

From the Editors

For many ethicists, the spring of 2020 has been marked by an adaptation of academic life to extensive restrictions aimed at reducing the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Some researchers within the field of ethics are more directly involved in addressing social challenges related to the crisis, while others continue their research and deliver academic courses in as normal a manner as possible. *Societas Ethica* – the European Society for Research in Ethics – has cancelled its annual meeting in autumn 2020, and is simultaneously planning for a digital conference related to the ongoing pandemic. *De Ethica* – one of the Society’s most important initiatives – will soon announce a special issue on the pandemic.

Meanwhile, we are delighted to present this issue, which is not related to the pandemic, but instead is highly representative of the main strategy of the journal and *Societas Ethica*: to promote European research in ethics through dialogue between philosophical, theological, and applied ethics.

The first article in the issue offers a discussion of the concept of moral agency in the context of AI. It is titled ‘Moral Agency without Responsibility? Analysis of Three Ethical Models of Human-computer Interaction in Times of Artificial Intelligence.’ This analysis is a contribution to applied ethics and the growing field of AI ethics in particular. At the same time, it is a philosophical contribution to the fundamental theoretical issue of moral agency and responsibility. Alexis Fritz, Wiebke Brandt, Henner Gimpel, and Sarah Bayer scrutinize three philosophical models that all describe forms of computer systems in terms of moral agency. The authors are skeptical about these attempts, arguing instead in favor of a concept of moral agency that considers human responsibility to be crucial.

In his article ‘Violence, Shame, and Moral Agency – An Exploration of Krista K. Thomason’s Position,’ Jan-Olav Henriksen elaborates on the issue of moral agency from a different perspective. He discusses Krista K. Thomason’s effort to explain violence as a response to the loss of agency. The starting point of Thomason’s approach is the observation that people can respond to shame with violence. Violence thus becomes a way of regaining agency. Henriksen scrutinizes Thomason’s understanding and suggests an alternative. According to his account, violent reactions that appear during the experience of shame need not be described as rational if we view shame as a manifestation of the lack of ‘ability to fulfill the intended project or achieve the desired aim in a coherent manner.’

In an article titled ‘Distributive Energy Justice and the Common Good,’ Anders Melin discusses the issue of distributive justice in relation to energy production and energy consumption. The author compares Martha Nussbaum’s capabilities approach with a contemporary model of the tradition of common good within Catholic theology. While

both approaches offer arguments in favor of global redistribution of energy production and consumption, the theological approach is more radical and therefore a more reasonable response to global injustices as they appear in the context of energy production and distribution.

In her article ‘‘What Do We Do with the Art of Monstrous Men?’ Betrayal and the Feminist Ethics of Aesthetic Involvement,’ Sarah Stewart-Kroeker reflects on the consumption of artwork. Her feminist approach is related to the context of the #MeToo movement. The author focuses on the fact that aesthetic evaluation of an artist’s work might be highly personal, thus creating special dilemmas when the artist is accused of sexual abuse. Stewart-Kroeker argues that a proper response to these dilemmas requires reflexive and social-structural examination.

‘On Some Moral Implications of Linguistic Narrativism Theory’ is an attempt to explicate normative components within a metatheory called linguistic narrativism. Natan Elgabsi and Bennett Gilbert follow Iris Murdoch, who claimed that abstract theoretical descriptions might imply evaluative components to the degree of normativity of moral visions. The authors argue that linguistic narrativism contains what they view as ‘‘undesirable moral agnosticism,’’ and they believe that such a metatheory should be normatively evaluated.

I hope that the reader finds the articles of this issue to be of interest for reflection as well as critique as the main instrument of philosophical enquiry. I would also like to encourage those working in different traditions of ethics to submit their articles to De Ethica.

Elena Namli, Editor in Chief