

Week 6

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Articles

1. **What ~ism do you most closely align with? Why?** I align most closely with moral realism. My mind is very rational. I like to think that there is one correct set of rules that everyone should follow. Anyone who wanders from these set of rules are behaving immorally.
2. **Does your epistemology and axiology impact how you feel?** My axiology and epistemology of "truth is one" and "reality is found" certainly show themselves in my alignment with moral realism.

When I first read the quoted definition of ethics in the first article, namely that ethics is whatever society accepts, I thought that it was the closest to what ethics is. I have a problem with the definition proposed by the article. My axiology and epistemology of "truth is one" and "reality is found" certainly have contributed to my perception of this problem. The definition set forth is, in my opinion to broad. It gives many examples that fall short of what ethics is, and it even gives several examples of what ethics includes. Those examples which fall short, the article dictates, fall short because they "deviate from what is ethical." These examples illustrate what ethics isn't. Then, the article gives several examples of what ethics refers to, but doesn't really give a solid definition.

That being said, the definition wasn't all bad. Being a part of a company that fosters continuous development in not only technical ways but also moral ways, I did like the notion of ethics referring to continuous development of our own ethical standards.

Comapred to the first article, the general introduction to ethics does a much better job defining ethics. It frames the shortcomings of ethics in that it can't point to a single right answer in most situations. Often, all ethics can do is provide a framework for choosing between many seemingly-good options.

Film

1. **Do pharmaceutical companies have a moral obligation to save lives?** I don't believe so, at least not generally. In the public sector, yes they would. However, in the private sector, I don't think so. Sure, I think that a good company might try to save as many lives as possible. It is not, however, in most companies best interest to go bankrupt to conduct research on a new medicine that could save countless lives, especially if there was very low chance of that fruitful in any reasonable amount of time. I don't think society should expect any private company to do that. I say "private", because I think it would be the duty of any public pharmaceutical company to do everything possible to save lives.

2. **Does the current patent regime for pharmaceuticals need to be reformed?** No. the patent regime does not need to be reformed. The entire patent system just needs to go away.
3. **Is 20 years a reasonable time for drug companies to regain their investments? If not, how long should patents last?** The patent system should not even exist.
4. **Do pharmaceutical companies have a right to set drug prices themselves? Why, or why not?** Why wouldn't they? They should be able to set the price to anything the people would be willing to pay for. The people working for companies spending billions of dollars on breakthrough research need to be adequately compensated for their work. They won't be adequately compensated if the government forced their prices down. Furthermore, I think it comes down to supply and demand. If the prices are forced lower than what people are willing to pay, there will inevitably be a shortage or else the companies making the drugs will lose money eventually forcing them out of business. In this case, no one gets the drugs. Most drugs are not commodities. Their prices should not be forced down.
5. **Should patents come with strings attached? If so, what can governments demand from patent holders?** Patents should not even be a thing.
6. **Can governments ever be justified in stripping companies of their patents if they feel that the patents are being abused?** No. The patent system is archaic in a day and age where technology and research is being shared in the community to better society. The only thing the government would be justified in doing with regards to anything patent-related is scrapping the entire patent system.
7. **But what about poor people in the developed world who lack access to life-saving medications or those who can barely afford branded drugs?** It is up to the governments of these individuals to provide them with the medical attention they need. Since these are governments of developed countries, they should have the resources characteristic of developed countries necessary to provide poor individuals with adequate health care.
8. **Can this be remedied, or can there never be a true free market for life-saving commodities?** Yes. Abandon the patent system. It seems like a great idea because it fosters innovation in those individuals who are paranoid and feel like they will not make any money if they tell their mother of their latest and greatest idea. But all it really does is allow situations like these to occur, where a company develops a miracle drug but competition is impossible because of patents. Simply do away with patents, and the free market system can properly foster healthy competition as it should.