Abstracts

Gwen Adshead - *Can We Treat Evil?*

Secure psychiatric services offer treatments to men and women who are frequently characterised as 'evil'. In my paper, I will explore how the discourse of illness and the discourse of evil are similar and different: specifically in relation to concepts such as insult, injury and damage, and whether it makes sense to think of human value systems as being damaged or impaired. I will use case examples from my clinical practice in a high secure setting to illustrate.

Claudia Card - *The Challenges of Global and Local Misogyny*

This essay explores ways in which John Rawls's ideas regarding combat by relatively well-ordered societies with outlaw societies might be a resource for women in responding to the great evils of global and local misogyny. Unlike so much feminist work on gender-related evils (including my own), this essay does not make the family a centerpiece of concern. Domestic violence is one of my concerns. But the family is not, on the whole, and has not been, the stage for many of the worst evils that target females: forcible and violent rape, kidnap for sexual slavery, forced prostitution, and witch-burning, to name a few. Victims are often women who have not had children, women who have had careers (not necessarily as care-givers) and economic independence, and women who have intimate relationships with women. The vulnerability of women to such evils is found in both what Rawls called outlaw societies and societies he considered (in his late work) relatively well-ordered. Even relatively well-ordered societies have pockets that are not well-ordered, areas where good laws are poorly and arbitrarily enforced when enforced at all, and fields where we who are women enter at our peril. What is often called a "war between the sexes" is better recognized as a "war on women" (or "wars on women"). Women have mostly not fought back very aggressively. War *between* the sexes would be progress. In *The Law of Peoples* Rawls takes up some of the thorny issues of justice in what have come to be called, euphemistically, "non-ideal" conditions, including the conditions of wars of self-defense. "Non-ideal"conditions are daily life for most of the world's women. How might women's self-defense and mutual defense against the evils of global and local misogyny embody values embedded in rules of war that seem intended to prevent many of the worst injustices in that extremely "non-ideal" context? The

task I have set myself is to address that kind of question, considering some examples of women's responses both as individuals and in non-state groups.

Steve Clarke - *A Religious Conception of Evil*

Many religious people use the term 'evil' to describe or explain actions and worldly events by appeal to a metaphysics involving the supernatural. A person performed a particular action because they were possessed by Satan; an apparent coincidence was no such thing but was the result of an intervention in the world by a demon, etc. It might be thought that because different religions postulate different supernatural ontologies, there would be a diversity of religious conceptions of evil. However, recent research in the cognitive science of religion suggests that there are very strong similarities in the conceptual commitments made by apparently very distinct religions. On the basis of such research I identify a shared religious conception of evil. This turns out to have much in common with the treatment of evil that falls out of Durkheim's classic analysis of the sacred.

Eve Garrard - *What Use Is the Concept of Evil to Us?*

This paper aims to investigate and connect aspects of two questions that may be raised about the idea of evil: firstly, the extent to which we can allay doubts about the legitimacy of the concept of evil; and secondly, the role played in our understanding of evil by the phenomenology – that is, by the nature of our distinctive response to evil-doing. Objections to attributions of evil may be moral, or metaphysical, or both; and they often lead to doubts about the legitimacy of the concept. Such doubts can take the form of (a) denying that anything falls under the concept; or (b) accepting that some cases do fall under the concept but claiming that they can be reduced to cases of less morally or metaphysically troubling forms of wrongdoing; or (c) claiming that the concept is itself an incoherent one. There are various ways of trying to establish whether a concept is legitimate: I canvass several of them, and focus on the investigation of what work the concept of evil does for us. I propose that the work in question is to capture a phenomenological distinction: the concept of evil marks off a discrete class of wrongful actions, namely those which produce in us a phenomenologically distinctive response of moral horror, rather than, say, the more ordinary disapproval (or fear or disgust) which other kinds of wrongful acts typically elicit. This focus on the phenomenology enables us to answer some of the doubts about evil mentioned above; but it does not, so it is argued, introduce an unwanted

subjectivity into our attributions of evil. The paper concludes by considering what implications this view might have for a range of issues, such as the question of whether there is a qualitative or a quantitative difference between evil and other kinds of wrongdoing; the extent to which we can be mistaken in our attributions of evil; the relation between evil-doing and forgiveness; the attribution of evil to psychopathic actions; and our understanding of our own capacities for evil.

Shlomit Harrosh - *Moral Enhancement and the Duty to Eliminate Evildoing*

Each of us has a moral obligation to refrain from evildoing. And yet evils persist in forms like child abuse, gay bashing, sexual and economic slavery, reckless dumping of toxic waste and fraudulent or risky financial practices that rob people of their homes and pensions. Scientific advances offer a possible solution to the challenge of eliminating evildoing: the moral enhancement of human beings through biomedical and biotechnological means. Assuming the efficacy and relative safety of moral enhancement, do we have a duty to use biomedical and biotechnological interventions to reduce the probability that we would become involved in evildoing? I address this question by teasing out and exploring different aspects of the problem. First, what is the target of moral enhancement? More precisely, what is being enhanced and to what extent? I argue against the perfectionist view that we should create moral saints or at least maximally improve people morally. The argument rests on the moral imperative to respect the separateness of persons and on the value of human freedom and autonomy. Second, I consider two alternatives regarding mandatory moral enhancement in society: universal enhancement and selective enhancement of specific groups like public office-holders and violent criminals. The question of who should be morally enhanced cannot be addressed without considering the ethical implications of different technological interventions. This is the third issue to be addressed. One important consideration is whether the intervention risks women's reproductive autonomy or affects only the enhanced individual. Another consideration is the potential for abuse inherent in each enhancement technology. I conclude by commenting on the moral costs and benefits of reducing evildoing through moral enhancement relative to those of alternative programs and the current status quo. It turns out that the question of moral enhancement as a response to evildoing is too complex to allow for a single all-encompassing answer. Exploring this complexity is the aim of this paper.

John Kekes – *The Secular Problem of Evil*

I argue that there is a secular problem of evil analogous to the well-known theological problem of evil; give a definition of evil; consider two widely held inadequate explanations of it; and propose a better explanation. The critical aim of the argument is to argue that the prevalence of evil is a reason for rejecting the optimistic faith shared by numerous past and present thinkers. Its constructive aim is to explain evil as a result of ambivalence that is inherent in the human condition.

Robin May Schott - *The Scale of Evil*

The concept of evil is applied to a wide range of phenomena, from large-scale atrocities and genocides such as took place in the Holocaust, Cambodia, and Rwanda, to the intimate encounters of spousal abuse and incest, to the everyday encounters of bullying in schools. What is it that enables one to speak about evil in both large- and small-scale contexts? To reflect on this question, I will discuss the work of theorists who in some sense have been concerned both with large-scale and small-scale evils. Ervin Staub's work on evil in the field of psychology draws a connection between the positions of perpetrator, victim, and bystander, both in large-scale scale atrocities and in the small-scale evil of bullying. C. Fred Alford's work in the field of political theory draws a connection between large-scale evil and everyday evil through the notion of human maliciousness and the question of whether or not culture can provide narratives and symbolic resources to contain maliciousness. While the philosopher Theodor W. Adorno, in his essay "Education after Auschwitz", focuses both on the objective and subjective conditions for genocide, and the role of education in changing these subjective conditions. By implication, the role of schools in educating against evil can be variously understood in terms of educating for care, educating for culture, or educating for critical consciousness. But with their focus on personality or existential conditions, these theorists give less attention to the relational dynamics of inclusion and exclusion that have become the focus of some recent bullying research. Here I will also consider the implications of this research for the use of the term evil in small-scale contexts as well as its implications for education in schools.

Arne Johan Vetlesen - *Narratives of Entitlement*

A striking feature in historical instances of collective evildoing is the role played by narratives assuring the perpetrators that they are entitled to harming their victims. Pursuing what according to outsiders and conventional morality is to be

condemned as blatantly wrong, is perceived by the perpetrators as the exact opposite: taking what is rightly theirs, giving the victims what they deserve. As a result, instead of regret there is pride, instead of feelings of guilt there is self-righteousness. Is this simply a reminder of the impact of ideology on perpetrators – recalling that the latter are also the creators of the former? Or do we need to move beyond the workings of ideology to appreciate what is going on here? More bluntly, the question may be put as follows: Are agents who report that they are morally right in doing what non-members of their group regard as utterly wrong, sincere or in bad faith? A deeper philosophical issue is buried here: To what extent is morality – crudely, the way to make the distinction between right and wrong – a group construction relative to the interests of its combined authors and addressees? Is morality epistemically self-sufficient, closing in on itself, as it were, without having to take recourse to a reality outside itself? Concentrating on the notion of entitlement as crucial to this issue, the paper will answer the latter question in the negative, and in doing so will argue the case for moral realism.

Alan Wolfe - *Evil in General, Political Evil in Particular*
In this paper I will argue the importance of considering political evil as a distinct category for analysis. All too often discussions of evil take place at too high a level of abstraction, leaving us unprepared for dealing with manifestations of evil in the world around us. By focusing on those who use evil means to achieve concrete political ends, we need not feel helpless in the face of such political evils as genocide, ethnic cleansing, terrorism, and torture. My paper will contrast evil in general with political evil in particular and provide examples of the advantages of so doing.