IMMUTABLE ETHICS:
A Non-Theistic Treatise in Defense of the Universality and Unchangeability of Right and Wrong

Aaron H. Gold, D.M.

ABSTRACT

Modern popularist teaching presents ethics as situational and relativistic. Rather than using this current approach a more classical and reactionary methodology that calls for the reevaluation of some of the elder philosophies that regarded right and wrong in the context of absolutism is required. Confusion between the concepts of beliefs, values, morals, laws, and ethics has increased to the point where many people today consider these related ideas as synonymous. It is essential to discuss these related concepts outside of any single religious or ethnically based belief system. To do otherwise would inject individualistic religious or ethnic beliefs and values into the discussion, thereby negating the universality of the argument. Both modern and traditional approaches to ethics have attempted either to manage the effects of unethical behavior after it occurs, or to give specific guidance and examples in order to prevent future similar occurrences. Unfortunately, both of these popular approaches are reactive at best. The optimal strategy is to take a proactive approach that can discern the root causes of unethical behavior so that this knowledge could be used as a preventative countermeasure to the ever-increasing amounts of unethical behavior. Axiology, the study of ethics, is not a new field; but many modern authors and ethicists have avoided and continue to avoid the issue of ethical absolutism. Contrary to much modern thought, there is no reason to avoid the discussion of absolutism, as the concept of universal and immutable ethics can be reconciled fully with other contemporary schools of thought such as physical sciences, social sciences, and rationalism.

PROLOGUE

"In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges 21:25)

INTRODUCTION

This treatise has a three-fold purpose. The first purpose is to convince the reader of the immutability of ethical standards. Part I of this paper will define and discuss five related yet distinct concepts: beliefs, values, morals, laws, and ethics. These definitions are followed in Part II by a comparison of these defined concepts in order to demonstrate the inadequacy of beliefs, values, morals, and laws to be universal and immutable vis-à-vis ethics.

The second purpose of this paper is to discover, define, and discuss root causes of unethical behavior. Although there has been considerable discussion on the subject of how to recognize unethical behaviors, and sometimes even dialogue on how to avoid them; there appears to be a dearth of information concerning the discovery of the actual root causes of unethical behavior itself, and realistic remedy. Part III of this paper delves into this question of the root causes of unethical behavior, identifies them, and offers preventative measures.

The third purpose of this paper is to provide some example areas for further examination regarding the compatibility of ethics vis-à-vis different fields of scientific study. Included in Part IV are assessments of some thoughts regarding ethics from some

great philosophers and scientists that have come before us.

PART I – DEFINITIONS

INFORMATION and IDEAS

Morris Massey's epic hypothesis, "What You Are is Where You Where When" posits that who one has become is based upon the unique synthesis of the distinctive cumulative stimuli of ideas and events that one has been subjected to throughout the course of his or her life. (Massey, 1976)   Information incessantly bombards us and we continuously process it all.   Some of this information we chose to reject and eliminate from our future use. Other information, we elect to keep. This retained information becomes each individual's personalized idea base for future use.

Information is constantly being presented to us from many differing points. These methods of presentation include both formal and informal venues, with one of the earliest methods of acquiring information being from parental interaction.   Even in today's modern world of public education, parents still influence their children's moral compass in those few years prior to surrendering their children to the state-run educational system. In addition to the state-run public education system, many children are also subject to the teachings of religious organizations.   Even if not directly influenced by these religious or state run organizations, daily interaction with those individuals who are indirectly affects everyone in the society.   Some societies that officially avoid or reject religious teachings either, 1) interject their own form of theism (often called atheism), or 2) these type of teachings are so entrenched that they have become an intrinsic part of the fabric of society.   This constant bombardment of information then becomes the universal database (the whole-set) from which is extracted those ideas into the grouping (the subset) that will become the basis of our individualistic belief system.

BELIEFS

From this subset of retained ideas, some of these ideas are found significant enough to become part of an individual's belief system. Beliefs are those states or habits of the mind in which trust or confidence is placed. Furthermore, belief implies having a firm or unshakeable faith, accepting something as true and genuine while holding a firm conviction as to the goodness, worth, or value of that something. The word belief comes from twelfth-century English, where the word implied the meaning of dear and esteemed. The word belief originally had a religious significance implying a trust in God, but by the sixteenth-century the word had become limited in common usage to meaning simply the "mental acceptance of something as true." (http://www.etymonline.com)

VALUES

Values are based upon the beliefs and ideas that are of special importance or significance to an individual.   The definition of value is based on the etymology of the word value itself; i.e., from the thirteenth-century French word, *value*, meaning of worth or of value, to be of worth, from the Latin *valere*, to be strong, well, of value. Values, then, are those ideas that have a particularly significant meaning to an individual, and from which paradigm one will base his or her future decisions. Individual values when normalized within a selected group then become the basis for societal norms and laws. (http://www.etymonline.com)

MORALS

Morals are a system of beliefs and values, often codified, that emanate from an individual's own value system.   Morals (or moral codes) are also often associated with societal values as opposed to individual values. The word morals is all too often used as a synonym for ethics. While the two words, morals and ethics, can be very close in meaning, in this case it is essential to focus on their differences as opposed to their similarities. Often, a collective or a society can

be defined as a group of individuals who collectively subscribe to a set of common morals. Cultural anthropologists and geographers often state that one of their determining reasons for considering a conglomerate of people as an identifiable group is that group's commonality of beliefs, values, and morals. In fact, societies that do not have these areas of commonality run the risk of becoming fractured and then falling prey to disintegration, e.g., Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, or having to revert to threat or actual use of force, e.g., U.S.S.R, U.K., U.S.A. to maintain unity.
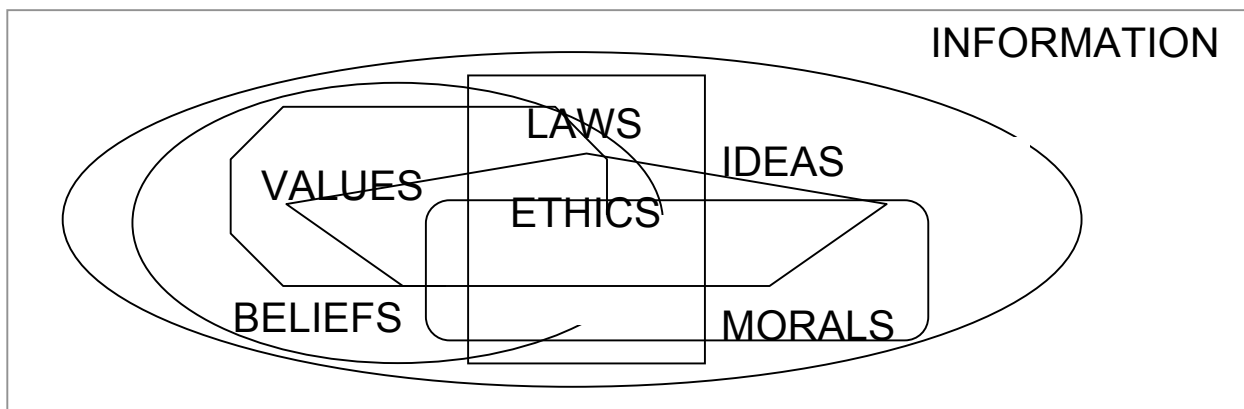
LAWS

Laws are a method of enforcing compliance with a society's morals and norms. For instance, many U.S. and European laws are descended from the Judeo-Christian beliefs, values, and morals. In a similar fashion, many Middle Eastern countries' laws are based upon an Islamic belief, value, and moral system; and many Oriental laws on Hindu, Buddhist, Confucist, or Taoist systems.

Contrary to some schools of thought, just because a specific act is legal does not make it ethical, moral, or even of value. As an example, in Nazi Germany, it was legal to kill Jews, Gypsies, Blacks, and Homosexuals. Although certain actions may be within an individual's belief system and might even be of value to certain portions of the population, thereby becoming moral and legal through custom or even due process, those actions can at the same time be unethical.

ETHICS

Ethics is the manner in which one applies values and morals, regardless of the legal ramifications. A dictionary definition of ethics is the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation. Ethics is the fundamental branch of philosophy that attempts to define right and wrong, what one ought to do as compared to what one actually does. The figure below shows ethics as a subset of the previously discussed concepts of information and ideas, beliefs, values, morals, and laws encompassing and blending aspects of all. (Figure 1)

Figure 1 – Ethics Superimposed on a Construct of Information & Ideas, Beliefs, Values, Morals, and Laws

Although good and bad can sometimes have degrees of goodness and badness, and good and bad can have relative and situational value, for the most part something is either always good or it is always bad. This paper specifically rejects that the concept of situational ethics, that system of ethics by which acts are judged within their special and

temporal contexts instead of by categorical principles, are the same as the true ethics as defined in this paper.   Ethics, contrary to beliefs, values, morals, or laws, are non-temporal, beyond the effects of space and time.   This treatise will demonstrate conclusively that something that is ethical today was ethical yesterday and will be ethical tomorrow.   By corollary, what is unethical in the present was unethical in the past and will also be unethical in the future.   Although beliefs, values, morals, and laws can vary from place to place and from time to time; ethics are on a separate plane and are therefore above temporal or spatial concerns.   Similar to Lawrence Kohlberg's Moral Development Scale, this paper recognizes the higher levels of maturity as a truer representation of universal ethics. In order to attain this higher level of ethical maturity and to recognize universal ethics, one must be able to evaluate ethics from an elevated plane where one can look at the issue from a dispassionate and elevated position.   This recognition of true ethics is the crux of this paper's position, which will be more fully discussed in the following sections of Part II.

PART II – COMPARISONS

BELIEFS vs. ETHICS

Should not beliefs be based upon quantifiable facts? If not, how can one prove the veracity of his or her facts?   Have not "facts" changed over the years?   It was "scientific fact" that inspired Nazi racist and South African apartheid laws.   How then can one place their faith in "scientific facts"? Theories and empirical data are only as good as the last datum point.   What happens when the exception to the rule finally presents itself?   It is difficult, if not impossible, to state definitively that scientific fact is infallible.

On the other hand, should belief be based upon one's religious faith? Is so, how could one ever prove the validity of one faith over another?   Are not religious beliefs, both institutionally and individually, continually evolving?   If they are not, are people still to believe that Zeus throw's thunderbolts? There is of course, reason to believe in a divine being that establishes absolute standards of right and wrong.   Without such a belief, all could become relative and there might be no absolute criterion of right and wrong, good or bad, ethical or unethical because it would always eventually be up to individual relative interpretation. I.e., why shall I not murder, why shall I not steal, etc., especially when there are such obvious short-term advantages for me? Only with an immutable, universal, omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient figure could these laws be absolute. But the question then becomes, "Whose God?" Specifically because of this reason, the argument for the universality and immutability of ethical standards must be made independently of one's belief or non-belief in a supreme entity.   This universality and immutability will be discussed further in section of Part III later in this treatise.

VALUES vs. ETHICS

Part I established that value systems are based upon one's individual beliefs. How then, can an individual be any more assured of the veracity and validity of their values, than of their beliefs? Because of one's beliefs, people often mistake their individual or even their societal values as infallible.   Moreover, because of one's placement of worth on these values, one often does not even consider another's point of view or the possibility of another's position; particularly if that other point of view is contrary to one's own. Values then are changeable, vulnerable to the affects of time and location, and because of one's own self-interest in them, can suffer extensively from biases of which one may not even be aware. (Bazerman, 2002) It is a simple thing to demonstrate this concept of the malleability of values by bringing attention to the different values apparent during an individual's maturation process, or how people's values can differ in various cultures or temporal settings.   Ergo, values cannot be the immutable basis for the ultimate factor in deciding whether a choice was ethical.

MORALS vs. ETHICS

Unfortunately, the problem of unreliability only continues to exacerbate itself as we continue to evolve this train of thought; groupthink, peer pressure, and other forms of societal coercion require us to accept a "herd mentality". To succeed in most human communities, one quickly learns that he or she must conform to certain minimum standards including moral standards. According to many accepted definitions, when these standards are "good" the community will prosper; when these standards are "bad" the community will deteriorate. The problem is in the selection of who gets to decide whether a society is actually prospering or degenerating. Against what or whose standards should the society be judged? This paper has demonstrated that morals are nothing more than societal normalized values, and has shown that values cannot be trusted as an infallible measuring stick. How is one to know when morals are "good" and when they are "bad"? What then is the standard against which our morals should be measured?

LAWS vs. ETHICS

One possible answer to the question of how to ensure an ideal ethical society is to design one with an enforceable set of rules, i.e., laws. This ideal society might be based upon any of a myriad of differing governing principles. Many great philosophers such as Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Spinoza, Jefferson, et al., posited a ideal society based upon democratic principles.

However as history has repeatedly demonstrated, democracies are not free from problems, and in fact there are unique difficulties inherent in democracy. E.g., democracy has been described rightly as two wolves and one lamb deciding on what is for dinner. Many democratic societies, as well as other types, that existed and seemingly succeeded did so all the while through the suppression of their non-citizen or minority communities. Their apparent prosperity was accomplished through numerous means, usually via some type of subjugation of the non-citizen or minority people. Examples of this are the maltreatment of the non-English communities on the British Isles, Indigenous Americans by European Settlers, and subjugated peoples of colonized Africa by European imperialists. Many societies that continue to succeed today can credit their success to the oppressive behaviors of their predecessors. This is not to say that the other forms of society, autocracies, theologies, oligarchies, or tyrannies are free from similar problems, far from it. Internal ethnic and racial disputes, disagreements over limited resources, et al., all cause internal and external difficulties that are oft times settled by the threat of or the actual use of force. Even in those nations that boast of the equality between the classes, e.g., communist countries, one finds, as George Orwell so poignantly wrote, "all…are equal, but some…are more equal than others".

According to James O'Toole's book, The Executive's Compass, even today democracies continue to exist on a precarious counter-balance; perched between the principles of liberty, efficiency, equality, and community. Based on O'Toole's Executive's Compass, there is no such thing as a perfect society as there must be continuous tradeoffs between the four principles mentioned above. This is not to say that laws cannot be ethical, but unfortunately, there is no assurance of this. There are no guarantees that laws created by societies will be ethically written or enforced, and there are just too many examples of unethical laws throughout history, the revised Commandment 7 of Orwell's Animal House, "some…are more equal than others", being one excellent literary example.

IMMUTABLE ETHICAL STANDARDS

Is it realistic in an ever-changing environment to expect something to remain constant? But, how can constancy be relative? As with the Jim Crow laws of the post-reconstruction Dixie-south, it is imperative to understand that even if legal, what was once unethical remains unethical now and in the future. What will be unethical in the future is unethical today and

was unethical in the past; even if we can not fully understand why.

It is essential to comprehend that if in the future something is discovered to be unethical that had at one time in the past assumed to be ethical, it is only because of one of the following reasons. First, man (individually or collectively) has grown to the point where he now understands the truth.   Second, man (individually or collectively) deliberatively and with malice aforethought had decided to act unethically.   After additional consideration, a third and fourth proposition, subsets of the first should also be presented.   Third, man (individually or collectively) was afraid to act ethically because of potential consequences; and fourth, man (individually or collectively) acted unethically in error. Misunderstanding whether something is unethical or not does not change the fact as to whether it actually is, just as truly believing that the sun rotates around the earth does not make it so.

PART III – DISCUSSION

RELATIVISM

If it were true that ethics are only relative, what would one use as the standard to determine right from wrong?   One can attempt to use democratic principles to attempt to measure standards of behavior, but this can present the danger of making ethics nothing more than a popularity contest. Just because a majority of people think that something is right does not necessarily make it so. It must be remembered that Adolf Hitler and his Nazi government were democratically elected, and that a definition of democracy can be two wolves and one sheep voting on what is on the menu for dinner.

To argue the position opposite that of ethical absolutism, i.e., moral relativism, means that both by definition and by implication all behaviors can be ethically and morally equal due to the fact that they would be based only upon individual belief and values. Based on this view, there could be no definitive basis for valuing one behavioral system over another's - other than individual choice. This would lead to an unacceptable condition, and as history repeatedly demonstrates would eventually lead to chaos and the threat of, or the actual use of, force to impose one individual's or society's beliefs and values over another's.

RIGHT and WRONG

According to the definition presented earlier in this paper, ethics are absolute, non-temporal, and immutable.   This is an ambitious statement, and must be defended to have validity and veracity. Ethics is the branch of axiology that attempts to understand the nature of morality, defining right from wrong. The word right implies righteousness and uprightness, being in accord with what is just, good, and proper.   Right also implies conformance to the facts or truth, being correct.   Truth is a non-negotiable precept, something is either true or it is not. Wrong has the meaning of doing something that is immoral, or unethical; an injurious, unfair, or unjust act. Wrong also implies the falling short of a standard, or positing an opinion that does not agree with the truth.   Something is either the truth or it is not; something cannot simultaneously be both true and false.

Many of us, were raised under the assumption that good (right) will always triumph over evil (wrong). John Wayne in the white hat always trounced the villain, and Flash Gordon always vanquished Ming the Merciless. Well, there was a reason that it was called fiction. In an academic setting students were asked who would win in a capitalistic contest, an ethical or an unethical company. The rest of the class adamantly claimed that the ethical company would win the contest (largely based on the argument of consumer choice and fair business trade laws). I argued that the unethical company would destroy the ethical one before the ethical company knew what hit them. Suppose there are two soccer teams, the PNcwOs a.k.a. "Plays Nice with Others", and the WaACos (pronounced Whackos) a.k.a. "Wins at Any Costs".   The unethical WaACos do not have to follow the rules; but just in case, they have either bribed, blackmailed, coerced, or otherwise "own" the

referees. And if it really comes down to it, the WaACos have the ability to terminate "with extreme prejudice" anyone who objects. Can one really think that the ethical PNcwOs stand a chance of winning? Therefore, it is incumbent upon those readers who would advocate an ethical world to do whatever they can (ethically of course) to prevent the unethical from dominating. As Edmund Burke posited, and unfortunately as history has proven repeatedly to be true, "the only thing necessary for the forces of evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." (This dictum is significant and will be mentioned again later in this paper.)

SEARCHING for the ROOT CAUSE

What does one do now that they understand that their beliefs, values, morals, and laws may not be in line with ethical behaviors? First, he or she must recognize what might be the causes of their unethical behaviors. Second, the individual must understand how these vices manifest themselves. Once they do these two things, they can then develop a plan on how best to act proactively in order to prevent future unethical behavior.

This treatise has taken the initiative to use a concept called the "Seven Deadly Sins" to explain the causes of unethical behaviors. The premise here is that although unethical behaviors can occur by accident (acts of omission), they more often than not occur through deliberate acts (acts of commission), and will be discussed more fully in the next section of this paper. To paraphrase the reason for unethical behavior from Part I, Immutable Ethical Standards Section, unethical behavior only occurs due to; not knowing, knowing but not caring, or knowing but being coerced into those behaviors. The difficulty with trying to create a universal system is trying to find a methodology that everyone can accept and use, i.e., an approach that is not exclusionary to any specific group of people on a religious, racial, ethnic, or other basis.

A discussion of the potential root causes that affect the reasons for unethical behavior is now in order. In turn, these root causes are concepts that are equated with right and wrong. Theoretically, if people can avoid these root causes and conduct ourselves by doing the corresponding ethical (virtuous) behaviors they can eliminate, or more realistically at least reduce their unethical behavior. Note the **bold-faced** words used in the following paragraphs of this section, they were **bolded** in order to highlight the intrusive, venomous, invective, and infective nature of the "seven deadly sins" especially when used to the excessive, as opposed to "all things in moderation".

Pride is an **inordinate** self-esteem and conceit that displays itself in **overly** conceited or disdainful behavior that leads to the scorn of others. It leads to the worst of competitive behavior, the types of conflicts that result in win-lose scenarios. On the other hand, humility, whose etymology is from the Latin *humus* earth; implies not being overly proud or haughty behavior. Humility lends itself to seeing ourselves as we actually are and not comparing ourselves to others. Humility does not mean having to surrender one's own beliefs, but it does lend itself to looking for win-win situations, especially if both parties have humility entering into negotiations.

It is important here to discuss the differences between competition and conflict in relation to win-win and win-lose scenarios. The word competition implies rivalry, opposition, contest, and struggle with the possibility of win-win results. The etymology of the word competition is from the Latin *competere* meaning; to strive in common, to come together, to agree, or to seek. Competition can be friendly, with the contestants thereof working together at the conclusion of the competition. An excellent example of this type of competition is the competing of several contractors for a U.S. Department of Defense contract. After the "bidding-wars" are completed and the prime contractor has been named, often there is a collaborative effort of all of the previous competitors working together under a common banner in support of that same contract. On the other hand, conflict implies a clash, battle, fight, or war, with their inherent win-lose outcomes. Conflict results in enmity even after

the conflict itself has been concluded. The etymology of the word conflict is also from Latin, but this time implies the striking of blows. When problems and issues are not resolved in a timely manner but are allowed to accumulate, grow, and fester; resolution frequently comes through the process of conflict. When this happens, resolution may finally be achieved, but often it is achieved at a horrific price. Examples of conflict can be seen in the plethora of wars that have been fought throughout history, a notable example being that period of European history beginning with the Hundred Years War and culminating with World War II. Moreover, whether the issues or problems which set off the conflict were actually ever finally resolved by the conflict is in itself an open question. A study of World War I, which was known also as "The War to End All Wars" but was followed by World War II, can be used as a proof text of this point.

Avarice or greed is the **excessive** and **insatiable** desire for gain and winning often in the fields of wealth or power, always at the **expense of others**. Often this vice expresses itself as **winning at all costs**, leading to win-lose scenarios. Alternatively, generosity denotes a lofty and courageous spirit that demonstrates nobility of feeling and generosity of mind, not being offended if others get the credit or praise, giving without having expectations of the other person. Similarly to humility, generosity in no manner suggests the surrender of one's own beliefs, but it does lend itself to finding win-win situations, especially if both parties are willing to be generous.

Envy, jealousy, and covetousness are synonyms that connote a **resentful** awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another, combined with an **unhealthy** desire to possess that same advantage. They also imply **intolerance** of any rivalry or unfaithfulness; being predisposed to suspect rivalry or unfaithfulness. There is also a feeling of **hostility** towards a rival or one believed to enjoy an advantage, feeling an **inordinate** desire for what belongs to another. Conversely, love (*agape* and *philos*, as opposed to *eros*) actively and altruistically seeks the good in others. Love of this nature always and actively seeks win-win opportunities.

Wrath and anger imply strong **vengeful** anger and indignation, often revealing themselves as a consequence of envy, jealousy, and covetousness. As such, wrath and anger are not a priori causes, and therefore will not be discussed in as much detail as the other causes. In contrast, kindness implies a sympathetic or helpful nature and a forbearing nature, using a gentleness that arises from sympathy and empathy. As such, kindness just like love, always and actively, seeks the win-win opportunities.

Lust comes from the Latin *lascivus* and presages **wanton**, **undisciplined**, **unruly**, **mean**, and **cruel** behavior. Lust often is a consequence of avarice or envy. Conversely, self control holds lustful and wanton behaviors in check, preventing the consequential unethical behaviors.

Gluttony is the act of **habitually** greedy and **excessive** indulgence. The word glutton's etymology is from the Latin *gluttire,* to swallow and *gula,* the throat. Gluttony implies selfish and impulsive acts made **without forethought or consideration** of other's needs. Gluttony is in direct opposition to love, kindness, and self-control in that it does not look for the win-win scenarios. Faith and temperance are subsets of love, kindness and self-control because they take other's rights and needs into consideration before acting.

Sloth is the disinclination to action or labor, and is usually demonstratable as **apathy, inactivity, complacency**, and an inclination to laziness. This type of behavior becomes a problem and a root cause of unethical behavior when it prevents or inhibits the concern for others due to one's own indolence. The topics of indolence and indifference will be addressed more fully in the next section concerning omission and commission. In contrast, zeal is the eagerness and ardent interest in pursuit of something. In this case, the somethings are the attributes of humility, generosity, love, kindness, self-control, faith and temperance, and zeal itself.

Through the rigorous discipline of the avoidance of the "seven deadly sins", and the

equally rigorous application of their opposing virtues, humankind may be able to eliminate or at least reduce the amount of unethical behavior exhibited daily. Otherwise, humanity shall be limited to continuing to react to unethical acts rather than being proactive in their prevention. This would be akin to a medical doctor who only treats disease reactively, instead of taking advantage of the proactive measures of immunizations, vaccinations, and other forms of preventative medicine.

It is the contention of this paper that even without attempting to alter another's beliefs and values, one can reach the commonality of universal and immutable ethics. In addition, the ability to avoid win-lose situations in favor of finding win-win scenarios eliminates a major source of unethical behavior. This does not seem to be too lofty a goal, or one out of reach for mankind; all this would require is the avoidance of greed and excessive pride. Also, similarly to how a medical doctor would prefer to have the knowledge to be able to prevent an illness rather than cure it after the fact, practitioners of ethics in general and business ethics is particular should prefer to discover the root causes so that an outbreak of unethical behavior can be prevented before it occurs.

OMISION, COMISSION, and COLLUSION

Commission denotes a deliberate planning and carrying out of a specific or general plan. Individuals who commit unethical acts through commission have thought about and planned their unethical acts prior to executing them. It then becomes incumbent upon all of us who believe in ethical behavior to proceed with a two-pronged offensive to overcome this cause of unethical behavior. First, those that profess to behave ethically must overcome their tendency towards indifference. And secondly, they must always be on guard against those who would denigrate and diminish their ability to act ethically. As posited by Edmund Burke so eloquently, "It is imperative to remember, that the only thing necessary for the forces of evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

Omission is defined as apathy towards or neglect of one's duty, one of the results of sloth. The word omission comes from omit, having as its root the Latin *omittere*, meaning to disregard, which has close ties with the word indifference. Holocaust survivor and philosopher Elie Wiesel defines indifference as meaning that it makes no difference which choice is made. Concerning indifference Elie Wiesel wrote, "The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness, it's indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it's indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, it's indifference." "Indifference, to me, is the epitome of evil."

Because omission, indifference, and their root cause sloth are so insidious, they can at times be even more dangerous than commission. As mentioned previously, people must always be on our guard against this methodology of perpetrating unethical behavior in ourselves as well as in others. It is not practical to demand or to expect zeal from everyone. Yet at the same time, it does seem realistic for everyone to at least be able to work on overcoming their own sloth; thereby simultaneously decreasing all of humanity's penchant towards indolence and apathy. Individual's like to think that because they are not actively participating in an unethical behavior itself that they are not actually a party to the unethical acts. As Edmund Burke and Elie Weisel would concur, through an individual's indifference and not attempting to prevent the unethical acts, the individual is actually knowingly colluding in the behavior.

Somewhere in-between omission and commission is the art of collusion. Collusion is a secret agreement or cooperation especially for an illegal or deceitful purpose, and has the same etymology as the word ludicrous. The point behind revealing this etymology is to recognize that both words relate to amusing or laughably obvious absurdities and incongruities meriting derisive laughter or scorn due to their being absurdly inept, false, or foolish. For examples of real-life collusion and the consequences thereof, it is recommended that the reader view the 1950 movie, "Trial at Nuremberg" starring Spencer Tracy. This movie portrays an excellent

example of the defendant's ludicrous position thinking that their collusion would obscure their guilt. Individuals often collude when they believe it is in their best short-term interests not to fight the system. It is incumbent upon everyone to recognize when they or others are being coerced into collusion either by individuals, an organization, or even by society in general. Knowledge is power; and with this power and some zeal, (or at least the lack of indifference) it is possible to fight this tendency towards collusion.

CAUSE and EFFECT

It is only because ethics, or rather the lack thereof, has been, is, and will continue to be so pervasive in society that it has import. Moral relativism has infested many of current society's institutions due to its being such a popular teaching method of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that moral relativism's ultimate demise is the belief that all behaviors are ethically and morally equal; one's own beliefs versus another's enforceable only through the threat or the actual use of force. Similar to the post-reconstructionist Jim Crow laws, it is often only upon reflection that one becomes aware that certain actions which people first thought were ethical, are in actuality unethical. Ultimately, it is only because unethical behavior always causes harm to others (and often even to one's self) that people are concerned with the subject of ethics, and have the right to demand compliance with universal ethical standards.

The verb humanity is a word that is supposed to demonstrate actions marked by compassion, sympathy, or consideration for others. The word humanity can also be used as noun and is intended to demonstrate characteristics that set human beings apart from the rest of the world. In opposition to humanity, inhumanity is the state of being (or the act of doing) cruel or barbarous (acts). All that this treatise asks is that humans act humanely. Regrettably, as Robert Burn noted so eloquently and accurately, "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." Unfortunately, and most probably due

to man's finite lifespan, mankind often looks at ramifications only in the short-term. Because of the short-term viewpoint, many individuals and entire societies subscribe to the, "He who dies with the most toys wins" philosophy. Similar to Kohlberg's theory concerning the stages of moral development, to measure the viability of ethical standards and behavior adequately requires a broader, and in this case, a longer-term perspective. A prerequisite to the understanding of ethic's non-temporal attributes is to comprehend that ethics might not measurable in or by limitations of the four dimensions (X, Y, Z, and time) as we currently understand them. The best perspective to understand ethical universality and immutability is through long-term analysis, not spur of the moment analysis.

This realization of the non-temporal aspect of ethics corresponds to what Baruch Spinoza identified as the third level of knowledge. At the third level, the mind realizes that there is more to the universe than one can see, and no longer views phenomenon (empirical or otherwise) as finite and temporal, but rather it comprehends their essential characteristics under the aspect of eternity. Perhaps Spinoza was harkening back to Socrates' inspirational declaration, "The unexamined life is not worth living".

Part IV – EXAMPLES

BARUCH SPINOZA (1632-1677) and Geometric Analysis

In his epic dissertation, Ethics, published posthumously, Spinoza clarifies and justifies his vision of ethics, matter, and the world, from a pantheistic perspective. Through precise geometrical deductive logic, a process derived from Euclidean geometry, Spinoza demonstrated that ethics are both absolute and universal. He established that the validity of ethics could be proved by a systematic approach identical to that of mathematical arguments and proofs, asserting that ethics are based on a geometric model in which his axioms and propositions logically build upon each other and are mutually supportive. By using this approach, he proved that ethical

truths have the same progression and precision, and eternal validity and veracity as mathematical truths.

Based on Spinoza's work (i.e., his geometric proof of the universality of ethics) and the observable reality of mankind's recorded empirical history, it appears that humankind seems to be on an ethical journey. That is, ethics is an absolute and although ethical behavior might be considered by some to be a final destination, ethical behavior can also be considered as the journey. As a rational being, every time one chooses to act ethically as opposed to unethically they take another step towards that ultimate destination of ethical perfection. By corollary, every time one chooses not to act ethically, or elects to contribute to unethical behavior, they take a step further away from that same ultimate destination.

IMMANUEL KANT (1724-1804) and the Categorical Imperative

The rationale for introducing Immanuel Kant's concepts into this discussion regarding the universality of ethics is twofold. The first is his belief in and defense of a priori logic and the second his concept of the categorical imperative. Kant established a fundamental rational and a priori basis for right and wrong in his writings. Kant's works followed a methodology of using practical reason, based solely upon things about which reason inherently reveals to it users. Kant, as a rationalist, believed in and expanded the ideas of inductive and most especially deductive reasoning. He was able to do this by brilliantly arguing that a prior knowledge actually exists, as opposed to the empiricists who believed that all knowledge must come from either one's own direct or others' indirect experience. Based on his rationalist deductive approach, Kant was able to demonstrate that ethical behavior not only existed, but in fact was required to be, independent of religious belief systems.

Kant demonstrated through precise logic and rational discourse that ethical behavior has its basis in pure reason. Kant posited that there is a single moral obligation, which he named the Categorical Imperative. It is from this Categorical Imperative that all other ethical obligations originate, and against which all ethical obligations have to be measured. Kant argued that ethics are an inherent principle of reason itself, not based on conditional or changing facts around us, such as one's emotional state. Accordingly, he believed and demonstrated that ethical obligation is both totally rational and universally applicable. Under Kant's test, one cannot treat others based upon how one feels about them as individuals or even based upon the context of a specific time.

Kant incorporated exceptions into universal ethical standards based on his categorical imperative. Exceptions, like the general rule, are universal as well; not just a singular exception based on the whim of an individual at any particular time or place. Lawrence Hinnman, Director of the University of San Diego's Value Institute and Center for Ethics in Science and Technology, provides his students the following example concerning this concept. Although it is not normally permittable for a car to speed, one can universalize an exception to this rule for ambulance and fire engine drivers. Kantian ethical universality also requires that a person of duty remains committed to these universal maxims, no matter how difficult things may become personally. This would include the avoidance of collusion discussed earlier, at times requiring a great deal of individual zeal and effort; nor does Kantian ethics allow favoritism, either of which (giving in to pressure or favoritism) would negate the universality and immutability of ethics.

ALBERT EINSTEIN (1879-1955) and the Unified Field Theory

A premises of this paper was to defend that a global ethical standard exists. This universal standard would be similar to what Albert Einstein and other physicists have been looking for since the early 1800s; a universal standard that Einstein called the "Unified Field Theory", and others called the "Theory of Everything". A discussion of Einstein's Unified Field Theory is beyond the scope of this paper,

but the pertinent portion of Einstein's theorem explains that there are forces in the universe that work with and counteract each other thereby producing a state of dynamic equilibrium. A simplistic illustration of these forces is shown below in Figure 2.

Strong Force

Electro-Magnetic Force   Gravitational Force

Weak Force
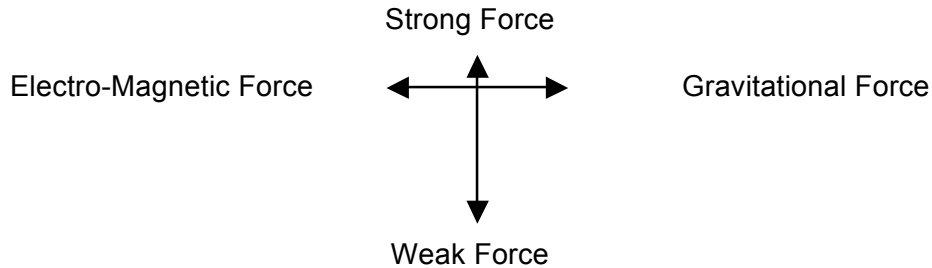
Figure 2 – Einstein's Unified Field Theory

If one of these forces were suddenly to overpower the others or to disappear, the physical universe would tear itself apart until a state of equilibrium could once again be established.

To James O'Toole, the author of The Executive's Compass, there are ethical counter-point forces that keep the ethical universe in state of dynamic balance, similar to Einstein's Unified Field Theory. This dynamic balance, as opposed to a state of static balance allows for movement around the axis. O'Toole described his ethical world in terms of liberty, efficiency, community, and equality. An illustration of O'Toole's executive compass is shown below in Figure 4.

Libertarianism

Community   Efficiency

Egalitarianism
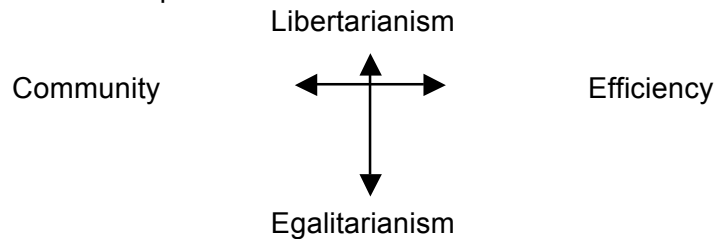
Figure 3 – O'Toole's Executive's Compass

O'Toole's Moral Compass is like a balance working to keep the four forces in a state of dynamic equilibrium. As long as the bubble is close to center no single extreme force is in charge, and the ethical world moves along relatively smoothly, albeit not perfectly. And exactly like Einstein's model, if any single ethical force were to dominate the compass or not to factor in at all, then the ethical world would enter a state of turmoil until a new dynamic balance was established.

ABRAHAM MASLOW (1908-1970)
and the Hierarchy of Needs

According to Maslow, if one has not fulfilled his or her lower level deficiency needs, one cannot move up on the hierarchy scale. Many people know someone, who although not necessarily meeting all of his or her physiological (lowest level) needs has however, found love. And perhaps knows of someone else that although not living in total safety, that has found love and belonging. How many times have people

seen, not the (financially) affluent but the (financially) poor, rise to the highest ethical standards? Not those who live in the fancy gated communities in (physical) safety but those in low-level or ordinary housing, or even the "homeless" who behave more ethically. Not the in-crowd, or the most influential and popular, but the outcast who oft times demonstrates how to behave ethically; e.g., Jesus, Buddha, Gandhi, M.L. King Jr., et al.

It had been my assumption that ethical behaviors would be associated with the top tier of Maslow's Hierarchy. It appears however, based upon the empirical evidence such as that cited in the previous paragraph, that Maslow's reasoning concerning the necessity of successful completion of the lower level steps being required prior to moving upward on the scale is not true. Therefore, ethical behavior has to be either able to be associated with one or more of the lower rungs, or based upon observable empirical data Maslow's thesis is incorrect in this matter. I would suggest that the answer is a combination of the two. First, Maslow is incorrect, people are not stagnant, but are in a state of flux between his defined levels. Second, ethical behavior being universal transcends Maslow's levels, and is applicable to all peoples, everywhere, and at all times. These answers directly support the concept of a universal and non-temporal ethical standard and structure.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this treatise was three-fold: first, to convince the reader of the immutability of ethics; second, to discuss and define root causes of unethical behavior; and third, to demonstrate the applicability of ethics in today's scientific world.

By definition we discovered that the concepts of individual beliefs, values, morals, and legal systems are irrelevant in the discussion of ethical universality and immutability. Although these concepts are all a part of ethics, none of them, individually or collectively, can demonstrate nor can they explain adequately the non-temporal and universal uniqueness of ethics. Of all of these concepts, only ethics demonstrates the requisite attributes to be considered both immutable and universal. Through evaluation of some of the theories of Spinoza, Kant, Einstein, and Maslow; we have learned that for ethics to have any value and authority it must be universal and non-temporal, i.e., immutable. If ethics are indeed relativistic, then one person's opinion is as valid as anyone else's and there can be no value in them other than that of mob-rule and violence. Therefore, in the argument regarding ethical universality and immutability, individual religious beliefs, values, morals, and laws become irrelevant.

Chris Argyris's double-loop theory involves learning to change underlying values and assumptions, not just the results. In this paper, a serious attempt was made to avoid the problems associated with single loop learning, which is identified as the reactive approach that many organizations and individuals use regarding ethics. An example of this single loop learning might be that if one does something unethical they will be punished, or if one does something ethical they will be appropriately rewarded. Single loop learning is prevalent in the field of law enforcement, but is used also in areas of moral enforcement, e.g., parents and their children, as well as clergy and their parishioners. Argyris' double-loop learning theory corroborates Kohlberg's Moral Maturity Model, in as much as people are trying to act at a higher, more mature level, altruistically, and without the need for immediate gratification.

EPILOGUE

Ultimately, the realization of what it takes to be ethical hinges on only three simple concepts. First, humankind must adapt a longer-range perspective. While people are locked into a short-term mentality such as "the one with the most toys wins", universal immutable ethics will never be fully established. Ethical maturity requires preventing short-term determinations of what is right or wrong, ethical or unethical. Kohlberg's Model of Moral Maturity and the Heinz Dilemma are excellent tools to aid in the realization of the pitfalls of short-term vision. Long-range vision may also be a difficult task as the non-temporal aspect of ethics makes this difficult for the casual observer to realize. Second, greed and pride must give way to humility and generosity that actively seek out the win-win scenarios. Only through win-win scenarios and the elimination of greed, hate, and pride will humankind be able and willing to stop long enough to learn the lessons of the advantages of ethics. Universality and immutability actually make ethics easier to understand, as they do not change from location to location, circumstance to circumstances, or from time to time. And third, people must all overcome their tendency towards indifference and sloth. As Elie Wiesel stated, "I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented." If humankind is ever to realize the advanced state of ethics recommended in this paper themselves, then they also must resolve not to be indifferent.

REFERENCES

Albert, Ethel M.; Denise, Theodore C.; Peterfreund, Sheldon P.; Great Traditions in Ethics. Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1984

Argyris, Chris, (1976), Single-Loop and Double-Loop Models in Research on Decision Making, Administrative Science Quarterly, (Vol 21 Iss 3)

Argyris, Chris, (1982), The Executive Mind and Double Loop Learning, Organizational Dynamics (Vol 11 Iss 2)

Asimov, Isaac. Runaround, Astounding Science Fiction Magazine, March 1942.

Bok, Sissela; Common Values. University of Missouri Press, 1995

Coghlan, David and Brannick, Teresa; Doing Action Research in Your own Organization. Sage Publications, 2003

Bazerman, Max H.; Judgment in Managerial Decision Making (Fifth Edition). John Wiley and Sons. 2002

Carnap, Rudolph; An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science. Dover Publications, 1995

Costa, John Dalla; The Ethical Imperative: Why Moral Leadership is Good Business. Perseus Publishing, 1998

Hinman, Lawrence; Director, The Values Institute, San Diego University. **http://ethics.acusd.edu/theories/kant/index.asp**

Holy Scriptures, The: According to the Masoretic Text. The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955

Hobson, Laura Z.; Gentleman's Agreement. Cutchogue: Buccaneer Books 1994

http://changingminds.org/explanations/needs/maslow.htm

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Categorical_imperative#Formulations

http://ethics.acusd.edu/theories/kant/index.asp

http://facweb.bcc.ctc.edu/wpayne/Three%20levels.htm

http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-moral/

http://www.angelfire.com/md2/timewarp/spinoza.html

http://www.epistemelinks.com/Main/Topics.aspx?TopiCode=Ethi

http://www.etymonline.com/

http://www.historyplace.com/speeches/wiesel.htm

http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Talmud/avottoc.html

http://www.mtsu.edu/~rbombard/RB/Spinoza/ethica-front.html

http://www.m-w.com/

http://www.online-literature.com/orwell/animalfarm/

http://www.philosophypages.com/hy/5i.htm

http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/e/ethics.htm

http://www.whitestonejournal.com/seven/

Kane, Robert; Through the Moral Maze: Searching for Absolute Values in a Pluralistic World. Paragon House, 1994

Kant, Immanuel; Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals. Great Books, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. 1990

Kant, Immanuel; General Introduction to the Metaphysic of Morals. Great Books, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. 1990

Kant, Immanuel; Preface and Introduction to the Metaphysic Elements of Ethics. Great Books, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. 1990

Kant, Immanuel; The Critique of Judgement. Great Books, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. 1990

Kant, Immanuel; The Critique of Practical Reason. Great Books, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. 1990

Kant, Immanuel; The Critique of Pure Reason. Great Books, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. 1990

Kant, Immanuel; The Science of Right. Great Books, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. 1990

Immaturity/Maturity Theory; **www.accel-team.com/motivation/chris_argyris_02.html**

Massey, Morris; What You Are is Where You Where When. Farmington Hills, Mich. Magnetic Video Corp., 1976

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary; **http://www.m-w.com/**

Online Etymology Dictionary, The; http://www.etymonline.com/index.php

Orwell, George; Animal Farm. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. (1990).

O'Toole, James; The Executive's Compass: Business and the Good Society. Oxford University Press, 1993

Paton, H.J.; The Categorical Imperative: A Study in Kant's Moral Philosophy. Hutchinson of London, 1967

Smith, M. K. (2001) 'Chris Argyris: theories of action, double-loop learning and organizational learning', *the encyclopedia of informal education*, **www.infed.org/thinkers/argyris.htm**