

Editor's Introduction

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In recent years there has been a significant increase in interest in applied ethics, both within the academy and outside it. Moreover, this interest in applied ethics has led many persons outside the philosophical community to recognize that even the apparently esoteric concerns of philosophers—such as the nature of personal autonomy, or the issue of personal identity—can have practical implications. The essays that are contained within this issue of Global Virtue Ethics Review reflect the interrelations between theoretical and applied ethics. In the first and most practically orientated paper in this issue, Amy E. White argues that there is a discontinuity in current approaches to suicide treatment and to the treatment of those who refuse medical treatment. White argues that if respect for personal autonomy supports respecting a patient's right to refuse treatment, then it should also support her right to commit suicide. Concern for the value of personal autonomy also undergirds the second paper in this issue, by Diana Buccafurni. Buccafurni argues that since some mentally incapacitated persons are capable of exercising a certain degree of autonomy, the advance directives that they put into place to apply to themselves were they to become thus incapacitated should not be honored, because they are still capable of making autonomous decisions for themselves. Moreover, argues Buccafurni, this rejection of advance directives gains further support from the plausible view of personal identity, on which the persons making the advance directives and those subsequently subject to them are actually two distinct persons.

The first two papers in this issue, then, used theoretical philosophy to illuminate practical issues. The second two papers in this issue—by Luca Comino and Omar Moad—are both theoretical papers, although they too have clear practical implications. Comino argues that, contra G.E. Moore, there is no reason to believe that if something has value then it has it universally, i.e., in all cases of its existence. Moving away from ethics, Moad argues that political arguments in which one side claims to be on the side of progress are based upon a philosophical view of a human “telos”, and he assesses the legitimacy of such a commitment. Finally, this issue concludes with what might termed a meta-question—the question of what ethics is anyway. Not only is this question itself a departure from those addressed by the preceding papers, but so too is the style of the paper, for its author, Miguel Bedolla, addresses this question from a “Voegelinian—Lonerganian Perspective”—a tradition of thought that is all-too-rarely addressed within the analytic tradition.

Biographical Sketch

James Stacey Taylor is an assistant professor in philosophy at Louisiana State University. His main interests lie in theoretical ethics, applied ethics, and action theory. He has published widely in these areas in journals such as *Social Philosophy & Policy*, *The Journal of Applied Philosophy*, and *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*. He is the editor of *Personal Autonomy* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), and is currently working on two additional books, one on personal autonomy, the other on the ethics of using markets to procure human transplant organs. Dr. Taylor can be contacted at jtayl25@lsu.edu.