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## Morality in Our Lives

*Man is that creature who must have some criterion of the good. No man can wish to jump out of this situation without presupposing it; that is, without first judging that it would be "good" to do so. This means that the true realist is the man who acknowledges the distinction between good and evil.\**

### MORAL DECISIONS AND PERSONAL LIFE

#### Life Forces Choices

All of us face, directly and indirectly, problems that persons did not meet in the past—problems not covered in traditional codes of morality, problems on which we have had little time to reflect. Even members of today's senior generation were not confronted in their youth by such moral issues as:

*heart and organ transplants:* From whom should organs be taken and to whom given?

*artificial insemination:* Does this process violate or enhance human sexuality's emotional aspect? What constitutes parenthood?

*biological engineering to control heredity:* To what extent should we shape future generations? What qualities are desirable in planned offspring? Should such controls be limited to nonhuman animals and plants?

*use and control of outer space:* Who should own or control what?

*energy:* How do we determine environmentally sound sources and uses of energy?

Other moral issues faced throughout history by countless generations have acquired new dimensions, and many persons are torn between traditional understandings and new interpretations. Some of these dilemmas are:

\*Edmond La B. Cherbonnier, *Hardness of Heart* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955), p. 28.

*the extent of personal responsibility:* Who is my neighbor—individuals on my street or persons now reached by jet in a matter of hours?

*human sexuality:* Should genital relations be only for reproduction by married people or for pleasure between any consenting individuals?

*interpersonal relationships:* What is a family—the nuclear model of husband, wife, and offspring or other models such as a group bound by a written contract? How should men relate to women, and women to men, in homes, in jobs, as friends, and in social settings?

*medical concerns:* Is population control in the hands of God or of humanity? Should the onset of death be left to nature, or may human beings hasten or postpone it?

*social justice:* Should unrestricted competition or some form of socialism lead eventually to economic justice?

Other, more-or-less routine choices fill our lives. You have chosen to read the words on this page, either as your acceptance of an assignment or for your own enrichment. The choice involved your sense of what is right and what is wrong to do.

Some choices that come before us are entirely new, some add new dimensions to familiar problems. Other choices are so routine that we sometimes do not recognize them as choices. The act of living forces many choices on us.

## A Unique Period of History

Reflective persons in each age have commented on their own respective crises. During the first century B.C., the Roman orator Cicero lamented "O the times! O the manners!" In the nineteenth century Charles Dickens began *A Tale of Two Cities* in this way:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going to heaven, we were all going direct the other way.

When we hear the inevitable cries of moral decay in our own day, should we be concerned? Is there anything really new since Cicero, or do thinkers in each age see their own period as uniquely awful, confronted with horrendous changes? Sociologist Peter Berger has observed that the modern age has a unique aspect: Humanity has moved from fate to choice.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Peter L. Berger, *The Heretical Imperative* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday-Anchor, 1979).

For many persons, especially in the United States, a way of life is no longer determined in advance. Society as a whole does not uphold a single view of life. Individuals are not limited to the ideas and life styles of their own kind. Opportunities of easy travel and communication and exposure to mass media confront us with a plurality of viewpoints on reality, truth, and values as they are actually lived.

No longer destined to a single way of life, we must choose among possibilities that range from the conventional to the previously unthinkable. Finding that the most authoritative institutions differ within and among themselves as to what is worthwhile and right, we are forced more and more to rely on our own judgments.

More than in any other period of history, our personal lives demand choices from us today. What is right and what is wrong, generally and specifically, must be decided by more persons than ever before. Each reader of these pages must make such decisions. Whether one views this period of history as an exciting opportunity or as a prelude to the downfall of Western civilization (or even the entire globe) is itself a choice.

## THE SEARCH FOR VALUES

### Choices and Values

Valuing occurs whenever one thing—a physical object, a way of acting, an idea or an ideal, a person—is preferred or chosen over another. We rate things as better or worse and act on these decisions. The issue is not whether we will have loyalties and ideals around which our lives are organized, but what kind they will be.

#### VALUES: THE POLESTAR OF EDUCATION

Values, we have argued, are experiences that are at once satisfying and fulfilling. The purpose of education is to make us creators and centers of value. Technological education does that indirectly by supplying us tools for the exploiting of nature. Liberal education on its intellectual side provides the values of understanding, which makes us at home in our world. Liberal education on its appreciative side makes us responsive to the best that has been said and painted and built and sung. Liberal education on its practical side puts the wind of emulation in our sails and gives direction to our voyage. Values are the stars by which education may and should steer its course.

From Brand Blanshard, "Values: The Polestar of Education," in *The*

*Goals of Higher Education*, ed., Willis Weatherford (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1960), p. 96.

*Brand Blanshard (b. 1892) has taught philosophy at a number of schools and was professor of philosophy at Yale University for nearly two decades. He has written many articles and books, the latter including The Nature of Thought, Reason and Goodness, and Reason and Analysis.*

Because almost every traditional value is under scrutiny and because each of us must make choices and preferences, thinking people frequently find themselves searching for answers. This quest is not just a classroom exercise; it has reached the most practical ranges of daily experiences. For example, the *U.S. News and World Report* included a report on the search by American adults for more satisfying values and patterns of life. The popular magazine *Psychology Today* devoted much of an issue to similar themes.<sup>2</sup>

This is not to imply that all traditional values have been disregarded. Quite the contrary: Large numbers of people continue to rally around conservative values, especially as they are taught and reinforced by religious institutions. A Sunday morning spent surveying the ideals presented on most religious television programming will reveal this traditional perspective. Customary values of family life, the role of women, the purpose of sexuality, and others are restated emphatically, and these ideals are applied to new issues. The certainty and clarity these religious spokesmen project are attractive to many persons.

Others are not persuaded that traditional values have reached their full maturity or that all familiar values are still adequate. It is this large group whose search presents them most sharply with the problem of choice. Unconvinced by authoritative moral spokespersons (who often disagree among themselves), those on a quest for new or differently applied values join the ranks of philosophers ever open to new insights.

## Philosophy and Real Life

Do we mean that philosophers never choose values but enjoy an ongoing intellectual search apart from ordinary folk? Is *philosophy*, which means the

<sup>2</sup>"America's Adults: In Search of What?" in *U.S. News and World Report* (Aug. 21, 1978); "The New Job Values," in *Psychology Today* (May 1978); Daniel Yankelovich, "New Rules in American Life: Searching for Fulfillment in a World Turned Upside Down," in *Psychology Today* (April 1981).

love of wisdom, removed from practical concerns? If by real life we mean attending to daily necessities (rest, food, shelter, and so on), clearly no one is exempt. Furthermore, no one—including the philosopher—is without choices to make. Even the person who accepts without much thought the values of the community has in a sense made a choice, however passively. In contrast, individuals who love wisdom consciously examine life. They will not be programmed; they will not passively accept what is given. At the very least, one might call oneself a philosopher if one reflects about living issues and practical concerns and makes choices required by daily involvements. "Wherever intelligence can be exercised—in practical affairs, in the mechanical arts, in business—there is room for *sophia*."<sup>3</sup>

When we reflect about **values**, we may be considering any of several practical areas of life. We may have clear preferences; that is, we may value particular artistic expressions, intellectual convictions, scientific developments, or economic goals. When we reflect on **morality**—what is right and what is wrong in human relations—we are doing **ethics**. In other words, ethics in philosophy is the study of morality—the good and bad, right and wrong in human conduct. My morality is my actual conduct; when I reflect upon or analyze my conduct I am engaged in ethics. In everyday conversation, however, ethics is used as a synonym for morality or morals or to designate a code of behavior (for example, Hindu ethics).

## Ethics and Education

The search for practical moral values has taken its natural place within the general current search for values. Reflection on human conduct is regaining a central place in formal education. One university forcefully states its own commitment:

An educated person is expected to have some understanding of, and experience in thinking about, moral and ethical problems. It may well be that the most significant quality in educated persons is the informed judgment which enables them to make discriminating moral choices.<sup>4</sup>

So pertinent is this search that on page 1 of *The New York Times* (Feb. 20, 1978) a major article appeared entitled "Ethics Courses Now Attracting Many More U.S. College Students." One might ponder whether a civilization on the brink of moral decay and chaos would devote so much public attention and concern to ethics and morality.

<sup>3</sup>John Passmore, "Philosophy," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 6 (New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1967), p. 216. *Sophia* is the Greek word for wisdom.

<sup>4</sup>"Harvard's Report on the 'Core Curriculum,'" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 16 (March 6, 1978), p. 15.

## THE GROUNDING OF VALUES

If our lives inevitably involve moral decisions, if we must choose, passively or thoughtfully, values on which to base those moral decisions, what justifies any particular values? Are all values the momentary preferences of one or more individuals? Before the existence of humankind, were there any values? Or are there some values that are independent of human beings, values that are inherently preferable to others? Whether values are built into the very fabric of the universe or are the creations of human minds, how are they to be discovered?

### Values as Subjective

One view is that matters of value are human opinion; this general view is termed **subjectivism**. Subjectivists make the following claims: Throughout history, individuals and groups have created preferences, measures of worth, in various ways. Philosophers have reached by reason what to them are desirable qualities. Inner ponderings, combined with folk wisdom, have led theologians to proclaim "God's will." Groups organized for cooperative living have selected by vote those moral values codified in their laws. Absolute monarchs have imposed their own values on societies. Subjectivists argue that such values may be thoughtful or emotional but that in every case they are imposed on a neutral universe by human beings.

### Values as Objective

The term **objectivism** is frequently used to mean that particular values will be accepted by any rational person who reasons disinterestedly and has relevant information available. Another meaning of objectivism is that particular values are built in to the fabric of existence; such values exist without regard to human wishes and formulations. Thus, objectivists hold that there are preferable qualities in objects, behavior, ideas, persons, and so on; this is a fact of existence independent of human preference. Some objectivists hold that these values coincide with the evolving universe; for example, an anthropologist has written with regard to human behavioral values that

the facts of man's biological nature, what *is*, determine the direction his development as a person must take. That is to say, that what *is* here clearly determines what *ought to be*; in short, that the biological facts give a biological validation to the principle of cooperation, or love, in human life. In other words, we can here demonstrate that there are certain values for human life which are not matters of opinion but which are biologically determined. If we do violence to those

in-built values, we disorder our lives, as persons, as groups, as nations, and as a world of human beings whose biological drives are directed toward love, toward cooperation.<sup>5</sup>

The declaration of God's will is an objectivist approach that assumes that values originate in the Creator's design of reality. The fundamental difference between Montagu's objectivism and a theologian's is that for the anthropologist values simply are, whereas the theologian believes the Creator deliberately has instilled certain values in His universe.

**False values.** Objectivists readily acknowledge that humanity chooses values inferior to or incompatible with the true values present in nature. The anthropologist can call false choices disorders and the like; the theologian labels them sin. To both kinds of objectivist, false choices lead us toward estrangement from true reality; we become out of alignment with what truly is and will be.

## The Grounding and Selection of Moral Values

Moral values too may be regarded as either subjective (of human origin) or objective (independent of human beings). The debate over the subjectivity or objectivity of moral values is centuries old. Where does this uncertainty leave the person who is thoughtfully trying to choose moral values?

The problem becomes less monumental, though not easily solved, if we assume that what is at stake is human fulfillment. With human fulfillment as an assumed value, the question of whether values are subjective or objective is not crucial. What is important is the impact of various values on human life. The effect of available moral values is far more to the point than their alleged objectivity or subjectivity. For example, if a respected scholar proposes a subjective solution to a moral problem, or if a religious leader claims to know God's will on an issue objectively, and such claims, from either source, run counter to what you view as the long-range physical and emotional well-being of humankind, then both the subjective and the objective viewpoints will seem to you, as a thinking person, to be inadequate.

Thus we are left with the need for **principles** for selecting moral and other values. Admittedly, these principles are of human origin, but the reader is invited to consider them as a preliminary step in selecting values.

1. *Intrinsic values are preferable to extrinsic values.* Our everyday lives are filled with things that have **extrinsic** value; that is, they are good for something but not of value for just being there. Examples of things with extrinsic

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<sup>5</sup>Ashley Montagu, *On Being Human* (New York: Hawthorn, 1966), p. 52.

value include most books, eyeglasses, pens, and cars. These objects are *good for something*; they are not of value for their own sakes. Something is **intrinsically** valuable when it is of value for its own sake and not for its ability to yield something else. For example, beauty, truth, love, friendship, and strength of character are considered intrinsic values by many persons.

Intrinsic and extrinsic values are not always either mutually exclusive or fixed. What is valued by one person for its own sake may be valued by another individual as a means to an end—for example, a beautiful vase can be valued as a work of art (intrinsic) or an attractive container for the display of flowers (extrinsic).

The danger of viewing values as exclusively extrinsic is that this leads to regarding everything and everyone as an instrument for yielding something else. In the moral sphere, human relations are reduced to the valuing of individuals for their productivity rather than for themselves.

2. *Long-term or permanent values are preferable to short-term or temporary values.* In a fast-paced society, we are likely to value what is instantaneous or offers desired results in the near future. Most readers of this book have adequate food, clothing, and shelter. However, we are as a people apt to value economic means that can provide us quickly with many luxury commodities. For example, many people are willing to incur debts so that they can acquire luxury items as early in life as possible. Resulting stress, which may damage health in future years, is given less consideration than immediate “success.” Consider another example: Which is of greater value—the quickly written song designed to sell and die within a year or two or the music anguished over by composers for months and valued for centuries?

3. *Thoughtfully selected values are preferable to those passively accepted.* More than ever we are becoming conscious of deliberate as well as unintentional programming of human minds and hearts. As we study history, we are appalled at the readiness of masses of people to accept the values of decadent religion, ruthless government, bigoted families, and self-appointed moral spokespersons. Prepackaged values have been grasped eagerly by those who have not had the time and opportunity to reflect and choose, as well as by those who would rather have their thinking done for them. Also alarming is the fact that large numbers of persons do not realize that they are being indoctrinated. For example, much contemporary advertising casually assumes values such as bigger is better, youth is optimum, more is necessary, adulthood means smoking and drinking, and buying such-and-such product will overcome your sense of negativity. These learning experiences subtly introduce and reinforce some values that have come to be taken for granted as “American.”

The alternative to value brainwashing is deliberate reflection on other value proposals. Critical examination of values for their intrinsic or extrinsic character, for their durability, and for their probable practical implications may precede a conscious choice. Such reflection does not guarantee



correct choices, but it enhances authenticity: The values selected will be *our* values. Our moral values will be grounded and reflected in the behavior of free human beings, not of robots or puppets.

## MORAL RELATIVISM

Many responsible thinkers have been subjectivists in one way or another. To them, moral values are of human origin and have no basis apart from human ingenuity and customs. There are no universally applicable moral standards; their usefulness is dependent on historical, cultural, or other conditions. This general attitude is called **moral relativism**. Scholars vary in their accounts of moral relativism, and here we shall consider two fundamental types.

### Descriptive Relativism

Social scientists such as sociologists and psychologists describe, among other things, the moral conduct of individuals and groups globally and throughout history. Reports of varying moral beliefs and practices tell us that in actual experience no moral standards are upheld everywhere as ideals or everywhere practiced. Any moral value, the social scientist states, can probably be found as a belief in some society at some period of history. **Descriptive relativism** is an acknowledgment of this moral variety among humankind.

**Implications of descriptive relativism.** Philosophers know that human moral variety exists; Plato and Aristotle drew from such observations the conclusion that many people do not know what is really good. From the variety of beliefs held by different people, they also concluded that many do not know right from wrong. This is no reason, they felt, to relax in the search for the good, the true, and the beautiful. Thinking or opinion alone does not make anything real, including moral values and right conduct. The attempt to justify or censure morality because of what is in fact is futile; what is does not imply what ought to be or what ought not to be. Descriptions provide insights about human behavior as it is, not as it ought to be. If we were to try to extract a moral principle from what has been and what is, we would be left with the idea that nothing is unacceptable.

### Normative Relativism

Some philosophers have concluded that no statements about right and wrong can be judged true or false. There is no way to prove a value claim in

any objective way. A statement such as "injury is wrong" is an expression of feeling or emotion; it is not a matter of truth or falsehood.

### A CRITIQUE OF ETHICS

We find that ethical philosophy consists simply in saying that ethical concepts are pseudo-concepts and therefore unanalysable. The further task of describing the different feelings that the different ethical terms are used to express, and the different reactions that they customarily provoke, is a task for the psychologist. There cannot be such a thing as ethical science, if by ethical science one means the elaboration of a "true" system of morals. For we have seen that, as ethical judgments are mere expressions of feeling, there can be no way of determining the validity of any ethical system, and, indeed, no sense in asking whether any such system is true. All that one may legitimately inquire in this connection is, What are the moral habits of a given person or group of people, and what causes them to have precisely those habits and feelings? And this inquiry falls wholly within the scope of the existing social sciences.

From A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (New York: Dover, 1952), p. 112.

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*Alfred Jules Ayer (b. 1910) taught philosophy at the University of Oxford, where he was educated. His writings include Language, Truth and Logic, The Problem of Knowledge, and The Concept of a Person.*

If this theorizing is valid, then moral relativity follows as a standard. Moral relativity as the norm is the view that of the same action or situation X both "X is good" and "X is bad" may be asserted, because "good" is merely the feeling of the person making the statement. One person would judge an execution as good and another bad. Neither judgment is a matter of truth; neither can be proved or disproved. Both judgments are merely expressions of emotion. Thus moral values may legitimately vary and conflict among societies and individuals. The codes developed by groups so that they can live with some degree of security are arbitrary and not universally binding.

**Implications of normative relativism.** Moral relativism implies that there is no objectivity in matters of morality and there are no norms that apply to humanity as a whole. One moral position is as right as another. When we feel repelled by a particular moral outlook or practice, we are reacting emotionally but with no claim to a provable universal standard. What is right in New York City may be regarded as wrong in Salt Lake City, Utah. In either place human feelings, opinions, and customs determine what is morally right.

If one moral position is as right as another, then no choice or act can be justified or condemned by any universal standard. There can be no genuine dispute about morals; philosophically speaking, we can conclude that all value judgments, all moral statements, are of equal standing.

Many persons today are convinced that our search for moral values will result in some form of relativism, in spite of the theoretical and practical difficulties involved. We cannot dismiss such considerations without a fair hearing.

## VALUES AND RIGHTS

In our discussion of morality in our lives we have considered moral decisions and personal life, the search for values, the grounding of values, and moral relativism. Another fundamental living ethical issue for us is the relation between values and rights.

A **right** is a claim to an achievable condition that both an individual and his or her society need for a better life. If there is something available and indispensable to a good life, it is an individual's right to have it. Whatever is valued as necessary for a good life is regarded as a right; if it is not readily available, the society ought to make it available. For example, two centuries ago a free education was not claimed as a right. The recognition of the **value** of education led people to argue that every child should be given an education. The right to public education at first included only elementary education, but later it was extended to secondary education. Now we are wrestling with the value and therefore the right of citizens to publicly supported higher education. Other values and rights under discussion today include medical care, private property, work, minimum financial security, and life itself. When a society ranks a condition as indispensable, it becomes a **right in theory**; when the condition is made available, it becomes a **right in fact**.

### Natural Rights

For thousands of years individuals and groups have appealed to certain rights that they felt were theirs in a special sense. These rights, they have felt, are based on nature. The doctrine of **natural rights** goes back at least to

the great thinkers of ancient Greece. The American colonies, in the Declaration of Independence, based their claim to independence on "certain inalienable rights," among which were "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The United States Bill of Rights assumes the same theory of natural rights.

Stripped of features that pertain only to particular times and places, the doctrine of natural rights expresses three claims: (1) persons have some rights that apply no matter what the circumstances or the culture; (2) these rights are due them whether or not their society or government recognizes them; and (3) these rights are inalienable—the person cannot surrender them nor can the society take them away for any cause. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a typical advocate of natural rights based these claims on two further ideas: (4) all persons share the same essential nature and needs; and (5) by divine ordering, or simply by the nature of things, certain rights, such as those to life, liberty, and property, are implied by the very idea of treating persons according to their essential natures.

Today the debate continues as to whether any rights are imbedded in nature (an implication of objectivism). The question "Are there universal rights?" goes hand-in-hand with "Are there universal values?" Another debated question is "Do all rights entail obligations?" or "May I claim a condition necessary to a good life without any obligations on my part?"

## VALUES AND FULFILLMENT

In recent years the ideal of personal fulfillment has found expression in popular literature and in so-called human potential movements. Any spokesperson with charm and a persuasive personality who can market a technique, religious or otherwise, that offers personal satisfaction and contentment is assured a following. If the results are quick, all the better.

Many, perhaps most, persons who legitimately seek a sense of being at ease with life by means of the varied available sources of fulfillment fail to consider the values assumed by these movements. Many, perhaps most, become disappointed with the weak effects of their so-called growth over the long term. Consider the following values and whether your own fulfillment is dependent on one or more of them:

personal independence	self-understanding
self-reliance	self-acceptance
oneness with a universal spirit	human fellowship
rationality	concernfulness
positive thinking	knowledge
emotional honesty	appropriateness
physical intimacy	purchasing power
salvation	self-control

Our present purpose is not to evaluate these preferences or qualities. We can simply recognize the fact that one or more of these values, as well as others not included here, are held as necessary to human fulfillment by competing movements or schools of thought. Each value or combination of values offers an implied interpretation of fulfillment; if a movement ranks personal independence and self-reliance high, its understanding of personal fulfillment will differ from that of a group preferring human fellowship. Thus, the offer of fulfillment by any movement or school of thought has values built into its concept of fulfillment. None is value free.

## VALUES AND A CHANGING WORLD

We have begun our search for a moral philosophy with a consideration of the fact of morality in our lives. Moral decisions are an inevitable part of our personal lives. These decisions are based on our values, especially our moral values. When we examine our values, we find that some individuals regard them as human opinion whereas others look upon true values as rooted in nature. One's understanding of values as subjective or objective determines to a large extent whether moral values and rights are seen as relative or as imbedded in objective reality. As we strive for fulfillment in our lives, we are again involved with values, perhaps even competing and conflicting ones.

If we were to trace the history of morality through Western civilization, we would find a variety of value positions. Cultural change has been an ongoing process, and changing values have accompanied the evolution of civilized peoples. At any given moment, however, the range of moral choices has been narrow. Most individuals' options were fated by the restricted alternatives available to them.

Today we are confronted with not only a very broad range of values originating in Western civilization, but also the philosophies of the Orient and Third World (emerging nations, especially in Latin America and Africa). They provide us with new values to consider. Our values of time, prosperity, activity, and self-reliance are being challenged by the comprehensive world views of peoples who differ from us in their understandings of truth and reality.

Morality in our lives has moved from the traditional straight-and-narrow path of familiar values to a sometimes disconcerting range of choices. To yearn for the good old days when life was simpler is in a sense understandable; choosing is far more perplexing than simply doing what seems obviously right. For those willing to philosophize and choose, this new age of moral choice can be the best of times, an age of wisdom, the season of Light, the spring of hope with everything before us.

**CHAPTER REVIEW**

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**A. Moral decisions and personal life**

1. Life itself forces choices upon us.
2. The choices that come before us are entirely new, familiar but with new dimensions, or so routine that we sometimes do not recognize them as choices.
3. The modern age has substituted choice for fate; the course of life for many individuals is not settled in advance.
4. Our choices now range from the conventional to the previously unthinkable.

**B. The search for values**

1. Valuing occurs whenever anything is preferred or chosen; we rate things as better or worse than other things and act on these decisions and ratings.
2. All values are being scrutinized today.
3. Some persons hold to traditional values and others to reconsidered values. Still others are searching for new or more genuine values.
4. Individuals are, in a sense, philosophers when they reflect about living issues and practical concerns and make choices required by daily involvements.
5. When we study or reflect on morality we are doing **ethics**. There is a nationwide, perhaps global, interest in ethics today.

**C. The grounding of values**

1. The discovery and justification of values are pertinent philosophical issues.
2. Subjectivists view values as created by human beings and imposed upon a neutral universe.
3. More than one kind of objectivism exists. Objectivists view values as objective when they are acceptable to any rational person who reasons disinterestedly and has available the relevant information, or when the values are built in to existence itself independent of humanity.
4. Some principles for selecting moral and other values are needed.

**D. Moral relativism**

1. Moral relativism claims that there are no universally applicable moral standards.
2. Descriptive relativism acknowledges the moral variety among human-kind throughout history.

3. Normative relativism claims that no statements about right and wrong can be judged true or false; no norms apply to humanity as a whole.

#### **E. Values and rights**

1. A right is a claim to an achievable condition that the individual and his or her society need for a better life; whatever is valued as being necessary for a good life is regarded as a right.
2. A natural right is one that applies universally to men and women everywhere and at all times.

#### **F. Values and fulfillment**

1. One's interpretation of fulfillment depends on one's values.

### **SUGGESTED READINGS**

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DeGeorge, Richard T. *The Philosopher's Guide*. Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1980.

A guide to the general histories, basic bibliographies, and collections of readings in philosophy; the section on ethics within Part III, "Systematic Philosophy: Branches, Movements and Regions," lists dictionaries, bibliographies, histories, journals, and works on ethics in medicine and science, business and professional ethics, and social ethics.

Edwards, Paul, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. New York: Macmillan, Free Press, 1967.

An eight-volume reference work containing such essays as "Value and Valuation," "Ends and Means," "Rights," and "Problems of Ethics." Each essay concludes with an excellent bibliography.

Lyons, David, ed. *Rights*. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1979.

A collection of essays that seek to understand what rights are, what rights we have, and why they are important.

Navia, Luis E., and Kelly, Eugene, eds. *Ethics and the Search for Values*. Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus, 1980.

An anthology of some of the most important ethical writings of Western philosophy, including an informative introductory chapter, "The Search for Values."