

From the Editors

In this issue two articles are published. Both are concerned with central questions for contemporary analytical ethics. The first article by Emma Duncan deals with the Trolley Problem and the distinction between doing and allowing; the second, by Kevin W. Gray, examines the nature and scope of distributive justice. From the perspective of a journal that is dedicated to both philosophical ethics and theological ethics, the two articles are also interesting in a different and perhaps more subtle way. Both articles address issues of great importance for philosophy as well as for theology. One deals with the dilemma of justification of killing non-liable persons and the other with the question of how global ethics should be constructed. Those are issues where a dialogue between theology and philosophy is of vital significance.

In Emma Duncan's article, 'Trolleys and Transplants: Derailing the Distinction Between Doing and Allowing', the well-known Trolley Problem is in focus. The Trolley Problem was first outlined by Philippa Foot (1920-2010), in her seminal essay 'The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect'.¹ In Foot's paper, the Trolley Problem was introduced as part of a discussion of the Doctrine of Double Effect – one of the characteristically Thomistic contributions to moral philosophy. A central part of much Catholic ethical thinking, it has also occupied a pivotal role in secular, non-religious ethical discussion.² Foot, however, was an atheist, and had little interest for theological inquiries. Nevertheless, her interest in virtue theory began when she read Thomas of Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* after it had been suggested to her by Elisabeth Anscombe.³

The Trolley Problem is also interesting in the sense that its problematic character builds on an often-shared moral intuition according to which the sole worker on the track is endowed with human dignity that protects him from being easily sacrificed to save more people. While there is plenty of empirical work building on the Trolley Problem and trying to make sense of our moral intuitions, one should not be too quick to dismiss the influx of religious traditions on our set of central moral intuitions and our apparent reluctance to weigh the life of one against the lives of many.

¹ Philippa Foot, 'The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect', in Philippa Foot, *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 19-32.

² For instance, in the context of Just War Theory, it was developed by Michael Walzer in his *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

³ 'The Grammar of Goodness: An Interview with Philippa Foot', *The Harvard Review of Philosophy*, 11 (2003), pp. 32-44.

In Kevin W. Gray's article – 'The Scope of the Global Institutional Order: Can Pogge Survive Cohen's Critique of Rawls?' – G. A. Cohen's argument for extending principles of distributive justice to the private sphere are discussed. Cohen's works – in particular his early *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*, which paved the way for analytical Marxism, and his later *Rescuing Justice and Equality* – have had an immense impact on the ethical and philosophical discussion.⁴ As a philosopher belonging to the political left, he is often seen as a typical non-religious thinker. To some extent such stereotyping is true: In his Gifford Lectures in 1966, Cohen described himself as having been raised to be 'antireligious' by his communist parents.⁵ Nevertheless, in the same lectures Cohen notes that his later agnostic position was as much a result of his upbringing as of rational persuasion.⁶ Perhaps more interestingly, when describing what led him to his critique of Rawls' theory he mentions the Gospels as a crucial source of inspiration. After watching Pasolini's movie *Il Vangelo secondo Matteo* (Eng. *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*), he started to read the Gospels and became 'deeply impressed' by their ethical content.⁷ Inspired by them, Cohen went on to construct a powerful critique of Rawls' theory of justice, arguing that justice must be a requirement for each individual, not only for social institutions.

While modern moral philosophy and theological ethics are sometimes seen as incompatible, having grown apart and building on different foundations and radically different traditions, there are reasons for doubting that this picture is accurate. And to the extent that it is, one might ask what will be lost if the separation is endorsed and maintained. *De Ethica* aims to explore the opposite path, where philosophical ethics and theological ethics can co-exist and fertilize each other. Rather than lamenting what will be lost, we want to see what can be won.

This issue also marks the end of an important and exciting period in the short history of this journal, as it is the last issue published with Professor Emerita Brenda Almond as *De Ethica's* Editor-in-Chief. Professor Almond accepted the position while the journal was very much just an idea, agreeing to help it in the start-up phase. Drawing from her experience as co-founder and editor of the well-known *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, we certainly improved the quality of the new journal and managed to avoid many mistakes. We are therefore very grateful for the leadership of Professor Almond over the last couple of years.

We are also happy to welcome Professor Elena Namli, Uppsala University, Sweden, as our new Editor-in-Chief. Under her leadership we hope to develop *De Ethica* further as a high-quality journal and a forum for scholarly discussions.⁸

⁴ G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); G. A. Cohen, *Rescuing Justice and Equality* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009).

⁵ G. A. Cohen, *If You're an Egalitarian, How Come You're so Rich?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Professor Namli will be presented in the next issue of *De Ethica*.

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