

Endnotes

- ¹ The distinction of morality (moral) and ethics (ethik) as practice and theory of moral dealings is a defining feature of German moral philosophy. However, there is a problem with the consistency of the use of these two notions. The distinction, as we just introduced it, can be found in many works of modern thinkers of practical philosophy. Unfortunately the use of the terms is ambiguous, and neither Kant nor Habermas use them exactly in the way just explained. In the case of Habermas, the terms even have an inverse meaning, with moral (morality) standing for the universal ethical considerations. The different concepts behind the notions are nevertheless visible, and we will stick to the distinctions because it is widely spread in German philosophy today. It also facilitates the discussion of the value of the notion of responsibility later on.
- ² Kant's philosophy is, of course, more complex than it appears here. The maxim is not easy to assign either to morality or to ethics, since it has a practical side but also is a theoretical construct. For our purposes it will suffice, however, to demonstrate that the distinction between ethics and morality exists since this distinction leads to problems, which the notion of responsibility is to overcome.
- ³ For a more detailed discussion of the moralists' scepticism of reason, see Rustemeyer (2001).

- 4 The “other” (originally *l’autre, l’Autre, autrui*) is in many cases hard to translate, as it can refer to the other person who is opposite me, the other as person but in an abstract way, and also the other as the genuinely unknown, as for example death in the writing of Levinas (1983).
- 5 The good Kantian would of course argue that Kant demonstrated that suicide is unethical because it is self-contradictory. The autonomous subject cannot will its own non-existence without contradicting itself. However, it is not clear whether the same argument applies to the mere chance of being killed that is part of the risks we are talking about. If we wanted to rule this out on Kantian grounds, then this would lead to the unconvincing result that the Kantian could no longer go shopping because he might be run over by a car.
- 6 Whether they have to maximise profits is a different question to which we will return later on.
- 7 Foucault (1975) gives a good overview of the change in the perception of punishment from a medieval spectacle with the purpose of revenging the breach of the prince’s sovereignty to the modern perception of punishment as socially useful, aimed at rehabilitating the perpetrator and deterring future crimes.
- 8 We do not want to go into a discussion whether this argument falls into the trap of the naturalistic fallacy, that is to say whether it draws normative conclusions from factual statements. We would not necessarily deny that this is so, but think that the validity of the argument is not affected by it.
- 9 See, e.g., Neuberg, 1997, Part I; French, 1992, Chapter 4; Fischer, 1999; Wallace, 1996.
- 10 May (1992) argues that it is the solution to the problem of collective responsibility to hold people responsible for their attitudes. If someone has racist attitudes and lives in a society where racially motivated crimes occur, then that person would be considered responsible for the crimes even if he did not participate in the racist activities himself. While this is an interesting approach that might allow dealing with some of the most difficult problems of responsibility, it is not visible how this would lead to clear ascriptions and sanctions.
- 11 Wieland (2001a, p. 23) points out that this argument is in fact tautological. The classical argument against collective responsibility does nothing more than define responsibility in individual terms and then show that a collective cannot fulfil it.
- 12 Some staunch defenders of the field of artificial intelligence (AI) such as Brooks (2002) are convinced that we will be able to build computers that

become like humans, that eventually the limits between information systems and humans will vanish. But even outspoken critics of this approach—who think that computers as we know them are fundamentally unable to ever develop understanding or meaning, such as Dreyfus (1993)—are careful not to say that building self-conscious computers is impossible. This is a good indication of how unclear the notion of consciousness still is.

¹³ For a thorough discussion of responsibility, see Birnbacher (1988).

¹⁴ The analogous question in the case of scepticism would have been: Can we approve of the use of the term scepticism and its results from the point of view of a theory of scepticism? The answer in this case would have been no, or at least not without considerable explanation.

¹⁵ Reflective responsibility thus rules out an entire class of theories of responsibility. These are the theories that one is responsible for everything just because of one's being. The young Sartre is one example of an author propagating this kind of idea in relation with his existentialism. The phrase "I am responsible for everything" (*Je suis responsable de tout*; Sartre, 1997, p. 107) does not make sense in our sense of the word.

¹⁶ A related idea can be found in Donaldson and Dunfee's (1999) Integrative Social Contract Theory. There they try to show that efficiency is a hypernorm. That means that the efficient use of resources has a moral quality and that it is even invariant to cultural influences.

¹⁷ A good example for this problem and also for the difficulties of finding a convincing position is offered by Benbasat and Zmud (1999).

¹⁸ Even though we support the idea of the rational and intentional creation of institutions, this has to be taken with a grain of salt. One has to agree with Downy (1972, p. 72) when he says that "...some of our institutions can less properly be said to have been built up by judgment and decision than to have grown up by custom: we did not so much create them as find ourselves in possession of them." Just as there is a limit and a fundamental fallibility of responsibility, the same can be said for institutions.

¹⁹ For a more detailed discussion of this point, see Stahl (2001a).

²⁰ For a more detailed discussion of the ethical impacts of IT on democracy, see Stahl (2001b).

²¹ For a more detailed discussion, see Stahl (2001c).

²² For a more complete overview of the impact IT has on the ethical aspect of democracy, see Stahl (2001b).

- ²³ One sometimes finds references to a fourth claim, to understandability. For our purposes the three above claims are sufficient; since the fourth claim is not reflected in most of the literature, we will just leave it aside.
- ²⁴ For a thorough philosophical critique of the idea of codes of ethics, see Ladd (1995).