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Omega Graduate School

PHI 801-52 Ethics in a Global Society

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60 Day Developmental Readings

Review 100-day assignment, course essential elements, assigned readings, and recommended readings to identify selections of books and scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles to identify and select developmental reading sources and entries.

Each program and Core have specific grading criteria. Follow the FALL 2022 Developmental Reading Rubric for the required number of sources, comments, and quality criteria.

See the General Helps in AA-101 The Gathering Place in DIAL for the following resources:

● Refer to the “FALL 2022 Student Guide to Developmental Readings” for updated

information on sample comments, grading rubrics, and key definitions related to

developmental readings.

● Download the “FALL 2022 Developmental Reading Assignment Template” Word

document to begin writing your developmental reading assignment.

● For grading criteria, go to the “FALL 2022 Developmental Reading Rubrics.”

● Document all sources in APA style, 7th edition (APA 7 Reference Example, APA7

Quick Guide) for in-text citations and Works Cited. Include page numbers.

Allot, Philip (2011, November 1). On first understanding Plato’s *Republic*. *European Journal of*

*International Law*, 22(4), 1165-1173.

1. **Comment**: A viewpoint on where “philosophy” comes from

**Quote/Précis**: Philip Allot (2011) writes that the human mind is intuitively programmed to formulate philosophy from ordinary mundane ideas upon which it feeds throughout the lifetime of the individual. Thus, the human mind is constantly utilizing the raw material of ideas that it ingests for philosophizing about the countless unsolved mysteries within and around us, while it is also attempting to foreshadow that which it has not yet encountered. According to Allot, in the end, our intuitive tendency to philosophize is the way that our ideas give rise to, and nourish our conscious mind, allowing our personal worldviews to harmonize with the larger worldview that bears the collective thought of the society in which we live (p.1165).

He notes that in Plato’s Republic, the individual’s mind creates the self as an outgrowth of the great universal mind. The mind of the individual, having created the self, is forever laboring to shape and reshape itself into as near-perfect a form as is possible. While the operations going on in the active presence of a universalized value-system in the mind, a grand prize awaits in the form of ideal happiness. Along with that, the mind continues to act upon ideas in order to alter its world, including its society, into forms that it finds most conducive to its own evolving state. For that reason, the self will always be in flux. But, quite outside of any direct effect from the society, the ideal of a “government”, a figment of the mind, begins to take shape, and with it, political principles and morality begin to emerge (pp. 1166-1173).

**Additive/Variant**: What we can say is that in Allot’s analysis ofPlato’s *Republic*, the human mind is innately wired to formulate philosophy. Therefore, the ideals of politics and morality emerge among the philosophical progenies of the human mind. Further, the idea of government is a mental construct that has no direct connection to society—it is not even a product of society, as many think. My belief, however, is that “A people deserves the government it has, and the political philosophy that gives birth to government, must be one of the several birth children spawned by the society.”

**Contextualization**: The political leader ordinarily appears as head of the state because he aspires to be the leader of others. His first, and sadly, sometimes his sole objective, is to secure and hold power. In his quest for power, he makes an assessment of the fact that the larger mass of people is looking for someone to believe in; someone whom they think is better than they are; someone possessing, perhaps a god given right to take charge of them and assume the role of the *pariens patriae*. He may either be a member of the society or an outsider, who is able to dress up the ideals of his promises in a garb that the society thinks is fitting for how it sees itself. So, he picks a few delegates or sycophants who are either members of the society, or who could, like the leader, himself, find outsiders who are able to sell his political philosophy of “hope”, or sow seeds of discord, or to inspire fear in the hearts of as many as possible. In this respect, the leader knows that he must become what the group sees as a master, or a “teacher”, ruling them from the front of the classroom. Seeing him in the posture he has taken, they either come to trust him, or fear him, or to expect of him the kind of protection that falls in all three categories. Yet, despite the leader’s primary goal to be recognized as the one who possesses the power to rule over them—some political leaders manage to be benevolent—some manage to become like school masters—teachers (James 1:3 NIV; KJV). Still, in the end, all governments are fashioned to reflect the image of the guardian class as in Plato’s *Republic*. For they belong to a class that presumes to represent the society, as a whole, whether the leader’s goal is to satisfy his own self interest or the interest of the people who make up the society he represents.

1. **Comment**: How philosophy helps the mind to understand the universe.

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Philip Allot tells us that this new way of thinking, this thing called philosophy, in which the Greeks had come to appreciate as the process of understanding and manipulating ideas, had begun to expand the human mind to a level of consciousness well beyond its known self and its society into the far reaches of the universe. Prior to the arrival of philosophy, mythology and religion were the natural channels through which the human mind would eek out a way to tap into the mysteries of the known and unknown universe. “Inspired by Pythagoras, the Greeks, like their contemporaries in some other cultures, had also found an ultimate form of universalizing in mathematics” (pp. 1166-1168).

**Additive/Variant**: My belief is that it cannot be that “philosophy” took over the role of attempting to unravel the mysteries of the universe as was previously done through religion and mythology. Instead, philosophy seems to have, somehow, become integrated into religion and mythology in the attempt of the human mind to tie the more easily accessible realities around us to the realities of the more distant universe.

**Contextualization**: If we attempt to define “religion” and “mythology” apart, in a mathematical way, we might want to see them as two overlapping sets with a significant number of common members. In many instances, it may even be as well to use the two words interchangeably in a manner that denotes a kind of quasi synonymous relationship. “Mythology” (A) may be defined as that umbrella term that is used for identifying the gods in respect to their rank and specialty in the times of “classical” antiquity, and how the gods’ often ungodly interactions with humans, influence man’s behavior, enroute to helping man shape his societies and traditions. In that respect, most of what “religion” (B) is, falls within the intersection between mythology and religion (A ∩ B) on the Venn diagram. On the basis of this, one would think that it is mythology, the broader of the two terms, that was actually displaced in the Hellenistic period by the arrival of philosophy, not religion, *per se*. And at length, it would have been religion, rather than mythology that became integrated with philosophy, but never really displaced.

1. **Comment**: The effect of union between the symbolism of language and philosophy.

**Quote/Paraphrase**: The author says that through mathematics, it became possible for the human mind to represent physical realities in “numbers and symbols and concepts (Kepler’s laws of planetary motion, Newton’s mechanics, etc.)” (p. 1167). Then, the human mind had begun to develop even greater mastery in its ability “to represent a universal reality of our existence. . . [by means of] the symbolism of language” (p. 1167) to work in tandem with philosophy. So, because of this marriage between philosophy and mathematics, the human mind became better equipped to universalize specific aspects of the infinite realities in ways that are still transforming the world (pp. 1166-1167).

**Additive/Variant**: What Allot says about the force which emerged to give the human mind its expanded capacity to utilize the language of mathematics is a point well taken. But, at the same time, Allot’s effort to dub the “symbolism of language” (implicitly, the symbolism of mathematics) as some newly evolved instrument that makes the human mind something of a catalytic converter of both the finite and infinite realities it encounters is flawed. All languages are symbolic and transformative. The language of life (DNA and RNA), for instance, is both symbolic and transformative; so is computer coding; so are the cultural languages such as, Greek, English, French, and so forth. So, yes, indeed! The “symbolism of language”, in the human mind, is a gift, not because it is transformative, in itself, but because it allows one individual to use a code (sound, script, or whatever) to transmit selected activities in his mind to others outside of him who possess the facility to decode the transmission and experience the activity he has in his head. Truly, mathematics does all the wonderful things Allot says it does, and more, because its symbolism, unlike that of the cultural languages, works universal and is succinct.

**Contextualization**: I am a retired teacher with State Certification in Mathematics, English Language and Literature, and School Administration. I did Education at NYU and CUNY, and later, School Administration at CCNY. Over a period of two years, I taught English Language and Literature (grades 9-12) under New York City Board of Education (BOE or DOE). I then taught grades 3-6 (1 semester), grades 7-8 (3 ½ years), and grades 9-12 for 24 years under my mathematics certification. With this, I believe my experience and education in mathematics and education should afford me a modest enough licence to comment intelligently on the human mind’s earliest display (from childhood) of its ability to utilize mathematics as an enzymic ingredient in its effort to transform man’s immediate environment, while, also attempting to connect man with the universe.

The point made by Allot that the Greeks of the Hellenic period had discovered mathematics and had since pioneered its use in combination with philosophy in ways that have altered the world is critical, mainly because it has opened the door to a very important discussion. But to accept this thesis, one would also be compelled to accept the corollary that humanity had made no real transformative achievements, in mathematics, to speak of, prior to that started by the Greeks during the Hellenic period.

If that is true, it would mean that I had wasted the better part of twenty-eight years as a mathematics teacher miseducating the youth of New York City. That would surely have been my real Socratic dilemma (Crito). At the same time, that would be as much as one saying that the earliest Egyptian pyramids, dating as far back as 3,000 BC, with all its still undecipherable display of sophisticated science and engineering, would have been accomplished without any of the prodigious levels of mathematical achievements Allot accredits to the Greek between 507 BC and 323 BC (en.m.wikipedia.org). To make the point we need only to offer up the discovery of the *ishango bone.*

According to archeologists, the *ishango bone* found near the headwaters of the Nile, at the “Fisherman Settlement” of Ishango, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, probably goes back to before 20,000 BC. The markings on it are arranged in three lengthwise columns. The consensus of most experts is that it is a tally of a sequence of prime numbers or a six-month lunar calendar. Peter Rudman rightly argues that “the concept of prime numbers could only have come about after the concept of division, which he dates sometime after 10,000 BC”. Rudman also claims that mathematicians of Western Civilization never really got a firm handle on prime numbers until sometime around 500 BC. (Ruderman, Peter Strom, 2007). Alexander Marshack suggests that early Egyptian mathematics apparently came about out of the manipulation of the *ishango bone* (Marshanck, 1991).

Dobbs, Darrell (1994, Sep.). The piety of thought in *Plato’s Republic, Book I*. *The American*

*Political Science Review.* 88 (3), 668-683.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/2944802>

1. **Comment**: Is God the source of morality

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Dobbs (1994) introduces Plato’s *Republic* in a didactic debate format among a group of philosophers over the question of whether piety has a place in the ideal republic. He points to the fact that Socrates is Plato’s protagonist who, quite rightly, is placed at center stage as the one whose attitude to religion is being spoken of as exemplary of what a model citizen’s attitude to piety should be. Dobbs points to Socrates’ claim that the citizen’s involvement in partisan political wranglings is, in itself, a descent into hell—an unproductive endeavor (Brann 1967, pp. 3-6). But since politics is the life’s blood of the republic, any citizen who become involved in a partisan way should be sufficiently armed with the breast plate of “morality” so as to be able to balance the scales of justice (p. 670).

**Additive/Variant**: Morality and, hence, justice are essential nutrients to sustain the health of the state as a durable sociopolitical entity. The need for political leaders to act in ways guided by morality forces the question of whether the source of morality is sacral or secular, or both. One thing is certain, politics without morality is the absence of justice and the absence of justice is anarchy.

**Contextualization**: In every situation in which an organized body of people is led by one person or a small group of people, government exists. And, wherever there is government, there is politics. The principal of a school, or the teacher in a classroom is a political leader. Teachers and school administrators have the obligation to deliver the education package to students with fairness. That exercise of fairness is morality, which, I believe, in a high percentage of cases, is instinctive. Is the tendency of the educator to be fair God-given (James 3:1 & 17).

1. **Comment**: The Piety of Socrates and “Divine Intelligence”

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Dobbs explains that to Socrates, like to philosophers of every era, there in a recognition of a necessary and eternal being—a god. “Socrates prayers to the goddess [Artemis] would naturally express and conform with his own acknowledgment of mankind’s fortitude and contingency.” Dobbs says that one needs to have an appreciation of the limitations of the human condition in order to appreciate Socrates. He says that Socrates believes that there is a dichotomy in human nature. On the one hand, a man must truly know himself. On the other hand, the individual human must recognize that while there is a huge gap between mankind and God, man should also bring himself to recognize that he has the capacity for “divine intelligence”. And so, each of us should strive for the highest level of excellence (p. 670).

**Additive/Variant**: It appears that Socrates was thought by his contemporaries to be a-religious, or possibly, agnostic. In the *Republic*, Plato has taken care to inform us that Socrates prayed to Artemis, but some might think that Socrates did not have the kind of reverence for the gods that one would have expected from a godly person. Socrates appeared to have placed man on par with God in his suggestion that man has the capacity to apply “divine intelligence”. The way I see it is that if one considers man to possess “divine intelligence” it is as much to say that man has godly qualities that other animals do not (Gen 1:27).

**Contextualization**: In 2006, a small group of us were flying from New York to Holland on our way to Ghana. I had no sleep the night before because I was busy packing. So, I contented myself with the thought that I was going to be able to grab some sleep while in flight, but that did not happen. As it turned out, I was extremely exhausted—too frayed and jittery to sleep. However, I flew from New York to Holland with my eyes closed. And, in all of that time, I busied myself doodling mental lines and arcs until they began to meet together tangentially. By the time the plane started to edge in, about a hundred miles or so closer to the landing strip, at Schiphol, the arcs had begun to curl around into complete imaginary concentric circles that soon began to seem as though they were dropping out of the squares while spinning to create something of a swirling vortex. But the twirling tornado-like image in my head had begun to slow down by the time we left Holland the following morning. And by the time we got to Accra, an equation popped into my head. In Ghana, I immediately settled down to simply and prove the equation. Within two hours, I had proven the mysterious equation. When I tested the equation on the vortex, it was able to give me the exact measurements of the radius of every circle or “edge” in the vortex to the N th degree. My friend and colleague, Sackeyfio, as well as our wives were there with me, in our friends’ Ghana home. When I showed it to them, they said not much more than, “Wow! That’s neat!”

A few years later, I showed it to a friend (a Math A.P. of a NYC high school). He was thoroughly mystified at how I came up with the equation. I myself had never questioned where the equation came from. I had just taken it for granted. But now, for the first time, I was beginning to realize how mysterious it was. That was when I began to realize that God had given me the equation. Now, at last, I am able to put a name to the process—“Divine Intelligence”.

1. **Comment**: Socrates belief that to attempt to find God because of fear is flawed

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Dobbs (1986) tells us that in the ongoing debate among the philosophers, in the *Republic* Book I, Socrates broaches the question of how personal wealth could negatively impact one’s religious life, and hence, one’s moral conduct in the republic. Dobbs calls attention to Socrates’ narrative about how the admiration he previously felt for Cephalus had begun to wane when he learned how desperately afraid Cephalus was of dying. He comments that in the *Republic* (Book I), Socrates theorized that Cephalus’ preoccupation with death appears to have sprung from his realization that if there were incidences in which he had carried out acts of injustice, during his life, his soul would be in jeopardy of eternal pain in the afterlife. The other concluded that because of such considerations, Cephalus had chosen to be religious in his old age (pp. 671-‘72). Dobbs cites Pascal’s assessment of Cephalus’ flawed approach to piety as disingenuous, and a demonstration of how one’s new-found faith could wind up being more centered in rationalist philosophy than in genuine piety, as it should (Pascal 1986, §418 and §410). So, in the end, Cephalus’ sense of genuine piety and justice is labeled as false. And, it is thus, that Plato presents the relationship between piety and philosophy (Dobbs p. 672).

**Additive/Variant**: Socrates believed that people who claim to believe in God should not do so because he or she is worried about his or her own mortality or any other material consideration. A true believer should feel driven to be godly because of some inner desire to connect with God.

**Contextualization**: I think that all of us have experienced some kind of miraculous unexplainable occurrences in our lives. But most of us, in the immediate *post facto* moments of reflection upon these events, do not think of any of it as “divine”. Rather, we tend to dismiss them as, “chance,” “luck,” “epiphany,” or simply, “weird.” And by so doing we miss the opportunity to realize the product of faith by not exercising that very act of faith. Those of us who find ourselves in that place could very easily wind up like Cephalus. St. Augustine discovered God through faith, but after delving into the Pauline books he came to realize that other disciplines, including the sciences or mathematics, could also be useful in helping one to find God—hence, his acceptance of scholasticism (Smith).

Cowell, Jason M., Decety, Jean (2016, Feb 10). Empathy, justice, and moral behavior. *AJOB*

*Neurosci*, 6(3), 3-14. Published online 2015 Jul 30.

Doi: 10.1080/21507740.2015.1047055.

1. **Comment**: Where “empathy” means the maintenance of diversity

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Cowell and Decety (2016) call our attention to President Obama’s words about the part that “empathy” plays in the dispensation of “justice”. The president was asked about the standard that he would use to guide his decision in the selection of a Supreme Court judge. Cowell quotes the president as saying, “ ‘I will seek someone who understands that justice isn’t just about some abstract legal theory or footnote in a casebook: it is also about how laws affect the daily realities of people’s lives.’ The kind of judge, Obama explained, will have empathy: ‘I view the quality of empathy, of understanding and identifying with people’s hopes and struggles as an essential ingredient for arriving at just decisions and outcomes. . .I am talking about an inability to recognize ourselves in anothers: to understand we are our brother’s keeper. . . ’ “(Cowell and Decety, p. ).

**Additive/Variant**: Having accepted the principle that the reason why the republic needs judges is that it is necessary to have officers of the state who are knowledgeable about the law, and thus, be able to determine when the law is broken, and if so, what should the “just” penalty be. The notion that justice is blind presupposes that a good judge may pass judgement within the special frame of “situational ethics”, but he should do so dispassionately—with sympathy perhaps, but definitely not “empathy”. So, while the Obama’s answer to the question about his criteria for the selection justices was an interesting political answer, it was not an appropriate answer that would satisfy the conditions of a just state.

**Contextualization**: Yet, shrouded in the Obama central criterion of “empathy” in the selection of judges is, as it turned out, a hidden promise that the judges selected by him would dispense justice that looks more like America. As it turned out, the judges he selected included African Americans, Hispanics, women, and so forth. Like the Obama judiciary, at the highest levels, the “faces” of American children in public schools should be, but are not mirrored in the faces of those who teach them. If fairness in wake of diversity is what the president meant by “empathy”, then, America needs more empathy, all the way across the board, in order for it to become a truly just society.

1. **Comment**: How empathy is translated into vested interest

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Cowell and Decety cite the author Cohen who pointed out that law and morality are mutually exclusive and that there are entire legal systems that exist solely for the purpose of propping up immoral political systems such as that exemplified by the South African Apartheid system of government between 1948 and 1994. Empathy, when moving toward the positive side of the equation and not moving toward its more immoral extremes, might well be that most vital character-trait in candidates vying for judgeships—the quality that would stir the feeling of compassion for “a young teenage mom or to understand what it’s like to be poor, African American, or gay”(Decety). Such a candidate, vying for a seat on the bench, would recognize the need to seek the expertise of “medical ethicists . . . [who would] have empathy when examining cost effectiveness or resource allocation in medical care” (Cowell and Decety 2016, p.6).

**Additive/Variant**: The point about having judges who can relate to those who are being judged makes sense in terms of “situational ethics”. If a state happens to be a kleptocracy, its laws would be designed to maintain a political system run by kleptocrats. Yet, such a state could not be properly considered moral or just. The fact that the laws of such a state are tied to thievery, someone would have to be the culprit and someone else, the victim of theft. That would be an immoral, unjust political system. And so was Apartheid.

**Contextualization**: In New York City public school system (BOE), during the late 1990s, eighty percent of the students were Black and Hispanic. The racial make-up of the faculty population was 14% Hispanic, 19% Black, and 55% White with 50% of the Whites being Jewish. At that time, most of the children of faculty attended Yeshivas, and religious or parochial schools. At least 60% of the teachers of color also tended to send their children to private schools. Not surprisingly, a high percentage of the faculty could hardly wait for the end of their workday to stumble over one another while flying out of the school. Meanwhile, most of the teachers whose children attended public schools involved themselves in unpaid after school and non-school day activities involving the students. This latter group of teachers had what educators call “vested interest” in the students that the others did not have.

1. **Comment**: A scientific look at “empathy”

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Cowell and Decety (2016) point out that in their examination of “. . . the intersection of neuroscience and psychology on the study of empathy and moral decision making. . . . Drawing from theoretical and empirical work in developmental science, social psychology, and affective neuroscience, we argue that empathy should be regarded with caution and is not enough to serve as a central motivation in driving moral judgment and decision-making. The evidence supports a moderate view of the role of empathy in morality. Cognitive reasoning is equally important for moral reasoning and justice. Understanding the role of empathy in morality requires a precise description of what the concept of empathy embraces” (Cowell and Decety).

Additive/Variant: According to the common usage of “empathy”, there is no direct relationship between empathy and morality. Empathy is the tendency to feel the pain, joy or anguish someone else is feeling (Concise Oxford English Dictionary).

**Contextualization**: Empirically, “empathy” is commonly seen in the interaction and relationship between teacher and student who have a language in common (dialect, etc.), or share cultural, ethnic or racial backgrounds.

Varkey, Basil (2021 Feb). Principals of clinical ethics and their application to practice. Med Princ

Pract, 30(1), 17-28. Published online 2020 Jun 4. doi: 10.1159/000509119.

1. **Comment**: Common morality and particular morality

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Varkey (2021) discusses two different types of morality. He says that ethics, in the broadest sense, is the study of the nature of morals and the specific moral choices we are sometimes forced to make because of special situations in which we find ourselves. He goes on to say that “normative ethics” forces us to seek guidance and to evaluate what our conduct should be, and why. This applies in those situations where the moral standards are common to all humans simply because we find ourselves constrained to act in ways that straight jacket all of us to follow the same set of specific rules of conduct, regardless of our backgrounds and circumstances. This form of morality is exemplified by the proper conduct one is expected to exhibit even when one desires a self-serving set of conditions, which, if satisfied, would violate the rights or well-being of others, or in cases where one is faced with an issue of law, or a matter involving the principles of altruism. The weight of such ethical decisions all fitting tightly within the categorical frame of what Varkey calls, “common morality.“

Next, he addresses a type of morality that falls within the class of what he calls, “particular morality.” This type of morality is tied to the choice one makes by adjusting the required judgement or punitive treatment one is required to administer because of some special existing conditions that is not taken into account by the law or regulation (Varkey 2021, n.p.n.).

**Additive/Variant**: For instance, if you are bothered by loud noises, but find yourself trapped in a public space where some other person is “self-talking” at an extremely loud pitch, and you feel an urge to go over to him and shut him up, but you restrain yourself and suck it in. That situation in which you applied self-restraint is what Varkey calls “common morality”. Varkey’s “particular morality” called “situation(al) ethics” is said to be derived from the German, *situationsethik*. This means that, “With the intent to have a fair basis for judgements or action, one looks to personal ideals of what is appropriate to guide, rather than an unchanging universal code of conduct, such as Biblical law under divine command theory or the Kantian categorical imperative. Proponents of situational approaches to ethics include existentialist philosophers Sartre, de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, Jasper, and Heidegger” (*Wikipedia*).

**Contextualization**: In the New York State Regent High School science and mathematics examinations, 60% of the mark earned by the student is based on the multiple choice (objective quantitative) portion of the examination. However, 40% of the grade is based on the short answer questions where the student is required to demonstrate his ability to expand the application of postulates, and prove theorems. Only New York State certified teachers in the specific content area are allowed to grade the short answer portion of the examination because it requires specialized knowledge and understanding of the content area to appreciate each student’s “particular” intellectual approach to the problem.

1. **Comment**: The right to self-determinism

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Vaykey (2021) draws support from Emmanuel Kant and John Stuart Mills in making the case for the ethical principle involving one’s individual right to self-determinism—the right to make moral choices—as a result of one’s individual worth. He points out that “This ethical principle was affirmed in a court decision by Justice Cardozo in 1914 with the epigrammatic dictum, ‘Every human being of adult years and sound mind has a right to determine what shall be done with his own body’ “(Vaykey 2021).

**Additive/Variant**: Vaykey’s endorsement of individual’s right to self-determination is, in a sense, a revisitation to the medieval tectonic shift from feudal system toward the recognition of the individual rights of the “common” man when King John I’s was forced to sign the *Magna Carta*, in 1215 (Oxford Dictionary of National Biography).  
Still, the idea did not ripen to fullness, in theory, at least, until the “Rights of man” and the “Bill of Rights” sometime about 1789. But the promise that the coming to fruit of the ideal would mean that the state (the republic) would achieve its supreme objective of “the greatest good for the greatest number” appears not merely to have been wilting, but is completely blighted on the vine.

**Contextualization**: So far, teachers (masters) still impart knowledge and skill, and applaud themselves for having done well. They still insist that “learning is change” but they leave the communities in which they taught worse off than they found them. If self-determinism means anything, it could not be that those who have been taught well have fared worse because they have chosen to do badly?

1. **Comment**: What is “Distributive Justice”?

**Quote/Paraphrase**: According to Vaykey, “Justice is generally interpreted as fair equitable and appropriate treatment of persons. Of the several categories of justice, the one that is most pertinent to clinical ethics is *distributive justice.*” Vaykey defines distributive justice as it applies to health-care is an equitable appropriation of treatments, benefits and resources in accordance with standards that have been test-run through processes that sets up the terms of social cooperation. In this case, the apportionment of “just desert” is weighted under special conditions that are not restricted to the purist notion of a justice meted out on the baseline principle that treats justice as that which is served out strictly by “Measure for Measure”. Such justice is distributed in accordance with, effort, contribution, merit, etc. (Vaykey, 2021).

**Additive/Variant**: The proposition, here, is that real justice occurs only where there is “fair equitable and appropriate treatment of persons”. In the same breath that Vaykey makes this statement, he invokes what is called Distributive Justice. What does it mean? It means that while it is fair to serve the people in a queue at the door of a hospital with accordance to their place in line, if the person in tenth place is having a heart attack, but the person in first place has a cut finger, it would be “just” to serve the person in tenth place first.

**Contextualization**: As an English teacher, I have taught that the trial of Mazie in Sir Walter Scott’s *Heart of Midlothian* stands out among the best of English literature on justice, where justice is that fruit of morality, which, when held within the foster care of man, must be served on the basis of motive.

Glennon, Billy; Hancocks, Matthew; Spinosa, Charles & Tsoukas, Haridimos (2023).

Beyond rational persuasion: How leaders change moral norms. *Journal of Business*

*Ethics*, 184 (n. s.), 589-603. Published 15 June 2022.

1. **Comment**: The promotion of a moral norm by leadership

**Quote/Paraphrase**: According to Glennon et al (2022) in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche noted that the primary act of leadership is to create values (1989: 211) “. . . . Plato recommended ‘philosopher kings’ who would understand the good and create a just polis (1987, pp. 260-325). Weber stressed the ‘inner determination and inner strength’ of the charismatic leader. . . (1946, p. 246).’ ” Glennon et al cites Selznick in his claim that the main duty of a leader is to transform his organization into an institution by injecting morals into it (Selznick, 1984, p. 57, n.20). He also utilizes Kaptein’s belief that “In organizations, moral values give rise to moral norms—i.e., influential standards of good behavior (Kaptein, 2019, p. 1139)—, which together constitute normative orders” (Glennon et al, 2023, n.p.n.).

**Additive/Variant**: Here, it is being proposed that an essential part of the mechanism that drives the polity of any organization is a certain set of moral principles that, being sponsored by leadership, gradually becomes standard practice. In essence, states, like all organizations, tend to be more balanced and productive when they keep a firm grip on morality.

**Contextualization**: In every classroom, the teacher’s overall role is that of leader. But although the teacher’s job to impart knowledge, skills, and change behaviors seems to be front and center among the reasons for his being there, classroom management is his number one job as leader. Why? Without a good classroom management system in place, there will be no learning. The teacher always has the never-ending task of managing a whole range of psycho-social issues. To do this, he must, from the very first day, set routines tied to a set of moral or ethical codes that is constant and durable in that particular classroom.

1. **Comment**: Ethics and moral change

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Glennon et al (2023) informs us that researchers are recognizing that it is critical for values (morals) to be injected into the organization, and then, follow that up by devising new ways to engineer positive changes in the norms (moral norms) in order to help set the direction and spur the growth of the organization. Today, researchers are beginning to take interest in how positive norm changes occur under ethical leadership. In such situations, these leaders usually include “moral entrepreneurs” who are able to create new ethical norms.

**Additive/Variable**: It does appear that the authors of this article are claiming that the growth and success of any organization requires that there be a moral component that can be tweaked so that it will evolve with the organization’s success as needed. My belief is that there are organizations that lack the moral component that also thrives. Are there any?

**Contextualization**: Back in the days when I taught and invigilated (proctored) Art, English Language, and English Literature at the O’ Level (Cambridge and London) in Jamaica, I became, like all other teachers in the British Commonwealth, who were given the privilege to handle those examinations. The moral code that determined how we handled the papers was extremely strict and, in the short term, faculty would automatically fall in line with what was expected of them in terms of extremely strict ethical standard for handling the examination material we had come to accept the moral conduct required of us as a given.

Years later, as a teacher handling the New York State Regents Examinations, I had brought with me a similar sense of awe and respect for the NYS Regents Examination as I did for the British examination. But one Year, I entered a room where a young teacher (MS) was proctoring an Algebra Regents Examination and was stunned to find him walking around, giving students answers from the examination answer key. He had only been a member of the Mathematics Department for two years. I told my friend and colleague (ES) what I had stumbled upon. Together, we decided to talk to him about it but not tell administration. ES and I found out later that the assistant principal knew about it and may even have been the person who gave him the answer key. The school was closed in 2012 but teacher MS is now a school principal.

1. **Comment**: The three sides of moral leadership

**Quote/ Précis**: Glennon et al suggests that, in the face of the new burgeoning appreciation of norm-change, three problems exist. First, the active involvement of leadership in norm change still remains stalled on the launch pad, as just an interesting topic of discussion, with no real movement (Miller, 1992, pp. 221-6). Glennon et al then identify the second problem as the incognizance of leadership to the fact that rule-breaking is one of the causes of negative norm-change (Badaracco, 1997, 2001; Cunha et al., 2013; Fraher & Grint, 2010; Tourish, 2013, 2020). It is in such cases that moral entrepreneurship theorists are seeing new norms filling up the void wherever moral judgments are substituted (Kaptein, 2019, pp.1141-1143). Thirdly, “rule-breaking sometimes involves acts of symbolic, emotional, or physical violence, as sacrificing troops, civilians, top employees, or operating units for the sake of morality and practically valuable purpose” (Eagleton, 2020; Yurtsever, 2003, p.3). Such rule-breaking poses a great deal of risk for the formal leaders who are doing it (Glennon et al, 2023).

**Additive/Variant**: So, the leader’s sponsorship of the ethical norm is a vital piece in the making of a successful productive organization. But, inversely, when the leader himself violates the ethics or fails to set up ethical pathways and boundaries, a moral void is created in the workplace. As a result, there will be a kind of free-for-all in which a rash of broken rules and indiscipline will be substituted where there is an absence of ethical and moral norm. In that way, the organization could wind up being thwarted from its intended direction or goal.

**Contextualization**: it is common knowledge that New York City Board of Education (BOE or DOE) is the second largest school district in the country. When I entered the BOE system, in 1981, there were very strict codes of conduct for personnel of all levels. But there was a different unwritten ethical path carved out for White faculty from that for faculty of Color. The main entrance way into the classroom was the same on paper, but in application, they were different. Tenure was a safe covert of protection for teachers but those of Color rarely made it into that safe place. Perhaps that explains why “The complexities and vagaries that surround tenure in New York are a source of constant litigation” (Stelzer and Bunthin, p. 4). Once a qualified candidate completed the licensing examinations, he or she was fingerprinted, then given a copy of the teachers’ contract with the BOE Regulations and sent to the Hiring Hall for placement. A good part of these regulations had to do with professional conduct (including interpersonal relations and ethical conduct). The school administration was also bound by its set of rules, some of which, required that the principal and supervisors not violate the teachers’ contract. However, imbedded in the administrative culture is a “moral” code that is inclined toward seeing the faculty of Color as the few who managed to squeeze under barbed wire fence, into the cuckoos’ nest, and the ones who needed to be gotten out as expeditiously as possible.

At the same time, teachers of Color, erroneously believe that they, like all the others, were protected by the same laws and regulations. According to the regulations, if the teacher feels that his or her rights are being trampled, he or she has the right to file a Step 1 Grievance that would be heard by the very principal who had trampled on his or her rights. A high percentage of Step One decisions were unfavorable to Black teachers who invariably wound up appealing at the next two “internal” (within BOE) levels—one to the superintendency and the next to the chancellery.

In general, between 1998 and 2003, 68% of the average grievances by BOE teachers were upheld in favor of the principal at the superintendent’s and chancellor’s levels. But by 2008, under the Bloomberg Administration, only 2% of grievances by DOE teachers were upheld in favor of teachers. Why so? Under the Bloomberg Administration (DOE), principals had been given absolute power, *carte blanche* to violate the contract and teachers’ rights.

At the same time, principals were being given bonuses for increase in students’ attendance as well as increase in graduation rates. Yet, SAT scores dropped and teachers, working in conjunction with principals, were caught changing answers on students’ NYS Regents exams.

In my school, a couple of principals were exposed for “fixing” the attendance. The first of these two was eventually forced to retire. The last of these two principals was found to have given NYS Regents credit in Chemistry to students for passing their Cosmetology (hair dressing) course. She was demoted and the school was eventually closed (Philips, 2011) which was thanks chiefly to the moral collapse and failure of administration in being the proper agents of justice.

Bauman, Christopher W., Mullen, Elizabeth, Skitka Linda J. (2017). Morality and Justice.

C. Sabbagh, M. Schmitt (eds.), *Handbook of Social Justice Theory and Research*, doi: 10.1007/978-1-4939-3216-0\_22.

1. **Comment**: Piaget’s and morality and sense of justice in young children at play

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Bauman et al (2017) state that the foundational planks upon which rest the commonly accepted theory of moral development, in humans, was first laid down by Jean Piaget, in 1939. After observing young children at play, Piaget concluded that such children tend to place a high premium on fairness. And, as a result of those observations, he concluded that very young children show a strict obedience to rules during play. He also found that as children get older, they begin to recognize that rules are subject to change. He observed that children become more and more taken with the desire to find the best possible ways to promote social interaction while playing within the girders of fairness (justice) generally accepted by the group, they are willing to modify or alter rules. With that, the authors say, Piaget concluded that moral development is the end-product of interpersonal interactions, and that through it, problem-solving approaches its peak in an atmosphere wherein sits a strong abiding sense of justice (Bauman et al, 2017, pp. 407-’08).

**Additive/Variant**: In their citation of the conclusions drawn from Piaget’s observation of very young children at play, Bauman and the others appear to be using Piaget’s finding to answer the long-standing question of whether morality and, hence, justice in humans, are innate or learned. They tell us that Piaget’s observation led him to conclude that “moral development” appears to be fed by social interaction among people who are engaging in problem-solving activities connected with justice. But, in none of this is there a clear crisp indication that there were any measurable behaviors of newborn in his attempt to answer the question of whether morality and or a conscious sense of justice is innate. Just to cite Piaget’s conclusions from his observation of the moral behavior of “very young” children alone does not quite get it.

**Contextualization**: One of the intangibles of the behavioral objectives that New York City public school teacher strives to achieve is to ensure that children be always on track to develop “socialization skill”. Regardless of content area, an important part of what the teacher does is to direct students who have already shown mastery in a particular skill go around the classroom and help those who are having difficulty. In that process, students are forced to utilize interpersonal as well as their practical skill and knowledge they have developed in the subject area. Not only is this one example of best practices in the development of socialization skill, but through this approach, students acquire the tendency to dutifully initiate a kind of peer-assistance, over time, without being asked. So, by cultivating that sense of responsibility for the success of the other guy in children there is clearly some degree of moral development going on, but who is to say whether a seed already there was watered by the teacher. Perhaps!

1. **Comment**: Kohlberg’s six stages of Piaget’s theory on moral development

**Quote/Paraphrase**: These authors summed up Piaget’s conclusion on moral development as an outgrowth of justice. They add that, by 1981, Kohlberg had taken the Piaget theory on moral development and broken it down into six segments he called stages. The first and second of these stages accentuate an innate self-centeredness in humans that leads them to see justice either as a cudgel being raised over someone’s head to administer punishment or a trophy that is being award for some outstanding act. In the next 3 and 4 stages, the individual begins to act as if he feels a need to meet conditions of what he thinks others expect of him. They do so in order to have others, individually or as a group, see them in a good light. Further, in these two latter stages, the individual is beginning to develop consideration for others while putting out deliberate effort to be seen as a law-abiding citizen who feels he or she is obliged to contribute to society (Bauman et al, 2017, p. 408).

**Additive/Variant**: The breakdown of Piaget’s theory about the development of morality and a sense of justice into six stages pretty much sums up the belief that man’s moral and judicious behaviors in his relationship with one another is first centered in how one projects one’s own self needs, one’s consideration of retribution, and consideration of what others expect of him or her.

**Contextualization**: The first most important part of the teacher’s commission is not that which has to do with the imparting of knowledge, skill, and concept in the content area, but more to do with “fairness” in grading and other classroom management functions guided by his moral compass. For, the teacher’s first job is to stimulate moral development and exercise a sense of justice.

The “great recession” of 2008 that hurt the United States and the world financial and banking systems was trigged by moral turpitude. Just prior to when the sub-prime loan took the economy into a financial nose dive, one Wall Street executive was quoted as saying that, “It’s a House of Cards. I just want to get mine before it all crashes!” Those were the words of a morally bankrupt Ivy League man. Would a truly educated person be willing to get his at the expense of so many.

1. **Commen**t: Kohlberg’s stages five and six of moral development

**Quote Paraphrase**: The authors tell us that according to Kohlberg, people’s entry into stage five of their moral development begins to show an appreciation for the necessity of law. They begin to see the law as that set of instruments which supports co-existence of people among one another despite their being from radically different backgrounds—despite their actions being driven by such extremely varying needs, interests, and concerns. They come to see the laws, as the reins on society in the hand of government; the rains that are meant to restraint on people’s behavior with the attitude of respect for another’s rights. This is where the individual begins to realize that, as a member of society, he or she is bound to live up to the social contract held in place by the restraint of law. In stage six, though, the individual, having graduated from stage five, begins to realize that the law, or social contract among members of the society, is meaningless if the evidence shows that the principles of justice are not applied universally. At this stage, one’s judgment about the extent to which justice exists is “motivated by self-condemnation,” rather than by the approving or disapproving voice of society. (Bauman et al, 2017, p. 408).

**Additive/Variant**: To put it plainly, laws help to restrain self-serving “accultured impulses” and by so doing, they compel us to work toward tolerance. For, without restraint (be it law or religion), there in no tolerance and without tolerance, there is no justice. The author uses the term “self-condemnation” in highlighting the type of motivational force behind what people in the sixth stage expect justice to look like in a society. But the term is quite abstruse. If I have to hazard a guess as to what is meant by “self-condemnation” I would say, it is the kind of “personal morality” that grows out of a cathartic response to the two tragic emotions—fear and pity—that that are triggered by a tragic event (Aristotle, apx. 335 B.C.).

**Contextualization**: One of the steps taken to apply breaks to the great recession of 2008, and then, put it into reverse, was the installation of a new set of banking regulations. In recent years, a number of these regulations were rolled back. The Symphony Bank and a couple of others, in the Silicon Valley area, decided to take advantage of the recently lifted regulations under the Trump administration so as to feed the gluttony of the CEOs and executives who wanted “more”. As a result, Symphony, and its cohort banks that followed suit, collapsed.

Here, there is a lesson to be learned from the Dickensian “Oliver Twist” who, by asking for more, was “hung and quartered”. But these bankers did not ask for more; they took more and left a mess that the Feds had to clean up. It was their moral descent to “avarice”. But avarice is not a virtue, it is a vice. And in this case, these bankers were gluttonous people bent on getting more at the risk of hurting others—it was immoral.

Sonto-Manning, Marriana (2021, Dec. 7). On the mis-education of teachers of color: Letter to

teachers’ educators. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 73 (1), n.p.n.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/00224871211057>.

1. **Comment**: Myth of racial inferiority among humans propagated by teachers colleges

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Sonto-Manning (2021) states that “Rooted in a long history of racial privileges, teacher education naturalizes Whiteness, misrepresentations and/or suppresses the lived-experiences of people of Color and deploy anti-Blackness ‘to uphold whiteness and White supremacy. . . .[T]his oppressive racial practice shapes U.S. life and the racism that all people of Color experience’ (pp.3-4). Such patterns are visible when teacher education marginalizes racial justice priorities and pursuits in favor of the acquisition of hegemonic content knowledge (Philip et al. 2019)“ (Sont-Manning, 2021, n.p.n.).

**Additive/Variant**: The miseducation of American children begins with how and what American teachers are taught in teachers’ colleges. The content-material in these programs is generally designed to reinforce the belief that White people are superior to people of Color. Therefore, by the time the teacher gets trained and enters the classroom, he or she is already thoroughly indoctrinated to propagate the White lie about colored people’s inferiority. It is also a matter of importance that the article does not stipulate whether the “whitewashing” of graduates by American teachers’ colleges is carried out solely on White teachers.

**Contextualization**: The high school where I last served, in the City of New York (DOE), existed from 1937 to 2012. In 2007, because the active principal was forced to retire, “for cause”, there was a bit of an interregnum in the intervening days. The vacancy, which would ordinarily have been filled by the most senior AP in the building, had occurred at a time when none of the really experienced APs was motivated to vye for that top slot. As a result, the position fell in the lap of a woman, who, although academically minted through the local university systems, and teacher-education programs, like the rest of us, had so far, only served two years as AP in the Social Studies Department. The sticking point for me was that someone close to this new principal had told me that she once told him that, “Black people, whether in Africa or in the diaspora, had not contributed anything to the advancement of world civilization.” Her treatment of Black faculty had begun to seem perfectly consistent with the statement she was rumored to have made about Black people.

Once in place, she had begun a brutal “Reign of Terror”, apparently driven by a desire to peel off every inch of blackness from the school complexion possible. During her tenure as principal, she U-rated (“discontinued”), or engineered the forced departure of the highest percentage of Black teachers of any of the four principals under whom I had served during my 25 years in that school. First, she “discontinued” a highly regarded Jamaican assistant principal. Second, she promoted a teacher from her old department to the position of AP Guidance. Faculty who are promoted to supervision in guidance were usually not teachers but guidance counselors. While he was adequately certified in content-area (Social Studies) supervision, he was the first AP Guidance whom I had seen with zero background in guidance, and precious little experience in teaching. This AP was a young man who was not the least bit timid about hammering home the point that he was of pure German extraction. He was also heard telling his select group of White conferees why he does not nod polite hellos or engage in persiflage with most of the people in the school. He was heard to say that they were not his equal—that most of the people in the building were beneath him.

The principal’s next big move was to simply pick up where the previous principal had left off. She did so by opting to keep in place two White, unqualified acting APs who had previously been given their positions with no supervisory certification. This was done in face of the fact that applications from fully certified African Americans were ignored. It was also a time when the best and the brightest in Science and Mathematics were Black. Yet, the “discontinuances” and forced early retirements of Black faculty began to weaken the quality of instruction and prompt a tremendous drop in student-attendance. Along with that, there began a steep decline in both the Regents passing rates and the graduation rate. Interestingly, enough, this new principal was the first African American principal in the history of the school.

1. **Comment**: The damage teacher-college training programs do

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Sonto-Manning writes that the focal point of teacher education has been centered on the employment opportunity and job security of White teachers. In addition to the meager number of educators of Color, the undeniable presence of institutional racism at teacher education facilities is greatly magnified in the form of an open display of “hostility” against professors and teachers of Color, “who are often presumed incompetent, evaluated unfairly, and forced to withstand microaggressions by colleagues and students (Dixson & Dingus, 2007; Evans-Winters & Hines, 2020; Philip and Brown, 2020) warn that ‘the push for diversifying the teaching force must be scrutinize within the context of larger patterns and structures of racial injustice” ( Sonto-Manning, 2021, n.p.n.).

**Additive/Variant**: In this case, the teacher-college programs may not only be succeeding at planting teachers who are trained to inculcate venomous socio-political caste cultural ideals in the mind of the American child, but they are also managing, whether deliberately or not, to help provide employment more specifictly for White folk. According to Sonto-Manning, the teacher-training programs have engineered a system whereby children of Color are not being educated in a manner that will help them compete for employment in the teaching profession, over the long haul. Personally, I do not believe that teachers’ college programs are in any way part of an elaberate scheme to tarnish the self-image of Colored children, and to consciously teach in a way to prevent them from compete against Whites in the marketplace of educators and other professionals. My thinking is that White educators are a product of American Apartheid. And as such, they do what they do, not because of some teacher college design, but because of the failure of teachers’ colleges to design training programs for teachers that counter the culture of racism.

**Contextualization**: In my last school, a Jewish gym teacher, married to one of his former students (a young African American woman) told the Science/Mathematics AP that his wife had just graduated from college with a major in Mathematics and she would like to work in her *alma mater*. The Assistant Principal promised to let him know if there is an opening. Two days later the AP quietly hired a young White lady from up-state New York to fill a vacant math position. However, the new math hire did not have a degree in mathematics, but rather, she had a degree in music. We, in Math/Science, were introduced to the new math teacher, but the gym teacher who was still waiting to be notified of a position for his wife, again approached our assistant principal to find out whether he had found a vacancy, yet. The AP, one of his wife’s former Biology teacher, told the gym teacher that there were still no vacancies.

1. **Comment**: White “microaggression” and how desegregation hurt children of Color

**Quote/Paraphrase**: The author tells us that children and adults in communities of Color have always had a deep abiding distrust for schools. From experience, they come to believe that schools are “sites of harm for us, wherein we were broken, silenced, dehumanized, and set up for failure. . . .We learned to see ourselves as impostors. . . not realizing that those feelings” were not innate in us but caused by deliberate, as well as subliminal messages through White “microaggression”. So we want to read writers like Lisa Delpit, Gloria Ladson-Billings, and Vanessa Siddle-Walker because such writers of Color help people of color to comprehend “the skin we speak” and help people of Color to understand “how *Brown v. Board of Education* landed us ‘on the wrong note’ ” (Sonto-Manning, 2021, n.p.n.).

**Additive/Variant**: Indeed, the damage to the psyche of Black people is probably even more damning than Drs. Kenneth and Mamie Clark’s finding in their 1940 doll experiments cited by Thurgood Marshall in *Brown v Board of Education* ( Clark and Clark) indicate. What I call American Apartheid is a form of sepsis in the bloodstream of the American culture. Ever so often, someone or something pops up and does something that causes the poison of racism to spread further in the American circulatory system. Following the decision in *Plessey v. Ferguson*, for instance, the infection, becoming worse than it had ever been. It mutated into one of the most infectious viral attack in the American body politic. Following the *Plessey* decision, the opportunistic infection of Jim Crow took root and began to spread from a seat on a train, into the schools, into the courthouses, into the pews and elsewhere throughout the Southern states. My belief is that, if not for *Brown v. Board*, racism would have, by now, eaten away at the core of America’s moral fiber, supplanting the morality-driven consciousness of justice, needed for the positive evolution of civil society, an ever-expanding black hole of injustice. The fact is that the *Brown* decision halted that perilous rush forward toward the precipice of American barbarism, by bringing to an end, through its legal condemnation of Jim Crow, the institutionalization of American racism (American Apartheid). Yet, Brown still fell short, not in its insistence upon school desegregation, as Sonto-Manning argues, nor in the fact that its journey toward civility has been unsteady, as we all know, but it erred in its failure to give school desegregation that extra push toward a guarantee that children of America (Colored and White) be henceforth taught by example as well as precepts, in a climate where there is a healthy admixture of educators who look more like the children they teach.

**Contextualization**: Dr. Hudson (an evening Professor at LIU) was let go from his day job as a Biology teacher in our school because he had just taken the last of the State’s certifying exams that summer and was not going to receive the result until a couple weeks after the first day of school. At the same time, the school had retained, at least, half a dozen “Teaching Fellows” in the same set of circumstance as Dr. Hudson. The only difference I could see was the fact that Dr. Hudson was African American and the “Fellows” were White. Even so, the school had placed itself in a precarious position by dropping Dr. Hudson.

My friend and colleague (Emmanuel Sackeyfio), the only African American faculty member on the selection committee, told me that our administration had interviewed an applicant for one of the Biology positions but had planned to turn him down. It was hard to fathom why they were finding it so difficult to hire Dr. Daniel, a former physician in India and a teacher who was fully state certified in both Chemistry and Biology. They claimed that they were troubled by the fact that Dr. Daniel wanted to switch from the school where he was appointed, to our school. The two most powerful members of the selection committee, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) Chapter Chair, EG and Principal EO, both Jewish, said that they were opposed to bringing Dr. Daniel on board because they felt that his desire to leave one school for another suggested that he had a problem with loyalty. They said he might not be prepared to stay at our school for any length of time. I thought that was a weak argument and wondered whether the effort to reject Daniel may have been due to the fact that he was Guyanese African-American. In the meantime, the new school year would begin the following week and the school was desperate to fill the two slots in Biology. Fortunately, Sackeyfio was able to convince them to hire Dr. Daniels on a probationary basis. Sometimes, it might not be enough for teachers of Color to bring “more” to the table in order to get a foot in the door.

In anticipation of the passage of *Brown*, many African American teachers in all- Black segregated schools, in Topeka Kansas (1950s), received pink slips. For, to many White parents found the prospect of Black people teaching children who look like them was a big NO! So, to Sonto-Manning, *Brown v. Board of Education* did not only increase the number of Black bodies on the unemployment line, from its inception onward, but it presented a façade for morality and justice in the empty promise of equal protection in the classroom for children of Color.

Aristotle. (1929). *The Nicomachean Ethics*. (H. Rackmann Trans.) William Heinemann

1. **Comment**: Binary operation between “intelligence” and “principles” to happiness

**Quote/Paraphrase**: In the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle notes that the ultimate object of the republic (state, or political establishment) is to uplift the largest number of individuals to a state in which most citizens are able to live their best life. Since the nation is that entity which takes upon itself the responsibility to ensure that there is a good life for all its citizens, it follows that the good life for each citizen will be realized when the good of the republic is properly served. For that reason, the good of the state or nation must always be treated as a good greater than that of any one individual (Aristotle, pp. 6-7).

He continues by saying that, in man, there appears to be a “rational” facet of man’s being in which exist two subordinate aspects that participate in a “binary operation” that kick-starts the function of the psyche so that it is able to operate in the sense world. One of these subordinate aspects deals with “principles”, while the other deals with “intelligence”. Aristotle goes on to suggest that since the eventual objective of each individual’s life-journey is for the individual to navigate his way through the complexities of the sentient part of his existence, toward purpose and fulfilment (hence happiness), the binary (mathematical meaning)interaction between the individual’s intelligence and his principles will trigger the active involvement of his soul. Through the instrumentality of the soul, the individual will then be able to identify his true “calling(s)”, and will thus, be able to strive toward the highest level of excellence (arête) of which he is capable. By that fact, then, if two persons possess the same calling or gift, one may exhibit a higher level of excellence than the other depending on how much heart (soul) each of the two has puts into it (Aristotle, pp. 31-33).

**Additive/Variant**: According to Aristotle, to find happiness is truly what each of us is here for. He says that in order to find happiness or the good life, we must first find whatever we are good at (virtue) and work hard to develop that skill or quality to its highest level possible. Consequently, the ultimate goal of the state or the republic is to help as many citizens as possible to achieve “excellence” in whatever they have a knack for, and by so doing, they will find happiness. To reach the height of excellence in what one does, one must get the two aspects of the rational part of one’s conscious being to work together in tandem so that the soul will get involved and thereby create in him a good deal of pleasure, which in turn is the good life, or the happiness he seeks.

**Contextualization**: In speaking about the operation performed between the two facets of the rational part of man’s being—“principles” and “intelligence”—I use the word “binary” and insert a parenthetical to indicate that I am giving it the mathematical meaning. I do so because these days everyone is tossing the word around in a “disjunctive” way—3 V 4. But the word itself does not mean one thing *or* the other, at least, not in a denotative way. If two things are “binary”, they are so because they work in unison under whatever operation connects them. If a process is a “binary operation”, it is so because it is necessary to have two things working together, not one or its inverse. For instance, multiplication is a “binary operation”—(a) (b)= ab. So, in the Aristotelean theory about the rational part of man’s being, it is the part containing “principles” and “intelligence” which together are locked in a binary operation that jump-starts the soul so that it can become an active influence on the individual, so as to elevate him to a state of pleasure, hence, happiness.

1. **Comment**: Who is a “Good Man” in Aristotelean thinking?

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Aristotle proposes that the function of a man is for him to raise himself up to where he is able to reach the highest expression of the “form of life” that exists solely for him as an individual. He suggests that such a form of life is based on how the workings of the faculties of the person’s soul utilizes his rational aspect so as to make him function as a “good man” (a fulfilled man). In the process, this addresses the question of what is a “good man”? It follows that “. . . the Good of man proves to be the active exercise of his soul’s faculties in conformity with excellence or virtue, or if there be several human excellences or virtues, in conformity with the best and most perfect of them” (p. 31).

**Additive/Variant**: Here, Aristotle uses the word, “good,” as synonymous with the word, “fulfilled.” Therefore, a “good” man is a man who is successful in finding his *joie de vivre* through an activated soul. He speaks of “excellence” and “virtue” in the same way—synonymously.

**Contextualization**: Ordinarily, we do not think of two things that are synonymous in a mathematical way. But if we use mathematical properties, we could say that two things which are synonymous have “commutative property”. Mathematically speaking, we can define “commutativity” as: a = b <- -- > b = a. This is the commutative property of equality. Since a = b is “logically equivalent” to b = a, the operation of equality is commutative and a and b are synonymous. In this Aristotelian theory, then, the commutativity that exists between “good” and “fulfilled” makes them synonymous to one another. So, a good man is a fulfilled man, such that a fulfilled man is a good man.

1. **Comment**: The three categories of “good”

**Quote/Précis**: In Aristotle’s *The Nicomachean Ethics,* the major premise of an inquiry represents more than one half of the whole inquiry because it embodies many other minor premises and queries. The first principle of the inquiry must be seen, not only as a corollary, but also as a major connective tissue between the first principle (major premise) and the inquiry into other related contemporary issues of the time. In Aristotelian discourse on the nature of what is “good”, three categories of goodness are recognized. First, there is “good” that represents a pleasing state of all that is outside of the individual. Second, there is “good” that refers to the actions and condition of man’s physical aspect in respect to his non-psychic actions. The third “good” is that which refers to the activities of one’s soul. This latter applies even to physical actions that are “the soul’s active exercise of its function”. Further, to each individual, “good” has a different form regardless of the category to which it belongs. But whatever form it takes, when good is achieve by an individual, the resultant effect on the individual is happiness (pp. 35-37).

**Additive/Variant**: If the Aristotelian way of seeing man’s purpose in life seems Epicurean, it probably is. To Aristotle, the greatest good is, ultimately, the highest level of excellence or virtue which will thus lead to the greatest pleasure, and, hence, the greatest pleasure. Accordingly, Epicurus propounded that the greatest good is the greatest pleasure, hence, the greatest happiness. At the same time, it appears to have been Aristotle who expounded the theory that pleasure is experienced in different ways in different facets of one’s being. He suggested that pleasure could be derived from one’s sense-contact with the world around, or from the pleasure one gets from what one does physically, running the gamut from sports, dancing, acts involving sensual activities, etc., or pleasure that is experienced in the soul, whatever conduit one uses. A person could dance in a way that the sensation he gets from the physical experience registers in the soul. In such a case, even though the channels are physical, the pleasure becomes psychical. What it boils down to is that in whatever aspect of one’s being it is expressed, “pleasure” is “good” and “good” is “happiness”. But, to Aristotle, “Supreme Happiness” is experienced in the soul. And although the core of what Epicurus is saying is pretty nearly the same as Aristotle’s basic theory about happiness. The only real difference seems to be that pleasure in the Epicurean sense is almost entirely sensual—something Hedonistic.

**Contextualization**: In symbolic logic, the treatment of the “chain rule” is similar to the rule by the same name in calculus, but it is identical to the property of “transitivity” in geometry and algebra. For example, in logic, a -> b -> c ∴ a-> c; and in algebra a= b = c ∴ a = c. So, in applying transitivity to the present Aristotelian theory, we should get the sense that “good” is “pleasure”, “pleasure” is “happiness”, therefore, “good” is “happiness”. It follows, then, that when Aristotle talks about the “good man” he is alluding to the “happy man”.

Matthews, George W. (2020). *Philosophical ethics*.

1. **Comment**: Taste versus moral anti-realism

**Quote/ Paraphrase**: Matthews (2020) tells us that “Cultural Relativism” refers to a unique variant strain of ideals containing, among other things, “moral universals” which, themselves, do not belong within the realm of possibility. It is from inside of such an environment that we formulate moral judgments which belong, more precisely, within the circumscription of human behaviors dealing with matters of taste than they do with instinct. Thus, our moral judgements, being judgments of taste, are often called “moral anti-realism”. What that means is that moral judgments operate outside of the scope of reality where we do not possess the means by which to tell right from wrong—what is right for one person could be wrong for another. So, Matthews suggests that there is very little reason why moral behavior should be debated since it comes down, invariably, to personal preference. In the end, he claims that “moral values and judgments are essentially rooted in culture” (Matthews, 2020, pp. 55-‘6).

**Additive/Variant**: Here, Matthews appears to be suggesting that the act of passing judgement based on morality is neither innate nor guided by any particular set of conditions. it is a matter of choice—a product of culture. In his view, morality, like justice, is spawned within the frame of relativism. In my view, morality is an innate sympathetic quality in humans, but the direction it takes depends on the environment that nurtures it. To me morality is like love, hate sensation, etc. Although these are all a priori qualities already in us, they all need to be pruned and sculpted into forms that are best suited to the situation in which they have to function. Even though humans are normally born with roughly the same sensible reactions (sensations) to what they taste, people from one culture might find one dish delectable that people outside of the culture find vapid.

**Contextualization**: One of the things teachers do in trying to put the students in the most suitable position to receive what he or she is about to impart, is to determine the students’ “learning modalities”. Since the most important learning receptors are sentient receptors, the learning styles or modalities have to do primarily with the five basic senses—seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting. In a “regular” classroom, students’ learning styles will tend to be auditory, visual, olfactory, and tactile-kinesthetic. Yet, if a particular student is a visual learner—needing to work from notes on the board, etc., the visual learning style still needs to be appropriately fine-tuned by the teacher. There are reading and transcription skills to be honed, polished and particularized to fit the culture of the classroom and the gifts and limitations of visual learner in the class. Because the quality of visual learning differs from one visual learner to the next, it does not mean that visual learning does not depend upon the person’s innate ability to ingest information by visual means. Neither does the fact that moral judgment differs from one person to another means that the seed for making moral judgement is not innate.

1. **Comment**: The tension between relativism and morality

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Matthews notes that the firstreally bothersome fact about relativism is the prevailing belief that, if no standards on right and wrong exist, outside of those tied to cultural perspectives, it becomes unreasonable to condemn people from other cultures for doing “wicked” things. Let us say there is a society that has two major sub-cultural groups. The group containing the majority of the population, treats the minority group disrespectfully. They do so simply because they feel that the minority group is deficient or genetically inferior. Consequently, they choose to inflict pain upon the minority group and perform fatal experiments on them, as well as force them to work as virtual slaves. They have even contemplated exterminating the entire minority group so that they (the majority) could feel better about themselves. It would seem, then, that a typical relativist, being inclined to recognize only local or relative norms, would very probably conclude that, even though, the majority political leader sees the treatment as intolerable to him or her and to the society, as a whole, he or she is not in a position to condemn the ill-treatment of the minority group just because it seems right to most of the people in the majority group (Matthews 2020, p.57).

**Additive/Variant**: Even in a relativistic society where there are no moral standards, there will always be one or more members of the majority group, who will find the racial atrocities and genocidal tendencies of his group objectionable. That the few who are bothered by the flagitious acts against the minority group does nothing, does not mean that they are not conscience stricken. If these objectors were not from outside cultures originally, why would they be bothered? Is it that, while we are born with the sense of moral responsibility to one another, if there are no checks and balances, we tend to follow the crowd even though there is an in-built sense of right and wrong. Why did Oskar Schindler stick his neck out to save the Jews? Why did Vice President Mike Pence run the risk of being hanged on the makeshift scaffold outside of the Capitol rather than reject the certified state electors? While some of us tell ourselves that there is no consequence, others have a stronger sense of moral responsibility. How much of a factor is culture? Do culture, penal consequences, or religion create morality or do they bend the pliant sapling of morality toward the dark or toward the light, the seed of which is already there?

**Contextualization**: Ten people could be cultured within an identical system of moral indifference to others pain. Yet, one or two of them refuse to inflict pain at their own peril when expected to do so. Why? One Chemistry teacher, the late Herbert Rittersporn, at the school where I taught for 25 years was a Jewish child living in Germany in the 1930s. At age 9, his Aryan neighbors snatched him and his seven year-old sister from their home and hid them when Hitler’s Gestapos came and took his parents and seized their house and business. The German neighbors eventually smuggled him and his sister out of the country to the United States. Why did his Aryan neighbors interfere with the actions of Hitler’s secret police at such enormous risk to themselves?

1. **Comment**: Relativism and value judgment

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Matthews submits that, “***Relativism seems*** like a plausible theory about the nature of value judgments. It also seems, at first glance, at least, to be a theory with nothing but positive implications –it seems to encourage diversity and [*sic*] lets everyone do their own thing. However, as we have just seen this easy-going character of relativism soon reveals a darker side. A relativist cannot really have any grounds for condemning any behavior at all, no matter how intuitively awful it seems, so long as someone believes that it is OK. In addition, relativism does away with one of the most important parts of our moral thinking, the idea that maybe through our efforts we can make things a little better. This idea of progress is rendered simply meaningless by relativism. These implications of relativism do not by themselves let us know whether or not relativism is true. At best they reveal what the stakes are – if relativism is true we get tolerance at the expense of having to tolerate anything at all that someone feels is the right thing to do” (p. 58).

**Additive/Variant**: From what I see, relativism encourages “free-speech”, in general, even that free-speech includes non-verbal, free-expressions. As such, the permissive nature of relativism is tantamount to saying that it embraces diverse perspectives. But what it seems to me is that relativism is a suitable label for a state of anarchy that might or might not be led by a ringleader. *Ipsofacto*, relativism appears to be that theory about a condition in which there is no obedience to rules or laws whatsoever. And after all, while relativism might encourage a diverse way of approaching reality, it might or might not encourage diversity when it comes to the rights of “other” people.

**Contextualization:** To me, the theory of relativism is a bastardization of the theory of relativity. In mathematics, an unproven theory is useful only in the way that it forms the basis of a discussion. No matter how beautiful the theory, the theorist or whomever has to prove it for it to be worth anything. Only when it is proven, and so, when it becomes a theorem, is it accepted as the basis of any mathematical application. Here, the “theory of relativism” appears to be commonly used as the basis of discourse about ethical and other issues with little or no attempt to prove that it is true.

Skuster, Mark (2020, Sept 18). Chapter 11:Social justice. *An Introduction to Philosophy:*  *Second Edition*. OER Commons. Institute for the Study of knowledge Management in Education.

1. **Comment**: The model for the just society

**Quote/Paraphrase**: In Plato’s *Republic*, the suggestion is made that the state or the nation should be something of a macroscopic, all-encompassing dilation of a microscopically etched print of the ideal person pulled off the plate. Such a person would have to be one whose actions exude justice in the way that he or she exhibits a type of meta-virtue. And, as such, he or she—the just person—would be tremendously versatile in abilities and virtues aplenty that are richly blended together in near-perfect harmony and balance as would be characteristic of a proverbial “Renaissance Person”. To Plato, because the virtues of the “just” person mirrors those virtues of the just community, the general population of such a community would demonstrate an abundance of those virtues parceled out among the people in accordance with their respective estates. For example, the people belonging to the rulering class, the military class, and the business class would possess an abundance of wisdom, fearlessness, and moderation and diligence, respectively. While Plato lauded the republic as the ideal politic system for the promotion of justice, he saw democracy as something comical, a political place where the least qualified people are the ones elevated to the positions of leadership (Skuster, 2020, n.p.n.).

**Additive/Variant:** Skuster tells us that, the virtues of the Republic, or state, by Platonic standard, are supposed to be a movie-screen size version of the collection of the several virtues that come together in the model individual living in the state. So, if we have met the model individual and knows what he looks like, by observing his behavior, we should also be able to figure out what the overall state or the republic is like. While the model individual is exhibiting wisdom, fearlessness, with moderation and diligence, in himself, the republic is displaying the same qualities by being a collective of communities that specialize individually in the same set of virtues exhibited by the model (Just) individual.

**Contextualization**: When I describe the Republic as being a blown-up version of the model individual, I use the concept of a “dilation” as used in transformational geometry. Just imagine an architectonic drawing on paper duplicated so many times its paper version being presented as a structure in the town square. That on paper is the model individual and that in the town square is the republic. If the “transformational” relationship is figured out, their similarity would be so there that one would be able to figure out the “constant of dilation”.

1. **Comment**: Searching for divine right under the cloak of democracy

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Skuster tells us that “John Locke’s *First Treatise on Government*was an extended argument against the European system of aristocracy and the alleged divine birth right of rulers. Of course, in a society that had only known government by the rule of kings, this raises an obvious question. If human society is not legitimately organized by the authority of the ruling class, then how is it to be organized? Locke’s answer is that the authority of government is entirely derived from the consent of its free and equal citizens. According to Locke, in the state of nature (or in the absence of government) people exist in a state of perfect freedom. They are free to pursue their own happiness and well-being. But this perfect freedom is not a license to do whatever one likes or treat others as one likes. Rather, it is the freedom to which people have a natural and inalienable right, the freedom from domination and coercion by others” (Skuster, 2020, n.p.n.).

**Additive/Variant**: In his “Two Tracts of Government”, dated 1660, John Locke’s statement about individual freedom may well have been the referent that inspired the enlightenment movement more than a century later. John Locke stated that all people possess a natural right to freedom. The statement, “all men are created free and equal,” in the Massachusetts’ Constitution of 1780 is mirrored John Locke’s central thesis about what the main object of the republic should be.

**Contextualization**: Plato’s condemnation of the ideal of a democratic republic seems out of line with what the practical side of the American philosophy has truly been at every level. Plato’s claim that in a democracy, it is often the least qualified who becomes the most powerful, a condition that appears to be true in many forms of organizations. In education the political philosophy that determine leadership and the way the institution is run is essentially democratic. In the NYC DOE, for instance, school leaders are usually appointed through a democratic process (at Level 1) called the “C-30 Process”. A committee composed of six parents, two UFT members (faculty members), one assistant principal, and a representative from the school superintendency read the candidates’ dossier (containing a resume, educational philosophy, and educational goal), participate in the interview, and vote for the candidate. All participants, but for the superintendent representative are selected by officers elected to represent their group. The two faculty members on the C-30 committee are selected by the Chapter Chairperson (elected by the faculty and staff in the school). The parents on the committee are selected by the elected officers in the parent association. If there is only one candidate a “yes” or “no” vote is submitted. The level one result is then sent to the superintendent for a final decision.

Still, despite the appearance of such a tightly woven democratic pattern, the principal almost always manages to curry favor and cheat to get his or her favorite people into and through the process at the exclusion of the most qualified candidates. Unfortunately, the principal whose obligation it is to invite the qualified applicants to the C-30, frequently “forget” to invite African-American applicants, or finds a way to work around the rules to put their friends in place. Was Plato right?

1. **Comment**: The Difference Principle and The Equal Liberty Principle

**Quote/Paraphrase**: “**The Difference Principle**: Social practices that produce inequalities among individuals are just only if they work out to everyone’s advantage and the positions that come with greater reward are open to all. The Equal Liberty Principle has a longer history. The idea that everyone should be granted the greatest degree of liberty consistent with similar liberty for others is defended at length in John Stuart Mill’s essay [*On Liberty*](http://www.utilitarianism.com/ol/one.html). In fact, we could take some variation on this principle as the core tenet of Liberalism as a political theory. This principle doesn’t tell us that people should be free to do as they please no matter what” (Skuster, 2020).

**Additive/Variant**: Personally, I think that the premise of “The Difference Principle” on its face is fallacious. There cannot be a system in which “social practices . . . produce inequalities among individuals” but work out to be advantageous to all. The key words are “produce inequality”. How can a society in which “[s]ocial practices. . . produces inequality” be just? Further, there is the “The Equal Liberty Principle” which is only possible in a just society. The question is, what is a just society? A just society is not a society in which everyone is equal but a society in which everyone is “equal before the law”.

**Contextualization**: Many of the teachers I have known and worked with share a similar belief that the heaviest burden we carry as teachers is the moral and ethical burden which compels us to treat our students fairly in our actions, as well as in the examples we set for them to follow. When one student need more personal attention because he or she has a special difficulty, we provide him or her extra help. But that is not what is suggested by “The Difference Principle”, because it is an act performed to provide extra time and help to one student in order to place him or her in the best possible position to achieve his or her personal best, or to bring him or her closer to par with the others. The teacher’s action in this situation does not “produce inequality” as “The Difference Principle” might claim. Therefore, such a teacher is not in violation of the moral code to which he is bound.

Sometime in the fall term, one year, three of my five classes were the two-year track for the slower Algebra students. In November my friend Sackeyfio brought me a child named Patricia Hernandez. He said, he found her in another teacher’s two-year Algebra class and realized that she was too bright for that class. He asked the teacher’s permission to speak to her outside and found that she, probably undocumented, knew very little English. Prior to speaking to me, he had already arranged with her to come to me in the room where I was teaching during her lunch hour. He wanted me to sit her in a corner and teach her the one-year curriculum on the side while teaching my thirty something other children the two-year curriculum I was expected to teach. He told me I needed to get her ready to pass the NYS Algebra Regents in January. Meanwhile, he had planned to stay after school and teach her Geometry for the June exam. Patricia passed both the Algebra and Geometry Regents with 93% and 95%, in a single year. Later, while receiving her B.S. from Union College, she took and passed the NYS Actuarial exam. Did we “produce inequality” in doing that? Definitely not! We simply balanced the equation.

In another situation, one of my very favorite students, Maria J, was taking Chemistry with Mr. KG. Maria J was Ecuadorian and Mr. KG was Columbian. Mr. KG Chemistry class was very diverse, ethnically. Maria J shared her confidence with me and told me that her Chemistry teacher said that he was going to make her the valedictorian. When his class took the NYS Regents Exam in Chemistry, she barely passed with a 65%. The highest Regents score in that class came from a Nigerian girl named BO. She made a 92%. Still, Mr. KG gave Maria J a 98% for the course and gave the Nigerian child an 85%. Maria J was the valedictorian that year but that action of Mr. KG “produced inequality”. That was “The Difference Principle” truly at work.

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There is a problem with word wrap around in my Microsoft 365. It’s also affecting spacing. I’ll try to get Microsoft to fix it for my 100 Day Assignment.