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Australian Association for Professional and Applied Ethics

AUSTRALIAN ETHICS

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the 2026 Winter Edition of *Australian Ethics*!

This is a bumper edition of *Australian Ethics*, so let's get straight into it!

The AAPAE 2026 online workshop is confronting a major ethical concern for democracies worldwide, examining '***Truth, Democracy and Misinformation'***. Featuring international keynotes, the workshop will be held on Zoom on 17 November, and is free for AAPAE members. If you'd like to submit an abstract, see p.3 for more details. It will be great to (virtually) see everyone there!

As well, the AAPAE Tertiary Ethics Olympiad is coming up soon on October 8. There's still time to be involved. Are you interested in being involved as an 'ethlete' or as a coach? See p.16 for more information and feel free to reach out to me if you have any queries.

The theme of this edition is caring: for people and planet. James Page kicks things off with an enjoyable thought experiment, asking if the zombies of movies and TV shows should have human rights.

Next, Anna Malavisi delivers a manifesto from Mother Earth to humans, calling on us to respond to the environmental destruction of warfare and the indiscriminate use of Artificial Intelligence. Howard Tankey turns our attention to the moral dilemmas that emerge in the context of human movement around our planet, and puts forward some principles to guide our ethical thinking.

Di Dibley continues the themes of care and environment, urging that environmental ethics should be enshrined in international law and that there is a fundamental human right to a sustainable global ecosystem. Leila Toiviainen reviews Konrad Marshall's new book '*Run for your Life*', reflecting on the significance of pursuits like running to wellbeing, but also considering the ethical issues (like safety) they raise.

Nathaniel Lamb and Gordon Young turn to the darker side of care, exploring how the caring professions (like nursing and teaching) are too often sites of moral harm, as professionals are exploited through their drive to respond to others' needs.

Noting 'Ethical Understanding' is one of the general capabilities to be embedded into the Australian Curriculum, Joy Verrinder explains her work in developing resources for empowering teachers to understand and teach ethics. Finally, Richard Machelle makes a call for world constitutional deliberation, based around the Golden Rule.

Thanks to all the contributors, and especially to Charmayne Highfield as editor for pulling together such a thought provoking read!

Hugh Breakey

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Do zombies have human rights?

James Page

Unusual questions can be useful, especially when looking at issues in applied ethics. Asking whether zombies have human rights is one such unusual question. In asking this, it is important to acknowledge that we live in a world of sometimes horrendous violations of human rights and posing this question is not meant to diminish the seriousness of such violations. Yet thinking about this question can help elucidate some of the complexities of human rights, how we should act to honour such rights, and indeed deeper questions about what it means to be human and the nature of modern societies.

At the outset, let's commence with the question of whether a zombie is a human being, which is logical if we're looking at whether zombies have human rights. There is no one simple definition of zombie. The popular notion of zombie is largely a recent literary and cinematic invention, adapted from African and Haitian mythology. That said, a working definition might be that a zombie is a non-rational (non-sapient) and unfeeling (non-sentient) flesh-eating entity, although an entity who or which at some time has been human. This definition assumes a deeper understanding of what it means to be human, namely, to have a sense of self.

The zombie usually is infected with a virus, which turns what was once a human into a non-human, by virtue of the loss of capacity to be rational and to feel compassion. What complicates matters is that some versions of the modern genre have it that zombies can sometimes recover a capacity for rationality and compassion. They can, in a way, de-zombie. Why this complicates the question of whether zombies have human rights is that the de-zombie process suggests that any conclusion that zombies don't have human rights is tenuous, given that the supposed non-human zombies might become human again.



It is interesting to speculate on whether the zombie can serve as a metaphor for unthinking and unfeeling human beings. The temptation is always to say that those who act in a brutal and heinous manner have lost their humanity and thus have forfeited the inherent rights that come with being human - what we call human rights. We see this in our attitudes to crime and war. It is tempting to say that those who act in a brutal and heinous (inhuman) manner have lost the right to be treated as human. The enemy is thus often characterised as those who have lost all feeling and rationality, and thus no longer enjoy the most basic of human rights, namely, the right to life.

Further, it is interesting to speculate on how and why the modern genre of the zombie has evolved. One of the hallmarks of the zombie genre is that the hero/s and/or heroine/s are involved in the necessary slaughter of zombies - in order simply to survive. It may not be too much of a stretch to say the zombie genre allows us to celebrate, in a vicarious way, the use of unrestrained violence, through enjoying the spectacle of the slaughter of hordes of quasi-humans, when we know that would otherwise be ethically unacceptable or at least ethically problematic.

Do we as humans we have an atavistic desire to kill? Some argue we do, although it is interesting that in the zombie genre it is quasi-humans who are slaughtered. One could equally argue that the zombie genre reveals an atavistic tendency against killing our fellow humans, an atavistic tendency against genocide, if you will. Otherwise, why would the genre emphasise that those being killed have lost their essential humanity?



War clearly involves widespread killing, especially in the modern era of weapons of mass destruction. Just war theory, however, stipulates that there are rigorous ethical conditions to be met before any war, and thus any killing, can be considered just. Perhaps the most important of these conditions is that the resort to war, which in the modern era generally means a resort to slaughter, must be a last resort. I suspect that deep down we know that this condition is rarely if at all met, and that probably no war in recent history can be considered just.

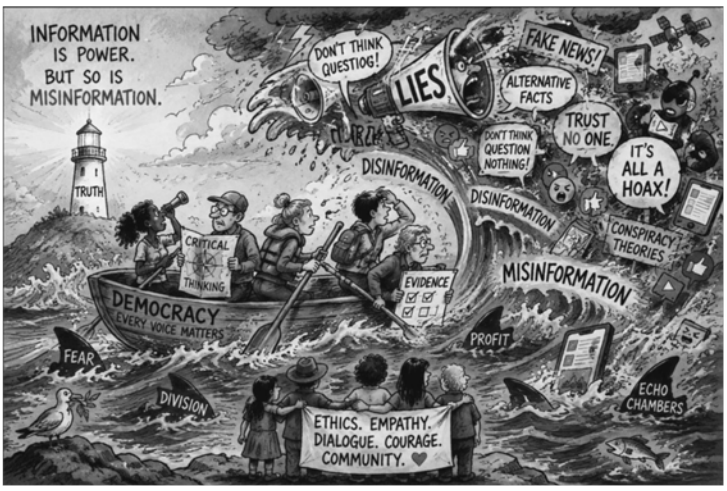
The zombie genre, however, enables us to celebrate the just war. The zombies aim to attack the remaining healthy persons (humans) and the only way to defeat this threat is through violence, that is, through slaughtering the zom-

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Truth, Democracy and Misinformation

AAPAE Online Workshop | Tuesday, 17 November 2026

In an era shaped by accelerating technological change, social fragmentation, political polarisation and growing distrust in institutions, questions surrounding truth, misinformation and democratic legitimacy have become some of the defining ethical challenges of our time. From artificial intelligence and algorithmic influence to climate communication, public health, energy transitions, media ecosystems and governance, misinformation (unknowingly shared untruths) and disinformation (deliberate lies) increasingly shape how societies understand reality, negotiate difference and make collective decisions.



What are the ethical dimensions of misinformation and its implications for democracy, public trust, governance and social cohesion across diverse sectors and industries?

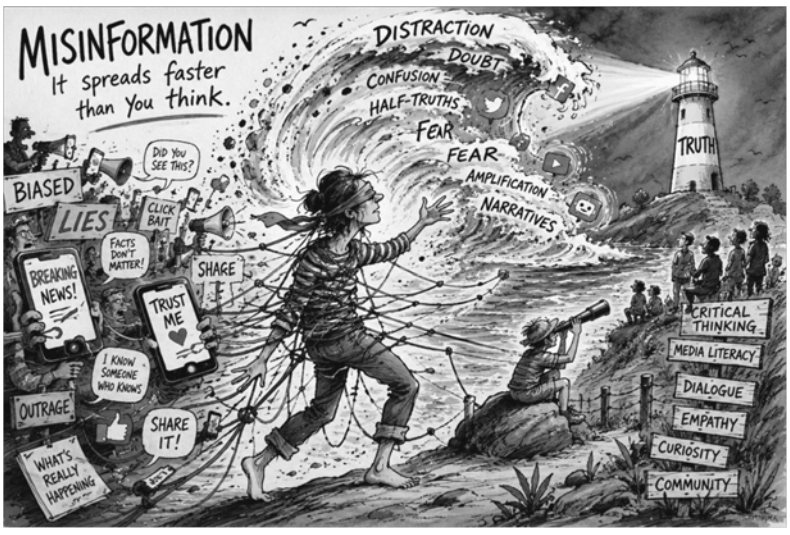
The workshop seeks to explore not only the harms associated with misinformation, disinformation and epistemic manipulation, but also the broader ethical questions surrounding truth, knowledge, communication, responsibility and democratic participation in increasingly complex and contested social environments. A public panel discussing misinformation and ethics will precede the workshop.

At a time when misinformation can undermine democratic processes, social trust, and collective action, this workshop aims to foster thoughtful dialogue about how ethical frameworks, institutions and communities might respond constructively to the challenges of our rapidly changing informational landscapes.

We invite papers, panels, roundtables, workshops, creative practice contributions and interdisciplinary conversations that engage critically and constructively with these urgent issues. Workshop proceedings and contributors will be invited to publish in our series: ***Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations*** **(REIO),** the official journal of the AAPAE: https://bookstore.emerald.com/research-in-ethical-issues-in-organizations

Submission: Abstracts (500 words) should be submitted to Dr Hugh Breakey (h.breakey@griffith.edu.au) or Dr Jacqueline Boaks (jacqueline.boaks@curtin.edu.au) by 1 September 2026.

To register: Please complete the form via Humanitix https://events.humanitix.com/aapae-misinformation-workshop



Earth's manifesto to humans

Anna Malavisi

This is Mother Earth and I have a message for all humans. I often ask myself why you humans ever dedicated a day to me when you are the ones destroying me. And I hope you realise that by destroying parts of me: the land, the air, the oceans, fresh water and much more, you are also destroying what you ultimately depend on for your own existence and posterity, but also for the existence of non-human and other living beings.

Today, I'm making a special and urgent plea because it seems that some human folks don't understand the consequences of their actions nor the gravity of the situation. There are two things that are particularly concerning to me: i) the environmental destruction that occurs in warfare: during and for decades afterwards and ii) the increasingly indiscriminate use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Many will say that humanity has always engaged in war, so that it's futile to think that it could ever be abolished. Please challenge this notion – too often, countries resort to war without considering other non-violent alternatives. The fact that war itself is a major contributor to the climate crisis (and believe me, it is a crisis), should be reason enough for nation-states to rethink strategies of protection, security and related matters.

I have borne witness to war among humans for thousands of years. And I've never really understood why you continue to do so, when you know perfectly well the damage this causes to me and you. Surely, there are other methods you could use to resolve conflict and tension such as dialogue, mediation, non-violent conflict resolution, etc. You humans get so caught up with your own egos and thirst for power that you become blind to the devastating results of your actions and wilfully resist to think there may be better ways.

At one particular time there lived a theologian, his name was Augustine (circa 400 CE). He was one of the first people to write about war. From his, and other writings, emerged just war theory. Most wars have been justified within the framework of this theory; of course, some of them unjustifiably. And this continues to this day.

It seems that political leaders all over the world are stuck in a paradigm that limits their thinking to war and defence as being the only solution to national security.

Money is of no value to me, but I would be remiss not to mention, at least, the exorbitant military budgets that support the war-industry. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan cost the United States, $1.5 trillion – about twice the cost of the Vietnam War when adjusted for inflation. One out of every five tax dollars is spent on armaments and the armed forces. The US spends more on its defence budget than the next ten countries combined – including Russia, China and allies. Not surprisingly, the US is the world's largest supplier of weapons.

The other day as I was sifting through the world news, I noticed that "Australia will be spending a record $425 billion over the next decade to overhaul the defence force and make the country more "self-reliant"…The government said the funding boost reflected the most "threatening strategic circumstances since the end of World War II".

It seems that political leaders all over the world are stuck in a paradigm that limits their thinking to war and defence as being the only solution to national security.

Moreover, the decision to go to war, and the entire military industrial complex that feeds off it, ignores the devastating impact that war has and has had on my home. This needs to change. If nation-states are serious about addressing the climate crisis, then one of the most effective strategies is to stop the onset and continuity of war. It's as simple as that.

War has created a huge global military empire that feeds the world's oil-based economies. Waging war is dependent on burning vast amounts of oil and generates high levels of greenhouse gases. Increased military spending diverts funds from social, educational, health and environmental needs.

My second concern is AI and how its indiscriminate use without any attempt to anticipate unintended consequences. AI is also used in warfare.

I was around during the Industrial Revolution and saw how that epoch was the beginning of my destruction. Don't start a digital revolution – I won't be able to sustain it. I can't even sustain my own being today; and

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I will not be able to sustain the lives of all humans, non-humans and other living beings for much longer.

Human action has resulted in my water sources becoming scarcer; many of my resources are not infinite, so the race to build even more sophisticated types of AI will deplete precious metals such as cobalt and lithium. And it makes me extremely sad to see young children and women being exploited and exposed to toxic levels because they are forced to mine for cobalt in places like the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Many of you are turning to AI because it is able to do some amazing things: answer questions, create songs, images and videos, write papers, and much more. I don't think many of you realise that the more you use AI the more energy is consumed; demand is increasing which only places more burden on me. Did you know that someone's daily digital activity can consume three litres of water, and asking ChatGPT to write a 100-word email uses the equivalent of a 500ml bottle of water?

Some of you recognise the potential negative effects of AI and have even protested against the building of data centres near your homes. You understand the unwanted effects these data centres have on energy and water use, noise and lighting close to your homes. Thank you for thinking about me, too. But this is not enough.

As a witness to the evolution of humanity over thousands of years, the accelerating use and expansion of AI will drastically change what it means to be human. So, my concern is not limited to an environmental one; an ominous existential threat to humanity is looming. However, I do not dare venture there now, but I believe this demands your further attention.

In conclusion, much more needs to happen to mitigate the effects of war and AI. New ways of thinking about addressing conflict between nations cannot wait. The connection between war but also AI and their pernicious effects on the environment has to be prioritised. Political leaders need to be stopped when they commit crimes against humanity and breach international law because they also commit crimes against the environment (ecocide). The only way this will happen is by upholding international law. Laws exist, what doesn't is political will or mechanisms that hold people and countries responsible and accountable for their actions.

Limits need to be placed on corporations too, through laws, regulations and standards. Making profit cannot be the only goal of these behemoths.

Please work on those mechanisms for your benefit and mine. Peace on Earth (my home and yours).

Signed: **Mother Earth**

Dr Anna Malavisi
(Mother Earth's messenger)
Email: annamalavisi@gmail.com

References: Please contact the author direct.

Acknowledgement: Sadly, t*he Earth graphic is courtesy of ChatGPT.*



ADVANCE NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Advance notice is given of the Annual General meeting of the Australian Association for Professional and Applied Ethics Incorporated to be held on: **Wednesday, 16 September 2026 at 1pm AEST by videoconference.**

Further details, including the Zoom link, will be shared with members via email in early August 2026.

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bies. This action satisfies the just war requirement of last resort, given there is no other way to stop the zombie onslaught. The zombie is unfeeling and thus pitiless, and irrational, and thus cannot be reasoned with. This is the classic us-versus-them scenario as presented by war propagandists, although in this case, the scenario is more straightforward, given the non-human and indeed inhuman nature of the threat.

Therefore, **do zombies have human rights**? No, with the caveat that we understand the zombification process as irreversible. If we do work on a basis that zombification is reversible, then the situation becomes ethically much more complicated. What I think we can say is that the question raises some interesting questions about what it means to be human, and the rise of the genre has some surprisingly positive implications for our understanding of what it means to be human.

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Moral Dilemmas

and some principles for how we move around the planet

Howard Tankey

We move around the planet for many reasons. This article will examine our motivations and discuss the dilemmas they present.

For Refuge.
Refugees escaping from situations where their safety is threatened deserve the protection most of the rest of humanity can provide.

We are all the same species, and all cultures, whether they be based on religious beliefs or simple humanitarian philosophies, instruct us to look after people whose survival is uncertain if they remain where they are. And it seems to be part of human nature for the majority, although the social environment of people can change the strength of that condition.

Principle 1. Refugees moving from near or far should be provided with a safe haven.

Economic Migrants.
These are people who live in various states of economic wealth, from real poverty to various ranges of poor economic outcomes, to reasonable wealth in their own country, but are relatively poor by the standards of modern, industrialised countries. Some of this latter group have strong motivation, capacity or support, to move to a country that provides greater opportunities for personal economic growth.

Dilemma 1. These people exist on a spectrum from poverty stricken to reasonable wealth, as measured by people in both the home and receiving countries. The question is, do any of these people deserve acceptance, and if they do, is there any level of wealth that would disbar them from migrating?

Some countries, Australia for example, will encourage this form of migration if the applicants have a certain level of wealth or useful skills. We use them to grow our economic wealth. However, often their wealth and skills are more needed in their home country.

Dilemma 2. Should money or skills be the measure by which we decide whether someone can migrate to a country?

Migration for Family Reasons.
Many people wish to migrate to another country simply because members of their family have successfully moved there. We can all empathise with the need to reconnect with family. However, if we accept this ideal, it becomes difficult for Governments to control levels of migration.

Dilemma 3. Should closeness of family connection be a criterion for eligibility and if so, how close does the relationship have to be?

Temporary Migration for Education.
Many students travel to other countries to enhance their education. The idea of living as a visitor in a different culture has benefits for the visitor, and people in the host country, far beyond the simple educational knowledge and qualifications gained. As in all movement between countries, the interaction between the visitors and hosts creates far greater understanding and leaves beautiful memories. Some families also see this as another way of getting access to another country.

Dilemma 4. Whilst movement for education is a great positive for both student and host country, should this be a means of permanent migration when often the home country has a greater need for the new knowledge and skills acquired?

Travel for Pleasure.
Many people, especially from wealthy countries, gain great pleasure and status from travelling around the world. Often the reason provided is to gain a better knowledge and understanding of countries, their people and culture by engaging briefly with their way of life. In reality, many of these adventures are very luxurious and formulaic in the way information is provided at the sightseeing places.

In the 1960s the New Scientist magazine produced an article on travel. Whilst it acknowledged the economic benefits that travel can bring, it questioned the adverse impacts, especially in smaller towns and villages. These were inflation in the price of goods and services to the locals, (In some cases small places had two prices, those for the well-heeled travellers and those for the locals); the economic benefit often went only to those people whose business or employment was involved in the travel industry; there were shortages and difficulty using some services like transport, eateries, accommodation during the peak of the

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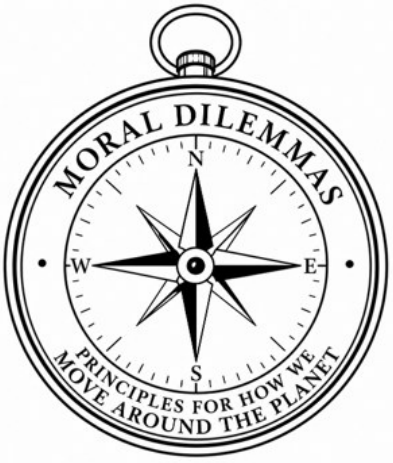
travel season; local culture was modified and even corrupted to make it more palatable or 'exciting' for the tourists; occasionally the relationship between the visitor and the local was marred by travellers making gratuitous, often loud, comments about the quality or standard of a whole range of local conditions or behaviours. (Remember this article was written in the era of the 'Ugly American' tourist).

Dilemma 5. Travel to a new part of the world, where there may be family or cultural connections or be a totally foreign place to one's usual domestic life, is one of the most exhilarating experiences of being on this planet for most people. People find that personal antennae they had no previous awareness of, suddenly appear. However, in a modern connected world where we can learn about and communicate with people at any place on the planet, do we need to place extra pressures on local places just for our own gratification? This could include the environmental stresses placed on the local natural space.

Travel for Business.
Business travel is often justified on the grounds that face-to-face meetings are far better for generating understanding, empathy and trust, compared to emails or the telephone or visual online chats. There is also often the ego boost, that an overseas business trip provides, because it signifies a certain status, a level of importance within any organisation. Changing countries for employment reasons, sometimes for pragmatic reasons, and sometimes for new opportunities, could be included in some of the above categories. The academic or new commercial areas would be good examples.

Dilemma 6. Are business motivations sufficient to justify the great movement around the planet for business reasons. Especially in this world of visual communications.

Our Human Right to Move Around the Planet.
In today's world it is very easy for someone, anywhere in the world, to discover through a device in their hand, that there are many different places to the one where they were born. Most people seem to have a natural connection with the place, and people, where they were born. However, if someone on the edge of the Gobi Desert or Siberian tundra decided that a gentle, fertile Californian river valley was where they wanted to live, why couldn't they go there as an inhabitant of planet earth? After all, the concept of nations and citizenship and visas and passports are human constructs. They are artificial and ever-changing.



Dilemma 7. Should we be able to move to any place on planet earth without restriction?

Dilemma 8. Will the unrestricted movement of people around the world be the end of unique cultures? (It could be argued that this is already happening and will continue to happen further, with the digitisation of the world).

Overall Impact of Movement of People.
The movement of people, especially that which results in people finding a partner and settling in a new country – often young people moving for education, work or travel experience – generates much additional travel, simply through family members just needing to reconnect. Carbon emissions and the need for material resources related to air transport, makes air travel one of the most difficult energy challenges to combat. This is because all other forms of transport can be modified to reduce impact on the climate. Planes cannot, at the moment. It will be highly unlikely that planes can be converted to a less carbon intensive technology in the next 30 years. The time during which our emissions must be reduced rapidly.

Since the 1960s we have become increasingly aware of our negative impacts on the biosphere. Some people have responded by trying to limit their use of energy, paper, plastics and generally try to reduce their use of resources. Maybe it is time to include movement in this picture. This is especially true in urban settings where many trips could be reduced with some thoughtful planning. Maybe people just need to have their heads in this space, rather than thinking we can move around without thinking about the consequences. Unfortunately, movement and a sense of freedom, a sense of free choice, individual rights, are intimately connected.

Dilemma 9. Should we be limiting our movement around the world as much as possible?

And this hasn't touched on travel to outer space!

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References: Please contact the author direct.

Environmental Ethics as an irrefutable *good*

Di Dibley

Our constructed knowledge and modes of thinking evolved to include ethics–concern with what is morally 'good' and 'bad'; 'right' and 'wrong'; placing value and setting standards by which our actions are guided and indeed, judged. Ethics are necessary for dealing with life's challenges and practical problems on a day-to-day basis. But how do we decide on what is 'good' and therefore, 'right'?

In the twenty first century, we are drowning in moral dilemmas. Globalisation promised to create a prosperous, interconnected world by valuing free trade, specialisation and the free flow of capital, technology and labour to maximise efficiency, generate universal economic growth, reduce poverty and foster global peace. Contrary to its perceived intent, it has been accompanied by the concentration of wealth and power into a few hands, increased poverty across the globe, environmental collapse and increased geopolitical tensions. Consequential social discontent is threatening to undermine institutional frameworks at national, regional and global levels.

Competing values include economic growth, environmental protections, democratic rights and food security. Conflicting ethical positions support competing interests, for example, economists and investors in agricultural commodity markets argue that ever-increasing productivity associated with industrial agriculture is needed to *feed the world;* industrialists argue that increased production *creates jobs* and *as-yet unknown technology* will allow us to continue to enjoy royalties from mining and energy from fossil fuels. Environmental ethics recognises that humans are reliant on the health of natural systems and values the Earth system above everything else when considering development. Democratic rights include the *institutional protections* provided by sound global governance that values equal opportunity. Food security values a universal right to food.

So…with competing ethics supported by compelling narratives, ethical claims have become meaningless. How can Ethics carry us safely through industrialisation and artificial intelligence? Specifically:

- What is the meaning of ethics when competing interests claim the moral high ground?
- Are all competing ethical positions right? Do they simply need to be debated and the best argument wins?
- Are there fundamental ethics that apply to us all?
- How would such ethics be upheld if ethics is about choice?

If we accept all of the current competing ethical positions on how we should live in our geobiophysical world, we reach an impasse because the various positions are irreconcilable. Furthermore, for strategic and political purposes some ethical positions are given more weight than others…are seen to be *more good*, *more right.* This is an impossibility theorem that is not only leading to environmental and societal collapse but destroys the essential idea of ethics as that which upholds what is good and right.

The renowned ecologist and Nature writer, Aldo Leopold, offered a moral test: "***A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise***". If we believe that some things are inherently and universally good, then how do we recognise and uphold them in a global society? If we accept the understanding provided by Earth systems science, that the human system is just one system in an interdependent Earth system, then, as Leopold proposed, valuing and respecting the foundations of that system as essential to life on Earth as we know it, is *right* and *good*. It is ethical. However, to be effective, such an ethic must be non-transactional. There cannot be shades of goodness.

The construction of our legal systems acknowledges that generally, human beings are incapable of self-regulation for the greater good. The ethics behind the notion of a crime recognise what is *good* and *right* and the law protects against violation. It follows that what destroys Earth systems, takes away the rights of future generations of ecosystems that include us, is unethical. However, we know that ethical positions are contested and often subject to self-interested manipulation.

Until and unless we come to accept and respect our place in the natural world; accept that some values are common to us all and are therefore, beyond debate, the best we can do is to enshrine environmental ethics in international law as an *irrefutable good* for the universal protection of a fundamental human right to a sustainable global ecosystem.

Dr Di Dibley

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References: Please contact the author direct.

Konrad Marshall

Book review

Run for Your Life: *A yearlong journey asking why we run,* Hardie Grant Books 2026, 295 pages.

Konrad Marshall is best known as a sportswriter and as the deputy editor of the *Good Weekend Magazine* as well as a passionate Richmond Football Club supporter. He has authored several books on his team and collaborated as a ghostwriter for several sports people.

Run for Your Life is a more personal work from 2024 when he decided to run every day, it is an account of running in all weathers, on his own and with many others. He addresses the many challenges posed by daily running in detail. One of the first questions he asks, and the question that people ask of him: 'Is this safe'? To find out, Marshall goes to a sports cardiologist, Andre La Gerche, for a thorough examination and finds out that although his blood test results are normal, he is obese at 117 kilograms.

In his early sportswriting career, Marshall regarded running as a lonely sport but as he progresses throughout 2024, he meets many people both in Australia and overseas who make him feel part of a supportive community. The sense of belonging is one of the most powerful aspects of this book, full of insights into what really matters: a strong, enduring connection to others makes our lives meaningful.

As anyone who engages in regular physical activity knows, it not only strengthens your body but also your mind; you can achieve more in every aspect of your life, whether work or leisure. Marshall gives several examples of people who have been successful in their lives and careers because of their combined physical and mental fitness. They answer the second question asked by many, how do people find the time to run? His running mates explain that by making time to run, they step away from the busyness of their minds. In return, they often solve problems during the solitude of a run that might otherwise have consumed far more time.

Dr Tracey Westerman is an Indigenous woman from Western Australia who has a PhD in clinical psychology; she helps Marshall with his nocturnal anxiety attacks. She began barefoot running as a child in Tom Price in the Pilbara and then became an expert in indigenous suicide prevention and the founder of Jilya, a charity to support indigenous psychology students with scholarships. She underlines the value of running for anyone trying to solve problems creatively: 'on the one hand as you are running you stop thinking while focusing on movement while on the other ideas arise in this state of not thinking.'

Jack Riewoldt, who has won three AFL premierships as the star forward for the Richmond Tigers, has had similar experiences: 'I try to let my mind run free. Once you get a bit of silence, humans naturally use that to filter what's on their mind – the important and pressing stuff – it all just bubbles to the top. Maybe I should do this? I need to address that.'

Andrew Leigh, a former Labor politician is another keen runner, an accomplished author and 'one of the busiest runners' that Marshall has known, relates to Leigh as someone who does meditation through movement. Leigh describes life as a three-legged stool, where 'a part of your life is family and friends, a part that is work and a part which is some kind of an interest'. After a hard sprint session in the morning, he has 'a feeling of confidence' about everything still to come.

The sense of belonging is one of the most powerful aspects of this book, full of insights into what really matters: a strong, enduring connection to others makes our lives meaningful.

As a marathon runner Leigh was determined to lose weight to run faster and managed to get down from 75 kilos to 62 kilos, only to be left with stress fractures of his hip that stopped him from running. When he recovered and was able to participate in the Tokyo marathon of 2017, he was determined to enjoy the experience and not worry about his speed.

Gout Gout is a young Australian man born to a Sudanese family of seven children in Brisbane in 2007. As a record-breaking runner he could be studying in some famous American sports college but prefers to stay at home because he loves Australia and his family and 'could not ask for more'. With Gout Gout's records has come fame and he explains how he is daunted by people who want a piece of him even when he does not want to talk to anyone. Apart from being a famous runner, Gout Gout balances his life with street photography, the music of Billie Eilish and Taylor Swift as well as his Christian faith; balance of activities for all of Marshall's contacts is an integral part of their running lives.

Towards the end of his running year, on his 334th run, Marshall experiences the worry of his son, Charlie, being late walking home from school and he blames himself for letting him walk rather than picking him up. He feels real 'terror, fear and dread' until Charlie turns up. The experience of fear makes Marshall reflect on the families whose loved ones do not come back, especially when he meets Samantha McIntosh, a local councillor in Ballarat, for a running session on the Yarrowee

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The weaponisation of care

Nathaniel Lamb & Gordon Young

The caring professions, a loose group of fields typically including nurses, teachers, disability workers, social workers and a variety of other human-focused roles, have two things in common:

- They are explicitly built around caring for people, showcasing exceptional ethics in their objectives and stated methods.
- They are chronically underpaid, under-supported, and disrespected beyond token lip-service.

Such professionals are often lauded for this grace under fire, even wearing it as a badge of honour. But review of organizational culture in these fields has led the authors to a disturbing underlying phenomenon: the disadvantage of a profession, not simply despite their ethical conduct, but directly **because** of that ethical conduct.

By way of example, consider the following experiences of Victorian school teachers over the last few decades:

Parentification via scope creep

Since the early 2000s the role of teachers has expanded beyond delivery of curriculum and assessment; teachers are increasing tasked with "Pastoral Duties" – the active monitoring and management of the 'wellbeing' of the children in their care. Standard practice in schools is now that if a student engages in suboptimal behaviours in class, their teacher must log what the behaviour was, what steps were taken to manage it (i.e. document that the policy has been followed), log who has been contacted, and what consequences resulted for the student.

But this is not enough; teachers must also ensure they *proactively* promote the wellbeing of their students, as evidenced by the number of professional development courses teaching "co-regulation" skills – in essence, controlling one's own neuro-physiological state to model calmness and regulation to help heightened students. The very definition of emotional labour, and frankly, a higher standard than most parents are held to.

'Invisible labour' aka unpaid overtime

It is well known that classroom teachers do a lot more work preparing for classes than their scheduled work hours would have you believe. But the more insidious and lesser-known example of this are excursions, camps and other 'educational value adds'. A teacher who agrees to go on a camp is on-call and has a duty of care for the entire duration of the camp. That means having an (increasingly positive) duty of care to all students, and being on-call for the whole 24 hours of each day of the camp. Camps do not net any additional pay loading, and do not count towards one's hours. The only additional compensation that teachers get is that for each 24 hours, they are permitted to skip 1-hour long meeting.

The obvious question then is, if it is such an onerous task and there is no recompense, why would teachers keep agreeing to go on camps? The response is simple: "We don't want students to miss out".

'Burnout' as systemic failure

Between the blowout in the scope and administration of the role, increasingly positive responsibility for emotional regulation and the wellbeing of students, and the intensive voluntary (but culturally presumed) invisible labour, burnout is all but inevitable in the teaching profession.

Young teachers are particularly at risk of leaving the profession or suffering compassion fatigue over time as a coping mechanism, which degrades the experience for everyone involved. As one teacher reported, when speaking to a department funded councillor after a workplace incident, the councillor responded to a request to develop better coping skills by saying "It isn't an issue of your coping skills, the issue is what you are being asked to cope with".

Tragically, this burnout is so normalised within the field that it has simply been built into the culture of the profession – it is normal, and thus, unremarked upon.

Tragically, this burnout is so normalised within the field that it has simply been built into the culture of the profession – it is normal, and thus, unremarked upon. All of which goes to illustrate a profession that is not just ritualistically abused as part of normal business, but is ritualistically abused *explicitly because of* their commitment to their students.

A systemic crisis of governance

Teachers, nurses, social workers, disability support work-

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ers, and notably even police, all suffer from precisely the same issue: horrific working conditions that have become culturally normalised to the point where the workforce can no longer imagine demanding better.

Such failures can be overcome. In fact, they can be overcome quite easily on a theoretical level via basic accountability mechanisms, frontline worker empowerment, and a realignment of cultures within the profession. Shorter shifts, better pay, regular standardised mental health support, clearer and actively policed boundaries on responsibilities, a clear and absolute prohibition on unpaid overtime – these are neither radical nor complex solutions.

But the challenge in establishing such solutions is the same problem that caused the failure in the first place; a vast imbalance of power between the frontline workers and their employers, which has resulted in such solutions feeling nigh-impossible to achieve. And over time, the culture of the profession has shifted to accept these problems as normal in response.

We do not believe the significance of this problem can be understated. In terms of professional ethics, there can be few failures worse than the systemic punishment of people *because* they hold themselves to a high ethical standard.

And when this phenomenon is systemic, not just within one profession, but within *every caring profession that we have observed*, we have a governance crisis on our hands that requires a radical rethink of how these professions are governed and who controls their governance.

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For further information or to discuss your own experience with this phenomenon, contact Nathaniel Lamb and Gordon Young at Ethilogical Consulting.



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River Trail, close to the area where a local woman Samantha Murphy went missing. Councillor McIntosh explains how this crime made community members, especially women, feel unsafe in a town where they had felt safe before. They made changes to their running times and routines and men running made sure to gesture to them that they were not a threat.

Marshall acknowledges that personal safety does not worry him: 'As a big bloke, I can go for a run at any time of the day. I can run with my headphones blasting in my ears. I don't feel the need to be aware of everything around me, or to avoid that alley, or to bring a friend. I can go where I want – unfettered – but women don't feel they can. That's not fair.'

In late July 2024, Marshall arrives in Paris on an assignment as a sports reporter to the Paris Olympics. Even after twenty years of sports journalism, he can hardly believe that he is there: 'This is pinch yourself stuff'. To shake off jet lag he goes for a run and continues his daily practice for the next two weeks in preparation for the Paris Marathon.

On his runs Marshall passes many of the famous landmarks of the city, so the reader gets a cultural and pop cultural tour of Paris while accompanying him. For instance, he goes past Cimetière de Montparnasse where intellectuals like Simone de Beauvoir, Jean-Paul Sartre, Samuel Beckett and Susan Sontag are buried. He has a drink in the bar frequented by Jim Morrison and has a shot of whiskey in his honour. He is reminded of the movie Midnight in Paris in which Owen Wilson, as the aspiring contemporary writer, time travels to the 1920s to meet Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald, Picasso and Dali.

Arts and culture do not matter when Marshall is participating in the Paris marathon, for him it's a gruelling physical experience. He has previously had toenails dropping off, suffered from 'the most brutal buttock chafing' and talks about men who have had bleeding nipples'; neither running nor reading about it is for the faint hearted. He has not heard of 'bathroom routine'; in health care the term is 'bowel management'. As a reader, I appreciated the honesty of Marshall's writing.

After the excitement of Paris, Marshall meets his family in Rome for a well-earned holiday. He continues running in beautiful locations in Italy such as the streets of Amalfi and Arrani.

Marshall completes his year of running on New Year's Eve supported by his friend Andrew after admitting that the mandatory runs at times got him down both physically and mentally.

For the reader, *Run for Your Life* is an opportunity to share in the joy of movement and of living, and in the companionship of past and present runners, all thoroughly decent people.

Dr Leila Toiviainen
Retired researcher

Developing ethical understanding in schools

Joy Verrinder

As a new member of the AAPAE, I am grateful for this opportunity to connect with you and seek your feedback and suggestions about what I am currently working on. My goal is to help teachers in schools develop ethical understanding to empower students to address harms and injustices and create a kinder fairer world.

About 24 years ago, after teaching English literature and Geography and being a Deputy Principal in secondary schools, completing a couple of master's degrees in strategic development and professional ethics, and volunteering with various organisations, tinkering at the edges of social change in any spare time I could find, I decided to leave my work in schools to address at least one area of social injustice in the world.

I started working with Animal Welfare League Qld (AWLQ) to prevent the killing of dogs and cats in pounds and shelters. At that stage, hundreds of thousands of healthy companion dogs and cats were being killed across Australia every year and 4000 in my city alone. I watched and cried as up to 50 healthy stray dogs, cats and kittens were being euthanised each day, by veterinarians and animal attendants who cared about animals. This seemed insane to me. Most people love their companion animals and would be horrified to see what was happening.

Our goal was to prevent the killing in a whole city as soon as possible and then spread the successful strategies to cities and towns across Australia. I started contacting stakeholder groups – vets, breeders, the pet industry, local government – but discovered not many people were really interested in being involved. And I wondered why. What is it that makes people want to address ethical issues in the world? Is it possible to define ethics scientifically and develop capacity to take ethical action, and, if so, how?

So, I did a PhD to explore these questions. Expanding my research from philosophy to neuroscience, evolutionary biology, and moral psychology, I was able to understand a scientific basis for ethics and ways to build capacity and confidence to take action to address harms and social injustice.

My experience in my strategic role at AWLQ working with stakeholders and building strategies also provided practical ethical understanding. It took 16 years to get to zero euthanasia of all healthy and treatable dogs and cats in a city of over half a million people. As we started to see success, we worked on broadening access to strategies across Australia. I learnt that addressing ethical issues requires ethical sensitivity, adaptive ethical decision-making, and motivating and helping people to take ethical action. Ethical behaviour is embedded in our brains, it just needs awareness, reflection, encouragement, support and practice.

As you are probably aware, Ethical Understanding is one of seven General Capabilities to be embedded in all subjects in the Australian Curriculum P - 10 for all schools, along with Literacy, Numeracy, Information and Communication Technology, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability and Intercultural Understanding.

However, there is a lack of clarity around ethics and ethical development. Research has found that teachers' views on what constitutes ethics are diverse, depending on whether teachers have backgrounds in values education or philosophy or are drawing on personal understandings developed through life experience. Some teachers relate ethics to reasoning and others to feelings. Teachers' views are also influenced by their subject area disciplines and by school culture. For instance, in schools emphasising regulation of student behaviour, ethics is framed as right and wrong action; in schools emphasising pastoral care, ethics relates to enabling positive interpersonal relationships; in schools emphasising student independence and extensive and expansive professional learning for its staff, individually distinctive views are more prevalent. Teachers claim no expertise in teaching ethics or ethical education and advocate 'dialogue' as the key way to promote diversity of ethical thought.

So, I am just finishing a book: "***Teaching Ethical Understanding: Creating a Kinder Fairer World***". My hope is that this book will make it easier for teachers to understand and teach ethics. It aims to help teachers explain to students simply and clearly what ethics is, and to distinguish ethics from personal and cultural values and beliefs. The book helps teachers develop their ethics teaching skills. It promotes a consistent approach to developing ethical understanding by teachers across the curriculum, within and across schools so that students are more likely to be able to address ethical concerns in their personal and future work lives. It aims for more ethical relationships, professions, indus-

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tries and governments.

This book also aims to help schools to integrate ethics across subject areas efficiently. In a crowded curriculum, with demands made on teachers to focus on many educational priorities (such as literacy and numeracy in primary schools, or the latest IT or profession-related knowledge in secondary schools), it is difficult to fit everything in. Because of this, ethical understanding and other general capabilities often lack priority. This book provides a practical approach to share the teaching of ethics across the curriculum to avoid repetition and maximise effectiveness across the school. As well, I want to offer workshops so that teachers can practise ethical skills, and plan collaboratively to facilitate a school-wide approach.

I believe teaching ethical understanding and ethics skills across the curriculum also provides an opportunity for a cohesive approach to behaviour development and management in schools. Ethics requires working closely with others for ethical action. If students can practice integrating ethics into their daily actions and relationships with other students and teachers in their school and the wider community, it is more likely to have a sustainable long-term impact.

Ethical Understanding is one of seven General Capabilities to be embedded in all subjects in the Australian Curriculum P-10 for all schools, along with Literacy, Numeracy, Information and Communication Technology, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability and Intercultural Understanding.

I recently had the opportunity to present some of my book content to teachers at the History and Science teachers national conferences. The feedback reflected that teachers are not confident about teaching ethical understanding. Teachers expressed appreciation for being given some clarity about ethics and some tools to use to help develop students' ethics skills within their curricula.

I am hoping my book will be published by early next year. Meanwhile, I would love to speak with curriculum leaders in Education Faculties about how teachers are currently being prepared to teach Ethical Understanding, what is needed and whether it might be possible to include some workshops for pre-service and/or current secondary teachers, particularly in Science, the Humanities and the Social Sciences, where I believe the initial teaching of ethics knowledge and skills is probably most suitable. Then all teachers can learn to apply ethical knowledge and skills so that students can confidently address ethical issues in all curricula. I realise time is limited, so I believe teacher workshops of 4 to 6 hours would be adequate to help develop practical ethical understanding and skills. I live on the Gold Coast so it would be wonderful to be able to trial workshops/short courses at universities nearby in the coming year.

I look forward to your feedback. I would love to know what else is happening in this area, whether you think what I am working on is helpful, and if so, ways you think I can best progress this, to help teachers to empower students to address harms and injustices and create a kinder fairer world.

Dr Joy Verrinder

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***Editor*: Dr Jacqui Boaks: Jacqueline.boaks@curtin.edu.au**



Call to engage in world constitutional deliberation

Invoking the Golden Rule and the Categorical Imperative

Richard Mochelle

It has long been obvious that the world's people lack adequate constitutional protection. The worsening polycrisis calls for widespread engagement in 'bottom up' world constitutional deliberation, unconstrained by the authority of the dysfunctional United Nation (UN system). Chomsky, Monbiot, Held and other luminaries called for this in their *Manifesto for a Global Democracy*.

Seriously inhibiting adequate response is the disempowering view that 'we, the world's people' have no right to engage in world constitutional deliberation, let alone the responsibility to do so as morally autonomous agents. The lack of enabling provisions is also a serious impediment; This practical hurdle is not insurmountable. Online resources could be developed by a group of ethically informed, entrepreneurial individuals willing to pioneer the initiative. Let me hope that a few from among the readership might take a lead.

Subsequent engagement of the wider public will likely require a provocative and controversial campaign, backed by educational leadership. To equip it, convincing arguments are needed. My PhD found several. The most persuasive argument gains leverage from widespread acceptance of the Golden Rule (TGR): briefly, whoever endorses TGR and/or its younger sister, the Categorical Imperative, can be led stepwise to accept the responsibility to engage in unencumbered, world constitutional deliberation as a highest priority imperative.

Upheld by multiple cultures, religions, and philosophers, TGR was adopted as an ethical uber-principle by the Parliament of the World's Religions in 1933 *"What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others… This should be the irrevocable, unconditional norm for all areas of life, for family and communities, for races, nations and religions".*

Critics have dismissed this statement as lacking substance – committing us to very little. This misunderstands its radical, anti-indoctrination essence. Understood as an uber-governing, ethical reasoning principle, TGR invokes and heads a closely connected family of principles of global responsibility, warranting enthronement together as long-reigning, meta-constitutional rulers.

1.**Universalisability**: in referring to 'others', TGR implies all others, globally. TGR invokes moral cosmopolitanism – having equal moral regard for all planetary beings, not just compatriots. It assumes that all humans, including future generations, have in common certain biologically based, transcultural, *universal interests*. The Rule of Law, a ubiquitously upheld, fundamental principle of jurisprudence, rests on the same universalist assumption. It implicitly calls us to ensure the constitutional protection of the security interests of all, globally.

2.**Impartiality:** goes hand in hand with universalisability. Impartiality is universally understood as a strict requirement of public service office; its violation invokes the charge of corruption. To date, the moral expectation of impartiality ends at a state's border. Our international military system prevents us from serving as impartial, world serving, moral agents. We are systematically segregated, compelled to belong to and favour compatriots, treat outsiders as 'foreigners', and defend ourselves militarily against them. TGR invokes a radically different, world order based on global impartiality.

3.**Reversibility:** TGR calls us to imagine changing places with diverse others, live in their shoes as it were, to evaluate the impact and fairness of proposed norms, to consider how we would feel if subject to them.

4.**Moral autonomy**: TGR calls us to treat others in accord with how we would *prefer* to be treated. This challenges us to engage in post-conventional reasoning, unencumbered by the authority of prevailing norms and conventions, not even by the international order and the uber-reigning norm of sovereignty. TGR requires that we take responsibility for the global governance principles we consent to, and build into our 'self-constitutions'.

5.**Consistency/integrity**: TGR requires that one's treatment of others is consistent, principled, systematic and hence trustworthy. Few would prefer others to act haphazardly and opportunistically towards them. Given our highly interdependent world, our universal interest in economic, political and ecological security, will surely incline most to prefer that we act consistently and dependably as trustworthy, impartial protectors of those interests.

6.**Unconditionality**: our universal interest in trustworthy security protection is unlikely to be fulfilled if made conditional on one's capacity to offer sufficient reward in money or exchange. Adopting global, ethical principles implies a 24/7, lifetime commitment – enacting them not as a

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business opportunity, occasional game or hobby. The global ethical commitment implicitly required by TGR points to an unprecedented, post-capitalist, economic constitution.

7.**Publicity**: dependable, trustworthy fulfilment of universal security interests requires public transparency – from all constituents, not only politicians. The global ethical principles adopted to construct one's self-constitution and guide one's priorities should be openly declared for scrutiny and challenge by all those affected. This publicity expectation can be readily facilitated with Internet technology. Personal profile pages can include not only skills and attainments but also the ethical responsibility commitments constituting one's civic integrity.

As shown above, TGR invokes a coherent family of procedural meta-principles to guide our deliberations on the more substantive, world constitutional norms. Also apparent is the close affinity between TGR and the principle that Kant called **the Categorical Imperative**. Among his formulations, the 'Universal Law' formulation is most pertinent here: *"Act only on the maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become universal law".* Upholding this as "the supreme principle of morality", Kant dismissed TGR as 'trivial' and 'merely derivative'. The preceding considerations indicate the contrary; the Categorical Imperative is logically derivable from TGR.

Acceptance of TGR and the Categorical Imperative has immediate implications for our commitment priorities. One cannot act consistently, with integrity, in accord with one's self-chosen civic principles until one undertakes the 'choosing' exercise. TGR therefore requires undertaking and reviewing this exercise as one's highest priority, self-constituting project.

Habermas rightly warned of the dangers of undertaking such an exercise monologically, i.e., solo. Hitler monologically determined his diabolical principles and undertook to violently impose them. To prevent the serious harms associated with human irrationality, ignorance and credulity, Habermas urged that we undertake the exercise dialogically in non-dominating settings with diverse, unlike-minded others. He proposed an addendum to the Categorical Imperative: *"Rather than ascribing as valid to all others any maxim that I can will to be a universal law, I must submit my maxim to all others for purposes of discursively testing its claim to universality"*. Applying equally to TGR, this principle of ***communicative action***, as Habermas called it, demands inclusion in TGR's family of seven principles. Taken together, as a coherent set, they compel our engagement in world constitutional deliberation. The engagement entails a substantial civilisational learning and development journey, arguably best begun in one's formative years. The implications for schooling will be transformative, for educational leadership, curriculum priorities and teacher education.

Expect objections to TGR: it is a product of Eurocentric or Western enlightenment thought; it is contaminated by association with historic colonising powers; it is antagonistic to diverse cultural traditions. These objections are spurious as TGR has a global pedigree; it is upheld by diverse cultures and religions worldwide, East and West. And yes, TGR is seriously antagonistic probably to all of them. TGR's moral autonomy requirement undermines tribalist indoctrination practices crucial to the survival of cultural traditions and nationalist fictions. Their perpetuation requires young, credulous minds to be colonised. The deceptive practices of identity branding and allegiance binding depend on continued public acceptance of '***the right to indoctrinate***'. TGR contradicts this; it implicitly asserts '***the right not to be indoctrinated***'. Were youngsters worldwide enabled to start their future constitutional relationship unconstrained by cultural, religious and nationalist authority, these institutions may not survive. We face two confronting and unsettling moral dilemmas.

Can these institutions be conserved without compromising our world's captive audiences and their moral autonomy? Must we keep TGR dethroned to achieve lasting world peace?

The call to engage in world constitutional deliberation has largely failed to attract practical response. Moral arguments, such as the Golden Rule-based argument mounted here, may need controversial 'marketing' even to attract early responders. Eventually the call should see our ethics-oriented, educational community take the pioneering, experimental lead. I hereby raise my hand to join with willing collaborators.

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The **AAPAE Ethics Olympiad** is a competitive yet collaborative event in which eth-letes (students) analyse and discuss real-life, timely, ethical issues. It will be held over Zoom on Oct 8, 2026.

The AAPAE Ethics Olympiad differs from a traditional debating event in that eth-lete teams are not assigned opposing views; rather, eth-lete teams defend whatever position they believe is right and win by showing that they have thought more carefully, deeply and perceptively about the cases in question.

Experience shows that this type of event encourages and helps develop intellectual virtues such as ethical awareness, critical thinking, civil discourse and civil engagement while fostering an appreciation for diverse points of view.

Want to find out more...

If you're interested in becoming a coach or 'eth-lete', or want more information, visit:

https://ethicsolympiad.org/?page_id=1458 or email Matthew Wills: ethicsolympiad@gmail.com

Ethics Olympiad

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←Thursday, 8 October 2026

AAPAE Charter

The broad purpose of the AAPAE is to encourage awareness of, and foster discussion of issues in, professional and applied ethics. It provides a meeting point for practitioners from various fields and academics with specialist expertise and welcomes everyone who wants or needs to think and talk about applied or professional ethics.

The AAPAE fosters and publishes research in professional and applied ethics, as well as attempting to create connections with special interest groups.

However, the AAPAE does not endorse any particular viewpoint, but rather it aims to promote a climate in which different and differing views, concerns, and approaches can be expressed and discussed.

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