

# NEWSLETTER

FALL 2004

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## President's Report

By Chris MacDonald

Since this Newsletter is making it out the door just past the year's end, I'll begin by noting the CSSPE's two main activities for 2004. These were our Annual Meeting in Winnipeg, and our participation in the Social Science and Humanities Research Council's (SSHRC's) re-visioning process.

I'll begin by offering sincere thanks to Susan Turner who (again!) did a great job of organizing our annual meeting. Despite some unanticipated last-minute changes of schedule, I think the event went quite well. The meeting was well-attended, and demonstrated a continuing strong interest among a substantial community of Practical Ethics scholars in Canada.

With papers presented on topics ranging from Population Displacement, the Precautionary Principle and Eco-Villages, through to Research Ethics and Legal Ethics, the CSSPE's again showed itself to be the only Canadian academic association dedicated to exploring the full range of topics within the field of applied ethics.

The Annual Business Meeting (held as part of our Annual Meeting in Winnipeg) was also well-attended, and saw a few changes in executive positions. Linda Penoyer, Mary Richardson, and Marc Saner were thanked for their service as "Members at Large," as their terms ended this year. Mary agreed to serve a further term, and our Members at Large list was filled out by the election of Karen Krug and Alex Wellington. It was also decided that, on an experimental basis, editorship of this Newsletter would be taken over by the President (i.e., me), in an effort to streamline communications. Kira Tomsons and Natalie Osterberg were thanked (*in absentia*) for their contributions as co-editors of the Newsletter over the past year.

The second significant occurrence for the CSSPE in 2004 was our participation in the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's effort to rejuvenate itself. SSHRC asked for input from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, which in turn sought input from its member organizations, including the CSSPE. So in spring of 2004 I sought input from members of the Society, and distilled the input I received into a CSSPE response to SSHRC's discussion document. I then attended a meeting held by the Federation in Ottawa in late March of 2004, and again at Congress in early June.

Signs at that time were promising; where was a significant convergence of opinion, on the part of both smaller associations such as ours and the larger associations, as to key priorities and changes for SSHRC. Needless to say, we'll be watching SSHRC's progress closely, to see how they balance the input from various associations with the need to demonstrate to government what we all know: that the social sciences and humanities make crucial contributions to all aspects of Canadian life.

Chris MacDonald, President  
Canadian Society for the Study of Practical Ethics  
(chris.macdonald@smu.ca)

Don't forget to check  
out our website, at:

[www.csspe.ca](http://www.csspe.ca)

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## ETHICS TEACHING TOOL: DETERMINANTS OF THE WILL SQUARE

By Susan Turner

Like many other even seasoned veterans, when it came to introducing the uninitiated to Kant's moral philosophy, I often felt I'd let my students down somehow. It seemed particularly tricky, for instance, to get them to really understand what Kant had in mind with the notion of an *a priori* principle which was equally binding on every rational agent and action guiding. I often felt I didn't quite understand it all myself. But then one day, literally moments before going into a large lecture hall to spring Kant on a hundred novices, the imprecision of my understanding magically resolved itself in a very simple little diagram which I furiously scribbled on a sheet of overhead plastic collecting dust on my desk. I continue to use this tool to introduce students first to Kant but then more broadly to the principal concerns and questions of both traditional and contemporary moral philosophers. I hope readers will find the tool as useful and effective a teaching device as I have and I welcome any comments, questions or suggestions you might have regarding it.

Kant argues only the will determined by reason alone is a good will. What does this really mean? Taking our lead from Kant, we can see the determinants (or causal motives or influences) of the will divided into four types. These four determinants are sorted according to whether they are **internal** or **external** and whether they are **objective** or **subjective**. As the diagram below indicates, this means only acts following from the will determined or causally motivated internally and objectively (autonomously) have moral worth. Wills determined subjectively and/or externally (heteronomously) are not good wills, according to Kant, and acts following from their direction have no moral worth. (*Think of the difference in value between a mined diamond and a cubic zirconia or a natural and a cultured pearl. The difference in worth is determined by the process*

*which formed the object.*)

**Internal determinants are those which force themselves on us from within. They are 'private' in the epistemic sense.** Reason and emotion are **internal** determinants of the will. No one but the person who feels the effect of either has direct epistemic access to the determinant. **External determinants force themselves on us from outside.** They are 'public' in the epistemic sense. Rules and regulations as well as the goals others have for themselves or have for us are **external** determinants of our wills. More than one person can have simultaneous and direct epistemic access to an external determinant.

**Objective determinants are those which apply in all like cases regardless of who is affected and when or where the effect takes place.** Objective determinants come in degrees. A *maximally* objective determinant of my will now and in this place is a determinant for all wills at any time and anywhere: it is an *absolute* determinant. The more *internal* the objective determinant, the more 'universal' its force. Reason or logic is maximally **objective** because what it deems correct for one is correct for all – no exceptions. Constitutional rules and regulations (criminal laws for example) are **objective** because they determine *all* wills though *in their jurisdiction only* so are not maximally objective. The force or influence of **subjective determinants is limited to a single individual or a particular relationship.** A *maximally* subjective determinant of my will is not a determinant of any other will. But subjective determinants also come in degrees. The more internal the subjective determinant, the more subjective or particular it is. My emotions are maximally **subjective**. They only directly affect me as motives for action. My fear of flying can be a reason for me to avoid it but cannot be a reason for you to avoid flying unless I have some power over you. So while they are **subjective** so not reasons for *everyone* to act in this or that way, the desires of others as determinants of my will are not *maximally* subjective.

(continued on next page...)

Reason (Internal, objective)	Rules & Regulations (External, objective)
Passions (Internal, subjective)	The Wills of Others (External, subjective)

When using this tool, I start by drawing it on the board and filling in only the main titles. Then, beginning with Rules and Regulations and working counter-clockwise, I go through the meanings and implications of the internal, external and objective, subjective distinctions using everyday examples provided by the students. By the time we get to discussing the nature of reason as a determinant of the will, the students have got Kant all figured out! The Moral Law is inside me in more or less the same way my emotions, dreams, thoughts in general etc., are (is internal) but it arguably has the same non-contextual force on my behaviour and on every other rational person's behaviour the Canadian Criminal Law has, for example, on every resident of Canada (is objective). They see quite clearly that yes, we can at least make sense of the idea that sometimes what we cannot help but believe is the right thing to do goes against our society's laws, goes against what others want us to do and even goes against what we desire (Bertrand Russell's counter-argument notwithstanding!). It is a pretty easy step from there to the Categorical Imperative: How *do* we know it (whatever it happens to be) is the right thing to do?

I also use the Square to illustrate *simple* differences between moral theories. Mill, for example, would not much care whether an act was motivated by one or another of these determinants when it came to assessing its moral worth unless it could be shown some determinants tend to erode the will's capacity to generate happiness producing outcomes. Aristotle and some feminists would not have much patience for Kant's insistence heteronomous wills, particularly those determined by the wills of others, had no moral worth. My emphasis on simplicity is due to first: the somewhat cursory treatment theory tends to get in practical or applied ethics courses and second: the fact few or none of the students in a non-pre-requisite applied ethics course will need or be able to tolerate more complexity. The terms I use to distinguish the determinants of the will are therefore deployed in their most easy going sense not, perhaps, how Kant would have liked it, but so what?

– Susan Turner

## Practical Ethics Events

Please note:

This information is provided for your information only. The CSSPE cannot be responsible for the accuracy of this information. Please verify details by visiting the websites or contacting the persons listed below.

### **The Second International Conference on Teaching Applied and Professional Ethics in Higher Education,**

30th August to 1st September 2005, Roehampton University, London

The theme is Ethics in a Virtual World. The scope of the conference is broad. Papers and other conference contributions are invited on any aspect of teaching applied and professional ethics in higher education; and on any ethical issue that gives rise to questions about how the issue needs to be addressed in higher education. Contributions that address issues arising in the virtual world are particularly welcome but the conference will remain broad in its scope of ethics.

All proposals should be submitted by 4th February 2005. Abstracts for papers must not exceed 500 words. Papers should be submitted to the CAPE Administrator at the Centre for Applied and Professional Ethics.

Duke of Kent Building  
University of Surrey  
GUILDFORD  
Surrey GU2 5TE  
UK  
Or to [CAPE@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:CAPE@surrey.ac.uk)

<http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/bss/cape/>

### **Business and the Broader Culture Symposium,** March 11, 2005, Boulder, Colorado

In the spring of 2005, the center will host the Business and the Broader Culture Symposium. This symposium, which is a part of our Business and Society effort, brings together scholars and businesspeople to discuss a broad range of difficult ethical issues. The inaugural topic will be "Corporate Retirement Security: Social and Ethical Issues."

The symposium will focus specifically on corporate retirement programs, rather than Social Security or governmentally sponsored retirement plans. Likely approaches might include, but should not be limited to: the social and ethical implications of a firm's funding obligations, the social role of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC), the circumstances under which corporations can ethically terminate or alter the terms of their retirement plans, and the social and ethical issues related to structuring

corporate plans as defined-contribution versus defined-benefit plans.

For more information:

Robert W. Kolb  
Assistant Dean for Business and Society  
Leeds School of Business  
University of Colorado, 419 UCB  
Boulder, CO 80309-0419  
Robert.Kolb@Colorado.edu  
(303) 492-6236

<http://leeds.colorado.edu/businessandsociety/interior.aspx?id=72,993,1256>

**First International Conference: "Politics and Ethics: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of Contemporary Issues"**

March 24-26, 2005, University of Southern Mississippi, Gulf Coast, USA

This multidisciplinary conference seeks to explore issues surrounding the relationship between, and intersection of, politics and ethics. Contributions are sought from those in any field that engages with the study of political ethics: political science, philosophy, international relations, sociology, cultural studies, legal studies, and other areas.

For more information, contact either:

Dr. Mark Evans  
Department of Politics and International Relations  
University of Wales Swansea  
Singleton Park  
Swansea SA2 8PP  
UK  
M.A.Evans@Swansea.ac.uk

or  
Dr. Bryan Hilliard  
Department of Philosophy  
New England College  
Henniker, NH 03242  
USA  
bhilliard@nec.edu

<http://www.apa.udel.edu/apa/opportunities/conferences/2005/mar/politics-ethics.html>

**Nanotechnology: Ethical and Legal Issues,**  
2 to 6 March 2005, Columbia, South Carolina, United States

Developments in nanotechnology provide the basis for a convergence of the physical and life sciences, including biomedicine, information technology, and cognitive science. Emerging technologies include highly functional molecular systems, alternative

manufacturing processes, molecular computing, brain/machine interfaces, tissue engineering, and recombinant genetic alterations of viral, plant, and animal systems. Virtually all areas of human life may be transformed, and these transformations will likely involve both great benefit and great risk. In this conference we explore the ethical and legal issues raised by nanotechnology and the larger convergence of technologies.

For more information:

George Khushf, Ph.D.  
Department of Philosophy  
University of South Carolina  
Columbia, SC 29208, USA  
KHUSHFG@GWM.SC.EDU  
TEL: (803) 777-7371.  
<http://nsts.nano.sc.edu/>

**Biomedicine within the Limits of Human Existence,**

8-13 April 2005, Hotel Conferentiecentrum Zonheuvell, Doorn, The Netherlands

This conference is the second in the "Biomedicine within the limits of Human Existence" series. At the first meeting on "Bioethics – an Interdisciplinary Challenge and a Cultural Project" – which was held in September 2001 in Davos – a new perspective on bioethics was discussed around the concept of "finitude": limits of human existence, limits of power and limits of knowledge. Bioethics is centrally concerned with these moral limits as they are dealing with, for example, the violation of basic moral values or the point at which biomedicine attempts to exceed prior limits of possibility. Limits do not only have to be seen as a burden, but being aware of limits can make life meaningful. What emerged to be important from that first conference was the need to evaluate different methodological approaches and to explore interdisciplinary possibilities.

[http://www.esf.org/esf\\_genericpage.php?section=10&language=0&genericpage=2131&shortcut=1](http://www.esf.org/esf_genericpage.php?section=10&language=0&genericpage=2131&shortcut=1)

**Ethical Corporation Europe 2005,**

June 2-3 2005, London

Europe's biggest corporate responsibility event is back for the fourth year in a row. With leading corporate responsibility professionals as speakers, this event will also feature an ethical products and services expo. Watch out for the cutting edge programme to be released soon.

For more information, please contact David Embelton on +44 20 7375 7174.

<http://www.ethicalcorp.com/europe2005/>

### **Second International Conference on Ethics Consultation**

17th to 20th March 2005, University of Basel, Switzerland

In April 2003, 150 participants from around the world gathered in Cleveland, USA to hear illustrious speakers debate the subject "Clinical Ethics Consultation." As follow-up to this successful event, a 2nd International Conference "Clinical Ethics Consultation" will be held in Basel from 17th to 20th March 2005, at the University of Basel, Switzerland. The special focus of this meeting is the assessment of the current state of the art, and issues affecting ethics consultation.

<http://www.iaeme.ch/>

### **Building Sustainable Relationships: Aboriginal Engagement & Sustainability Conference**

February 8-9, 2005, Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre, in Vancouver, BC

Canadian Business for Social Responsibility (CBSR) and Alcan Inc., in collaboration with leaders from industry, Aboriginal communities, government and NGOs invite you to:

- MEET the anticipated 350 leaders from industry, Aboriginal communities, government and NGOs.
- ENGAGE on the integral role of Aboriginal engagement in sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR).
- SHARE the lessons learned, innovation, and success stories of developing and sustaining relationships in the mining, oil and gas, energy and forestry sectors.

Register before January 14th for early bird discount! To register online or to see complete list of speakers, go to: [www.cbsr.bc.ca/csrevents/vancouver.htm](http://www.cbsr.bc.ca/csrevents/vancouver.htm)

### **Corporate Responsibility and the Travel and Transport Industry: How Your Company Can Turn Moral and Legal Requirements into Real Business Opportunities**

March 8-9 2005, London

This two-day conference gives you the opportunity to discover what corporate responsibility challenges lay ahead for travel and transport industry. This is the must-attend CSR conference for 2005 - your company can't afford to miss it!

<http://www.eyefortravel.com/csr/>

### **Corporate Responsibility In China,**

Mar 22-23 2005, London

In China, a unique cultural, legal and regulatory base provides specific challenges, but the opportunities are there for you to grasp too. Find out at this conference how global organisations that have successfully implemented CR initiatives in their Western facilities have successfully implemented these same policies in China

<http://www.ethicalcorp.com/china2005/index.shtml>

### **Social Divisions in the Genomics Era: Issues in Agriculture, Environment, Fisheries, and Forestry – Genome Canada GE3LS Symposium**

March 13-15. Toronto, ON

Genomics and proteomics research goes beyond the sphere of human health. It now finds application in agriculture, environment, fisheries and forestry. Research projects conducted in these fields are expected to bring many benefits, including environmental protection, improved agricultural productivity, and better forest management. The genomic era is well underway; yet, on a societal level, its unfolding is accompanied by tensions between those who support genomics and proteomics research and those who oppose it.

Genome Canada's GE3LS Symposium will focus on this issue of social divisions in the genomic era. Four of the main factors that account for existing tensions and subsequent confrontations in the political arena will be examined:

- 1) conflicting worldviews;
- 2) social cohesion;
- 3) ownership; and
- 4) the democratic deficit.

These themes will be explored in relation to the application of genomics and proteomics to the fields of agriculture, environment, fisheries and forestry. Where relevant, they will be examined through the lenses of the concepts of genomics integrity, genomics diversity and genetic pollution.

The symposium will aim to provide participants with an in-depth analysis of the four component parts set out above. This will include a clear statement of the issues, an examination of their implications and challenges, an account of potential solutions, and a discussion on roles and responsibilities. The symposium will be structured around a number of presentation sessions by well-known experts; followed by workshops. It will thus adopt a format designed to encourage everyone's participation.

<http://www.genomecanada.ca/ge3ls2005/INDEX.ASP?l=e>

### **Philosophy, Ethics & Sport Conference**

June 9 - 11, 2005  
University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada.

The conference theme will address questions of philosophy and ethics connected to the limits of human achievement, and the methods used by athletes, coaches, and others involved in the production of sporting performance at all levels, from the community to the international stage, and the keynote speaker will focus on gene doping.

In addition to papers focusing on the special theme outlined above, the conference committee invites submissions on a broad range of topics relating to philosophy, ethics, and sport. Submissions addressing philosophy and ethics relating to physical activity, recreation, and exercise will also be considered.

Please submit 300-500 word abstracts to *both* Dr. John S. Russell [jsrussell@shaw.ca](mailto:jsrussell@shaw.ca) AND to Dr. Angela Schneider [aschneid@uwo.ca](mailto:aschneid@uwo.ca)

Abstract Deadline: February 15, 2005; Notification of acceptance: March 1, 2005.

Local arrangements are being coordinated by Dr. Gabriela Tymowski, Faculty of Kinesiology, University of New Brunswick, [tymowski@unb.ca](mailto:tymowski@unb.ca) Further information will soon be available at <http://www.unbf.ca/kinesiology>

### **American Society of Bioethics and Humanities' 7th Annual Meeting**

October 20-23, 2005, Washington DC

The 2005 Annual Meeting Theme is "Suffering and Justice." While all submissions are welcome, emphasis will be placed on interdisciplinary, information and skill-building sessions covering issues affecting bioethics and humanities related to the overall theme of suffering and/or justice. Ideas include: a round table on Health Disparities, discussions on health and human rights, etc.

Submission Deadline: March 1, 2005

<http://asbh.confex.com/asbh/2005/index.html>

### **17th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Bioethics Society**

October 20-23 2005  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Theme: "MONEY, MONEY, MONEY: BIOETHICS CONFRONT \$ DOLLARS & \$ENSE"

Whether we like it or not, economic considerations permeate health care decision-making in government,

at the bedside, in the boardroom, in the community and in the home. The time is ripe for the bioethics community to critically examine the influence of the pocketbook on the world of healthcare.

Program planning for CBS 2005 is underway.

Themes include:

- The influence of money at the bedside, in the home, in the community (including social justice, the disenfranchisement of identifiable groups)
- Its influence on the practice of health professions (for example, patient safety/medical error)
- Institutional monetary concerns (including implementation of cutbacks and other issues that go beyond individual clinical encounters)
- Financial pressures on the healthcare system (for example, waiting lists, pharmacare, the concept of medical necessity, and the sustainability of government-funded health care systems)
- Money and health research (including both institutional and individual conflicts of interest and conflicts of obligations)
- Money and the health needs of developing countries
- Money and the discipline of bioethics

Halifax, 2005 promises to be an engaging and provocative meeting, with much to share and much to learn. And don't forget to bring your dancing shoes for the Ceilidh on Saturday night at Murphy's On the Water!

*Two Preconferences:*

*Ethics Committees for Health Regions: Vulnerability, Visibility and Vision; and, Ethical Challenges in Human Development and Genetics*

<http://www.bioethics.ca/english/annualmeeting.html>

## **Membership**

Interested in becoming a member of the CSSPE? Membership is open to anyone interested in practical ethics.

Regular membership is \$20/year, and students can join for just \$10/year!

For more information, see our website at [www.csspe.ca](http://www.csspe.ca) or e-mail our Treasurer, Angela White, at [awhite33@uwo.ca](mailto:awhite33@uwo.ca).