

PHI 801-52, Ethics in a Global Society, Assignment #3

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November 30, 2024

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Assignment #3

Write a 5-page essay that analyzes a topic in ethics relevant to your research interests, professional growth, and as an interdisciplinary faith-learning scholar. The essay must show scholarly work and cover the subject well.

2. Paper Outline

- a. Begin with an introductory paragraph that has a succinct thesis statement.
- b. Address the topic of the paper with critical thought.
- c. End with a conclusion that reaffirms your thesis.
- d. Use a minimum of eleven scholarly research sources (two books and the remaining scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles).

Ethics in Society

This essay explores ethics and its implications in modern-day society. Scholarly research will be reviewed to understand how to incorporate ethical leadership in daily personal, professional, and ministry practices. As we integrate faith into Christian leadership practices, it is evident that there is a need for leadership on what is ethical in every profession and sector of society. This essay will discuss ethics in three areas; AI ethics in education, ethics in social media use, and ethics in Christianity. Many ancient Greek and Roman philosophers' primary objective for ethical thought was to live well (Owen, 2020; Adylkhanova, 2023). This concept of ethical practice as a way of life is different for different nations in different periods (2023). Practical ethics took on the primary importance in teaching, learning, and philosophy to be acted out, lived through, and incorporated into the very way one lived one's life and conceived of the world (2020).

Ethics in AI Education

There are ethical issues around applying artificial intelligence (AI) in education from the largely learner-facing in the early days of artificial intelligence in education in the 1970s to the increasing sophistication of the system interfaces and the rise in data use and misuse in the current state of this field (du Boulay, 2022, p. 1). Learner-facing tools today now take into account the affective, cognitive, and motivational aspects of learning, and the rise of data collection and analytic tools has enabled dashboards to collect management and reflective understanding of users, both students and adults (2022). Educational technology has some positive attributes. There have been about seven meta-studies and meta-analyses of the effectiveness of learner-facing tools as compared to either a teacher working with a whole class

of students or a skilled teacher working with a single student” (2022). The results from 182 comparative studies show “that learner-facing tools perform better in terms of learning gains compared to a human teacher working with a whole class but slightly worse than a skilled human tutor working with a single student ” (du Boulay, 2022, p. 5).

AI in education is distinct from other sectors in society, “All the generic concerns around big data and algorithms apply to education” (Holmes, et. al., 2022, p. 512). Holmes’ research points out that the features that make the formal education system, and learning as a phenomenon are also distinct from the other sectors of society being impacted by data science” (2022). AI in education needs to “differentiate between doing ethical things and doing things ethically” (du Boulay, 2022). Regarding teaching and learning in education, AI presents concerns in making ethical pedagogical choices and deciding how to account for the ever-present possibility of unintended consequences (2022; Young, 2024). These issues relate to when, how, and to what AI is used for in education (2022; Borenstein & Howard, 2021). These concerns, despite good intentions, are not a driving factor in ethical designs or ethical deployment (2022; 2021; Young, 2024). AI in education presents such a challenge because it has been implemented in schools without ethical frameworks, guidelines, policies, and regulations to address the specific ethical issues raised by the use of AI in education (2021; Holmes et al. 2018, p. 504-505).

In addition to the need for guidelines, policies, and regulations catching be established, there needs explicit instruction and lessons on AI use in education. As AI takes root in education, a starting point would be everyone from students to staff, in particular educators, need to complete ongoing lessons regarding what it means to use AI and what ethical responsibilities look like in different roles in and out of the classroom (Borenstein & Howard, 2021). Skeptics

may point out that the implementation of explicit courses on ethics does not necessarily mean that it will influence behavior (2021; Young, 2024). However, explicit instruction and lessons in the academic and professional code of ethics to enhance ethical awareness and practice can be a starting point, not an endpoint (2024). In the need for ethical perimeters for accountability, “ethics is a process, not a solution” (2024). We are just behind in that process (2024; 2021).

Ethics in Social Media

“Besides ethical concerns in education, social media scholars also need to make sure that their research activity does not breach any legal barriers” (Mancosu & Vegetti, 2020, p. 2).

“Globally, 43% of the world’s population use social media (Kemp, 2018) and 69% of Americans use social media (Smith & Anderson, 2018)” (Brown, 2020). People participate globally in political discourse, maintain social connections using social media, and gather news and information from social media (Brown, 2020). With researchers using more traditional approaches, such as surveys or lab experiments, they typically ask subjects to provide their informed consent before the collection and use of their data. With digital trace data this is not the case because data can be collected about many individuals as they go about their day-to-day use unaware of being studied, monitored, or observed (2020). “This makes it practically impossible to obtain informed consent from every one of them” (Mancosu, & Vegetti, 2020, p. 2).

Unbeknown to users, this information is used to profile users based on their psychological characteristics, cultural tastes, and political and religious views. (2020).

The information is used for multiple purposes, including political advertising campaigns (2020). As a solution, a group of American scholars, in partnership with Facebook and other nonprofit organizations founded Social Science One, whose role is to collect and evaluate

research proposals and possibly grant access to Facebook data directly from the company (2020; King & Persily, 2018). While this is an attempt at a solution, it leaves the last word on what can be researched to the company itself (2018; 2020). Social media and other user-generated content platforms have become gold mines for collecting a wealth of publicly available information about human behavior (Fiesler, et. al., 2020, p. 187). “This “data gold mine” has proven to be a great resource for researchers in many disciplines (2020).

In the Cambridge Analytic scandal, it involved semi-private information shared by the users with their closed circle of “friends” being compromised (Mancosu, & Vegetti, 2020; Brown, 2020). This information was collected from users of 270,000 apps in violation of the sharing privileges (2020; 2020). Facebook allowed users who were not friends of all the users who installed the app to view all the data in the dataset, which violated the users’ privacy, observing them in a space where they would not “reasonably expect to be observed by strangers” (2020; 2020; Townsend & Wallace, 2016, p. 10).

Hence, CA’s data collection violated the users’ privacy, was used to build user profiles to inform micro-targeted political campaigns, and the user’s sensitive information (cultural preferences, political views) was used to sort them into groups, which in turn were exposed to persuasion campaigns collectively (2020; 2020). In this case, even though the individual privacy was preserved, their group privacy was violated (2020; 2020).

As a result of the CA case, Facebook decided to close the API, the tool that allowed third parties to access and download information about the user activities on the platform (Mancosu, & Vegetti, 2020). Other platforms may also follow Facebook’s lead in making it more difficult, or even impossible, to collect behavioral data safely and straightforwardly (2020). This doesn’t

make it disappear from the web, and it is still publicly available (2020). The public needs to understand that anyone who has a Facebook account can access the identity, activities, and even the personal/sensitive data of an unimaginable amount of users (2020). While for most people casually surfing information is somewhat acceptable. Taking users' information and uploading it into a dataset and eventually publishing it leads to ethical and legal concerns (2020).

Ethics in Christianity

There is a tendency today to divorce religion from life with no differentiation among classes. Separating the sacred from the secular, and worship from work has become commonplace as two entirely distinct realms of existence (Alexander, 2019). There is a need for a systematic non-materialistic study of Christian ethics and philosophy, even with Christian leaders and teachers (2019). This need for more ethical Christian studies need to address the unfaith and pessimism of this age with advocacy centered around the personality and worth of man, human rights, and our to Jesus Christ (2019). Above all, ethics in Christianity need to show that religion needs to be integrated with life, “transfiguring and spiritualizing all its activities and relationships” (2019). We as believers need to embrace Christ in all of our activities. This is integrating our faith into daily practice and not compartmentalizing our faith as a personal matter (2019). Christianity should be practiced as “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:5-6). Our love for God needs to be integrated into every area of our lives.

This love for God and His creation should be evident in our values as a society. Business should be more than their economic value, void of ethics, theology, or religion (Nicolaides, A., 2020). Christian ethics should be evident through business practices, and there should be a

distinct contrast between Christian business practices and secular, more than just being closed on Sunday (2020). Christian ethics should dictate the well-being of all people and advocate for the common good. It is critical in business for several reasons. Ethical behavior supports sustainability and is in any case the ‘right thing to do, (2020). Our Christian faith should guide us to the right actions, virtue, and morality infusing these aspects to become part of the culture (2020) Churches contend that the moral obligations of corporate managers are not only reducible to maximizing profit or shareholder return (Zúñiga y Postigo & Schmiesing, 2013). Nicolaides asserts that “the Church maintains that Governments must deliver on sound regulations and a system of taxation which encourage businesses to preserve the natural environment, hire disadvantaged workers, and create jobs in the most depressed areas as a priority” (2020, p. 8) Of course, stockholders and managers should be held accountable for their responsibilities toward society. But how might our society look to the church collectively it stood as their advocate? Nicolaides points out that the “church is a key element of civil society, and should serve as a watchdog, more than it currently does (Nicolaides, 2020, p. 8).

Conclusion

The discussion in this essay about AI ethics in education, ethics in social media, and ethics in Christianity only exacerbated the lack of ethical discussions overall. American society being such a huge conglomerate of diverse cultures, makes it even more crucial for Christian leaders to bring ethics to the forefront. Corduan states in his book that “Increasing people from different backgrounds and cultures live side by side, sometimes adapting their ways to each other, many times trying to maintain their ancient heritage despite strong pressure to give them up. Over the past few decades, the United States and Western Europe have experienced an

unprecedented influx of people from remote reaches of the globe. In contrast to earlier immigrants, these people are not ready to jettison their own cultures and jump into a melting pot” (Corduan, 2024).

So where do we start with raising ethical consciousness? Well, in the famous words of Booker T. Washington, "Cast down your bucket where you are," or in the words of the Holy Bible, Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but does not notice the log that is in your own eye? **4** Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? **5** You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye (Matthew 7:3-5). Ethics begins with the church and the people of God. We should focus on three areas: 1) What it looks like to show up as a person with an ethical mindset; 2) How to apply ethical practices and standards in different careers and professional practices; and 3) How to advocate as a Christ-followers for the well-being of all of God's human creation.

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