

Editorial Observations

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This issue of the Global Virtue Ethics Review consists of four papers on remarkably diverse topics, all of which could be cut from the current news headlines. I think you will find them fascinating, topical and provocative!

The first article, “Ethical Failure: Intelligence Agencies and U.S. Universities” by Samuel Freeman, was originally presented at a peer-reviewed international conference on intelligence and immigration ethics held at The University of Texas – Pan American in November of 2008. This conference, “Ethics in Intelligence, Security and Immigration: The Moral and Social Significance of Gathering and Managing Information and Borders in the Global Community,” included speakers from the United States and Mexico and was co-sponsored by PACE (Pan American Collaboration for Ethics in the Professions) and IGkNU (Integrated Global Knowledge & Understanding Collaboration). Dr. Freeman poses the question: Should colleges and universities join in partnerships with National Intelligence agencies “to recruit students from our campuses to be spies?” Freeman posits that “higher education, the academy, is, or should be devote to the humanities broadly defined” and that the “presence of such programs on our campuses raises profound ethical questions.

While public universities continue to find themselves in tight financial binds he argues that accepting grant money for these programs is tantamount to accepting the proverbial 30 pieces of silver, especially since they are seemingly shrouded in secrecy and require participating universities to recruit and indoctrinate ever younger minds from middle and high schools as well.

Given the current climate of the “Occupy Wall Street” movement the second article, “An Examination of the Symbiosis between Corporations and Society with Lessons for Management Education and Practice, by Ian Langella, Jerry Carbo and Viet Dao is extremely topical. These authors use the biological concepts of symbiosis and parasitism as a metaphor to describe healthy and unhealthy corporate practices. As corporations moved away from their originally intended purpose, “to serve the needs of communities and societies” to become more shareholder profit centered in the mid-19th century, greed and power became their primary focus. This, they argue has inevitably led to irresponsible and unsustainable business practices, accounting scandals, the recent mortgage crisis, corruption and a host of other ills. They call on business and management schools to place greater emphasis on ethics and corporate social responsibility in their course curricula to create a more holistic and healthy relationship between corporations and society.

Lloyd Steffen, in the third article, “Human Rights: Virtue’s Last Resort?” examines how Confucianism’s addresses of human rights. He asks: Are “Confucianism promoted ideas and

ideals of behavior at odds with thinking about rights in general and human rights more specifically.” He answers with another question, “Is the idea of universal human rights the only or the best way of fostering harmony?” He argues,

the virtues Confucius endorsed all involved duties to self and others. *Li*, for instance, establishes a duty of decorum necessary for the harmonious functioning of a person internally and in terms of relations to others; the self-cultivation of *ren* establishes how one is related in, with and to co- humanity. Cultivating *ren* promotes the well-being of the individual, but it does so not simply as some activity that assists in a personal self- actualizing of some sort. Well-being, rather, is always socially defined. Virtue cultivation leads individuals to become perfected in virtue to the end that they come to be valued members of society, and, as such, individual virtue development ultimately advances the well-being of society.

While the times and language of Confucius (551 BCE - 479 BCE) was admittedly gender biased and did not speak specifically to “rights,” the Confucian tradition reminds us that we must demonstrate the values of civility by enacting those values in ALL of our many relationships every day. Would that the politicians running for office this season remember that!

The final article in this issue “Democracy for Morocco?” addresses the notion of a *moral* democracy and the urgent search for it in many countries associated with the *Arab Spring*. Aziza

Zemrani, a native Moroccan, and Cynthia Lynch chronicle this nation's evolutionary march and occasionally revolutionary charge toward a more democratic form of governance. And, just as Benjamin Franklin said about America's democratic form of governance 200 years ago, we shall have to see if they can keep it. (1)

(1) *The American Historical Review*, vol. 11, 1906, p. 618. McHenry's notes *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, ed. Max Farrand, vol. 3, appendix A, p. 85 (1911, reprinted 1934),