are each looking out for ourselves, but collectively each decision could add up to real impact—better transportation systems, tighter communities, etc.

So, if we live in a time of “me,” how do we get to “we”? In our hyper-productive, over-stimulated, fractured culture there is a disconnect from the natural world and our fellow man. Is there, then, a place for an “us” mindset in all this “me”? Do we have the capacity or compulsion to recognize an obligation to consider and protect the collective? Can we, as individuals, rationalize personal choices that may sacrifice self but enhance the greater good? Can we then bring that thinking to the international level?

We’ve been hearing it for years: individuals need only make small changes in daily actions and habitual behaviors to live a greener life. If that’s true, then when we consider implementing a green life strategy, we know the “how.” So, how do we explain the “why”? Why do some people carpool or bike to work, recycle or eat local, while others choose not to? What drives our motivation to make a certain choice? Is it a sense of altruism, or concern, cultural upbringing or responsibility, or perhaps a sense of crisis or economic well-being?

Recognizing what motivates us is the first step to shaping a strategy designed to address these real and persistent challenges that face the planet, and consequently each of us. It might also be a good place to start as we each reflect on our personal behavior and daily choices. The big problem might be climate change, but if we each exercise the power to lead a slightly greener life, maybe the Me-We conundrum won’t seem so daunting.

**Green Ideas**

- **PRO**
  - Reducing the number of single occupancy vehicle trips, reduces total emissions
  - Reduces amount of power sipping by electronics when not in use
  - Lowers total emissions from transportation, one of the largest sources of emissions
  - Supporting local agriculture cuts down emissions from transportation
  - Uses less water, a limited, valuable resource
  - Lowers emissions as well as your power bill

- **CON**
  - Can be viewed as inconvenient, resulting in a loss of freedom and independence
  - Has to become a habit
  - Can be perceived as dangerous, inconvenient in inclement weather or limited distance
  - Options limited to seasonal harvest and often more expensive
  - Loss of luxury and convenience
  - Can create an uncomfortable living atmosphere

**Ethical Water?**

Ethos Water is a brand of bottled water sold at Starbucks. Five cents of every bottle sold funds humanitarian water programs to improve access to water as well as sanitation in developing nations. However, it takes the equivalent of three bottles of water to produce and distribute just one serving of bottled water. When nearly twenty percent of the world’s population currently has limited access to clean water, is Ethos still ethical?

...Drink from the tap.

**Forgo “to go,” take it “for here”**

“Would you like a bag for that?..”

Did you know...

- Ethos Water is a brand of bottled water sold at Starbucks. Five cents of every bottle sold funds humanitarian water programs to improve access to water as well as sanitation in developing nations.
- However, it takes the equivalent of three bottles of water to produce and distribute just one serving of bottled water. When nearly twenty percent of the world’s population currently has limited access to clean water, is Ethos still ethical?
- **PRO**
  - Reducing the number of single occupancy vehicle trips, reduces total emissions
  - Reduces amount of power sipping by electronics when not in use
  - Lowers total emissions from transportation, one of the largest sources of emissions
  - Supporting local agriculture cuts down emissions from transportation
  - Uses less water, a limited, valuable resource
  - Lowers emissions as well as your power bill

- **CON**
  - Can be viewed as inconvenient, resulting in a loss of freedom and independence
  - Has to become a habit
  - Can be perceived as dangerous, inconvenient in inclement weather or limited distance
  - Options limited to seasonal harvest and often more expensive
  - Loss of luxury and convenience
  - Can create an uncomfortable living atmosphere

- Ethos Water is a brand of bottled water sold at Starbucks. Five cents of every bottle sold funds humanitarian water programs to improve access to water as well as sanitation in developing nations. However, it takes the equivalent of three bottles of water to produce and distribute just one serving of bottled water. When nearly twenty percent of the world’s population currently has limited access to clean water, is Ethos still ethical?

...Drink from the tap.

**Forgo “to go,” take it “for here”**

“Would you like a bag for that?..”

Did you know...

- Ethos Water is a brand of bottled water sold at Starbucks. Five cents of every bottle sold funds humanitarian water programs to improve access to water as well as sanitation in developing nations.
- However, it takes the equivalent of three bottles of water to produce and distribute just one serving of bottled water. When nearly twenty percent of the world’s population currently has limited access to clean water, is Ethos still ethical?
Community service = good. That equation seems pretty simple, right? Performed by generous individuals looking to help others, parents wanting to set a good example for their children, high school students trying to pad their resumes, and corporate officials aiming to improve their PR, service has traditionally had a universally positive connotation. Yet recent research and the press have shown a different angle on service. Volunteer groups can disrupt the daily activities of the organizations they are aiming to help, create resentment and feelings of patronization between the “recipients” and “givers” of service, and be a burden on organizations that must host and cater to the needs and skills of visitors.

In high school, I was confused by these conflicting messages, but also grateful for the positive impact service had on my life. Volunteering opportunities had enhanced my understanding of social issues, given me a sense of responsibility to my community, introduced me to new friends, and helped me find my passion for teaching. These experiences inspired me to start “Guia” (the Spanish word for “guide”), an after-school program aimed at connecting middle school students with service opportunities. I felt that my work in volunteering had given me a strong background in predicting and preventing the negative side effects from service, and I felt equipped to start an organization that would avoid them. I was determined to do all the right things, in the right ways, and create a sustainable, effective, and fun program.

After substantial research through volunteering in other after-school organizations run by Duke students, taking a course on local Latino issues, and interviewing numerous students, teachers, families, and administrators at the middle school, I assembled a strong team of volunteers who were experienced and enthusiastic. Guia started small—just once a week—but over the next year, it expanded to work in the school four days a week and on weekends.

Unfortunately, we faced some unanticipated problems. We experienced a sudden drop in attendance after asking students for a small financial contribution. The students were less interested in the tutoring services we were offering,
I think Duke students have the responsibility to run the best programs we can. If not just for the sake of maximizing the impact of our volunteers’ time and energy, service leaders owe it to their community partners to perform well and constantly improve.”

However, there were clearly things that I had not thought through, and I am not alone in this weakness. Founding Guia exposed me not only to weaknesses in my own programming and planning, but also to obstacles facing all volunteer- and social action organizations on campus. Service at Duke is a confusing web of student and faculty-led initiatives. Many of us are trying to do almost exactly the same thing, but are not communicat- ing, brainstorming, or problem-solving together. Often we compete for volun- teers and resources; sometimes, the issue is as simple as missing out on important opportunities for collaboration because, as an organization leader, there is just too much else to do.

Is this a problem? I believe it is. I think Duke students have the responsibility to run the best programs we can. If not just for the sake of maximizing the im- pact of our volunteers’ time and energy, service leaders owe it to their commu- nity partners to perform well and con- stantly improve. Unfortunately, I believe it is impossible for a service organiza- tion to never be a drain on the commu- nity. Many schools, nonprofits, and other hosting groups are happy to collaborate with Duke students, but it is their expecta- tion, and rightfully so, that we will do the best we can to be only a positive force. To ensure the achievement of this standard, service groups should utilize all of the resources they have available to them, and the Duke Partnership for Service aims to help this happen.

These challenges highlight the importance of a gover- nance body such as dPS, and inspi- red me to run for president of this organization earlier in the month. Since being elect- ed into the position, I feel even more strongly about the poten- tial role of the organization. Nearly any- one can start a fundraiser, an afterschool program, an environmental campaign, or a health project, but starting a good one calls for strong leadership and planning. Perhaps more importantly, I believe great projects require further consultation and problem solving to maintain themselves in ever-changing environments. Service or- ganizations can benefit from experienced sounding boards, external vision, connec- tions to Duke and Durham resources, and financial support, and I believe that this is where dPS can step in.

On the practical side of things, dPS can take on challenges such as recruitment, transportation, financial crunches, and the hurdles blocking collaboration. We can also address issues I haven’t listed here upon the request and communication of organizations’ leadership. This allows groups the freedom and flexibility to wor- ry about their area of expertise, and in my opinion, the area of greatest importance: running effective, sustainable, innovative, and relevant projects in our community.
IS BELIEF IN GOD A NECESSARY FOUNDATION FOR MORALITY?  IF SO, WHY?
IF NOT , WHAT SALIENT ALTERNATIVES COULD THERE BE?

On a personal level, my own understanding of ethics is wrapped up in two theological notions—the forgiveness of sins and everlasting resurrected life—without which my worldview would unravel pretty quickly.

No, belief in God is not necessary for morality. Certain basic moral principles are accepted widely by many different religions, which suggests that those moral beliefs do not depend on any particular religion. Some religions do not even involve belief in God, but their adherents still hold moral beliefs and often live morally good lives. The same is true of many atheists and agnostics. These cases show that good moral beliefs and actions can and do often occur independently of belief in God.

Some theists (and atheists) respond with the slogan, “If God is dead, everything is permitted.” However, the only theory that makes moral rights and wrongs depend on the existence of God is a divine command theory of morality, and that theory faces an old dilemma: Does God have any reason to command us not to rape, for example? If He has no reason, His command is arbitrary, and arbitrary commands could not ground morality. But if God does have a reason for this command, that reason explains why rape is wrong, and the command itself is superfluous. Either way, God’s commands are not what make acts immoral.

On a philosophical level, there seem to be many highly developed ethical systems of thought that don’t presuppose God, others that do, and others again that seem to be compatible either with belief in God or with no belief in God. Ethical systems largely resolve into the search for good actions, good intentions, good outcomes, good relationships, or good people. In principle any of these are compatible with theological or non-theological presuppositions. On a personal level, my own understanding of ethics is wrapped up in two theological notions—the forgiveness of sins and everlasting resurrected life—without which my worldview would unravel pretty quickly.

Walter Sinnott-Armstrong
is a professor of philosophy and ethics and the author of Morality without God?

Sam Wells
is dean of Duke Chapel and research professor of Christian ethics at the Divinity School

A PARALLEL INTERVIEW ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MORALITY AND THE BELIEF IN GOD

WSA

SW

“On a personal level, my own understanding of ethics is wrapped up in two theological notions—the forgiveness of sins and everlasting resurrected life—without which my worldview would unravel pretty quickly.”
WSS

Different religions and theologians approach moral questions in different ways, but many religious people look to a sacred text for guidance. All such sacred texts include both good and bad advice, so believers need an independent way to separate the wheat from the chaff. For example, the Bible has many wonderfully inspiring passages based on common sense, but it also includes many very questionable passages like these:

“...wives should submit to their husbands in everything.” [Ephesians 5:24; see also Colossians 3:18, 1 Peter 3:1]

“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything.” [Colossians 3:22; see also Ephesians 6:5-8; 1 Timothy 6:1-3, Titus 2:2-10, 1 Peter 2:18-19]

Thus, if you look to religious texts like the Bible when considering what should be a part of an ethical life, then you will be led astray unless you carefully choose what to follow and what not to follow. The choice of which passages to follow (and how to interpret them) must be based on a moral standard that is independent of the Bible itself.

In contrast, a secular person accepts no sacred texts or authorities as the basis for moral belief or choice. Instead, secular people think about how their acts affect others and whether their acts use others as means only, among other considerations. They can and should discuss moral issues with other people who have different experiences and perspectives, but nobody has any special authority or clout. A good model of how this works can be found in some hospital ethics committees, who often resolve difficult moral issues without referring to religion or God. In this way, secular thinkers can succeed in moral deliberation. Religious people can also succeed in this same kind of deliberation, but then their moral deliberation does not depend on their religious views.

SW

The first question I ask my students is, “In whose interest is the discipline of ethics pursued?” We look at three kinds of answers:

1. Ethics for anyone – what I call universal ethics. This assumes we are all fundamentally the same, and the issues we all face are cut from the same cloth.

2. Ethics for the oppressed – what I call subversive ethics. This assumes life looks different if you are under the heel of history and ethics is primarily pursued for the sake of those who find themselves so situated.

3. Ethics for the church – what I call ecclesial ethics. This assumes Christians simply see the world differently from secular thinkers, and should attend precisely to the resources God gives us to follow him.

If we neglect these abundant resources, we inevitably experience the world as one of scarcity – not enough resources, wisdom, information, truth, and so on. It is this difference between an outlook of scarcity and one of abundance that I believe constitutes the fundamental difference between Christian and secular ethics.

“Ethics is largely about learning to take the right things for granted. Faith traditions shape the imagination of their adherents so they learn to take the right things for granted.”
HOW DOES LOOKING AT RELIGIOUS STORIES THAT CONFER MORAL LESSONS OR ATTITUDES DIFFER FROM EXAMINING MORAL LESSONS FROM SECULAR FABLES AND FAIRY TALES? IN WHAT SIGNIFICANT OTHER WAYS DOES RELIGION CONTRIBUTE TO AND/OR HINDER MORAL EDUCATION?

WSA
Both religious and secular stories can be either insightful or misleading about morality. There is still a difference: secular people are free to reject fables and fairy tales as just that—fables and fairy tales. They can call any story immoral when it is immoral. Some religious people adopt this critical attitude toward the founding texts of their tradition, and they reject large parts of those texts, but then it is hard to see why they see those texts as especially reliable or divinely-inspired. To criticize a divinely-inspired text, religious people would have to hold that God conveyed a bad story or a false doctrine. They would also risk ostracism by their religious communities. These constraints lead many religious believers into a kind of dogmatism and inflexibility that hinders moral thinking. Of course, not all religious people display these vices, and not all secular people escape these vices. Still, reliance on any text as divinely-inspired introduces grave dangers into moral judgment and action.

“To criticize a divinely-inspired text, religious people would have to hold that God conveyed a bad story or a false doctrine.”

SW
This is how I conceive of Christian revelation. It gives us a five-act play, in which God offers purpose and shape and direction for life. Act 2 is Israel. Here God makes a covenant with a particular people. Act 3 is Jesus. Here God demonstrates his will to never be except to be for us in Christ. Act 4 is the Church. This is now. Act 5 is the end of all things, when God will draw all things to himself and renew creation in his image. We are in Act 4, with the heritage of faith and the destiny of hope. Secular ethics operate in a one-act play.

The question about secular fables raises the issue of authority. Christians make judgements of a fable’s authority by locating it within the five-act play. The story of Jesus’ birth, life, death, and resurrection is the definitive story that shapes judgements about all other stories.

I can’t speak about religion-in-general. I don’t know if there even is such a thing. Neither do I have much stake in a broad notion of God. The only God I know is that revealed in the person of Jesus. So I don’t know how to answer a question like “In what significant other ways does religion contribute to and/or hinder moral education?” because religion isn’t a single monolithic thing. It’s at best a generic category like “culture” or “society.” In practice I assume almost everyone has a religion because most people have some kind of more or less articulated telos toward which they orient their lives and judgements.

THROUGH THE AGES, HOW IMPORTANT HAS FAITH OR BELIEF IN GOD BEEN IN SHAPING THE ETHICAL STRUCTURE OF CIVILIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES AND HOW IS THIS ROLE CHANGING TODAY?

WSA
Religion has had tremendous influence on some moral beliefs. This influence has been often good and often bad, but it seems widespread either way. Nonetheless, religion should not get credit for our basic moral views. As I said, certain moral principles are shared by people of many different faiths or no faith at all. This uniformity can be explained by evolutionary pressures apart from religion.

Today religion has less impact in some areas or at least enclaves, but religion still continues to shape culture and government policies in many countries, including the United States. For example, one government commission reportedly heard over a hundred witnesses for and against legal restrictions on embryonic stem cell research, but every single witness who favored such restrictions represented an organized religious group. Yet the U.S. government ended up restricting this useful medical research by limiting funding in response to these religious groups. In cases like this, religion continues to shape government policies for better or for worse.

SW
If we’re speaking of Western civilization, one can think of a number of (very broad) eras. As the Roman republic gave way to the Roman empire, the high ideals and order of the state gave way to the desire to align one’s dispositions and will to a sense of fate or natural law. That transition may be called Stoicism. It concerns God, but a God unrecognizable to Trinitarian Christianity.

Another era might be the Middle Ages. Here we have a sense of earth suffused with the divine—a sense that God is a partner in every conversation and a part of every relationship.

That seamless universe is broken apart by the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment. Here there emerges a sense that the earth is a self-sufficient unity with rational laws. Quickly God becomes an alien, perhaps unwelcome intrusion, and religious faith may seem problematic, and an ethic that presupposes God’s action may seem very troubling. But it’s important to remember this is a relatively recent development.

While there is plenty of religion around today, in the West, at least, it more or less settles for this role as an alien imposition, and so it’s place in public life always seems problematic, even though almost every institution owes its inception to religious convictions.
DESCRIPTIVELY SPEAKING, WHAT KIND OF CORRELATION DO YOU SEE BETWEEN PEOPLE OF FAITH AND PEOPLE LIVING ETHICAL LIVES?

WSA

Scientific research finds little consistent correlation between religious belief and moral behavior. Some studies suggest that people who regularly practice religion tend to cheat a little less and give more to charities. It is still not clear whether these behaviors are motivated by fear of hell or desire for heaven, in which case they are really selfish rather than morally motivated. Experiments have found that people give more to charities when they are cued with religious words, but later studies reveal that secular moral cues have almost as much effect. Moreover, religion is correlated not only with moral behavior but also with certain kinds of immoral behavior, such as intolerance and sexism. Religion also seems to fuel or intensify wars. When one country declares certain land sacred, this religious declaration makes it more difficult to reach a compromise that could peacefully resolve a conflict. Overall, then, it is not clear whether religion is correlated with more or less immorality.

SW

Evelyn Waugh was often chastised for being a bad example of Christian discipleship. “Just imagine what my life would be like if I weren’t a Christian,” he would reply. Ethics is largely about learning to take the right things for granted. Faith traditions shape the imagination of their adherents so they learn to take the right things for granted. It is hard to learn good habits unless one is formed in deep rooted tradition that assume transcendence and ultimate truth in the way Christianity, and some other religions, do. I’m not entirely sure what living an “ethical” life means. I’m guessing it’s intended to indicate most of the notions associated with a “good” life without whatever negative resonances the word “good” may be taken to have. That’s not a project I have any stake in. I do have a stake in the living of good lives, but I’m in the business of aligning good in the trajectory of a telos that is finally out of human hands—an eschatological frame of reference, to use theological language. To return to the language of question 3, good means anticipating Act 5 and being shaped by Acts 1–3 while living in Act 4. While I’m humbled and moved by the good lives of many who don’t configure their existence that way, I can’t philosophically account for it.

“It is still not clear whether these behaviors are motivated by fear of hell or desire for heaven, in which case they are really selfish rather than morally motivated.”

“I don’t necessarily agree. I think people who have a concern for others are ethical and sometimes that concern comes with a belief in God and sometimes it doesn’t.”

“No I disagree with that. I don’t think God has anything to do with ethics.”

“I think religion has anything to do with ethics.”

“I think that it may be correlated, but I don’t think it’s caused. I think that people who have thought about believing in God might have thought about ethics more.”

“I think religion can be used as a tool, and just as any tool can be used as a weapon, it is the same for a belief in God. If you are certain that you know that’s what God wants you to do, you can use that against other people. We [The Jewish Community] have a lot of rituals that don’t really make sense, but if you practice—like not eating ham sandwiches—maybe, when you have to make a really hard moral decision, you will be more inclined to make a good one, because up to that point you have been separating what you want to do. Maybe religion could be a practice for acting ethically.”

“I think it’s about what your family teaches you in general and how you grow up.”

“I think it’s more about what you do with what you’ve been taught.”

“I think that people who believe in God have a moral compass. I don’t think all people who believe in God are moral, but I think people consider their actions more when they have a devout relationship with God.”

“I’m not entirely sure what living an ‘ethical’ life means...That’s not a project I have any stake in.”

“I agree with that. Vaguely.”

“It’s helpful for people too have a foundation, but it does not necessarily need to be a theistic foundation.”

“Just imagine what my life would be like if I weren’t a Christian.”

“43
Across:
2 - Wrote On the Genealogy of Morals (p.23)
4 - A working environment with little pay and unhealthy conditions
6 - Ethical ______: your own welfare is the basis of morality
9 - ______ band - imitates the music of a previous band (p.12)
11 - Contributing one's time or talent towards communal purposes
13 - Practice of self-denial to achieve a high spiritual or moral state
14 - “Reserve army of the unemployed”; critic of capitalism.
15 - “All things are in flux”; Greek philosopher - The Riddler.
16 - Identifying with and feeling other people's concerns
18 - Recipient of the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize
19 - Excessive trading of client's account by a broker in order to generate commission rather than benefit a client
20 - A guiding principle
22 - “Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall”
23 - Greek philosophy before Socrates

Down:
1 - ______ ethic: an ethic whose rules are independent of personal or cultural views (p.41)
3 - One who is noncommittal about the existence of God (p.40)
4 - Motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing the welfare of a group
5 - Philosophy of Immanuel Kant; Persons should be treated as ends, and never as merely means (p.23)
7 - Theory that the moral worth of an action is determined by its consequences (p.22)
9 - Respecting the dignity and rights of all persons
10 - Accomplishment of a task measured against preestablished standards, e.g academic ______ (p.8)
12 - Free from hypocrisy or dishonesty
17 - Director, Kenan Institute for Ethics (p.9)
21 - Abbr. for Duke organization that oversees other student service organizations (p.39)