Conceptual Ethics II

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Abstract

Which concepts should we use to think and talk about the world, and to do all of the other things that mental and linguistic representation facilitates? This is the guiding question of the field that we call 'conceptual ethics'. Conceptual ethics is not often discussed as its own systematic branch of normative theory. A case can nevertheless be made that the field is already quite active, with contributions coming in from areas as diverse as fundamental metaphysics and social/political philosophy. In this pair of papers, we try to unify the field, reflecting on its basic nature, structure, and methodology.

1. Introduction

The precursor to this paper circumscribed the field we call 'conceptual ethics' and explored why it might be worth pursuing. At its core, conceptual ethics is the business of determining which concepts we ought to use, and one reason we think it's important is that our conceptual choices can have profound, non–conceptual consequences. Nevertheless, the reader might have left the previous paper with a lingering feeling that conceptual ethics is not so much a unified field, as a litany of one-off questions after a single, monotonous pattern: 'Should we use concept C (over alternative A)?' Compare aesthetics, which is a rich, cohesive branch of normative theory, not just a roll-call of pro-or-con judgments about individual works of art. We think conceptual ethics has the potential to be much more systematic. Appearances to the contrary are largely artifacts of our approach to the previous paper and the current state of the field.

To fix ideas, we began the first paper by zooming in tightly on concrete case studies involving particular concepts from different areas of specialization – exercises in 'practical' or 'applied' conceptual ethics, if you will. Then, to set the boundaries of conceptual ethics, we zoomed out to a wide shot that included neighboring territories. Here, our discussion verged on conceptual metaethics. To bridge this gap and hopefully help bring conceptual ethics into its own, the present paper focuses on three interrelated, medium-grain issues internal to the subject that arise with respect to a large swath of concepts. We can think of them as special topics in 'normative' or 'systematic' conceptual ethics.[1]

The topics canvassed below are (i) eliminativism and revolutionary fictionalism about a given subject matter, (ii) the metaphysics and methodology of parameterizing questions in conceptual ethics to particular goods or goals, and (iii) what we call the problem of 'hypocrisy' for arguments in favor of conceptual change. We might have highlighted other issues instead. But hopefully readers will ultimately agree that these three collectively strike a nice balance between familiarity and novelty – revealing the potential breadth of systematic conceptual ethics without sacrificing its claim to unity. We take them in turn, over the course of the following three sections.

2. Eliminativism and Revolutionary Fictionalism

Antirealism about an arbitrary subject matter comes in a stunning variety of colors. Some of the 'isms from this literature are purely descriptive, metaphysical. Others have a more

prescriptive and/or conceptual tint. Consider for example *eliminativism* – with respect to folk psychology, say, or ordinary moral discourse. Sometimes the view is simply taken to be a bald, ontological claim to the effect that certain (putative) objects or properties don't really exist. There aren't any beliefs or desires, moral rights or wrongs. As a matter of terminological housekeeping, however, the view that Fs do not exist might be better called 'nihilism' or 'nominalism' (as indeed it often is). After all, if there aren't any Fs, we don't have to eliminate them. On the other hand, if there are, simply refusing to think or talk about them won't make them go away.[2] So one might reasonably reserve 'eliminativism' for the distinctly normative, representational view that we ought to stop using a given term or concept. Thus construed, eliminativism is a position within conceptual ethics – a position that might be *defended* by appeal to nihilism/nominalism, but not simply identified with it.[3] Indeed, nominalism about Fs could be taken to support other views in conceptual ethics instead.

The fictionalist, for example, thinks the virtues that accrue with the use of a given conceptual apparatus are largely independent of whether or not there are actually objects or properties answering to its constitutive concepts. Even if there aren't any Fs, there may still be good reasons to continue thinking and talking 'as if' there were. Now, there are many different forms of fictionalism, which we cannot stop to survey here.[4] But one crucial distinction for our purposes is between hermeneutic (descriptive) and revolutionary (prescriptive) versions of the view.[5] Revolutionary fictionalism can be helpfully seen as a position in conceptual ethics. Whatever the actual, current content of our thought and talk on the topic, revolutionary fictionalists advocate the distinctly normative view that we *ought* to use the relevant concept(s) within the scope of some sort of pretense. In the previous paper (§4), we distinguished two sorts of questions in conceptual ethics. Should we use a given concept? And if so, how should we use it exactly? Revolutionary fictionalism addresses both. Unlike her eliminativist counterpart, the fictionalist answers our first question affirmatively. But unlike the realist, she invokes a kind of make-believe or disowning preface in her answer to the second.[6]

Revolutionary fictionalism is usually motivated by the desire to strike a compromise between the theoretical value of representing the world correctly and the practical value of exploiting whatever conceptual resources help us get by. Consider for example fictionalism in the philosophy of mathematics.[7] Even if there aren't any numbers, using numerals and other arithmetical concepts can make it much easier to do your taxes. Nominalistic paraphrases of applied arithmetical discourse are just too cumbersome for everyday purposes. To avoid endorsing false or factually defective thoughts in the process, just construe everything you do as part of a pretense, or as falling within the scope of an operator like: 'According to the myth of Peano arithmetic…'.

But why, one might reasonably wonder, must we balance the values of truth and expedience? Why can't we simply vacillate between the two as circumstances require? To hone this line of objection, we might tease apart the following questions:

1. How (if at all) should we use arithmetical concepts in everyday life?
2. How should mathematicians use arithmetical concepts?
3. How should we use them in the ontology seminar room?

It's far from obvious that the answers to these three questions should run parallel. Invoking different contexts, people, and projects can trigger different aims or values we might be interested in. Take 1. When we're doing our taxes, or shopping for groceries, worrying about how the non-existence of numbers might impact the truth of what we think and say seems borderline neurotic. Here, expedience is the key. On the other hand, with 3, true representation is presumably paramount. Those of us afraid that numbers may not exist might reasonably

refrain from arithmetical discourse altogether (for the duration of class). Which is not to say that the fictionalist's compromise is *never* apt. On the contrary, operating within the fiction of arith-metic might be the best policy when we're doing number theory, as with 2. But the larger point remains that any presumption of uniformity across 1–3 requires justification.

Suppose the fictionalist responded to our treatment of 1 by saying that she simply cares more about truth than we, the authors, seem to.[8] A further complication arises, this time with respect to *dialogue* (rather than soliloquy or thought). On the one hand, if the fictionalist makes her disowning preface explicit in ordinary conversation, she runs the practical risk of confusing her interlocutors and inhibiting discussion. On the other hand, if she keeps her pretense tacit, she misleads unsuspecting audiences into taking her utterances at face value, thereby sacrificing truthfulness to truth. Notice that three very different goods or values are in play here: the metaphysical good of truth, the practical good of clarity, and the moral good of honesty. Even if our fictionalist has taken all three into account and decided how she would like to proceed, we have not yet been given any reason to follow her lead. Indeed, she may even be mistaken about the norms governing her own conceptual behavior. We should not assume without argument that the facts in conceptual ethics are metaphysically up to us or epistemically transparent to introspection. These observations raise a host of questions in conceptual ethics quite generally. The next section makes a start at addressing some of them more systematically.

3. On the Plurality of Parameters

If the foregoing discussion of fictionalism established nothing else, it at least set out the epistemic possibility that norms in conceptual ethics are indexed or parameterized to… *something*.[9] We wrote most often of goods or values, but contexts, people, projects, and aims came up as well. Approaching the subject a bit more systematically, we might try to shore up the range of variables and values (in the quantificational sense) that could potentially impact which concepts we ought to use. Can each of the parameters on our partial list vary independently of the others? Which are fundamental or explanatorily basic in conceptual ethics? We consider some of these issues in the first sub-section below, with respect to 'goods and goals' specifically. But there are further questions in the vicinity. Should we countenance 'all things considered' conceptual norms, or does the correct conceptual ethics just consist in various relative mandates – for different goods of interest, say? The revolutionary fictionalist seemed to be looking for a single, overarching prescription, but the case studies we canvassed in the previous paper generally seemed to restrict our attention to some specific set of goods (whether or not the relevant authors always made those restrictions explicit). This issue has both metaphysical and methodological dimensions, which we distinguish and discuss individually in the second sub-section below.

3.1. GOODS AND GOALS

As we have seen, truth, clarity, and honesty are three separable 'goods' or values that could be operative in conceptual ethics. Looking back at the examples in paper one (§2), we begin to see that the catalog of potentially relevant goods could be extended almost indefinitely. The literature on revisionism about TRUTH, for example, emphasizes the virtue of consistency or coherence.[10] In fundamental metaphysics, the principal good seems to be objective naturalness; though ideological parsimony is also often invoked.[11] And in Sally Haslanger's discussions of concepts surrounding race and gender, the good of social justice plays a major role.[12] (Not to mention the value of surviving death in discussions of personal identity.[13]) We could partition this panoply in a number of different ways. One natural scheme would

retrace traditional disciplinary lines. So, for example, we could say that 'epistemic' goods applicable to conceptual behavior include coherence, facilitation of justified belief, and computational tractability; whereas 'metaphysical' goods might include naturalness and contribution to true representation. Straddling the border are goods that have to do with explanation and prediction. Not to mention moral or political goods like justice, happiness, and human flourishing.

These are all values of a single variable: goods. But there are other variables worth tracking in conceptual ethics as well. Which concepts we ought to use certainly seems to be sensitive to our individual projects, interests, and aims; or those of various groups to which we belong.[14] If we're studying the flora native to some Greek island, one set of conceptual tools may be better than all the rest. But when it's time for dinner and we're attempting a vegetarian stir-fry, we'll presumably want to use a somewhat different set of concepts. Agents can and do pursue a variety of worthwhile projects, with different standards of success. And it's natural to think that different *goals* give rise to different norms – conceptual and non-conceptual alike. If you abstain from using the concept NUMBER, you won't get very far in mathematics. And you can't excel at soccer without the concept OFFSIDE. Moreover, as these assorted examples help show, we should not restrict our 'natural thought' to purely theoretical projects. Inquiry is but a fragment of human activity. Whether our aims are practical, theoretical, or some mixture thereof, they can easily affect which concepts we ought to use.

Having placed goals on the table alongside goods, we might wonder whether one of these two variables can somehow be reduced to other or whether we should just keep separate books. Are the relevant goods in conceptual ethics always determined by the relevant goals? Or is it the other way around? If instead the two parameters can vary independently, how often does that happen? And how many different parameters make independent contributions to conceptual norms? These are substantive questions in conceptual ethics that we cannot hope to settle here. But we do have space to register one reservation about the reduction of goods to goals, and to gesture at a few additional parameters that may be worth tracking.

Meet Karl, a politician whose only goal in life is to win the US presidency. By stipulation – however psychologically plausible or implausible this may be – Karl simply doesn't care about social justice. Using our default concepts of RACE and GENDER in stump speeches and at fundraisers may help him get elected. As it turns out, however, the use of certain alternative concepts in public arenas like these would hasten the dawn of a more just society (as per our discussion of Haslanger in paper one). Now, suppose these alternatives would somehow alienate the base of our politico's party. Then a simplistic, goal-centric conceptual ethics would presumably have us conclude that Karl ought to use our default concepts of RACE and GENDER. That may or may not be the right verdict.[15] We suspect not. But suffice it to say: if Karl's goals were ultimately trumped by the good of social justice, one might start to think that *goods* are more explanatorily fundamental than *goals* when it comes to settling the normative facts in conceptual ethics. Of course, our goals would still matter; but it would be an open question *how much* and *in what way* they matter.

What other parameters might make a difference in conceptual ethics? Consider historical context. Should Aristotle have used the concept QUARK when he was working on *The Physics*? The anachronism suggests a negative answer. But it's not obvious we can secure that verdict by just focusing on goods and/or goals. At some reasonable level of description, Aristotle's aims were certainly continuous with those of contemporary physicists; and the principal values at issue in both cases are broadly theoretical. With enough ingenuity, we could probably squeeze the right verdict out of a fine-grained description of the relevant goods or goals. As a matter of methodology, however, it might be more perspicuous to admit historical context as another variable that can potentially impact our conceptual ethics.

Which concepts are *available* for use can affect which concepts ought to be used.[16] In many cases, of course, we'll be interested exclusively in the present context. And in some historical cases, anachronism will be irrelevant. But we shouldn't ignore a parameter altogether just because it's sometimes ethically inert.[17]

3.2. ALL THINGS CONSIDERED?

The fact that we can parameterize questions in conceptual ethics to various goods or goals (or whatever else) does not preclude the existence of 'all things considered' norms governing our conceptual behavior. The point is clearest, perhaps, with respect to goods. Nothing we have said thus far rules out the revolutionary fictionalist's proposal that we should, all goods considered, only use numerical concepts within the scope of some sort of pretense. As in ethics more generally, it is important not conflate this issue with what's at stake in debates between absolutists and relativists. The goods-relativist in conceptual ethics can grant that there are all-goods-considered norms. Her view is simply that the relevant norms are parameterized to some good(s) or other – the plural ensuring that 'all goods' is just a limiting case. The crucial contrast here is between a universal generalization over some parameter and its ungeneralized, unparametrized counterpart. The relativist thinks of all-goods-considered norms on the first model, whereas the absolutist prefers the second.

It is also important to distinguish such metaphysical questions about the existence and nature of all-goods-considered norms from related methodological issues. Whether or not there are any overarching conceptual norms out there for us to uncover does not immediately settle how to conduct the business of conceptual ethics. If there are such norms, the best way to find them may be, first, to determine the relevant norms for individual goods and only then attempt to compute their vector sum.[18] On the other hand, even if there aren't any all-goods-considered norms, the most efficient way to discover whatever fine-grained norms might lie in the vicinity could still be to start with the blunt, unqualified question: should we use concept C (over alternative A)? These are simply two different approaches to conceptual ethics, neither of which is clearly superior to the other across the board. They are equally understandable reactions to the practical challenges posed by the plurality of goods described above. Both have their shortcomings, but both could prove useful as conceptual ethics advances.

The shortcomings of the second approach are probably more glaring. Most obviously, can we really hope to alight on fine-grained norms by searching for overarching norms that just aren't there? But the first approach has its pitfalls as well. There is a natural temptation when doing conceptual ethics to restrict one's attention to goods endemic to the subject matter from which a given concept is drawn, and to presume without argument that those are the only sorts of goods that will matter in the final accounting. One might focus, for example, on a metaphysical good like *naturalness* for the ethics of a metaphysical concept like PERSISTENCE, or a moral/political good like *justice* for the ethics of a moral/political concept like HUMAN RIGHTS. The temptation is natural just because we each tend to focus on concepts from our respective areas of specialization and to bring considerations *from those very areas* to bear on philosophical questions about the concepts. In principle, however, any kind of good could prove relevant to the ethics of any kind of concept. Our first, one-good-at-a-time approach to conceptual ethics should not be mistaken for an excuse to ignore goods native to other sub-fields. A philosopher of biology interested in the ethics of concepts like GENE and FITNESS might do well to consider moral or metaphysical goods. Which truth-like concept we should use could be sensitive to epistemic or political goods. Whether or not such goods will turn out to matter is a substantive question in conceptual ethics that cannot simply be legislated in advance.

4. The Virtues of Hypocrisy

The last section dealt with perennial questions in systematic ethics quite generally, though their answers may ultimately be somewhat idiosyncratic in the conceptual case. The present section, like our initial treatment of revolutionary fictionalism, concerns an issue peculiar to *conceptual* ethics in particular. The issue has to do with our standards of argument for conceptual change. Unlike fictionalism, however, this third and final topic on our tour has only been investigated, thus far, with respect to a small handful of concepts. By way of illustration, suppose the logic of a natural language like English is classical, in the sense that the concepts expressed by words like 'and' and 'or' underwrite the validity of all and only classical logical principles. Nevertheless, for certain theoretical reasons, a philosopher might suggest we modify the meanings of the logical particles so that our new language has some weaker logic; a relevance logic, say. Now here's the rub. Suppose the revisionist *argued* for her proposed changes using premises or rules of inference that turned out to be invalid in her preferred logic (yet, to her credit, classically kosher). She might well be accused of hypocrisy and invited to reformulate her argument accordingly. If no suitable reformulation seemed to be forthcoming, her revisionary suggestion might be dismissed without further ado. The means of a revolution must be consistent with its ends, one might say.[19]

The first point we want to register about this dialectical situation is that 'hypocrisy' is not obviously a vice. After all, we could have just as easily described our imagined revisionist as addressing her opponent 'on his own terms' – which certainly sounds like an argumentative virtue. A more neutral metaphor might be climbing a ladder one intends to kick away. But let's suspend branding until we understand the situation better.

Abstractly, there are two salient kinds of argument for the conclusion that we ought to be using concept C (rather than alternative A): arguments that make use of C but not A and arguments that make use of A but not C.[20] The same goes for the opposition (who argue for A over C), giving rise to ten possible dialectical situations, up to isomorphism.[21] The easiest two arguments to assess can be represented as follows – where the Ys and Ns are answers to the question: is there an otherwise compelling argument (i.e., bracketing any hypocrisy/ladder issues) that fits the description corresponding to the cell's column and row?

Using A...	Using C...		Using A...	Using C...	
Y	N	...to argue for using A	Y	Y	...to argue for using A
N	Y	...to argue for using C	N	N	...to argue for using C

The dialectic on the left looks like a stalemate, with each side able to use their favored concept to argue that we ought to use their favored concept, but neither side able to argue for their concept using their opponent's. The dialectic on the right, by contrast, looks like a victory for A. Whether we use A or C, all arguments point to the use of A. The other eight possible scorecards are somewhat harder to evaluate. Some substantive philosophy is called for.

A quick calculation reveals that seven of the ten unique grids (including the one on the right, above, but not the one on the left) contain at least one Y signaling a 'hypocritical' argument: an otherwise compelling argument for A using C (or vice versa). Our basic point, then, is that dismissing such arguments without looking at the other three cells in the relevant grid seems myopic and prejudicial. After all, the Y in upper-right cell of the scorecard on the

right only seems to *strengthen* the case for using A.[22] Or more cautiously, those who would disagree arguably owe us some justification for regarding hypocrisy as a disqualifying vice.

The second point we want to make is that these sorts of issues actually arise with respect to a wide range of concepts. As we noted in the previous paper, there is an emerging literature on whether we ought to revise or replace our ordinary notion of truth in light of inconsistency theory. Part of the topic's interest stems from the fact that inconsistency theory is a semantic position, combined with the widely held view that TRUTH is central to semantics. Arguments from inconsistency theory to revisionism therefore run the risk of exhibiting exactly the kind of dialectical involution described above. Indeed, the problem here is quite general. For philosophers tend to be interested in concepts that are in some sense basic or fundamental to our conceptual schemes: BEAUTIFUL, JUST, JUSTIFIED, RIGHT, IDENTICAL, SOME, PART, SET, etc. Precisely because these concepts are so basic, we often use them in doing philosophy itself, and, thus, in doing conceptual ethics specifically. As a result, the case for revisionism about a given concept of philosophical interest will often be in danger of relying on that very concept. To take an example close to home, it's hard to see how to do conceptual ethics without relying on relying on certain core normative concepts, such as OUGHT and GOOD. But what if we want to investigate the ethics of such normative concepts themselves?[23]

5. Conclusion

The previous paper in this pair defined conceptual ethics and argued for its significance. Whereas the examples adumbrated there look like topics in 'practical or applied' conceptual ethics, the issues explored in the present paper might belong to 'systematic or normative' conceptual ethics (and/or metaethics). But however we catalog them, hopefully the reader can now see the value in thinking carefully about which concepts we ought to use. We have raised more questions in the pages above than we have tried to answer: about revolutionary fictionalism, parameters like goods and goals, dialectical circularity, and other methodological matters in conceptual ethics. If nothing else, the discussion will at least have demonstrated that there is plenty of work to be done on normative and evaluative issues concerning representational choices and changes. Our overarching goal has been to help bring conceptual ethics into its own, by getting more people on board and by encouraging interaction between practitioners dealing with concepts drawn from different philosophical fields.

Short Biographies

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Notes

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[1] There are of course vexed questions about whether, where, and how to draw lines between applied ethics, normative ethics, and metaethics quite generally. (And some of the discussion below will admittedly be fairly 'meta'.) Even if we should ultimately reconfigure this tripartite distinction as a continuum, say, we can still exploit its familiarity here to help clarify the relations between our two articles. The distinction also helps motivate the present paper. As we have seen,

there is already a significant body of work in applied conceptual ethics. But there is plenty of room in this literature for more general, systematic normative and evaluative theorizing. Once we recognize that many of the same ethical questions and concerns come up across a broad range of philosophically interesting concepts, it becomes easier to see our field's potential. Or so we hope the following discussion establishes.

[2] Unless of course the Fs at issue are mind-dependent in just the right way. Suppose for example that something is hip iff the right people in the right circumstances would judge it to be hip. If those people vowed to stop using the concept HIP (in a modally robust way), then presumably nothing would be hip.

[3] Our treatment of eliminativism here resonates with the discussion in Railton and Rosen (2009).

[4] For a nice overview of fictionalism, see Eklund (2011).

[5] Burgess and Rosen (1997) originated these terms.

[6] We gloss over the differences between pretense and prefix versions of fictionalism in the interests of breadth and simplicity. For more on the contrast, see Burgess (Forthcoming).

[7] See the introduction to Field (1991). We pick this example because it arguably started the fictionalist wave in contemporary philosophy and because the motivations here are stark and clear. Admittedly, not everything we say about revolutionary fictionalism will immediately carry over to other topics. The case of moral fictionalism is particularly delicate, given that the subject matter is itself normative. For discussion of moral fictionalism, see Joyce (2001), Hussain (2004), and Kalderon (2005).

[8] To forestall the reaction that we have been unfairly brusque, perhaps it will suffice to note that one of us has defended an instance of revolutionary fictionalism elsewhere: Burgess (Forthcoming).

[9] We use terms like 'index', 'parameter', and 'variable' more or less interchangeably throughout, to capture the vague but intuitive concept of relativization. We do not have any particular, theoretical notion from linguistic semantics in mind. Nor do we want to suggest that the best methodology for conceptual ethics involves *semantic* inquiry into normative or evaluative *claims* about concept use. This is a vexed question in metaethics quite generally and metaphilosophy more generally still. (Consider for example whether the best methodology for modal metaphysics involves semantic inquiry into counterfactual constructions of natural language.) What we go on to say about parameterization is orthogonal to these issues. Even if it turns out that semantics should just be kept out of metaphysics or ethics, the relevant facts or states of affairs may still somehow 'incorporate' values of variables like those discussed below.

[10] See Eklund (2002), Patterson (2009), and Scharp (2013).

[11] See Sider (2012), building on Lewis (1983).

[12] See Haslanger (2012).

[13] See Johnston (1989) and Parfit (1984).

[14] This basic idea resonates with important themes in the work of both Liz Anderson and Sally Haslanger on conceptual ethics. See, for instance Anderson (1995), Anderson (2001), and Haslanger (2012). It's also taken up in Plunkett and Sundell (Forthcoming) and Sundell (2011).

[15] Some of the considerations that come up when thinking about Karl – and about how deep an explanatory role his personal goals may play – parallel debates over the Humean Theory of Reasons, as well as related disagreements about internal vs. external reasons. For helpful discussion, see Finlay and Schroeder (2012).

[16] See note 29 of 'Conceptual Ethics I' for more on this score and some related references.

[17] Once we abandon the ambition of shoehorning everything that might matter to our conceptual choices under the guise of goods or goals, we begin to notice a host of additional parameters. Take the age of a concept user. One can imagine a conceptual ethicist arguing that children shouldn't possess certain 'adult' concepts, either because they have no use for them yet or because acquiring the concepts at an early age would be somehow detrimental. A given elementary-school student might be capable of grasping the epsilon/delta definition of continuity under intensive instruction but only at social and emotional costs that would dwarf the countervailing benefits. Or consider concepts for crimes like MURDER, TORTURE, and RAPE. The fact that there is no popular series of picture books designed to develop these concepts reflects our culture's view that they are simply inappropriate for small children. Granted, there are clearly moral and practical goods at play in these examples. But it's not obvious that they collectively cover everything of conceptual-ethical significance to the cases. Moreover, even if they do, the modest methodological point remains that we might access the relevant norms more efficiently and reliably if we permit ourselves to parameterize with respect to a user's age.

[18] Some goods might drop out of the accounting in a given case. Consider the view that what's cool or hip is a judgment-dependent matter, constituted by our aggregate opinions. If this were true, we might not have to worry about whether our concept HIP cuts reality near its joints or reflects the nature of some genuine universal out there in the world. This observation may help explain why some philosophers think that undermining 'realism' about certain topics (e.g., human sexuality) can have such significant implications for the sorts of goods we should bring to bear in evaluating theories on those topics. Consider in this connection Foucault (2002), Hacking (2002), Davidson (2001), Veyne (1997), and Dreyfus (2001).

[19] See chapter four of Nagel (1997) for related discussion.

[20] We could also consider arguments that use neither or use both (not to mention arguments *for* using neither or both), though it's not clear what these additional options would look like in the logical case. Anyway, the two-by-two grids above should serve well enough for present purposes. Adding more columns and rows just bolsters our point.

[21] Not sixteen, because there are six pairs of equivalent grids – with one member generated from the other by systematically swapping A and C (and moving the Ys and Ns accordingly). The grid on the right is part of such a pair, whereas the one on the left is not.

[22] Indeed, insofar as it's harder to argue for A using C than to argue for A using A itself, we might even consider giving extra credit for such Ys. Whether or not there is really any such 'home court' advantage in conceptual ethics remains to be seen. Thanks here to Tristram McPherson.

[23] See Plunkett and Sundell (Forthcoming) for more on this issue. Relatedly, one might wonder whether we should be using the concept MORALITY in our thinking about how to live. See Gibbard (1992) for readings of Nietzsche and Williams that emphasize this sort of question. The relevant primary sources include Nietzsche (1994), Nietzsche (1989), and Williams (1985). Whether there is a threat of circularity here – viscous or virtuous – depends on whether we should use the concept MORALITY for conceptual ethics.

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