

“Dissecting Bioethics,” edited by Tuija Takala and Matti Häyry, welcomes contributions on the conceptual and theoretical dimensions of bioethics.

The section is dedicated to the idea that words defined by bioethicists and others should not be allowed to imprison people’s actual concerns, emotions, and thoughts. Papers that expose the many meanings of a concept, describe the different readings of a moral doctrine, or provide an alternative angle to seemingly self-evident issues are therefore particularly appreciated.

The themes covered in the section so far include dignity, naturalness, public interest, community, disability, autonomy, parity of reasoning, symbolic appeals, and toleration.

All submitted papers are peer reviewed. To submit a paper or to discuss a suitable topic, contact Tuija Takala at tuija.takala@helsinki.fi.

The Concept of Responsibility: Three Stages in Its Evolution within Bioethics

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Since its creation in 1970, the word “bioethics” has had two competing points of view. Van Rensselaer Potter, who coined the word “bioethics,” envisioned a multidisciplinary approach to global issues of human survival, such as environmentalism.¹ The Kennedy Institute of Ethics and similar organizations whose roots lie in moral theology and philosophy have emphasized the internal morality of medicine, biomedical research, biomedical technology, and particularly the ethics of the clinical encounter between caregivers and patients.

Recently we have witnessed the rise of a third trend, which appears as a sort of fusion of the “global” with the “clinical.” It is characterized by *global* perspectives related primarily to *immediate human* concerns, such as exposure to health hazards and gaps in quality and availability of healthcare

worldwide. An illustrative example of this new focus is the “Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights” issued by UNESCO in 2005.

In this article we trace the development of the concept of responsibility as reflected through the above three bioethical points of view: the clinical, the environmental, and the global.

Accountability as Context-Specific Responsibility

Since the first systematic philosophical discussion of responsibility,² the term has been subjected to dual readings, mainly the “merit based view” and the “consequentialist” one.³ The key issues of contention have been related to the question of determinism versus free will. Galen Strawson’s influential attempt at a synthetic resolution was pragmatic and sensitive to

social norms.⁴ This approach was friendly to the soon emergent discipline of applied ethics, whose fundamental assumption is praxis within definite social contexts in multicultural environments.

Another major theme in the philosophy of responsibility is the question of “moral luck,” namely, the relationships between the internal mechanisms of moral action, such as good will, foresight, and deliberation, and the eventual outcome of one’s actions in the world. For example, we may judge a person praiseworthy for being virtuous and wise in spite of a terrible outcome that, nevertheless, evolved from his deeds. But we may also find the same person guilty simply because the terrible outcome could have been avoided had he chosen to act differently. Effects that are not compatible morally with the mental state of mind that produced them are attributed to “moral luck.” Donna Dickenson has recently discussed some implications on bioethics of this topic.⁵

Common to these discussions is the seeing of responsibility within the framework of imputation. According to Paul Ricouer, to impute means to attribute an action to a cause.⁶ If the cause lies within a moral agent, imputation posits moral responsibility in that agent. In civil law imputation entails an obligation to make up for the damages brought about by the imputed action; in the context of criminal law, responsibility for a prohibited action justifies or even necessitates punishment.

The word “responsibility” appeared for the first time in 1787 in a text attributed to Alexander Hamilton, in reference to the government’s obligation to answer (*respondere* means to answer) questions raised by the parliament.⁷ In this light we understand each case of responsibility as typically

constituted by a specific social context, such as a government, which is under the supervision of those who have invested it with power. Similarly, physicians’ responsibility would be defined by the context of medical practice: the medical sciences, the regulation of the medical profession, the acceptance of certain people as patients, patients’ compliance, and the like.

Evidently, every person is responsible for his or her own actions. If John hits a stranger or gives him money, John’s very action is the context of responsibility. In other contexts such as clinical medicine, inaction could be as morally laden as active action. Following Strawson, we may say that each social context creates roles along with its relative moral expectations, which responsibility is bound to answer. Responsibility in the sense of context-specific answerability is accountability.

Historians have shown that the concept of responsibly has evolved through a threefold process comprised of humanization, individualization, and interiorization.⁸

At a certain point in history, animals, spirits, and inanimate objects stopped being considered guilty and liable for punishment. As late as the Middle Ages, animals were put on trials and punished in European tribunals.⁹ It took a long process of humanization to make us impute moral responsibility only to moral agents, that is to say, morally competent humans.

History also shows a passage from the traditional practice of collective revenge (clan, tribe, family) to the notion of individual responsibility. The idea that children should not suffer the sins of their fathers is exemplary of individualization.

Interiorization is related to the development of inner speech, which enables one to engage oneself with

imaginary interlocutors and particularly with inner “voices” calling for action or inaction, praising or rebuking the self. Socrates mentions a “demon” within his psyche; Philo of Alexandria described consciences as an internal perception of accusation,¹⁰ Immanuel Kant already employed the much more formal and socialized metaphor of the “inner tribunal.”¹¹

Interiorization is not the ability to forecast a future event, to see in one’s imagination what the judge might rule. Rather, interiorization is the ability to conduct an independent process of moral valuation, of being able to exercise rationality in order to adopt or reject a sense of guilt or approbation in emulation of authentic judgment, yet without actual processes of social evaluation, and even in opposition to them. “I know that it is me, and nobody else, who is responsible for this action.”¹² “I know that the court will find me innocent, but I consider myself guilty,” or vice versa.

The discriminatory power of interiorization is particularly attuned to the eliminative trends of humanization and individualization. The inner tribunal, so to speak, sifts out events that are not strongly enough linked to the acting agent, for example, secondary effects, and situations in which others’ contribution to the production of an event are much greater than the agent’s.

The element of interiorization has taken prominence in the recent bioethical literature belonging to the clinically oriented point of view. Responsibility is rendered at the level of moral excellence, even supererogation, an internal sense of duty to answer to moral standards that are richer and more demanding than mere compliance with laws and regulation.¹³ This heightened level of moral sensibility inevitably expands the domain in which consequences are morally linked

to the agent’s actions and inactions.¹⁴ However, stretching responsibility to morally meaningful areas, yet beyond the limits of imputability, is the challenge of the new ethics of responsibility.

The advent of “care-ethics” in the 1980s highlighted responsibility as holistic reckoning with divergent and even contradictory undertakings of care. Moreover, Feminist theoreticians argue that complete accountability in a few contexts of responsibility is *irresponsible* unless it “best responds to the needs of everyone in the story.”¹⁵ The new ethics of responsibility expands significantly the “story” of obligation and care, so as to include within it distant people and even nature itself.

Technology and the Globalization of Responsibility: from Context-Bound Responsibility to Antecedent Responsibility

The 20th century placed unprecedented technological powers in human hands. Much of it was harnessed in the service of mutual destruction during the World Wars and in other political conflicts. It was particularly the specter of nuclear warfare that infused new meanings into Max Weber’s notion of “the ethics of responsibility.” Hans Jonas stressed responsibility with regard to humanity and its potential for mass destruction.¹⁶ Jonas also believed that we must move on from “ethics of here and now,” the ethics of particular social contexts, to an ethics that reflects our responsibility for distant people and future generations. Moreover, especially in relation to future generations does our responsibility come forth; like parents with regard to their helpless babies, future generations are vulnerable to our actions without being able to reciprocate or even to protest.

This new vision introduces antecedent responsibility—a kind of responsibility that is not a response to already extant expectations or contracted obligations. Antecedent responsibility depends on an ability to foresee the possible outcomes of our actions in the distant future and in other dimensions that are not part of the ordinary legal and moral discourses on accountability. Antecedent responsibility is free from given cultural contexts; its only relevant context is the human experience, broadly conceived.

Theodor Adorno explains responsibility with these words: “You are not just acting out of pure conviction, but you include the end, the intention and even the resulting shaping of the world as positive factors in your considerations.”¹⁷

Karl Otto Apel draws our attention to the gap between traditional systems of ethics, which are centered on “micro” contexts such as the clinical encounter, and the incumbent duty to make decisions and shape policies that ultimately bear on the environment as a whole and on future generations as well. He refers to this as “planetary macroethics.” Paradoxically, this “macroethics” is so expansive as to render everybody responsible somehow, without providing any context for personal accountability. In fact, Apel speaks of a “primeval joint responsibility of all people,” and maintains that primeval joint responsibility is based on a proto-phenomenon in which an event is perceived to be morally relevant, but it is not yet imputable. At this stage, responsibility is too raw to be individualized; it still belongs to all people.

Indeed, it is the responsibility of society as a whole to regulate morally its energy production and consumption as well as its armed forces and other instruments of destruction. At

the level of democratic society, we all share the burden of responsibility.¹⁸

It follows that antecedent responsibility also contains an element of regression from individualization of responsibility toward joint responsibility. Every single person’s contribution to air pollution is negligible. Therefore, not a single individual is to be blamed for the impact of air pollution on rain forests and on the health of its inhabitants. Moreover, it is not possible at all to function in Western society without the use of cars, plastics, and numerous other technologies whose impact on future generations could be devastating. According to the “asymmetry thesis,” whereas active action always carries with it some measure of responsibility, a person needs the availability of alternative courses of action in order to be responsible for inanity.¹⁹

Conscientious individuals do not exempt themselves from antecedent responsibility on the grounds of inaction that has no alternatives; rather, they search for venues for moral involvement, alternatives to passive existence with regard to global concerns. Besides, the powerful and the affluent are more responsible than the disadvantaged and the poor, whose openings for alternative actions are much more limited.

Antecedent responsibility is a care that is in search for contexts of accountability with regard to basic interests of distant people and the environment. Earlier theoreticians of antecedent responsibility emphasized guilt, shame, and fear resulting from human destructiveness. Their key message was restraint of technology, consumerism, and even of population growth.

The Philosophical Challenges of Antecedent Responsibility

Paul Ricoeur and Robert Spaemann, reflecting on Jonas’ concept of respon-

sibility, stress how the risk of an ethics that pushes responsibility to its extremes, so much so as to consider everyone responsible for everything, might eventually turn into its opposite, that is to say into an ethics that does not hold anyone responsible seriously for anything.²⁰

This same criticism can also be applied to Emmanuel Lévinas, who, like Jonas, extends the boundaries of responsibility almost endlessly. Lévinas writes:

Responsibility is what is incumbent on me exclusively and what, *humanly*, I cannot refuse. This charge is a supreme dignity of the unique. I am I in the sole measure that I am responsible, a non-interchangeable I. I can substitute myself for everyone, but no one can substitute himself for me. . . . It is in this precise sense that Dostoyevsky said "*We are all responsible for all men before all, and I more than all the others.*"²¹

In the spirit of the "merit-based" school of responsibility, and in opposition to the "consequentialists," who regard the real events of the world as more important morally than personal attitudes, Lévinas' ethics is strongly oriented toward states of mind. The novelty in his approach lies in placing attunement to worldly events in the heart of the phenomenology of responsibility as a personal virtue and in casting Augustine's notion of "truths that confront,"²² as overwhelming and irresistible unless at the price of losing humanness. In an obvious reference to Friedrich Nietzsche, who finds guilt only with relation to contracted contexts, such as debt and promise, Lévinas declares that "one is in debt from the start."²³

Augustine meant that some ordinary facts possess an intrinsic moral power, such as Abel's blood crying out from the ground. Antecedent re-

sponsibility is not necessarily guilt related; it does not search for verbal or symbolic responses and excuses either. Augustine wrote about facts that confront us with our misdeeds. According to Lévinas, responsibility is about recognizing moral callings in certain kind of acts such as sufferings, injustices, and existential threats. This recognition produces emotional dispositions to act. Morally appropriate emotional responses to reality and the manner by which we perceive it are virtues to be cultivated through education and art.²⁴

Whereas a spontaneous urge of responsibility is possibly the natural reaction to seeing a person collapsing in front of our own eyes, antecedent responsibility requires special moral sensibilities that include identification with distant events or complex entities such as future generations and the nonhuman environment. As antecedent responsibility is always about responsibility over a distance,²⁵ and because its targets are often large scaled, such as "future generations" and "rain forests," the cultivation of the appropriate emotional aspects of responsible worldviews is heavily dependent on cognitive faculties such as imagination, abstraction, and historical as well as geographical perspectives. Antecedent responsibility tends to verge on the mythical, as it invokes the relationships between man and the whole world.²⁶

Levinas' approach might implode from placing too much moral burden on each and every person. It also risks the loss of freedom. When a conscientious agent starts seeing the relentless finger of responsibility pointing at him in relation to every other person in need, he does not feel free anymore to engage himself in anything but actions stemmed by responsibility for the very wretched.

Moreover, an overcharged mission of responsibility might easily degenerate into bigotry, condescending paternalism,²⁷ and an obsession with knowledge and control, so as not to miss even the remotest influences of our plans and actions (a so-called “butterfly effect” of responsibility).

Taking upon oneself all the consequences, including those most contrary to the initial intention and foresight, will eventually make the human agent responsible for too much. Moreover, if mere vulnerability creates responsibility, no chain of causality between deeds and consequences is necessary anymore. Ricoeur observes “As a result of this new change in emphasis [regarding the nature of responsibility] the idea of the vulnerable other tends to replace that of damage done as the object of responsibility.”²⁸

Ricoeur and Spaemann believe that ethics should be placed halfway between an ethos of responsibility that strives to take upon itself all the consequences along with the consequences of those consequences and all the consequences that branch out from them, and an ethos of virtue, which at the expense of consequentialist considerations focuses on internal moral processes of the psyche.

According to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, the opposing attitudes of consequences-dependent and of intention-dependent moral valuations are both manifestations of intellectual abstraction.²⁹ For the sake of extracting moral life from such abstractions, he develops the notion of *Sittlichkeit*, that is to say, the practical wisdom of shared beliefs and institutions, social customs, and other historically situated norms. The various ranges of different responsibilities are set by the realities of social life, not by pure practical reason.³⁰

Inspired by Hegel’s notion of *Sittlichkeit*, Ricoeur explains that “between avoiding the responsibility of consequences and the over-inflation of responsibility, it is necessary to find out the right measure and to stress, as Robert Spaemann did, the Hellenic principle of ‘nothing in excess.’”³¹ It is the prudential capacity for circumstantial moral judgment, recognizing, among the countless consequences of an action, those that we may be held responsible for in the frameworks applied ethics.

A less discussed aspect of Jonas’ philosophy of responsibility is his grim opinion on democracy and his anticipation that only some sort of moral tyranny can cope with the crisis of antecedent responsibility.³² More recent work in the style of “deep environmentalism” explicitly sets the preservation of nature, as a higher moral goal than many human aspirations, including those for adequate nutrition and better health for every living human being.³³ The environmentalist discourse is often vague with regard to the relationships between anthropocentric ethics (always placing human vital needs above nonhuman values) and environmentalism for its own sake, in which humanity deserves no special moral standing.

Third Phase: The Humanized Globalization of Responsibility

The recent UNESCO declaration signals the growing awareness of responsibility toward distant people and peoples.³⁴ As Wilfred Beckerman and Joanna Pasek show, responsibility for people who are distant in *time* is very similar to responsibility for people who are distant in *place*, those residing in remote parts of the earth.³⁵ The same processes that degrade the environment and threaten its sustainability

for future generations are also implicated in the suffering of real people who live beyond the reach of our existing circles of context-bound responsibilities.³⁶ Globalized responsibility is about fashioning new domains of context-bound responsibilities that enable and frame action for the benefit of mainly human vital needs at the global scale and from a commitment to humanist values. This new vision of responsibility takes the betterment of the life of the very wretched as the gateway for dealing with future generations and with the environment. The global perspective is also responsible in the sense that it does not allow devotions to particular goals to disregard human and environmental issues.

Many people recognize the calling of antecedent responsibility as a primary motivation. It arises neither as a reaction to guilt nor in response to any question of accountability. Humanized antecedent responsibility creates its own moral questions as practical challenges for social life. This recognition involves two sets of motivations: an instinctive and compassionate moral rage at suffering and injustice along with nourishing, and creative solidarity with life.

The embrace of life, even one's own life, is the rejection of nihilism; the rejection of nihilism is the identification with some cares; one single care inevitably produces further cares.³⁷ Caring for anything is the first bud of responsibility; if cultivated, it may grow and develop. The new globalized sensibility of responsibility casts responsibility as an unstoppable moral rippling in the universe, as each circle of responsibility delineates a context for action and generates a broader one. These contexts of responsibility are strongly linked to survival, procreation, and flourishing. The joy of life and the drive to survive and to nour-

ish join hands with the human happiness that comes from success as such.

The exuberance in successful human action is expansive; it seeks new, more challenging, and broader areas of engagements.³⁸ White calls this the "effectance motive," which is "a drive to develop competence through interacting with and controlling the environment."³⁹ Contemporary researchers refer to such relationships with the world as "vital engagements."⁴⁰ For a young child, the "world" and the "environment" are rather limited. The more we mature and develop our moral sensibilities and our understanding of reality, the more our "world" expands so as to encompass global concerns. Success at the global scale, and particularly in supporting life and happiness, is arguably one of the most rewarding and meaningful human experiences. Antecedent responsibility is about "effectance motive" with global moral contents. It infuses life with meaning by a balanced contextualization of self-identity within the world as a whole and from a practical, moral, and humane stance. Similar to truthfulness, obligation links us to the reality we wish to find meaningful.⁴¹

Devotions to vocations driven by antecedent responsibility happen to involve much less degradation of the environment—one is simply too remote from or too busy for indulging oneself in conspicuous consumption or in other forms of profligacy. Heightened sensibilities for the future, for the past, and for the expanses of existence may scale down many extravagant desires that are dominated by the perspectives of here and now.

Of the many practical issues raised by the humanized and globalized responsibility we choose to point out a few.

Because the onus of burden of antecedent responsibility lies on social in-

stitutions and governments, these bodies of authority and power will accept an active role in the reduction of environmental damage along with an active commitment to the betterment of the lot of distant people and of the biosphere as a whole. Ordinary citizens will also heed the Hamiltonian vision and make their governments answer questions created by antecedent responsibility.

As experts are still searching for effective means of intervention, strong evidence exists in favor of the positive impact of *medical* plans of assistance.⁴² This observation entails obvious implications.

In the "global village," one need not venture outside of one's immediate environment in order to encounter needy people who come from distant countries and cultures. These people are often poor labor-driven immigrants or political refugees. Today, every healthcare professional may find himself responsible for patients whose care depends on a holistic understanding of completely different social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Hence, issues of globalized responsibility must now be part of medical education worldwide.

Every scientist and every person who works with and supports science will come to terms with the possible global impacts of his or her own work in areas such as genetics, microbiology, and the treatment of waste. The creation of practical and long-range plans for the sake of the environment and of future generations requires multidisciplinary enterprises of research, development, and implementation. The crowding of one fourth of the world population in slummy "megacities," the ubiquity of toxic products, the threat of viral epidemics, and many other similar issues make it clear that regulation and cessation of ruinous

habits are not enough. Humanized globalization of responsibility is a calling for democratic initiatives of intervention, change, and healing.

Research in philosophy, moral psychology, bioethics, and the social sciences may help us cultivate our raw sensibility of antecedent responsibility into a mature and operative virtue. We need to find the right balance among the motivations fostering antecedent responsibility: moral rage at suffering and injustice, love of life, adventurism, aesthetic fascinations, curiosity, personal growth, and happiness through vital engagements as well as humility that does not allow enthusiasm for globalized stewardship to deteriorate into tyranny and intolerance.

Another challenge is political, as it relates to the promises and dangers that lie in strategic alliances of antecedent responsibility with other economical and social interests.

As respect for nature, holistic identification with nature, and freedom are three of the earliest and strongest environmental values, and because acceptance is a fundamental clinical virtue, at certain points we should learn to leave nature alone, and let it be.

Notes

1. Potter VR. Bioethics: The science of survival. *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 1970;14:127-53. Another influential early work is Passmore J. *Men's Responsibility for Nature*. London: Duckworth; 1974 (2nd ed. 1980), where responsibility is interpreted with regard to the protection of nature and setting limits on human population growth.
2. Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk 3, ch. 1-5.
3. For recent discussions, see Arpaly N. *Unprincipled Virtue*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2003, for the "merit based camp," and Dennet D. *Elbow Room: The Varieties of Free Will Worth Wanting*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press; 2004, for the consequentialists.

4. Strawson G. Freedom and resentment. *Proceedings of the British Academy* 1962;48:1–25.
5. Dickenson D. *Risk and Luck in Medical Ethics*. Oxford: Polity; 2003.
6. Ricoeur P. Le concept de responsabilité. Essai d'analyse sémantique. In: Ricoeur P. *Le Juste*. Paris: Éditions Esprit; 1995:41–70.
7. Issue 63 of the "Federalist," published in 1787 in various New York News Papers. For a web version see: <http://www.foundingfathers.info/federalistpapers/fed63.htm>, accessed Jan 4, 2007.
8. Fauconnet P. *La Responsabilité. Etude de sociologie*. Paris: Alcan; 1920; Gernet L. *Recherches sur le développement de la pensée juridique et morale en Grèce. Etude sémantique*. Paris: Ernest Leroux; 1917; Husson L. *Les Transformations de la responsabilité. Etude sur la pensée juridique*. Paris: PUF; 1947.
9. Evans EP. *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals: The Lost History of Europe's Animal Trials*. London: William Heinemann; 1906.
10. Philo. *On the Special Laws*, I, 235, pp. 236–7 in Loeb's edition.
11. Kant I. *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*. Berlin: Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften [1797] 1915;VI:438.
12. The responsible person is the one who chose to act (Plato, *Republic*, 617e), the origin and "father" of the action (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1113bff.). For contemporary literature, see Ben Ze'ev A. *The Subtlety of the Emotions*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press; 2000:243–8.
13. For example, Tauber AI. *Patient Autonomy and the Ethics of Responsibility*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press; 2005.
14. See note 13, Tauber 2000:202ff.
15. Hirschman NJ. *Rethinking Obligation: A Feminist Method for Political Theory*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; 1989:236.
16. Jonas H. *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of Ethics in the Technological Age*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 1985.
17. Adorno T. *Problems of Moral Philosophy*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press; 2000:162. These words are taken from a lecture given in 1963.
18. See Apel KO. *Diskurs und Verantwortung. Das Problem des Übergangs zur postkonventionellen Moral*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp; 1988.
19. Fisher JM. Responsibility and failure. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 1985–6; 86:251–70.
20. Ricoeur P. Le concept de responsabilité. Essai d'analyse sémantique. In: Ricoeur P, ed. *Le Juste*. Paris: Éditions Esprit; 1995:41–70. Spaemann R. Nebenwirkungen als moralisches Problem. *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 1975:82.
21. Levinas E. *Ethics and Infinity*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press; 1985:101.
22. Augustine. *Confessions*, bk 10, 23:34. The Latin adjective is "redarguens."
23. Nietzsche FW. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. New York: Random House; 1989:70. Levinas E. *Otherwise Than Being*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press; 1998:112. Later Levinas grappled with an idea of "guiltless responsibility." Hand S. *The Levinas Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell; 1989:83. Martin Heidegger also discusses guilt as a psychic event that may precede any particular context such as indebtedness. Heidegger M. *Being and Time*. Oxford: Blackwell; 1967:337. Both philosophers stress the role of shame.
24. On the cultivation of the right emotions see Oakley J. *Morality and the Emotions*. London: Routledge; 1992:ch. 4. For seeing reality as a kind of virtue, see Little MO. Seeing and caring: The role of affect in feminist moral epistemology. *Hypatia* 1995;10:117–37. For the role of the dramatic arts, see Belfiore ES. *Tragic Pleasures: Aristotle on Plot and Emotion*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press; 1992:ch. 10.
25. Bridging over distances and respect for distances are two fundamental cognitive schemes in ethics. The expansion of the horizons of obligation and responsibility is always in a potential conflict with the language of human rights. The latter is based on the metaphor of unimpeded movement.
26. Thoreau, for one, spoke of "theological ecology." Nash RF. *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press; 1989:36–7.
27. Tronto TJ. *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethics of Care*. London: Routledge; 1993:170.
28. Ricoeur P. *The Course of Recognition*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; 2005:9.
29. Hegel GWF. *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*. In: *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. VII, Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag; [1821] 1964.
30. Whereas Hegel saw social norms as "measures" for moral principles, Strawson (see note 4, Strawson 1962) went much further, claiming that social contexts actually define the very substance of responsibility.
31. See note 28, Ricoeur 2005:68–9.
32. For a recent discussion, see Wolin R. *Heidegger's Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Lowith, Hans Jonas and Herbert Marcuse*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press; 2001:123–9.

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33. See, for example, Rolston III H. Feeding people vs. saving nature. In: Light A, Rolston III H, eds. *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell; 2003:451–62.
34. For a comprehensible discussion of the humanitarian sensibility see Haskell TL. Capitalism and the origins of the humanitarian sensibility. *American Historical Review* 1985;90:339–61, 547–66.
35. Beckerman W, Pasek J. *Justice, Posterity and the Environment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2001.
36. One should be cautious not to romanticize poor and nonindustrial people as earth friendly and ecologically responsible. As one anthropologist studying the relationship between tribal cultures and their natural environment remarks, “Data show that people who live in a tropical rain forest and wore few cloths, sometimes acted very much like people in Western societies.” Harms R. *Games against Nature: An Eco-cultural History of the Nunu of Equatorial Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1987:245.
37. This is a commonplace topos in the philosophy of desire. We do not discuss here the different and the overlapping characteristics of cares and desires. One important point is that cares do not strive to satiate wants. Another crucial difference is that cares target something in the real world. See Barilan YM. Towards a dialogue between Utilitarianism and medicine. *Medicine, Healthcare & Philosophy* 2004;7:163–73. In Humean terms, desires are prerequisite for the adoption of moral goals; according to Levinas, cares evolve spontaneously when a human being becomes aware of a crisis of injustice or a vital need.
38. Jamison KR. *Exuberance: The Passion for Life*. New York: Vintage; 2005:ch. 4.
39. White RB. Motivation reconsidered: The concept of competence. *Psychological Review* 1959;66:297–333.
40. Nakamura J, Csikszentmihalyi M. The construction of meaning through vital engagement. In: Keyes CLM, Haidt J, eds. *Flourishing: Positive Psychology and the Life Well Lived*. Washington, D.C.: APA; 2003: 83–104.
41. On the intrinsic value of truthfulness in linking us with reality see Williams B. *Truth and Truthfulness*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press; 2002. Such links involve freedom in our relations with the environment, p. 143.
42. Kristof N. Aid: can it work? *New York Review of Books* 2006;53(15):41–4.