

## Preface

"New Rules in American Life: Searching for Self-Fulfillment in a World Turned Upside Down"<sup>1</sup> expresses well some of the feelings of many individuals living in the 1980s. We are on a search in which we are reluctant to affirm either all the old moral rules or all the new alternatives. With the conviction that part of education involves facing reality, colleges and universities are recognizing the necessity of providing formal reflection on living issues. One such institution recently claimed:

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>2</sup>

Readers of *Living Issues in Ethics* are invited to share in the reflections of four persons who, along with all instructors and students, are confronted with moral decision making. We have provided a book designed to raise some fundamental questions of ethics including a multitude of unresolved issues; the field of ethics will be opened especially to those students who can take only one course in the subject. We hope that our readers' imaginations will be stimulated to understand that morality is an inescapable part of their lives and that points of view other than their own deserve thoughtful consideration. We have written with the intention that students realize that fundamental questions of right and wrong, of human rights and conflicting obligations, are raised by many technical, social, psychological, and political situations. We trust that they will come to respect the need for coherence, consistency, and clarity in thinking about moral matters. And we hope that they will begin to understand and appreciate the reasoned differences both in ethical theory and moral alternatives. In short, we invite readers to be provoked, at an introductory level, toward "some understanding of, and experience in thinking about, moral and ethical problems" so that they will be better enabled to make discriminating choices.

In Part 1 we are concerned with ingredients in the search for a moral philos-

<sup>1</sup>Daniel Yankelovich's extended essay in *Psychology Today* (April 1981)

<sup>2</sup>"Harvard's Report on the 'Core Curriculum,'" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (March 6, 1978), p. 15

ophy: the recognition of choices forced by living situations, some issues of ethical theory, and the historical context out of which we carry on our search today.

In Part 2 we consider who we are as individuals and issues of quality in our relations with ourselves and with others especially close to us.

Part 3 focuses upon certain personal and biological aspects of our lives as individuals: moral dilemmas in health and medical care as well as sexual ethics.

Issues raised by living in a social order will be discussed in Part 4: issues of politics, economics, individual liberties, social and ecological obligations, and the threat of war.

We move, therefore, from the theoretical and historical foundations of ethics in Part 1 to applied ethics in our lives personally and socially for the remainder of the book.

We have attempted to keep our theoretical and applied reflections readable and nontechnical. The legitimate, technical problems of the professional philosopher engaged in ethics are not the problems of students exploring for the first time ethics and morality. We have avoided the seemingly endless qualifying of each idea so prevalent in technical discussions as well as complex academic surgery, hopeful that the book's purposes will be carried out effectively for an introductory adventure.

The chapter reviews are designed to help students recall the general thrust of the chapters but are not substitutes for reading, pondering, and learning ideas emphasized by instructors. The suggested readings include reference works as well as some important studies in each chapter's topics.

Another feature is the book's adaptability. In the art of teaching, each instructor can accomplish the book's purposes, as well as modify or expand its goals, by selecting an order of reading different from the book's sequence, by omitting some chapters, and/or by assigning additional materials. Appreciating flexibility, we encourage instructors to adapt the text to their own styles.

The authors have not worked in isolation! We have built on the foundations laid by the five editions of *Ethics For Today*, first published in 1936. Ernest L. Rothschild was a chief guide for those editions and for this new textbook, a companion to *Living Issues in Philosophy*. Elaine S. Krause edited our writing, and Rachel Hockett took responsibility for leading the manuscript to production. Typists included Nancy Stack and Ann Wilson, who meticulously produced the drafts and final manuscript. We are grateful to Robert C. Pingpank for his assistance with the proofreading.

A great deal of writing on morality is designed to inspire readers toward a particular moral viewpoint on all matters, to seek behavioral changes in readers, and to be entertaining and comforting. Our invitation does not include these designs. We invite readers instead to consider a wide range of theoretical and practical issues and the moral alternatives which they evoke. Students may feel on occasion some frustration at the variety and complexity of moral decision making. But the result, we hope, will be a greater awareness of and sensitivity toward their own responsibility to find and develop a reasoned morality of their own in a world filled with *Living Issues in Ethics*.

Richard T. Nolan  
Frank G. Kirkpatrick  
with  
Harold H. Titus  
and  
Morris T. Keeton