I

Introduction

The Globalization of Ethics

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A great deal has been written lately about the ethics of globalization, under-stood as the intensification of interactions across national boundaries, particularly in the areas of trade and investment, but also the transfer of technology, the movement of peoples, and the global diffusion of a Western consumer lifestyle embodied in products such as Hollywood movies and McDonald's. There have been many impassioned ethical debates about the benefits and costs of these processes of globalization, including their effect on inequality both within and between societies, their consequences for the environment, and the way they are uprooting and displacing traditional ways of life.

One striking aspect of these ethical debates about globalization is that they are themselves globalized. These debates take place across national boundaries, bringing together activists, academics, and government officials from all parts of the world, who must therefore find a common vocabulary to discuss their ethical concerns about globalization. People from Western liberal societies must find a way to discuss ethical issues with people from Buddhist societies in Southeast Asia or from indigenous communities in Latin America. Such transnational debates about ethics are increasingly unavoidable, given the intensity of interaction amongst the world's cultures. As globalization increases, ethics must itself become globalized.

Our aim in this volume is to explore the globalization of ethics, which is a surprisingly neglected phenomenon. In particular, we examine how some of the world's most influential ethical traditions think about the task of construct-ing moral conversations and moral norms at a global level. What intellectual resources are available within Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, liberal-ism, natural law, Confucianism, and feminism when confronted with the need to engage in a globalized ethics?

It is difficult to overstate the gravity and difficulty of this task. We live in a world where entire populations and blocs of nations look for moral guid-ance to different religious and cultural traditions. And while these different

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moral traditions all contain elements that allow and encourage cooperation across religious, cultural and national lines, they also may mandate conflicting norms and incompatible social arrangements that render cooperation difficult. Conflicts can arise between the adherents of different traditions, not because people suspend their ethical sensitivities when dealing with outsiders, but precisely because of their ethical sensitivities. Indeed, conflicts rooted in rival perceptions of good and evil may be more destructive and intractable than conflicts rooted in conflicting material interests. Such ethically based conflicts can arise over such issues as the status of women, religious tolerance, forms of punishment, models of governance, and the use of public space.

Yet, despite these important sources of potential conflict, there are also grounds for consensus amongst diverse ethical traditions. Indeed, these areas of consensus arguably outweigh the areas of disagreement. Unfortunately, the scope for convergence has too often been obscured by different modes of expression, historical grievances and resentments, and the absence of appropriate forums for open dialogue. It is one of our aims in this volume to promote a dialogue across ethical traditions to help clarify the real points of agreement and disagreement, to identify and broaden areas of possible consensus, and to consider ways of accommodating enduring differences.

We can imagine a range of possible responses to the challenge of globalized ethics. One option would be to start with an existing moral tradition and to attempt to impose it as the single legitimate framework for global ethical discourse. Throughout much of recent history, particularly in the era of colonialism, many people around the world have criticized Western powers for doing just this, whether in the form of imposing Christian religious values or secular liberal values. Obviously this option is only feasible in a context of massive inequalities in power, and for just this reason attempts to impose a particular ethical tradition are likely be perceived by others as an exercise of unjust power, not as an attempt to construct a genuine global ethical community.

Indeed, as the following chapters make clear, it is widely recognized by most traditions today that the attempt to impose one's values on others is both illegitimate and unrealistic. While each tradition harbours the hope and expectation that others will come to share its values and perspectives through the force of example and persuasion, this is seen as the desired outcome of an ethical conversation, not as its starting point.

Another option would be to try to define an entirely new ethical vocabulary that is not drawn exclusively from one of the historical ethical traditions, but rather is built specifically for the purpose of engaging in cross-cultural debates. This, of course, is one of the aims of the vocabulary of "international human rights" articulated by the United Nations. This approach has developed to the point where it too can now be seen as an "ethical tradition," or at least as the ethical core of the larger tradition of international law. Like any tradition, it has its own "canonical texts" – particularly the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two International Covenants on human rights adopted

in 1966. But these canonical texts are supposed to be free-standing, available to (and agreed upon by) all of the world's major ethical and religious traditions, not tied to any one historical tradition.

The remarkable global diffusion of the idea of "human rights" since 1948 shows that there is indeed great potential in this approach. People from all regions of the world, and all religious and cultural backgrounds, have been able to appropriate the language of human rights, and use it to articulate their ethical concerns. In many ways, it has come to serve as the "gold standard" of international moral debates.

Yet the idea that human rights can function as an adequate basis for a globalized ethics is controversial. For some people, the human rights framework is a lightly disguised form of Western liberalism. It purports to be the product of an international consensus, but in fact reflects distinctly Western ideas about the individual as a rights-bearing agent who needs protection from society and the state. (It is important to remember that the 1948 Universal Declaration was adopted before the era of decolonization, so that most of the world's non-Western societies were not in fact part of the negotiation over the original definition of human rights.)

For others, the idea of human rights, even if it has universal resonance, is nonetheless insufficient to discuss many of the ethical issues raised by globalization, such as the effect on the environment, or on local communities, or on families. International human rights must therefore be supplemented by other ethical norms and principles, including norms of collective responsibilities. However, there does not appear to be any consensus on how to fill in these gaps. For example, feminists and Confucians may well disagree about what sorts of measures are needed to protect the family, or indeed about how to define the family in the first place. Indigenous peoples and European settlers may well disagree about what sorts of property rights are compatible with protecting the environment, or indeed about whether ideas of "property" and "ownership" are appropriate at all in regards to the natural environment.

In principle, one could imagine trying to build up the international discourse of human rights so that it can address all of these issues in a way that can be endorsed by all of the different traditions. But it's not clear that this is feasible, given the diversity of the world's ethical traditions, or even desirable. After all, each of the world's major ethical traditions carries with it centuries of experience, argument, and example, and as such is a repository of potential moral resources from which we can learn. In this respect, the fact that the discourse of international human rights is "self-standing," not rooted in any historical religious or ethical tradition, is both its strength and its weakness. Insisting that everyone use a constructed discourse of human rights helps to ensure a degree of consensus and mutual understanding, but it comes at the expense of cutting us off from the wisdom embodied in older ethical traditions, which often can only be expressed in the tradition's own vocabulary. Indigenous ideas of "stewardship" of the land, for example, cannot readily be translated

into human rights terminology, but it would be a mistake to therefore exclude them from our globalized ethical discourse. So too with Catholic natural law's ideas of "subsidiarity." Indigenous ideas of stewardship, or Roman Catholic ideas of subsidiarity, have positively influenced ethical debates about how to protect communities from the more pernicious effects of globalization, but only because our ethical debates are not confined to the constructed discourse of human rights.

A third option, therefore, is to think about global ethics as a two-level phenomenon. At one level, we have a self-standing international discourse, such as human rights, that seeks to define a minimum set of standards agreeable to all. At the second level, we have a multiplicity of different ethical traditions, each of which has its own account of what more, or what else, is needed above and beyond human rights. Any convergence at this second level will be the result of learning, mutual exchange, and inspiration, which is likely to be a slow and uneven process. Room must be provided for such learning and persuasion to take place through the articulation and propagation of different ethical views. History shows clearly that the members of different cultures are indeed able and willing to learn from each other, not just with respect to issues of technology, but also with respect to basic ethical values. A crucial task of a globalized ethics, therefore, is to think about the conditions under which such interchange can take place, without presupposing or imposing a single ethical perspective, and without limiting ethical debate to the thin and minimal discourse of international human rights.

Most ethical traditions today endorse some version of this two-level view. As we will see, all of the ethical traditions discussed in this volume disavow a "crusader mentality" that seeks to impose their own ethical views on others. Instead, they seek to show that (1) they can endorse and support a doctrine of international human rights constructed on a cross-cultural basis, and (2) insofar as they seek to propagate their views globally, they do so through open and constructive dialogue, not coercion.

Indeed, this disavowal of the crusader mentality is clearly a point of pride, as well as a point of principle, for many ethical traditions. Many traditions believe themselves to have been uniquely resistant to the temptation to use violence and coercion to promote their views. For example, according to Kimberly Hutchings, of all the traditions surveyed in this volume, feminism is the "most reluctant" to use violence to promote its ends. Peter Nosco claims that Buddhism is unique in its commitment to the principle of "conquest by righteousness" as opposed to "conquest by force." Richard Madsen argues that Confucianism is distinguished by the absence of a Crusader mentality in its history and canonical texts, and its commitment to spreading Confucian values through free debate. According to Michael Walzer, while Jews have always seen themselves as a "light unto the nations," they seek to achieve this ethical leadership through the force of example, not through the force of arms. Mark Murphy argues that Catholic natural law doctrine rests on respect for

the rational nature of human beings, and hence privileges reasoned debate over coercion for the resolution of moral disagreements.

Historians may question whether these traditions have always been as committed to peaceful relations and free debate as they are presented in some of the chapters of the book. The widespread support today for persuasion over coercion arguably reflects distinctly modern ideas about the rights and dignity of all human beings and the repudiation of older ideologies of ethnic and racial hierarchies, as well as a reaction against the horrors committed by crusading and colonizing powers in the name of morality.[1] We could say that the narratives provided in these chapters reflect a distinctly post-colonial attitude, highlighting those aspects of each ethical tradition that privilege free and equal deliberation with the members of other cultures, and downplaying those aspects that legitimize acts of coercion. While the contemporary doctrine of universal human rights was built upon the shared values of the world's ethical traditions, that doctrine has in turn exercised a profound influence back upon those traditions, reshaping how they interpret their texts and practices in a more egalitarian and post-colonial direction.

And yet it would be a mistake to imply that the two-level view based on universal minimum standards and voluntary debate and conversion is entirely a modern invention. We can find examples of it far back in history. As Michael Walzer notes, the Jewish tradition has always distinguished a minimal set of norms binding on all groups and accessible to all rational humans (the "Noahide" laws, articulated in the Ten Commandments) from the thicker set of laws given by revelation to the Jews (the 613 "Mosaic" laws). The latter are seen as a higher moral code, and it is hoped and expected that non-Jews will come to see the code's merits and voluntarily subscribe to it, but so long as other societies respect the minimal standards of the Noahide laws, they must be respected. This is a very ancient example of the two-level view.

However, the line between the coercive crusading approach and the two-level view is not always clear. Consider, for example, the way the Spanish conquerors justified their treatment of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. The way in which coercion was used to propagate Catholicism, and the sorts of abuses and atrocities this gave rise to, is now widely seen as a textbook example of the problems of a crusading moral imperialism. Yet this is a potentially

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[1] That such a "post-colonial" change has taken place within Western traditions, religious or secular, is clear enough when we recall the near-universal support in the nineteenth-century amongst both liberals and Christians for European colonization. But I would argue that a similar change has also taken place amongst many of the other ethical traditions. For example, there is considerable evidence that Buddhist kingdoms in Southeast Asia were historically quite willing to forcibly conquer and convert the "barbarians" on their borders. See the discussion of Laos, Vietnam, and Thailand in *Multiculturalism in Asia* (Kymlicka & He, 2005). For the persistence of such ideas into the modern era, in Buddhist, Confucian, and Muslim-majority societies, see *Civilizing the Margins: Southeast Asian Government Policies for the Development of Minorities* (Duncan, 2004).

misleading account. Many influential officials in the Spanish court and Catholic Church did not claim that they had a right to coercively impose Catholicism on non-believers.[2] Instead, they too endorsed a version of the two-level view according to which:

There are certain minimal standards that are accessible to every competent and rational person, even without the benefit of divine revelation, canonical texts, or a particular history of moral teaching. Any society that falls to meet these standards is either composed of people who lack rationality, or is barbaric and corrupt. Intervention can be justified to enforce these universal minimal standards – for example, by suppressing certain "barbaric" indigenous practices, such as human sacrifice.

Catholicism is a higher moral code whose virtues will be made clear through force of example and persuasion, so long as Catholics are allowed to live their exemplary lives, and to discuss its merits with non-believers. Therefore, intervention can be justified to enable Catholics to freely share their knowledge and experience – for example, by forcing indigenous communities to allow Spanish missionaries to preach.

Put this way, their view was not all that different from many contemporary views, at least in its basic structure. The position was that coercion was justified, not to impose Catholicism directly, but rather (1) to ensure that indigenous peoples respected universal minimum standards available to all rational beings, and (2) to ensure the conditions for people to freely witness and discuss the merits of the Catholic religion. On the surface, this does not seem vastly different from any number of contemporary views that insist on the twin goals of respect for universal human rights, combined with the freedom to propagate one's views in peaceful dialogue.

Why then has the Spanish treatment of indigenous peoples come to be seen as a paradigm of a crusading and intolerant approach? Part of the answer is that the actual behavior of the Spanish colonizers went far beyond what was justified by the official pronouncements of government and Church. Coercion was used not only to prohibit allegedly barbaric practices and to permit peaceful evangelism, but also to dispossess Indians of their land, and indeed to enslave and murder them in appalling numbers. Many Catholic missionaries were horrified by this brutality, and fought bravely against abuses that were committed in the name of Catholicism.

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[2] There was in fact a broad range of views amongst sixteenth-century Spanish officials and Church thinkers regarding how to treat indigenous peoples in the Americas. Some (for example, Sepulveda) assumed that Indians were incapable of rational thought, and hence incapable of being converted to Christianity, and were therefore fit for slavery, in accordance with Aristotle's theory of natural slavery. Others (for example, Las Casas) believed that Indians were rational, and therefore would freely convert to Christianity given the opportunity, so that forced conversion was unnecessary and unjustified, although using force to enable missionaries to freely travel and preach was justified. For a good overview of these debates see *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America* (Hanke, 1965) and *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origin of Comparative Ethnology* (Pagden, 1982).

But for our purposes, let us set aside the abuses, and focus instead on the official justifications for coercion, in order to see how a two-level view can edge closer to the crusading view. Consider the Spanish claim that indigenous peoples failed to respect certain universal minimal standards that should be apparent to all rational human beings. A powerful example concerns the Aztec practice of human sacrifice. Few people today are likely to criticize the Spanish conquistadores and missionaries for suppressing this practice. But the Spanish also intervened in indigenous communities that did not practice human sacrifice. To justify those interventions, the Spanish relied on a much broader list of "barbaric" practices that included idolatry, "promiscuous" sexual relations, and matrilineal kinship.

These practices shocked the conscience of the Spaniards, almost as much as human sacrifice, and hence were all labeled as practices that violate natural reason and natural law. Yet, viewed from today's perspective, this is a curious list, lumping together truly horrific practices with harmless variations in cultural mores. The Spanish appealed to the idea of universal minimal standards that are accessible to all rational human beings, but their account of these standards is strangely parochial, based on very localized sixteenth-century European norms about "proper" family relations. To put it charitably, the Spanish did not make much effort to see whether other peoples around the world shared their sense of what is "universally" abhorred. If a practice shocked their conscience, they simply assumed it would shock the conscience of all humanity, without bothering to test whether other peoples shared their reactions or reasons. Any account of universal minimum standards that is defined in this unilateral way runs the risk of becoming a coercive moral crusade.

A similar problem arises with the Spanish account of the conditions of dialogue and debate about religion. The Spanish justified the colonization of indigenous lands on the grounds that this was needed to permit Catholic missionaries to peacefully evangelize. The freedom to engage in missionary work was said to be a "natural right" that could be enforced against indigenous communities that threatened to expel or kill the missionaries. Yet, at precisely the same time the Spanish were forcing indigenous peoples to allow Catholic missionaries to preach, they were restricting the religious liberties of Jews and Muslims in Spain itself, and were engaged in the ruthless suppression of Christians suspected of heresy. (This was, after all, the heyday of the Spanish Inquisition). In other words, the Spanish insisted that they had a right to freely propagate their religion to non-believers in the Americas, but no one had a reciprocal right to attempt to convert Catholics within Spain.

Viewed from today's perspective, this is a remarkably hypocritical account of the conditions under which religious beliefs should be expressed and debated. The Spanish wanted the freedom to convert others, but did not want to run the risk of losing any of their own members, and hence they put in place various measures to prevent any backsliding. They wanted dialogue, but only under "winning conditions."

This problem of what we might call "asymmetrical" accounts of the freedom to propagate one's views is not unique to sixteenth-century Spain. In most countries with a Muslim majority, for example, Muslims have historically been allowed to attempt to convert Christians and Jews, but the latter were not allowed to proselytize amongst Muslims. Muslim men could marry non-Muslim women, on the assumption that women will follow the religion of their husband, but Muslim women were not allowed to marry Christian or Jewish men, since they would then be lost to the faith. More generally, conversion to Islam was permitted, even encouraged, but apostasy from Islam was discouraged, in some cases legally prohibited, and in a few countries was (and remains) subject to the death penalty.

In both these cases, conversion to either Catholicism or Islam was seen as voluntary. In theory, no one was forced to convert. In that sense, there is a commitment to the idea that conversion should be the result of example and persuasion. Yet, for members of other religious or secular traditions, this is hardly an acceptable account of "free debate" or the "free exercise of reason." It is a biased and asymmetrical idea of freedom, in which only one side can hope to benefit. Any account of the freedom to propagate one's faith that is so one-sided runs the risk of becoming a coercive crusade.

In these (and other) ways, the two-level view endorsed by some Spanish colonial officials is difficult to distinguish from a coercive crusader mentality. Of course, we have come a long way from sixteenth-century colonization of the Americas. No one today is likely to endorse the blatantly biased and arbitrary moral reasoning of the Spanish colonizers, and the Catholic Church itself has over time become a dedicated defender of the principle of freedom of conscience as a universal human right, applicable to all religions.

Yet this case raises some important methodological challenges that remain with us. For example, how can we be sure that our own assumptions about what is "barbaric" are any less parochial than the Spanish colonizers? Consider questions of punishment. Many people in the West are appalled by the practice of spearing in some Aboriginal communities in Australia, or the cutting off of hands in Iran. Yet many people around the world would find it barbaric to lock someone up in a tiny jail cell for long periods of time. There are many things about the world that we find shocking and appalling, but which of these reactions is rooted in parochial cultural assumptions and which is rooted in universal human reasoning? How do we distinguish them?

Similarly, how can we be sure that our account of the conditions under which people should be free to propagate their faith is truly impartial? One could argue that most ethical traditions today still seek to stack the deck, demanding greater freedom to convert others while setting obstacles to the propagation of other views, often in the name of "public order," countering "blasphemy," or "national security." The United States today actively pressures countries to allow greater access to evangelical Protestant missionaries, as a condition of aid or preferential trade status, while making it more difficult for Muslim

religious leaders to enter the United States. Is this a faint echo of earlier Span-
ish views? Many liberals would argue that they have overcome this problem,
given that they defend freedom of speech for critics as well as defenders of
liberalism. Yet liberals typically seek to put in place constitutional restrictions
that protect liberal values from possible rejection. Liberals hope and expect
that others will come to see the merits of liberalism in a free and open debate,
but in the event that liberals lose some of these debates, they also want constitu-
tional guarantees that prevent the electorate from backsliding from liberalism.
Critics of liberalism have suggested that this too is a biased account of "free
debate."

All of this suggests that there are many unresolved challenges facing the
globalization of ethics. Living as we do in a post-colonial era, everyone today
is at pains to repudiate the crusader mentality and to disavow the right to
forcibly impose one's values on others. Instead, people accept the idea that
the propagation of one's views should occur through voluntary conversion and
free dialogue. Force should only be used to protect universally acknowledged
minimum standards, defined through international negotiations and consensus
reflecting the shared values of many ethical traditions. These have almost
become platitudes in the contemporary literature.

This is certainly progress compared with the ethnocentric and arrogant
attitude of earlier times. Yet these platitudes raise as many questions as they
answer. How are these universal minimal standards set? How are the terms of
debate and interaction amongst ethical traditions to be defined?

Our goal in this volume is to explore these challenges to the globaliza-
tion of ethics. Our approach, which is employed in all of the volumes in the
Ethikon Series in Comparative Ethics,[3] is to invite each author to address
these issues from the perspective of a particular ethical tradition. Authors
serve as "reporters" on the tradition, exploring its main lines of thought, while
also identifying what they take to be the most promising lines of development
within it.

As with all Ethikon volumes, we have brought together a mixture of
religious and secular ethical traditions, chosen either for their historical
significance in shaping the world's ethical perspectives (such as the major
monotheistic world religions), and/or for their influential role in contemporary
debates about human rights and globalization (such as international law and
feminism).

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[3] For other volumes in the series, see *The Ethics of War and Peace: Religious and Secular Per-
spectives* (Nardin, 1996); *International Society: Diverse Ethical Perspectives* (Mapel & Nardin,
1998); *Boundaries and Justice: Diverse Ethical Perspectives* (Miller & Hashmi, 2001); *Alterna-
tive Conceptions of Civil Society* (Chambers & Kymlicka, 2002); *Civil Society and Government*
(Rosenblum & Post, 2002); *The Many and the One: Religious and Secular Perspectives on Eth-
ical Pluralism in the Modern World* (Madsen & Strong, 2003); *States, Nations, and Boundaries:
The Ethics of Making Boundaries* (Buchanan & Moore, 2003); *Ethics and Weapons of Mass
Destruction: Religious and Secular Perspectives* (Hashmi & Lee, 2004).

In each case, we have asked our authors to explain how, from the perspective of the tradition they are reporting on, certain crucial questions about the globalization of ethics are addressed. These include:

1. The basis on which universal minimal standards are defined, and the legitimate scope for coercion in enforcing these universal norms. What sorts of issues should be seen as matters of universal norms, and what sorts of issues can be seen as a matter of legitimate variation? To what extent should these universal norms be made legally binding, and coercively enforceable?

2. The desirability of constructing a new and self-standing cross-cultural vocabulary or framework for debating global ethics (such as universal human rights) that is not rooted in any particular ethical tradition. How would such a new vocabulary relate to older ethical traditions? What role does each play, on what sorts of issues?

3. The appropriate ways of seeking to propagate one's moral views. Insofar as coercion is ruled out, and persuasion and example is relied on, how should dialogue amongst ethical traditions be conducted? Is it appropriate to pressure other societies to enter into the sort of debate that might lead to conversion? Is there a right to engage in proselytization even in societies that do not wish it?

Not all of these questions have the same application or relevance for all traditions. However, as the chapters show, these questions have been a source of concern, and sometimes anguish, to many of the best minds within these traditions. There is often a striking diversity of answers within each tradition, as well as across the traditions. There are also some surprising gaps and omissions. Our hope is that this volume will encourage greater reflection on these issues within these traditions, and inspire new lines of debate and exchange across them.

Structure of the Volume

As noted earlier, contemporary debates over the globalization of ethics typically involve at least two elements: (1) the attempt to construct a common self-standing international discourse, such as the discourse of universal human rights, that can be accepted by adherents of different ethical traditions, and can be used to define a set of minimal standards; and (2) the attempt to promote dialogue amongst defenders of different ethical traditions, each explaining and defending their distinctive concepts and norms, in order to identify areas of disagreement, grounds for mutual learning, and possibilities for accommodating differences. These two elements – the construction of a shared ethical discourse and the exploration of diverse ethical discourses – are closely linked. On the one hand, the new international discourse of human rights has been continually