Merging Top-Down and Bottom-Up

Wendell Wallach and Colin Allen

in Moral Machines: Teaching Robots Right from Wrong

The topic of this chapter is the application of virtue ethics to the development of artificial moral agents. The difficulties of applying general moral theories in a top-down fashion to artificial moral agents motivate the return to the virtue-based conception of morality that can be traced to Aristotle. Virtues constitute a hybrid between top-down and bottom-up approaches in that the virtues themselves can be explicitly described, but their acquisition as moral character traits seems essentially to be a bottom-up process. Placing this approach in a computational framework, the chapter discusses the suitability of the kinds of neural network models provided by connectionism for training (ro)bots to distinguish right from wrong.

Reality and Value

Graham Oddie

in Value, Reality, and Desire

This chapter presents a map of the territory in which the varieties of realism and antirealism are located. Topics covered include realism, the connection between realism and truth, presuppositional fulfilment, mind-independence, irreducibility, and causal networking. An overview of the subsequent chapters is presented.
This chapter argues for the causal networking of value. In making it plausible, it has become apparent how such causation would mesh smoothly with the natural fabric of the world. The argument from explanatory idleness, the argument from causal exclusion, mental causation, causation by values, causation and convexity, and causation and properties are discussed.

Moral and Prudential Choice
Robert Kane

An attempt is made in this chapter and the following two to give an incompatibilist or indeterminist account of free will that is consistent with current scientific knowledge without assuming any obscure or mysterious notions of agency or causation. A number of topics are discussed in the process of constructing this theory: self-forming actions (SFAs) or willings (SFWs), moral and prudential choice, divided will, indeterminate efforts, chaos theory, non-equilibrium thermodynamics, quantum physics, neural networks, weakness of will, mind and body, plural voluntary control, choosing for reasons, consciousness and purpose, self-networks, chance, folk psychology and the brain, value experiments, and others.

Response to Commentaries
Michael Parker

Page 2 of 11
This chapter mapped the ethical issues arising out of the increase in the number and size of global health research collaborations. The author’s motivation was to explore the extent to which it might be possible to generate a research agenda on the ethics of international research collaboration. I came to the conclusion that there were indeed some new issues to be investigated. Zhaocheng Wang and Ilhak Lee have some sympathy for this argument but have both also suggested a number of ways in which this research agenda might be enriched and expanded and have made it clear that there is much more work to be done on these issues. In this response, the author reflects on and respond to the commentaries written by Zhaocheng Wang and Ilhak Lee which have together convinced the author that there is a lot more to be done on this productive and novel area of bioethics research.

The Good Life

Michael Bishop

Published in print: 2015 Published Online: December 2014
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199923113.001.0001
Item type: book

Philosophers defend theories of what well-being is but ignore what psychologists have learned about it. And psychologists learn about well-being but lack a theory of what it is. In The Good Life: Unifying the Philosophy and Psychology of Well-Being, Michael A. Bishop marries these complementary investigations, and the result is a powerful, new framework for understanding well-being and the good life. The network theory holds that to have well-being is to be “stuck” in a self-perpetuating cycle of positive emotions, attitudes, traits, and success. These states build upon and foster each other, forming a kind of positive causal network (PCN), so that a person high in well-being is in a positive cycle or “groove.” A person with a modest degree of well-being instantiates a PCN fragment—some positive feelings, attitudes, traits or successes, but not enough to kick-start a full-blown, self-perpetuating network. The network theory provides a framework for understanding Positive Psychology, the psychological study of well-being, as the study of the structure and dynamics of PCNs. Psychologists explore the structure of PCNs by investigating correlations and causal connections among positive emotions, attitudes, traits, and success. And they investigate the dynamics of PCNs by identifying states that establish, strengthen, or extinguish them. Bishop’s inclusive approach to the study of well-being brings together the knowledge and skills of the philosopher in her armchair and the scientist in her lab to produce a powerful, unified foundation for future scientific and philosophical investigations into well-being and the good life.
Norms in the Wild
cristina bicchieri

published in print: 2017 published online: january 2017
isbn: 9780190622046 eisbn: 9780190622084
item type: book

norms in the wild takes a unique look at social norms, answering questions about diagnosis (how can we tell that a shared practice is a social norm?), measurement (how do we measure expectations and preferences?), and change (which tools can we adopt to effect norm change?). the theories developed in the book are brought to life by examining real-life cases of norm creation and abandonment, the rationale behind policy interventions, and how change can be spearheaded by various types of trendsetters, be they individuals, groups, or the media. by exploring how a range of problems, from poor sanitation to child marriage, can be addressed, the book shows how social norms can have a causal impact on collective behavior, and which interventions may succeed in creating new norms or abandoning harmful ones. in laying the theoretical groundwork for implementing social changes in a contextually sensitive and empirically based way, it also diagnoses why some less culturally attuned attempts to eliminate negative practices have failed.

the network theory of well-being
michael a bishop

in the good life: unifying the philosophy and psychology of well-being
published in print: 2015 published online: december 2014
isbn: 9780199923113 eisbn: 9780190212193
item type: chapter

this chapter presents a simple and succinct introduction to the network theory of well-being. if you were to describe a person with well-being, you would describe a host of objective and subjective facts about the person, including (1) positive feelings, moods, emotions (e.g., joy, contentment), (2) positive attitudes (e.g., optimism, hope, openness to new experiences), (3) positive traits (e.g., friendliness, curiosity, perseverance), and (4) successful interactions with the world (e.g., strong relationships, professional accomplishment, fulfilling hobbies or projects). these elements are nodes in a causal network. each node is causally connected to some of the other nodes—it fosters some and is fostered by others. the network theory holds that to have well-being is to instantiate a positive causal network or fragments of a positive causal network.
Conclusion
Michael A Bishop

in The Good Life: Unifying the Philosophy and Psychology of Well-Being
Published in print: 2015 Published Online: December 2014
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Item type: chapter

This chapter summarizes the three main ideas put forward in this book: the inclusive approach to the study of well-being, the hypothesis that Positive Psychology is the study of the structure and dynamics of positive causal networks, and the network theory of well-being.

A Scientific Case for Conceptual Dualism*
Anthony I. Jack

in Oxford Studies in Experimental Philosophy: Volume 1
Published in print: 2014 Published Online: January 2015
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Item type: chapter

For centuries philosophers have suggested that it may not be possible to explain human conscious experience purely in terms of physical processes. This chapter reviews evidence from cognitive neuroscience and individual difference measures which supports this view, and develops a theoretical account of both the explanatory gap and belief in ontological dualism. It is argued that our cognitive structure links our understanding of phenomenal experience to moral concern for others, and that this empathetic mode of understanding is in tension with an empirical mode understanding. The evidence suggests that we are not cognitively capable of forming a single unified world view which recognizes both persons and the sub-personal processes of the mind. Implications for philosophical and psychological approaches to the mind are briefly discussed.

Solidarity in Consumption
Edna Ullmann-Margalit

in Normal Rationality: Decisions and Social Order
Published in print: 2017 Published Online: September 2017
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Item type: chapter
Contrary to a common picture of relationships in a market economy, people often express communal and membership-seeking impulses via consumption choices, purchasing goods and services because other people are doing so as well. Shared identities are maintained and created in this way. Solidarity goods are goods whose value increases as the number of people enjoying them increases. Exclusivity goods are goods whose value decreases as the number of people enjoying them increases. Distinctions can be drawn among diverse value functions, capturing diverse relationships between the value of goods and the value of shared or unshared consumption. Though markets spontaneously produce solidarity goods, individuals sometimes have difficulty in producing such goods on their own, or in coordinating on choosing them. Here law has a potential role. There are implications for trend setting, clubs, partnerships, national events, social cascades, and compliance without enforcement.

Primary Topic Article
Michael Parker
in The Future of Bioethics: International Dialogues
Published in print: 2014 Published Online: January 2014
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199682676.003.0037
Item type: chapter

Increasingly research on diseases affecting people in developing countries takes the form of collaborative networks. This chapter argues that these new forms of research mean that: Ethical issues arise differently across multiple, diverse but interconnected locations; Ethical issues arise and need to be resolved at multiple levels of analysis – particularly at both the global and local levels; ethical issues arise out of the fact that collaborative research involves communities in many different and disparate locations; ethical issues arise in relation to the nature and form of research collaboration; there is a need to develop practical ethical solutions in the context of multiple, ambiguous and sometimes competing forms of governance and regulation; change is a more common feature of the ethical landscape than in other forms of research; there is a need for priority-setting in ethics; and, Issues of global justice and fairness are more likely to be foregrounded.
Positive Causal Networks and the Network Theory of Well-Being
Michael A Bishop

in The Good Life: Unifying the Philosophy and Psychology of Well-Being
Published in print: 2015 Published Online: December 2014
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Item type: chapter

This chapter presents a provisional account of Positive Causal Networks (PCNs). There exist networks of causally interrelated feelings, emotions, attitudes, traits, and accomplishments. Such a causal network is positive if it consists of a relatively high number of valued states and states with a positive hedonic tone. PCNs are homeostatic systems, like living organisms or running engines. Changes strengthen the system when they make it more robust—tougher, more durable. Changes weaken it when they make it less robust—more delicate, less durable. The causal drivers of a PCN are those states that tend to establish, maintain, or strengthen it. A state or set of states is a PCN fragment just in case it is or could be a causal driver in a PCN for that person.

Warrior Masculinity and Female Victimization
Robert Paul Churchill

in Women in the Crossfire: Understanding and Ending Honor Killing
Published in print: 2018 Published Online: October 2018
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Item type: chapter

This chapter completes the reasons-explanation of the psychological factors making honor killing possible. It shows how violence-prone personality is shaped into warrior masculinity in contexts where functioning as a real, honorable man is believed to require the degradation of femininity and violent responses to alleged female misbehavior. This transition from potential aggression into violent action occurs through a learned process called the shame-to-power conversion. The chapter also investigates the behaviors and traits of potential victims, other female family members, and neighbors as facilitators or supporters of honor killing. Attention is given to conflictual arrangements common in honor-shame communities that serve as sure-fail mechanisms; that is, that generate periodic antagonisms that increase risks that females will be violently victimized.
Moral Transformation
Robert Paul Churchill

in Women in the Crossfire: Understanding and Ending Honor Killing

This chapter and the next are about ending honor killing through moral transformations occurring within communities. The emphasis is on facilitating and curating reforms that community members come to willingly adopt as their own. Sociocultural norms, expectations, and conditions must be revised such that no one can conceive of honor killing as an honorable deed. Here the practicality of such an outcome is emphasized by examining four subjects. First, the formation by Badshah Khan of the Khudai Kidhmatgar into a nonviolent and service-based army among the Pathans demonstrates the possibility of transformation even among the fiercest of honor-bound peoples. Second, the chapter demonstrates the effectiveness of reframing honor and inducing cognitive dissonance, thereby separating killing from honorable behavior. Next, three existing honor–shame cultures in which honor killing is not practiced are examined as real alternatives. Finally, possibilities for nonviolent conflict resolution and peaceable costly signaling techniques are considered.

Unmasking Hate on Twitter
Diana L. Ascher and Safiya Umoja Noble

in Free Speech in the Digital Age

Notions of free speech and expectations of speaker anonymity are instrumental aspects of online information practice in the United States, which manifest in greater protections for speakers of hate, while making targets of trolling and hate speech more vulnerable. In this chapter, we argue that corporate digital media platforms moderate and manage “free speech” in ways that disproportionately harm vulnerable populations. After being targets of racist and misogynist trolling ourselves, we investigated whether new modes of analysis could identify and strengthen the ties between the online personas of anonymous speakers of hate and their identities in real life, which may present opportunities for intervention to arrest online hate speech, or at
least make speakers known to those who are targets or recipients of their speech.

Positive Causal Networks and Positive Psychology

Michael A Bishop

in The Good Life: Unifying the Philosophy and Psychology of Well-Being

This chapter argues that Positive Psychology is the study of the structure and dynamics of positive causal networks (PCNs). There are six lines of evidence for this hypothesis. First, many psychologists have identified PCNs (though not under that description). Second, the many definitions psychologists have offered of Positive Psychology can be plausibly interpreted as expressing the basic idea that it is the study of PCNs. Third, the study of group well-being can be understood as the study of interpersonal PCNs. Fourth, because PCNs are complex and multiply realizable states, the hypothesis organizes and makes sense of the various methods and approaches different researchers adopt to the study of well-being. Fifth, Positive Psychology studies the structure of PCNs—correlations and causal connections between positive feelings, moods, emotions, attitudes, traits, and objective factors (e.g., income, longevity, health). Sixth, Positive Psychology studies the dynamics of PCNs—states that establish, maintain, strengthen, and extinguish PCNs.

The Case for the Network Theory: An Inference to the Best Explanation

Michael A Bishop

in The Good Life: Unifying the Philosophy and Psychology of Well-Being

On the inclusive approach, the case for a theory of well-being will be an inference to the best explanation. This chapter argues that the network theory (NT) explains the scientific and commonsense evidence better than four well-known alternatives—hedonist, informed desire, authentic happiness, and Aristotelian theories. All five competitor theories explain the commonsense evidence reasonably well. But NT is the only theory that organizes and makes sense of the science, Positive Psychology. The
other four theories fall victim to either the fitting problem (the challenge of fitting the central construct of a theory to the scientific literature) or the privileging problem (the challenge of organizing and making sense of the startling diversity of research that flies under the banner of Positive Psychology). NT is the best explanation of the totality of the evidence.

Objections to the Network Theory
Michael A Bishop

in The Good Life: Unifying the Philosophy and Psychology of Well-Being

This chapter considers three objections to the network theory (NT). The first is that it has counterintuitive implications. For example, a sad person might instantiate a PCN and so, according to NT, have well-being. While NT has implications some people will find counterintuitive, the inclusive approach recommends the theory that best explains the totality of the evidence, and that theory is NT. The second objection springs from Thomas Scanlon’s argument that the concept of well-being is useless for first-person deliberation. NT explains the power and the flaw in Scanlon’s argument. The third objection is that NT cannot account for the normativity of well-being, for why it is valuable. There are many different views about the nature of value. On some plausible views about the nature of normativity, NT can explain the value of well-being. But on other views of normativity, NT cannot explain the value of well-being. But these conceptions of normativity are too controversial to seriously threaten NT.

Diagnosing Norms
Cristina Bicchieri

in Norms in the Wild: How to Diagnose, Measure, and Change Social Norms

The chapter distinguishes between collective behaviors that are independent, as when they are purely determined by economic or natural reasons, and those that are interdependent, as when other people’s actions and opinions matter to one’s choice. The chapter introduces diagnostic tools: conditional preferences, as well as empirical
and normative expectations. It explains the role such concepts play in decision-making. It draws a distinction between customs, descriptive norms, and social norms based on the role played by social expectations and conditional preferences. It explains what a social norm is and how to diagnose its presence. It concludes by considering the belief trap of pluralistic ignorance—a cognitive state in which each member of a group believes her personal normative beliefs are different from those of similarly situated others, even if public behavior is identical.