

From the Editor

As our former Executive Editor, Lars Lindblom, mentioned in our previous issue, we are experiencing both new beginnings and closures. For many, this issue marks a fresh start—especially for me; I am honored and humbled to serve as De Ethica’s new Executive Editor, and I owe much to Lars, who held the position for many years. Lars has long been an inspiration and a great mentor in our editorial office. He and the entire team have been crucial to De Ethica’s growth over the past few years. As noted in the previous issue, we have started including book reviews, and we plan to continue doing so. Another essential aspect is the research we publish, and here the editorial Lars wrote in volume 8, issue 4, concerning the state of “allowed” research in the US. As before, De Ethica will continue publishing relevant research—even when it may be uncomfortable—that is vital for advancing discussions on ethics and morality. Our goal is to keep most elements the same, so you, as a reader, will continue to find familiarity in De Ethica.

In this issue of De Ethica, the articles examine ethics from various perspectives, including migration, administrative law, human rights, environmental philosophy, and moral methodology. Despite these different topics, each piece analyzes how ethical ideas are interpreted and applied in contexts shaped by institutions, public debate, and social practices. Together, they highlight the broad scope of contemporary ethical research across multiple fields that we regularly publish in De Ethica.

We start with Peter G. Kirschläger’s article on the ethical foundations of the right to asylum. Using his Ethics-SAMBA model—observation, analysis, ethical judgment, and action—Kirschläger connects contemporary asylum debates to broader issues of human rights, political responsibility, and moral duty. His main point is that vulnerability is not an exceptional condition but a core aspect of human life. From this, he argues that those whose safety, dignity, or basic needs are threatened have both a moral and legal right to protection. He also questions common distinctions between asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants when such categories are used to limit moral concern or legal responsibility. The article highlights the tension between universal human rights and state sovereignty and shows how ethical reflection can link ideas like dignity and vulnerability to institutions, public policy, and practical steps.

The second article, by Johanna Romare, Johanna Ohlsson, and Olof Wilske, explores whether individuals have a right to receive reasons for administrative decisions that affect them, especially in areas like welfare, detention, and deportation. What might initially seem like a technical procedural issue is shown to have deep legal and moral importance. The authors place reason-giving within the context of administrative law and the rule of law, highlighting its links to transparency, accountability, and good governance. Providing reasons clarifies the exercise of public power, helps affected individuals understand the basis of a decision, and allows for appeal, review, or criticism. Philosophically, drawing on Kantian ideas and Rainer Forst’s theory of justification, the authors argue that the obligation to give reasons is closely connected to autonomy, dignity, and mutual justification. They suggest that a person subject to public authority is not just

an object of administration but a subject entitled to ask why a decision was made. Thus, the article shows that fairness involves not only outcomes but also whether decisions are reasoned, communicable, and open to scrutiny.

The third article, by Alexandra Lebedeva, examines the connection between human rights discourse and responses to honor-based violence in Sweden. Her goal is not to question how serious this violence is but to analyze how it is presented in legal, political, and public discussions. A key point is that the language of human rights and gender equality can become strongly linked to national identity, so that these are seen not as universal principles but as specifically "Swedish values." When this happens, rights discourse can be used to distinguish between those who are seen as already embodying these values and those portrayed as culturally outside of them. By analyzing policy documents, legal changes, and court cases, Lebedeva illustrates how terms such as honor culture, honor norms, and honor context can contribute to the cultural framing of violence, especially when linked to ethnic or religious minorities. She argues this can hide larger patterns of gendered violence and may also enhance subtle forms of discrimination. The article therefore raises important ethical questions about how universal rights are understood in specific contexts and how they can sometimes be used in ways that promote exclusion rather than challenge it.

The fourth contribution by Anders Melin explores environmental ethics and considers whether the Capability Approach can serve as a normative framework for urban biodiversity management. Melin starts from the idea that biodiversity in cities is not just an ecological or planning issue but also a matter of justice. Since urban environments influence the conditions in which both human and nonhuman beings live, questions of flourishing, coexistence, and access become ethically important. Melin contends that the Capability Approach, which emphasizes what beings are able to be and do, offers a deeper understanding of well-being than approaches based solely on income, resources, or preference satisfaction. This makes it a useful way to interpret the ethical significance of green spaces, ecological diversity, and human interactions with nonhuman life. Melin further extends the discussion by asking whether the framework can be broadened beyond human beings to include animals, plants, species, and ecosystems. This raises profound questions about freedom, agency, and the limits of ethical individualism, because environmental ethics often involve not only individual organisms but also entire ecosystems and multispecies relationships. His analysis underscores both the potential and the limits of the Capability Approach when it comes to thinking about justice in more-than-human urban environments.

The final article by Anoop Kumar Suraj and C. Upendra shifts the focus from substantive ethical issues to moral methodology, offering a critical examination of reflective equilibrium. Associated mainly with John Rawls, reflective equilibrium aims for coherence among considered judgments, moral principles, and background theories, and has long been seen as a central model of ethical justification. Suraj and Upendra identify several key limitations of this approach. First, they argue that moral intuitions are not neutral starting points but are influenced by social, historical, and ideological factors, which complicates claims of universality or impartiality. Second, they point out the problem of circularity: achieving coherence within a system of beliefs can produce internal consistency without providing an independent basis for justification. Third, they highlight epistemic inequality, noting that the resources needed for reflective moral reasoning are unevenly distributed, with social position, education, and institutional authority shaping whose judgments are heard and whose perspectives are valued. As a result, the method

might perpetuate exclusion even while seeming inclusive. Their article makes a valuable contribution by questioning not only how moral justification is built but also whose perspectives are included, and whether ethical inquiry should focus solely on coherence or also accommodate ongoing disagreement in pluralistic societies.

The two book reviews in this issue, although they explore very different intellectual traditions and concerns, are linked by a common ethical question: what resources do we have for thinking clearly during a time marked by crisis, interconnectedness, and uncertain moral boundaries? Each review, in its own way, emphasizes the need for frameworks broad enough to handle the complexity of today.

Mao Xin reviews Jana S. Rošker's *Confucian Relationism and Global Ethics*, noting it questions whether global ethics are too Western-centric. Rošker advocates reviving Confucian relationism to address global issues like human rights, equality, and the ethical challenges of the pandemic. The book promotes a transcultural dialogue beyond mere opposition, although it leaves some political and societal questions unresolved. Mao sees it as a valuable addition to global ethics discussions.

Gary Slater's review of *Liberating People, Planet, and Religion*, edited by Joerg Rieger and Terra Schwerin Rowe, examines its focus on the connection between ecological crises, economic systems, and Christian thought. Slater describes the volume as an ambitious effort to explore these areas together, emphasizing their deep interconnectedness. He highlights the book's ability to combine systemic critique with practical action, analyzing capitalism, anthropocentrism, ecological injustice, and reflections on care work, divestment, organizing, and farming. The review also notes limitations such as its narrow focus, overemphasis on Christianity, and weaker engagement with politics. Overall, Slater sees it as a serious, thoughtful contribution to Christian ethics that addresses urgent issues.

Martin Langby, Executive Editor