

**UNIVERSALISM
VS. RELATIVISM**

**Making Moral Judgments in a Changing,
Pluralistic, and Threatening World**

Edited by Don Browning

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Self-Evident Truth (Beyond Relativism)

Amitai Etzioni

MAKING LIGHT OF RELATIVISM, of the old-fashioned personal variety, or of the “postmodern” cultural, politically correct one, is like shooting fish in a barrel. It has been done often and well, but the barrel is still full, at least in part because no other, more compelling, content has been provided. The question thus stands: What may replace relativism? What solid grounds have we for moral judgments in general, and cross-cultural judgments in particular?

One major reason such an accounting is essential is that we all (except psychopaths) have a moral sense. J. Q. Wilson, in his book *The Moral Sense*, writes that

beginning at an early age, children can tell the difference between moral and non-moral issues. That is to say, when asked whether it is all right to do something even if there is a rule against it, children draw distinctions between actions that are always wrong (for instance, lying, stealing, and unprovoked hitting) and things that are wrong only when there are rules against it (for example, boys entering the girl's bathroom, not going to school every day, or staring at someone while they undress).

Moreover, Wilson stresses that

there are some things that young children regard as wrong whether they are middle-class residents of Hyde Park, Illinois, or Hindus living in the Indian village of Bhubaneswar. These include breaking a promise, stealing flowers, kicking a harmless animal, and destroying another's property!

When we learn about honor killing in parts of Pakistan, where brothers and fathers believe they are morally entitled, indeed commanded, to kill a sister or daughter because she had a premarital or extramarital affair, we experience moral outrage. The same holds for when we learn about Saddam's goons torturing children to squeeze confessions out of their parents for crimes they have not committed; Saudis chopping off the right hands of thieves; ethnic cleansing in Kosovo; the United States wantonly breaking treaties; and much else. (Not all such sensibilities are negative. When we learn about Danes who risked their lives to save Jews from the Nazis, or about an anonymous donor who gave much of his wealth to those most in need, and so on, we experience a sense of moral approbation.)

Once we experience such a sense, we basically face two choices. We can tell ourselves that such a sense is inappropriate because different people have different cultures, and what we sense as outrageous or as morally commendable may not be so in their eyes, in their terms, or by their values. Such an argument leaves our moral sense, which rarely is assuaged by such notions, raw, unexamined, and, above all, unaccounted for. Or, we can use this *preliminary* sense as beseeching us to establish whether our initial response is justified—as an invitation for renewed reflection on which grounds for moral judgments will allow us to justify those positions we are going to maintain after initial reflection—to ourselves as well as to others, including people from different cultures—hence, “universal” grounds.

To illustrate: When I asked myself how I could account for my dismay at learning about arranged marriages between young girls and old men in some parts of the world, I wondered first whether this might be an arrangement to which both parties agreed—and thus my initial dismay uncalled for, merely reflecting the fact that such marriages are not part of contemporary Western experience. I still had some doubt about the morality of such marriages because I do not accept that all contracts, even if voluntarily entered, are moral. For instance, a contract to serve as someone's slave is never acceptable. Upon further reflection, I concluded that the girls' conditions do not allow them to provide valid consent. These are in effect forced marriages, and my original sense of dismay was justified.

In contrast, when I learned that young children work long hours for meager pay in the sweatshops and factories of Third World countries, I initially found it highly objectionable. On examination I learned that if these children were denied this work, their condition, on the farm with starving families whom their factory work helps to feed, would be worse. This consideration shifted the focus of my moral outrage to a world in which many millions do not have the basic minimum they need to live. The focus of my outrage shifted away from the culture of Third World countries and toward the wealth differentials between rich and poor countries, as well as corrupt local elites.

In both cases, there is of course room for additional, much more complex deliberations. (For instance, why object to the use of force to arrange intimate relationships?) All I am trying to illustrate is the merit of examining our moral sense rather than trying to set it aside in vain, in effect leaving it “raw” and unaccounted for. In the process, we move from a moral sense to a moral judgment. This examination is also the main way the approach advanced here differs from intuitionism² or emotivism,³ both which rely on the moral sense but leave it unexamined. (That difference has eluded some of my critics.⁴)

In the following pages I am trying to lay out grounds for justified, cross-cultural, universal judgments. However, I note that while one may well accept the arguments that follow, my opening point stands: we all have a strong moral sense about that which takes place not merely in our own culture—with the possible exception of those who have long been drilled by relativist philosophies and absorbed some limited subcultures that so foster non-judgmentalism that their moral sense is suppressed. If the suggestions here outlined for examining and justifying the judgments our moral sense leads us to form are rejected, then others are needed. Our choices are limited to a moral sense (that knows no borders) that is either unexamined or well accounted.

A word about vocabulary. Once, following a lecture on the same subject in Stuttgart, a leading German philosopher approached me and said, “I sure like your ideas but such simple words . . .” Having spent a lifetime in academia, I am well aware of the various justifications given (no reluctance here) for complex and arcane vocabularies. They can indeed be used to make arguments more precise and to differentiate one approach from another. However, they can also be abused to conceal that one's contribution is quite limited and to make it seem profound—and above all to avoid the tough questions. In the following pages I am taking the risk of saying it plainly.

Curbing Relativism without Universals

There is considerable literature that has provided several treatments of the issue at hand. Each deserves a careful evaluation that I must leave for another day. Each provides steps that get us closer to where I hold we need to go, but none seems to provide all that is called for. These include the following (a far from a complete list): Stanley Fish argues that we are free to make cross-cultural moral judgments—as long as we make it clear that they merely reflect our culture.⁵ This is a step away from the position that we ought not to judge others (“judge not, lest ye be judged”) but it takes away much of the moral force of the judgment because it turns it into a matter of taste. I like broccoli; of course you may not. I find honor killing abhorrent, but this judgment is based on my culture, while in yours it might well be quite commendable.

Daniel A. Bell joins others who argue that we should labor to find within the other culture we are judging grounds to justify our judgment. For example, the Muslim tradition of amputating a thief's hand may be challenged on *intra*-cultural grounds, since Islam lays several conditions that must be met—but almost never are—before one can morally justify the amputation.⁶ This approach is fine as far as it goes, but it also reflects a great reluctance to form cross-cultural judgments.

Isaiah Berlin is often credited with having taken us out of the relativism quagmire by introducing value pluralism. When all is said and done, his position amounts to declaring a few acts—genocide for instance—morally unacceptable because they are clearly beyond the pale. Here there is both much less and much more than meets the eye. Less, because Berlin leaves most acts unaccounted for, in the relativism bag. Thus, his approach provides no grounds for judging most behavior. Moreover, the notion that there are some things that are clearly outside the purview of any reasonable value system introduces a universal claim that may have more legs than he recognizes.

Consensus is a particularly widely favored step for determining what is justified, but an especially limited one. Some argue that consensus is a ground for forming moral judgments in the private as well as the public realm. Imagine, they might say, that the members of a community discussed with one another at great length what should be done to enhance public safety in the face of the rising fear of terrorism. Slowly a consensus emerged that all members of the community should volunteer to give two evenings a month to patrol the streets of their neighborhood at night, and they should commit to reporting any suspicious movement they see to public authorities, even when on someone else's property (previously considered off limits). Such a consensus is then considered as a source of valid moral judgments; in the process the community is made the ultimate arbiter of what is right and wrong.⁷ However, as I see it, such consensus is at best an expression of cultural relativism: It applies merely to members of that particular community. The others have not consented and hence presumably are exempt from the moral claims involved.

One may say that consensus could arise across communities, on a national or even regional and global level, say in favor of women's rights or select measures justified by the need to protect the environment as a common good, and thus provide a source of transnational moral judgments. First of all, evidence shows that there is precious little on which all people agree (even that killing is morally inappropriate). Second, what if some communities or nations do not agree? Is what is moral then to be subject to a majority ruling?

Speaking more generally, *consensus has a great pragmatic value but contains little moral justification*. Say one submits to two ethics committees in two hospitals the same case for ruling—for instance whether life support may be

turned off in a given case. One committee rules 5 to 0 whatever it concludes, the other 3 to 2. Surely the first committee's ruling is much easier to follow, but there is no reason to hold its decisions of greater moral "value." Indeed, a community can readily agree, even unanimously, that any nonmember who strays into its confines will be shot or, if of a different race, lynched. And but a few decades back, one could have quite readily reached global consensus that women are a second class of citizen. Hence one cannot reliably build cross-cultural moral judgments (indeed any) on consensus.

Stronger Alternatives

Can one go further in the pursuit of cross-cultural, universal moral grounds? Both the founders of the republic and of the UN point the way. The founders declared certain truths to be "self-evident"—not self-evident to you or me and not to the man behind the tree. Not self-evident to Americans, or Westerners, but to one and all.

The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which has acquired a semisacred respect across many cultures, especially the concept of human rights, is another one of these self-evident truths. Even those governments and people who do not heed it do not deny its moral claims. They merely provide various narratives explaining why they cannot, at this stage, follow its dictates, or they claim that they actually do. Their response shows that they "hear" the compelling voice of these self-evident truths. (Those who question whether self-evident truths that go unheeded may be just lip service rather than moral tenets should note that these particular tenets do not go unheeded, although they are only partially followed by some, which is the case for all moral tenets.)

The observation that there are self-evident truths is not limited to sociology or history, but is of course the cornerstone of a philosophical approach, of deontology. The term generally refers to ethical theories based on moral obligation, duty, or necessity. It recognizes that certain moral causes speak to us in a compelling manner. William Frankena writes, "Deontological theories . . . assert that there are other considerations that may make an action or rule right or obligatory besides the goodness or badness of its consequences—certain features of the act itself other than the *value* it brings into existence, for example, the fact that it keeps a promise, is just." A deontologist "contends that it is possible for an action or rule of action to be the morally right or obligatory one . . . simply because of some other fact about it or because of its own nature."⁸ (Unfortunately the term brings to mind numerous other issues that have no bearing, that indeed distract from the discussion at hand.⁹ I

hence avoid it from here on and refer instead to self-evident truths.) For example, when one points out that we have higher obligations to our own children than to the children of others, this moral claim speaks for itself, effectively and directly. One does not sense that there is a need for some consequentialist explanation, a calculus of harm, or some other form of utilitarian analysis. Indeed, I have not found a single person who maintains, believes, or argues that we have the same moral obligations to all children that we have to our own.

The best way I can further elucidate the notion of compelling moral concepts is to report about an informal experiment I conducted in several countries with audiences of more than four hundred groups of rather different social, intellectual, and political backgrounds or persuasions. In each case I asked the group to pretend that they were a public school committee that must decide which values to teach in the third grade next year. First, I pointed out that it is impossible to formulate a value-free or neutral curriculum about most matters. Whatever one teaches about slavery, the Holocaust, the cherry tree, and so on will have implied moral judgments (including, of course, if one tries to present "both" sides objectively). Next I asked the various audiences if one should teach that truth-telling is superior to lying or vice versa under all but limited conditions (such as when someone is dying from cancer and asks if there is any hope left). Without exception the groups looked puzzled. They wondered, where was the question I led them to anticipate? Was there something I meant to ask and did not? Why, the answer was so self-evident!

Furthermore, none of the groups I queried engaged in any kind of argumentation, such as, "One must note that if one tells a lie, soon others will do the same, and then we shall find ourselves in a world of liars, a world we do not wish to live in; therefore, we must not lie." Group members did not require such a utilitarian, consequentialist explanation. They found the answer staring them in the face, or more accurately, directly speaking to them. (Some added arguments as an afterthought, to examine and account for a moral sense they already recognized.)

Statements about moral causes that present themselves to us as compelling are similar to what religious authorities speak of as *revelation*. This does not mean that we cannot *reason* about these matters. The fact that some cause appears powerful to me initially does not obviate the need to examine it closely. However, here reason follows, buttresses, or challenges revelation, rather than being the source of judgment. When one senses that certain positions are self-evident, one asks if one can find a compelling counterargument. If not, the judgment stands. Thus when one recites the dictum that "it is better to let a thousand guilty people walk free than to hang one innocent person," it may at first seem self-evident. However, when one then notes that these freed crimi-

nals are sure to kill at least several innocent people, one finds that the certitude of the initial statement is no longer nearly as strong as it seemed at first blush. In contrast, when dealing with the reaction to a crime and attempts to use the anger generated to justify revenge or police misconduct, the line "two wrongs do not make one right" stands, even after it is being contested.

Charles Taylor emphasizes this dual nature of morals, arguing that "our moral reactions have two facets, as it were. On one side, they are almost like instincts; on the other, they seem to involve claims about the nature and status of human beings."¹⁰ Naturalists and emotivists, Taylor argues, want to forget about the second part¹¹; but it would be equally a mistake to forget about the first part. We must keep in mind that rational explanations of moral value are attempts to, as Taylor puts it, "articulate" the moral sense, but are not its essence.¹²

Self-evidence as a Primary Concept

All systems of thought, whether mathematical, scientific, religious, or moral, require at least one starting point, primary concept, or assumption that we must take for granted—which is another term for self-evident. Many a philosopher who does not recognize the validity of the term self-evident truth may well agree that every moral argument ultimately comes down to a number of premises. These premises may also be supported by arguments that themselves have premises. However, when one gets to the root of things, there are inevitably premises for which one cannot reasonably ask for further foundations, but which nonetheless seem reasonable, something similar to what Alvin Plantinga calls "properly basic beliefs."¹³

In the Jewish tradition, this need to have an unquestioned moral anchoring point is expressed in the idea that "every tongue is made by a prior tongue." Or, in Archimedean terms, give me a leverage point, and I will move the world. Deny it, and I am out of business. For most religions, the starting point is God. His word or his delegates can legitimize things because the tablets or text express what the Lord commands, or his delegates explain and specify it. But for those who do not recognize God as a compelling truth, the rest does not follow. Other systems of thought employ nature or reason as such a primary concept. (Michael Ignatieff rejects the treatment of human rights as self-evident truths and complains about the lack of justifications of these rights in other terms.¹⁴ He then proceeds to treat human rights as an expression of agency. But all he achieves is to move the marker one step, to the question of why we should respect agency—and, to use as a primary term a value, agency, that, by my light at least, is much less compelling than human rights.)

In short, behind every sustainable moral construction is a self-evident foundation, or it is on very shaky ground.¹⁵ *I am not arguing that because we need anchors we should make up or blindly embrace some truth and call it self-evident. I am suggesting that there are truths we recognize as self-evident, and they serve also as anchoring points.*

To extend the list of self-evident truths, I turn to two that are particularly important for communitarian thinking, as this communitarian sees it. I say so because there are as many differences among communitarians as there are among other schools of thought.¹⁶ The normative standing of social order and autonomy, for a carefully crafted balance between them, has a similar standing to the concept of life and health in medical sciences. Each of these terms is subject to different definitions and whole literatures regarding their meanings. They are used here in the following basic interpretation. Autonomy is used to mean my right to act on my preferences. Social order is used to mean my realization that some constraints on the right to act on one's preferences are needed. Carefully crafted balance refers to the realization that a society that maximizes either value is not a tolerable one.¹⁷

Theoretically, one could ask, "Why recognize life and health as self-evident goods? Could one consider death and illness as good and build sciences that embody them as core values? Some kind of Satanic science?" It is, though, far from accidental and rather telling that very few, if any, would grant such a possibility serious consideration. Life and health are compelling goods that speak to us unmistakably when compared to their opposites.

This observation is not belied by the fact that there are some limiting conditions under which one may find virtue in sacrificing life or health—say, for a just war, or in an experiment to test new drugs for the sake of others. Given that we recognize multiple goods, which cannot all be fully adhered to at the same time, we must work out conflicts among them, and even sacrifice a measure of some for the sake of the others.

One augments the self-evident status of core concepts by various secondary and instrumental accounts—for instance, that a dead person can neither exercise moral responsibility nor be a bearer of rights, or that illness limits our autonomy. However, we correctly judge these arguments to be secondary. Life and health are compelling in and of themselves, as are autonomy, social order, and a carefully crafted balance between them.

I am asked, where do these self-evident truths come from? Nature, God, built into our humanity?¹⁸ I know not and it matters not for the purpose at hand. The analogue is to see an arch and understand what holds it together, without any cement or glue or wire. It stands because the way the bricks are laid out generates a formation that is self-sustaining. I can recognize this quality of the arch without having the faintest idea who put it together. Similarly,

self-evident truths speak to us such that they feel complete without our having to know how we got to that point. To suggest that they are given to us by God or nature or in some other way merely moves the justification chain to another "tong," which in turn demands the self-evident status. Once we ask, as children are bound to do, who made God or how he got into heaven, we are back to the *reductio ad absurdum* that undermines all moral and intellectual constructions. The same holds for nature and all other questioned anchor points. I am not arguing that these may not be critically examined, but merely that by doing so, we are in effect introducing another anchor point, the ground on which we justify the critical assessment, another self-evident truth—or we are left with moral and intellectual anarchy, also known as relativism.

It should be noted that the discussion here deals with the values that members of a society seek to uphold rather than merely with judgments they must come to share in the public realm in order to formulate public policies, which entail numerous moral judgments. Several "solutions" to the challenge at hand that may work in the public realm do not work for society at large because it encompasses the private and not just the public (or political) realm. For instance, many who follow liberal political theory suggest that people can hold divergent ultimate values privately but agree on shared public policies—and find them normatively acceptable—although they reach these conclusions on different moral grounds, or because they find legitimate policies that have been reached through a procedure considered legitimate—for instance, on a vote in a legislative body after due deliberation. None of this satisfies the question of which, if any, shared values the members of society may draw on in rendering moral judgments, which very much include the private realm.

Moral Dialogues and the Discovery Effect

Hans Joas criticized the concept of self-evident truth by suggesting that if it was self-evident the founding fathers (and all others who evoke this concept) would not have needed to proclaim it. The fact that they did constitutes *prima facie* evidence that the truths claimed are not self-evident.¹⁹ My response is that self-evident truth may elude people either because they live in closed societies (fundamentalist theocracies or secular totalitarian states) or have closed minds although they live in open societies. In the first case, so much social pressure and cultural indoctrination can take place that people are blinded to what stares them in the face, so to speak. No wonder children betray their parents to the secret police and people kill their best friends in the name of a cause. In the second case, people "under the influence" of one mind

modifier or another, whether it is alcohol, drugs, or merely mass culture (watching TV for six hours on an average day), are unaware of most moral considerations, including those that are self-evident. However, both of these kinds of people can be brought to see the compelling nature of the truths involved when their societies are opened up, they are freed to participate in unencumbered moral dialogues, or they are helped to overcome their various mind- (and soul-) numbing addictions.

A critic suggested that the concept of self-evident truth is a claim that my intuition is better than all others. As I see it, the opposite is the case; it is a truth that all see unless they have been distracted, and they will face it once invited and enabled to join an open moral dialogue. (In this sense there is some similarity with the line advanced here and that of Rawls' notion of idealized consensus.²⁰) By moral dialogues I mean, drawing on my teacher Martin Buber, conversations about values (rather than fact and logic driven) in which we truly open to one another and, in the process, open to the overarching truth (or God).²¹ It is also the process through which the revelation of truth is tested by counterarguments, as already discussed earlier—a subject that has gained much attention among philosophers and is laid out in fine detail in Bernstein's essay.

Habermas' ideas about the conditions of discourse that enable normative agreement,²² as well as Alasdair MacIntyre's and Charles Taylor's reclamations of practical reason,²³ may well have some bearing on this approach. So may several works by pragmatists. However, all approaches that rely on suspending one part or another of our quest for truth, or bracketing our values (for instance leaving them in the private sphere to make public agreements possible) for practical purposes, or coming down to situational ethics, follow a different course than the one here indicated because they openly or indirectly deny the claim that there is a limited but crucial set of self-evident truths.

Social Consequences of Moral Judgments (and the Lack Thereof)

A major reason there is such a determined opposition to recognizing universal truths is that scholars are like generals: They are forever preparing to fight the last rather than the next war. Scholars over the second half of the twentieth century—Isaiah Berlin, Hannah Arendt, Ernest Gellner, and many of the other most influential voices of political theory and social philosophy in the West—have had their eyes glued to the rear window, laboring to provide bodies of thought that would counter the threats of totalitarianism of both the communist and fascist varieties. It is this concern that fuels the great interest in relativism. (Another is liberal guilt over the way the “white man” imposed

his values on other people and otherwise abused them, in the now long-defunct colonial period.) The twenty-first century stares down into a rather different and even deeper schism—that between religious fundamentalism and modern, secular, liberal societies. Fundamentalists view liberalism as a threat to the values that they feel must be upheld, if need be forcefully, by the government. Moreover, fundamentalism provides answers to the profound moral and social questions that liberalism does not even claim to lay gloves on, indeed prides itself on not touching. In many liberal societies, moral understandings have, in the process of adapting to modern society, become so attenuated that they no longer provide a foundation for moral judgments. It is this moral vacuum that invites fundamentalism, which kills the prospect of a good society while trying to save it. The struggle between liberal democracy and fundamentalism is most evident in countries such as Turkey, which had strong modern (and somewhat liberal) regimes, but in recent years has seen fundamentalism build up its following and power, threatening the budding secular, civil society.

The challenge for the defender of civil, free society, hence, is to enrich its moral content, provide a new core of shared basic moral understanding (while maintaining pluralism in other areas), answer whether there is more to life than the amassment of objects, explain what we owe each other as members of communities, and address basic existential questions. Dropping the strenuous efforts to deny our moral sense and the existence of self-evident truths is an essential step in this direction. It will not take us back to totalitarianism, but save us from fundamentalism. Whether or not there are bases for rendering moral judgments for others—especially across cultures—is a matter philosophers can debate until the cows come home. However, a sociologist adds that the resulting predispositions have serious social consequences. Refraining from judgment removes a major factor that discourages immoral behavior and that fosters good conduct. Social forces affect people to make them better—or worse—than they would be otherwise. A gang will encourage its members in their anti-social behavior; a religious order in their charity work. *The same holds even across cultures.* Following reports by the global media that a nation is engaged in behavior widely considered unethical—especially if such disclosures are followed by a considerable amount of criticism, outcry, demonstrations, and so on—many a nation will at least somewhat modify their behaviors. True, some may only seek to hide it better, others to curtail it temporarily, but few are indifferent. This holds for conduct as varied as selling child pornography on the Internet to honor killing, although this observation holds much more for democratic countries or at least those that are relatively open, than for diehard totalitarian governments and headline theocracies. Similarly, nations find approbations for their good conduct, say

making major contributions to peacekeeping forces in far away and thankless lands, and they find in such appreciation a significant source of national pride and motivational reinforcement. Refraining from judgment undermines all this.

Following the Stanley Fish move—rendering judgments but stressing that they are contextual, that they are valid only from the perspective of the culture of the one who is rendering them—does not carry us much forward. The beneficial social consequences are not derived from such conditionality. In sharp contrast, the claim that certain moral judgments are universal, are self-evident truths, which all those who are open-minded can readily see, has the kind of force that can generate important salutary social consequences. It is the kind of claim most societies, especially those that are free or open, find hard to ignore.

My argument is not that we should make nonrelativist claims because they are beneficial, although at least those who subscribe to utilitarian, consequentialist doctrines might consider such a course. My argument is that given that there is a core of self-evident truths, giving it voice has a bonus: a world better than it would be otherwise.

Moreover, without cross-cultural moral judgments we cannot get to the next step—asking what legitimate measures we must take to enforce our judgments. Thus, key questions concerning the conditions under which it is appropriate to impose economic sanctions and, above all, to engage in military interventions (whether humanitarian, to avoid genocides and ethnic cleansing, or just war) are all secondary to the resolution that there is something taking place in another nation that we are compelled to stop. Only after we conclude that certain conduct is morally unacceptable do we logically come to the question of what we legitimately might do about it. We can conclude that a certain behavior is unacceptable, but that we cannot do more about it than condemn it. We cannot rule that we can, for example, legitimately employ military force until the behavior has been found morally wrong. Questions of means follow decisions about goals. (One may of course say that we act on nonmoral grounds, say because we need the oil. The observations made here concern the legitimacy of our action.) There are those who fear cross-cultural moral judgments because they believe that such judgments legitimate sending in the Marines, Special Forces, and bombers. One must draw a clear line between judging that a given conduct is morally reprehensible and considering a whole second set of moral judgments—what it is justified for us to do about that conduct. These considerations come into play, for instance, in the considerable literature on just wars. However, there are scores and scores of situations in which we shall judge behavior as morally wrong but that will not justify governmental interventions across borders. Critics, who first fear judgments lest they lead to action, then turn around to argue that without ac-

tion such moral judgments are useless. Far from it. In a world which is increasingly like a global village, people of different parts of the world do care about the moral judgments of others and are affected by them. Thus the Chinese government rejects the claim that it does not care about human rights, but then tries to conceal most violations when they are found out. And when the United States was roundly criticized for its lack of support for the fight against AIDS, even the Bush administration dedicated \$15 billion to the cause. True, one may say that in each case the parties involved acted out of self-interest, concern for good will, PR, and such. What necessitated these actions, however, what made it in their self-interest to conduct themselves better, was the moral voice carried with certitude across borders.

Notes

I am indebted to Mark E. Gammon for research and editorial assistance in working on this paper. It draws on chapter 8 of Amitai Etzioni, *The New Golden Rule: Community and Morality in a Democratic Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1996).

1. James Q. Wilson, *The Moral Sense* (New York: Free Press, 1993), 141.
2. A classic text is G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988). Later and milder variations can be found in the work of W. D. Ross and Robert Audi, among others.
3. See especially Charles L. Stevenson, *Ethics and Language* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1944).
4. For instance, William R. Lund, "Autonomy, Functionalism, and the Common Good," in *Autonomy and Order: A Communitarian Anthology*, ed. Edward W. Lehman (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 9–10. Also J. Russell Muirhead, "Accounting for Order," in *Autonomy and Order: A Communitarian Anthology*, ed. Edward W. Lehman (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 195–200.
5. Stanley Fish, "Don't Blame Relativism," *The Responsive Community: Rights and Responsibilities* 12, no. 3 (Summer 2002), 27–31.
6. Daniel A. Bell, "The East Asian Challenge to Human Rights" (unpublished), 9. See also Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, *Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990).
7. Michael Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 7–8.
8. William K. Frankena, *Ethics*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1963, 1973), 15.
9. The term *deontology* brings much baggage with it, and is deeply associated with individualistic moral theories, which I do not share. Taken broadly, it can refer to any rule-based ethic, from divine command ethics to natural law to Kant.
10. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 5.

11. Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 5–8.
12. Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 7.
13. Alvin Plantinga, "Is Belief in God Rational?" *Rationality and Religious Belief*, ed. C. Delaney (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979).
14. Michael Ignatieff, *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).
15. See, for instance, Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002). Williams argues that accuracy and sincerity are "virtues of truth."
16. The term "communitarianism" has been used to mean many different things; here I use it to refer to the idea that healthy societies require a proper balance of individual rights with social order, as spelled out in my book *The New Golden Rule*.
17. Etzioni, *The New Golden Rule*, chapters 1–2.
18. Wilson in *The Moral Sense* suggests that the source is a combination of a biological predestination and universal socialization features.
19. Private communication with Joas, Berlin, 1 June 2003.
20. John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).
21. Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Scribner's, 1970).
22. Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990); see also Hans Joas, "Procedure and Conviction: On Moral Dialogues," in *Autonomy and Order: A Communitarian Anthology*, ed. Edward W. Lehman (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).
23. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988); Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 34–60.