

# AUSTRALIAN ETHICS

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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### ETHICS: PROFESSIONAL AND APPLIED

- Business
- Education
- Engineering
- Environment
- Law
- Medical
- Nursing
- Police
- Public Policy
- Public Sector
- Social Work
- Teaching

Every year seems to be a busy one for the AAPAE, and 2015 is proving no exception.

Of course, the main excitement surrounds our upcoming conference — held for the first time outside of Australia's shores, in beautiful Auckland, New Zealand. We hope to see you all there! More details regarding the conference can be found on pages 2 and 3 of this issue of *Australian Ethics*.

Our new website is up and running, with fresh content regularly appearing, and more coming soon. Be sure to check out <http://aapae.org.au/>. All articles, past and present, from our newsletter *Australian Ethics* are now available there in an easily accessible internet format, allowing web-surfers to know more about what we are doing and thinking.

Membership is going strong at this time of the year. Thanks go to Charmayne Highfield for sending out the personalised emails that are eliciting this great response. (If you're a 2013 or 2014 member and you haven't received a reminder email, it may be that our records don't have your current email. Please feel free to email me at [h.breakey@griffith.edu.au](mailto:h.breakey@griffith.edu.au) if you think this might be you.)

Meanwhile, the AAPAE continues its support of BEAM — the UNSW Bioethics and Medicine Society (visit <https://www.facebook.com/UNSWBEAM>). AAPAE Sydney-siders might be interested in some of the terrific events it puts on; keep an eye on the AAPAE website for details as they arise.

But perhaps the most significant work is taking place with respect to the Herculean task of updating the AAPAE Constitu-

tion. This is an issue that I'm sure many members will take a keen interest in.

### Revising the AAPAE Constitution

The Committee will be putting a revised constitution to this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) for adoption by special resolution. Formal notice will be given of this, with explanatory material.

The main reasons for proposing a new constitution are: (1) that the model rules under the New South Wales legislation have changed, and are easier to apply in our circumstances; and (2) our current constitution contains unnecessarily high hurdles in relation to the size and quorums of meetings, especially general meetings, and it is becoming increasingly difficult for the Association to comply with these requirements. The new constitution, like the model rules, will give us something more realistic and matched to our circumstances.

All members will receive more information about this important issue as we move forward towards the 2015 AGM at the Annual Conference.

Do note that this provides a special reason to come to the Conference this year. The more members we have at this year's AGM, the more smoothly this process can occur. If you are unable to attend the AGM, you can still have your say by providing a proxy. We will provide full details of the proposed amendments and how to vote in the coming weeks.

**Please note that you must be a financial member of the AAPAE to be eligible to vote at the upcoming AGM.**

Best wishes to all our members,

**Hugh**

## 22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL AAPAE CONFERENCE

To be hosted by **The University of Auckland** from **9 to 12 July 2015**. This is the first time that the Annual AAPAE Conference will be held outside of Australia.

## CONFERENCE THEME

### C O N T E M P O R A R Y I S S U E S I N . . .

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual AAPAE Conference in Auckland, New Zealand will be an opportunity to address a range of contemporary issues in applied and professional ethics.

**For example ...** The ethics of Tax Avoidance - Global Justice - Consumption - Terrorism - Obligations to Future Generations - Privacy - Surveillance and the Public Good - Information Sharing - The Challenges of New Medical Technology - Climate Change - Intergenerational Ethics - Genetically Modified Organisms - Institutional Excuses - Neuroethics - The ethics of Enhancement - National Responses to Epidemics - New directions in child protection - The imposition of Business Models in Education and Health - Sexism - Racism - Big Data: Challenges and Opportunities - Cyberspace ethics ...

## SPECIAL WORKSHOP

In conjunction with the Faculty of Arts — Classics and Ancient History — at the University of Auckland, a combined workshop on '**Role Anxieties: Contemporary and Antiquarian Perspectives**' will be a feature event on July 10.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

**Author guidelines** for AAPAE Conference Papers can be found at:  
[http://www.emeraldinsight.com/products/ebookseries/author\\_guidelines.htm](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/products/ebookseries/author_guidelines.htm)

### Conference Convenor A/Prof Tim Dare

Head of Disciplinary Area  
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### Conference Committee

#### Mr Marco Grix

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[m.grix@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:m.grix@auckland.ac.nz)

#### Dr Peter Bowden

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## VISITING AUCKLAND

Maori culture is an important part of Auckland's heritage. There are lots of great cultural experiences available, from cultural performances to the huge collection of 'Maori taonga' (treasures) at the Auckland Museum.

Visit: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com/about-us>

## C A L L F O R P A P E R S . . .

The AAPAE Conference Committee warmly invites submissions for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual AAPAE Conference from individuals (and teams) from all disciplines and professions who are interested in advancing the understanding, teaching, and practice of professional and applied ethics. The annual conference atmosphere is one of collegiality and encouragement, and is a great space for newbie researchers (as well as seasoned presenters) to showcase their work.

### Extended deadline

Those wishing to present at the Conference are asked to provide a short biography of around 100 words and an abstract of no more than 350 words when they submit their paper to the Conference Convenor at email: [2015AAPAEConference@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:2015AAPAEConference@auckland.ac.nz). The deadline for submission has been extended **until 17 June 2015**.

### An opportunity to be published

The AAPAE has a standing arrangement with **Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations (REIO)** to publish selected papers from the AAPAE Annual Conference in the journal. Participants of the 2015 AAPAE Conference are strongly encouraged to submit their paper for publication.

## KEY NOTE SPEAKERS



### Professor Tim Mulgan

Professor of Philosophy at the University of Auckland and Professor of Moral and Political Philosophy at the University of St Andrews. Tim has published extensively and is the author of several books, including *Ethics for a Broken World: Imagining Philosophy After Catastrophe* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011). To read more about Tim's current work, visit: <http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/people/tmul009>.



### Dr Hilary Greaves

Associate Professor in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Oxford. Hilary's current research focuses on various issues in ethics, including foundational problems in consequentialism ('global' and 'two-level' forms of consequentialism), the debate between consequentialists and contractualists, aggregation (utilitarianism, prioritarianism, and egalitarianism), moral psychology and selective debunking arguments, population ethics, the interface between ethics and economics, and the analogies between ethics and epistemology. To read more about Hilary's current work, visit: <http://www.populationethics.org/> and <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~mert2255/>.

## CONFERENCE FEE SCHEDULE

Early bird rate (until 21 June 2015)	AAPAE Member	Non-member
Regular conference	NZD 200	NZD 260
Regular conference and catered social gathering	NZD 250	NZD 310
Unwaged/Student - conference only	NZD 100	NZD 140
Unwaged/Student - conference and catered social gathering	NZD 140	NZD 180
Standard rate (from 22 June 2015)	AAPAE Member	Non-member
Regular conference	NZD 300	NZD 360
Regular conference and catered social gathering	NZD 350	NZD 410
Unwaged/Student - conference only	NZD 150	NZD 190
Unwaged/Student - conference and catered social gathering	NZD 180	NZD 220
Day passes and catered social gathering tickets are also available – see the Conference website for details: <a href="http://2015aapaconference.blogspot.co.nz/p/registration.html">http://2015aapaconference.blogspot.co.nz/p/registration.html</a>		

## SAVE THE DATE

When:  
Where:

**THURSDAY, JULY 9 TO SUNDAY, JULY 12**  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND**

Arts 1  
Corner of Symonds Street and Grafton Road  
Auckland 1010 NZ



Conference email: [2015AAPAEConference@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:2015AAPAEConference@auckland.ac.nz)

Conference website: <http://2015aapaconference.blogspot.co.nz/p/home.html>

## BLOWING THE WHISTLE ON BOWDEN

A reply to Bowden's *The imperatives of teaching whistleblowing*

S Cohen & D Grace

In arguing that moral philosophers should pay more attention to whistleblowing, Peter Bowden identifies our book, *Business Ethics*, as taking a 'very negative' position on the issue (*Australian Ethics*, Summer 2014, pp4-5). He seems to think we hold the view that whistleblowing is a moral wrong, and is therefore not justifiable. This misrepresents our position, and we wish to correct that misunderstanding. Worse, Bowden seems not to understand the moral situation with whistleblowing and whistleblowers, either in his article or in his recent book, *In the Public Interest: Protecting Whistleblowers and Those Who Speak Out* (Tilde Publishing, 2014). Finally, Bowden makes targets of straw men — moral philosophers, who, Bowden believes, ignore or take a negative line on whistleblowing. We shall say a little about this.

Our differences with Bowden begin with the definition of whistleblowing, paraphrased from Miceli and Near's (1984) definition as '*exposing an illegal or unethical activity to an authority able to stop it*'. Miceli and Near's actual definition is '*the disclosure by organization members (former or current) of illegal, immoral or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, to persons or organizations that may be able to effect action*'. Our position is that whistleblowing is best viewed as external reporting only, a departure from normal practice necessitated by obstacles to using internal procedures. Hence, we take a more restrictive view of whistleblowing than Miceli and Near, which, in turn, means that we must consider the hazards of going outside normal procedures. We also consider the possible abuse of whistleblowing, a topic about which Bowden says nothing.

Despite the broad definitions of some Australian public interest disclosure legislation, we define whistleblowing to be disclosure only to third parties. We do not include internal reporting, because that is disclosure to the organisation itself. To us, this distinction is central. External reporting is whistleblowing properly so-called because it calls *public* attention not only to wrongdoing in an organisation but also to the organisation's failure to deal with it — and not infrequently to cover it up. This is not to deny that internal reporting may also require courage. Subtle as well as overt forms of retribution can harm the wellbeing and careers of both internal and external reporters of wrongdoing. We argue, however, that external reporting — whistleblowing — is always a courageous and supererogatory act.

**... Our differences with Bowden begin with the definition of whistleblowing. ...**

**Our position is that whistleblowing is best viewed as external reporting only ...**

Bowden clearly believes that if something is a good thing to do, then it is obligatory to do it. He does not consider that doing something good can be more — or other — than what is morally required. So, if whistleblowing in a particular situation would bring about a good result, then any person in the position to blow the whistle has an obligation to do so. Bowden shows no awareness of the possibility that something might be a good thing to do and yet not be obligatory — that an act might be, say,

permissible or even laudable, but not obligatory. At least as long ago as 1958, J.O. Urmson discussed the difference between a supererogatory act and an obligatory act, pointing out that there is an important difference between acting from duty and acting heroically. The supererogatory act is supererogatory precisely because it puts one's vital interests at serious risk, and that is why it is not an obligatory action. It is not something that one *has* to do; it is not something that is one's *duty*.

Urmson's point was later reflected in discussions of the 'Kew Gardens Principle', which recognises a clear duty to help in situations where a person is not putting their vital interests at serious risk. Although it might be a good thing for someone to help in some situation where they would be putting their vital interests at serious risk, it is cavalier, reckless, objectionable, and seriously at odds with common intuitions for an ethicist (or anyone else) to insist that that person *ought* to help (or, according to Bowden, has an *obligation* to help). This is exactly to misconstrue an act of supererogation as one of duty or obligation.

Never, through five Australian editions of *Business Ethics* (the most recent in 2014), or the Canadian edition (2014), have we placed whistleblowing in what Bowden calls the 'negative category'. In every edition, we have pointed out the benefits of justifiable whistleblowing, and (and this is where we believe that Bowden has misunderstood us, and, we fear, the moral nature of whistleblowing in general) the fact that it is, in most cases, a heroic act. Our point has been that because whistleblowing almost always involves putting one's vital interests at risk (whistleblowers

## BLOWING THE WHISTLE ON BOWDEN

A reply to Bowden's *The imperatives of teaching whistleblowing* (cont.)

risk very much indeed!), it is cavalier, reckless, and objectionable to suggest — as Bowden does — that there is a duty (an obligation) to blow the whistle. Along the way to getting to this conclusion, we have, indeed, pointed to some of the prima facie ethical downsides to whistleblowing: e.g., appearance of disloyalty, dobbing, damage to innocent parties, risks to one's health and career, and so forth. We have acknowledged that there are indeed some prima facie moral downsides. We believe that it would be negligent — maybe irresponsible — *not* to call attention to these.

If these prima facie downsides are acknowledged, then it cannot simply be a matter of whether something is awry that gives rise to justifiable whistleblowing. It should be a matter of whether something is *seriously* awry, serious enough to override considerations of disloyalty, dobbing, risks to one's wellbeing, and so forth. Yet Bowden believes otherwise: *'it is difficult to see how whistleblowing is disloyal, or ... sneaky, underhanded, and destroys trust, when the wrongs exposed are so blatant'*. Bowden latches onto the considerations we raise and wrongly accuses us of negativity. Bringing to light the risks of reporting corporate wrongs should no more be regarded as 'negative' than informing patients about the possible side effects of prescribed drugs.

Bowden also champions enhanced legislative and corporate provisions for whistleblowing and protection of whistleblowers. But he ignores the important fact that much (most) whistleblowing legislation — certainly in Australia — has not got very far in providing real protection for whistleblowers. Undoubtedly, recent leg-

islation covering the public sector has improved the position of whistleblowers, but such laws have not removed the presence of significant dangers to informants; and legislation covering the private sector still offers almost no protection.

It is because of these difficulties and also because no legal-administrative measures can completely protect, compensate, or emotionally insulate whistleblowers from adverse consequences that reporting corruption remains heroic, not obligatory. Even with good outcomes, whistleblowing jeopardises one's vital interests. Years ago, in conversation with one of us (Cohen), Roger Boisjoly (of Challenger Space Shuttle fame), had this to say:

*All organisations have the same playbook for whistleblowers. Identify them, make sure their colleagues know who they are, take them away from meaningful work, do what you can to turn them into alcoholics, try to wreck their families. Then, finally, terminate their employment with the company, and do everything you can to make sure that they don't find work with any other similar companies in the future. And, if you can do it, make sure that they don't find work of any kind in the future.*

Of course, the situation is not always as bleak as the late Roger Boisjoly painted it. Some things have improved — a little. But it is morally blasé to believe that the situation is anywhere near the state that Bowden thinks it is, where the only moral consideration a person should have in deciding whether to blow the whistle, is whether it is in that instance justifiable. If the answer is 'yes, it is justifiable,' then one has an obligation to blow the whistle. That

is, Bowden believes whistleblowing is obligatory because it is justifiable. This view wags a finger at people, insisting that they should put themselves into harm's way. This view itself is irresponsible.

***Perhaps if moral philosophers had never discussed whistleblowing, Bowden's complaint against them might have some point. As the matter stands, he throws bricks at straw men.***

Quite apart from misunderstanding and misrepresenting our view of whistleblowing, Bowden's own view of it is unacceptable. Bowden sees a potential whistleblower as recognising that there is a moral wrong that could be rectified if he/she blows the whistle. In wondering whether or not to blow the whistle, this potential whistleblower might ask, 'why shouldn't I?' And Bowden sees this as nothing but a rhetorical question.

The problem is that this question should not be regarded as rhetorical. Serious moral questions reside in the very nature of whistleblowing: that is our point. These questions are not at all rhetorical. They concern real reasons — such as the welfare of this person, their family, their livelihood, loyalty, the reliability of their beliefs for taking action, the potential for disproportionate harm and so on — concerns that one should be aware of when deciding to blow the whistle. To fail to take these factors into account would be morally negligent. This is what Bowden has done. Rather, it is what he has insisted should be the situation with any potential

## TOWARDS THE THEORISATION OF 'ETHICAL MINDSETS'

In *Ethical Mindsets and Spirituality* (Australian Ethics, Summer 2014, pp8-9), I shared some of my early research findings on 'ethical mindsets' and how 'spirituality' seemed to be important when discussing ethical mindsets. I also shared how my current and ongoing research, conducted in twelve countries including Australia, had further indicated that 'spirituality view and practice' was one of the major components of ethical mindsets for countries such as Australia, Canada, India, Ireland, Israel, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, the UK and Scotland, and the USA.

Indeed, in this recent research, the preliminary results indicate that 'spirituality view and practice' is one of the six components<sup>1</sup> of ethical mindsets in Australia. I wish now to briefly expand on this specific finding.

During recent presentations<sup>2</sup>, whenever I mentioned the concept 'spirituality', I was asked what exactly is meant by this concept in the context of my research. In most cases, these questions seemed to have the tone of non-belief that an issue such as spirituality would even be apparent in Australian society, let alone in Australian business people and as one of the components of ethical mindsets. The audiences also questioned whether I had looked at the concept of spirituality from a religious or a non-religious point of view, and why would people in Australia consider spirituality or even think that they were spiritual.

To allow me to respond to these questions, I would take refuge in my earlier PhD research, which resulted in the introduction of two forms of spirituality, namely: 'aesthetic spirituality' and 'religious spirituality', as

two of the ethical mindset components in the Australian Services Sector. Aesthetic spirituality had seven dimensions: integrity, honesty, support, and compassion by the boss and integrity, honesty, and compassion by the co-worker, which Reave (2005) considers as spirituality components. In addition, respondents from the Australian Services Sector opted to relate these components more to aesthetics rather than pure spirituality, whereas the consensus was that spirituality might be recognised as related to or derived from religion. Nonetheless, Reave (2005) and other scholars who have attempted to define spirituality, indicate that concepts other than religion might be part of the notions that define spirituality. This view contradicts Post's (2002) postulation that the fruits of spirituality are generated from religion.

***... the respondents from Australia provided insights into how Australia is a tapestry of individuals who might be religious and others who might follow other ideologies and philosophies.***

While religious spirituality had four dimensions: prayer, search for divine truth, being a spiritual person, and the belief in miracles, the message generated from my PhD research findings indicated that those in the Australian Services Sector did care for spirituality, but the majority of them did not usually relate this to any religious tradition. This result came despite the fact that there is strong evidence in the literature that gives spirituality a major role in the new paradigms presented by some of

### Theodora Issa

scholars, especially in management and business (e.g., Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2004; Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003; Lips-Wiersma, 2002), and reflects the latest literature on how the business world can be improved.

Those who pose such questions might have been following the data published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2014) which indicates that Australia has been a religious place for thousands of years, home to the spiritual beings and forces observed by the Aboriginal people, as well as those of the Torres Strait Islander religion. The First Fleet brought Christianity and Judaism to Australia, and over the last two centuries, Australia has seen the arrival and growth of other religions, ideologies, and philosophies. The ABS article also highlighted that 'no religion'<sup>3</sup> is an option increasingly reported by Australians in the Census of Population and Housing, and the number of people reporting 'no religion' has increased substantially over the past century, from one in 250 people to one in five. This is a trend that is spreading worldwide, and not only in Australia.

From the qualitative data that accompanied the quantitative data in my latest research on ethical mindsets, the respondents from Australia provided insights into how Australia is a tapestry of individuals who might be religious and others who might follow other ideologies and philosophies. For example, there were those who differentiated between spirituality and religion:

- *I am continually questioning my beliefs and searching for answers. I don't consider myself religious but definitely spiritual.*
- *Just to qualify, I am what might be considered a spiritual person, but not in a religious sense.*

## TOWARDS THE THEORISATION OF 'ETHICAL MINDSETS' (CONT.)

Then there were those who understood religious notations, but did not consider themselves religious:

- *I'd not call myself an atheist, but I do not believe in the general concept of 'God'. I do however believe that there exists some form of supreme power, however, I do not believe that she resides in the temple/mosque/church! I believe in the power/skills of us as humans and believe that love, compassion and understanding towards fellow human beings is the highest form of worship. Want to add though, that I am in no way prejudiced towards this line of thought and completely appreciate and respect others' faiths and beliefs!*

Further still, there were those who were believers, for example:

- *Yes, though it seems religion is out of fashion in Australia, but I feel that it is a crucial and important part of my life.*
- *I'm a Christian man, and my faith is in the*

*heart of my professional and personal life.*

- *As I am a Christian, these things are integral parts of my life.*
- *I have already found the divine truth in Jesus.*

Despite 'no religion' being increasingly indicated when completing the Census form, religious individuals still outnumber those who report themselves as having 'no religion', and this might partly explain my current research findings and strengthen the argument that 'spirituality' has a presence in Australian ethical mindsets, including in the mindsets of those who are in business.

Further analyses are currently being carried out to triangulate and enhance the quantitative results of this research.

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<sup>1</sup> The six components being balance and harmony, selfless and attitude improvement, truth value at the workplace, integrity, self-responsibility for personal growth, and spirituality view and practice.

<sup>2</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Contemporary Business (ICCB) and 14<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Flexible Systems Management (GLOGIFT14) joint conference held in Singapore in October 2014, and, more recently, at the John Curtin Institute of Public Policy (JCIPP) in Perth, Western Australia.

<sup>3</sup> Including ideologies and philosophies such as atheists, agnostics, humanists and rationalists.

### References

For a full list of references, please contact the author direct, at:

email: [theodora.issa@curtin.edu.au](mailto:theodora.issa@curtin.edu.au)

## ADDING TO ISSA

A Singapore perspective

***... I believe in the power/skills of us as humans and believe that love, compassion and understanding towards fellow human beings is the highest form of worship. ...***

The comment in Issa above (p7 this issue) completely resonates with me.

I have lived in Singapore for over 10 years, a country that is an eclectic mix of religions and races but, as an Australian, publicly declaring my religion and race, as is required here by law, constantly grates on me, even now.

When I became a Singapore Permanent Resident several years ago, despite being brought up in a Christian-influenced society, I elected to be a 'free thinker', the equivalent of Australia's 'no religion'. It just felt more 'me' to have a label on my Singapore National Registration Identi-

tity Card (akin to the once proposed Australia Card) that I thought was neutral, well *neutral-ish* anyway.

The alternative would have left me feeling branded with a way of thinking that (although it had shaped who I am) was not a true reflection of the way I thought. Interestingly, there is still the ever-present assumption here that *I must be* a Christian.

Do I believe in the concept of God? No, but I am a believer. I believe that the ultimate good in human nature will surpass all the unhappiness in the world that I see today.

Interestingly, one question most Australians probably never ask of themselves, is: Do I celebrate the important religious occasions of others? My answer is yes. Learning about (and being a sideline participant in) other religious celebrations

## Charmayne Highfield

and cultural traditions is an acceptable (and encouraged) pastime in Singapore (I agree that having designated public holidays for all major religions does help!).

This is in stark contrast to Australia, where I feel that I should not engage in discussion about religion or race, lest I am perceived as being discriminatory, racist or, worse still, developing terrorist tendencies.

Is 'no religion' a cop-out? Definitely not — perhaps it is more of a reflection of the Australian tradition of 'mateship', and our innate desire to be friends with everyone!

### Dr Charmayne Highfield

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## DON'T TRUST ME!

The moral virtue of transparency

Hugh Breakey

**A** *personal reflection*: When I first became interested in moral philosophy, all my energies focused on working out the right thing to do — and of persuading other people to see it my way. I entertained visions of a world where people — especially people in power! — might take my arguments seriously and improve (from my perspective) their values.

As time progresses, I find my ambitions shrinking. Now, I increasingly find myself wishing people (especially people in power) would just live up to *their own* values. Where once I was concerned with the justifiability of political parties' policies, now I appreciate anyone who seems honest and capable. In other words, my core concern has turned to one of others' integrity: *Do they live up to their publicly stated values?* rather than one of ethical substance: *What is my judgment about their publicly stated values?*

Of course there are limits. Some people do have values that really are horrifying, and it's bad news for everyone that they live up to them. It's curious that we refer to such people not as having integrity but rather as being extremists. There's a difference between being true to your own values and forgetting that other people have values too. But for the most part, I increasingly find I prefer genuineness and competence over a kindred moral vision.

But there is a problem here. It is the problem of trust and transparency. For it turns out that genuineness is hard to find. It's hard enough to find it retrospectively — looking back on how a person performed with the benefit of hindsight, we all-too-often find failures of integrity. But the real problem is finding integrity *prospectively* — being able to tell ahead of

time who deserves our trust. None of us are good at judging prospectively who to trust unless we know the individual pretty well — and sometimes not even then.

What this means is that we need to have processes that watch over those with power, or that constrain the use of their power. And we need to have processes that watch the watchers and patrol the boundaries — and so on until we're all watching each other, at least some of the time and in some sorts of ways.

That may sound more alarming than it actually is, but my concern is with just one aspect of this outcome. That is, none of us *like* the idea of being watched over. Nor do we like being asked to jump through hoops to demonstrate we are doing the right thing. It feels like a moral affront — as if the watcher has already decided not to trust us for some personal reason.

***Everything the honest individual would say and show can be emulated by the conman and the Machiavellian politician — and probably done better by them, truth be told.***

But what is the basis of this affront? Why should we expect to be trusted? On what grounds can we demand to be given the benefit of the doubt if doing so involves the trustee taking real risks? After all, from the other person's perspective, we are just another anonymous and unproven individual.

How we present ourselves, and what we say to others, hardly help sow trust. Everything the honest individual would say and show can be emu-

lated by the conman and the Machiavellian politician — and probably done better by them, truth be told. Talk is cheap. Only deeds, work, and sacrifice show integrity, and seeing these in action usually takes personal history.

Here, as so often in morality, the key lies in recognising how the situation looks from the other person's perspective — and they simply can't tell us from Adam, as the saying goes. True, we can object to an assumption that we are in fact dishonest or dangerous — or that we are especially liable to be. Such aggressive mistrust is morally dangerous and caustic to social harmony, especially if it is based upon any type of profiling. Such mistrust is a type of prejudice — we *pre-judge* the other and view them as a risk.

But we surely cannot object to the other person *not knowing* if we are honest, and so requiring various checks and balances on how we act whenever we possess public or professional powers. 'Innocent until proven guilty' is an important legal principle, but its status as a moral, political, or social precept is less peremptory. Realistically, most of us reside in the grey area of 'unproven'; it is wrong to presume we are guilty, but reckless to presume we are saints. If we can't object to others being ambivalent about our moral integrity, then it seems to me we need to seriously consider the professional virtue of *transparency* — understood as accepting the requirement of being watched and checked up on, accepting the obligation that when we wield public, professional, and corporate powers, we do not only need to do the right thing, but to work to demonstrate to others that we are doing the right thing. As



## DON'T TRUST ME!

The moral virtue of transparency (cont.)

commentators at the recent *Global Integrity Summit* observed (<http://integrity20.org/>), too often there is an assumption that transparency is the exception, that governance measures and regulations are impositions on the natural order. I think a little perspective-taking shows that this must change.

On reflection, it turns out there actually is a way of prospectively telling if someone has integrity. It hinges on

their willingness to be bound by measures ensuring their proper behaviour. The less they need regulation and inspection, the more they appreciate the need for it from the other person's perspective. The more emphatically they assert that they are the type of person who should be trusted, and that it is a moral affront to demand their accountability, the more they are precisely the type of person who we should not trust.

If this is right, then the more we are moral, the less we should demand others take on faith our morality — and the more we should adopt the professional virtue of transparency.

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## THE IMPACT OF ETHICS ON THE WAY PEOPLE THINK AND LIVE

One view of ethics is that it is a wisdom based on the realistic, rational, and optional activities of individuals. Ethics, in this interpretation, provides a set of principles to determine appropriate behaviours for individuals and groups, and is a reasonable thinking procedure, which aims to identify what values should be kept and prevail in society at any given time.

It is generally true of all human beings that their behavioural, mental, active, and social standing among others depends on their personal characteristics, motives, and beliefs, and this includes their trustworthiness and their willingness to trust others.

In light of this general truth, if somebody is an 'alien' in society and if there is only a synthetic relationship between them and their surroundings, then their humanistic features, innovativeness, and positive motives may be overshadowed; ultimately

demolishing their professional careers, stunting their social growth and development, and eroding their willingness to trust others.

Everybody desires success, but not everybody has an identical view of what constitutes success or how to achieve it. However, what is universal is the desire to succeed. Success in one's personal and professional life and in society's durability is a common ideal of humanity, and provides meaningfulness to life.

***Society in general, and the economic system in particular, demand trust built on ethical foundations and social norms to function effectively.***

In my lifetime, I have witnessed society's attempts to find appropriate solutions for some of the negative social phenomena we see today, like

### Ahmad Shabanifard

large-scale benefits for the few, torts, and indemnity from investigation and prosecution for certain powerful people. Appropriate solutions have also been sought to eliminate the general inequities in health, social security, hygiene, education, and cultural acceptance and, as an example, this is where developments in information technology and advances in pharmaceuticals have had positive impacts on our working lives and the wellbeing of society.

Society in general, and the economic system in particular, demands trust built on ethical foundations and social norms to function effectively. Ethics, as a set of human principles, to determine appropriate behaviours must also foster mutual trust.

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The AAPAE Annual General Meeting will be held during the 22nd Annual Conference in Auckland.

**Have you renewed your AAPAE membership for 2015?**

To make your vote count, either in person or by proxy, you must be a financial member.

## PROFESSIONS, ETHICS, AND TWO MISSING ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Alan Tapper

In recent years, my colleague, Stephan Millett, and I have been trying to find a grounding for professional ethics. We reject the view that professional ethics is simply an application of general ethical principles. We are now exploring the proposition that professional ethics is a function of professions as a form of social practice. This has led us into an examination of how the idea of a profession is defined. We find that the standard definitions all have a strong ethical component. This, we think, is what one would expect if professional ethics is practice-based. We presented a preview of this at the 2014 AAPAE conference and the argument is elaborated in our paper in the forthcoming conference edition of REIO.

So far, so good, then. Yet a funny thing happened on the way to this conclusion. We examined 21 definitions from a wide variety of sources. All, as I say, had a strong ethical component. And yet none made mention of two of the most well-established ethical principles that we associate with professional ethics.

The two missing principles are these: 'Do no harm' and 'Respect client autonomy'. The first is of course the oldest of all professional principles. The second may be said to be the newest: it is the centre-piece of 'principlism', the revamped version of professional ethics that arose in the 1970s, led by the work of Tom Beauchamp and James Childress in the biomedical field.

Beauchamp and Childress put forward four key principles, and two of them were 'Do no harm' (they called it the principle non-maleficence) and 'Respect client autonomy'. Both have been widely accepted as essential to professional ethics. But, in our sur-

vey, neither rated a mention in definitions of a profession.

The oddity of this can be best seen in the work of Beauchamp and Childress themselves. They only rarely discuss what professions are. But in later editions of their *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, they posit four elements that together constitute a profession: knowledge, training and certification, self-regulation, and service. The service component is construed in ethical terms.

*Professionals ... are usually distinguished by their specialized knowledge and training as well as by their commitment to provide important services to patients, clients, or consumers. Professions maintain self-regulating organizations that control entry into occupational roles by formally certifying that candidates have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills. In learned professions, such as medicine, nursing, and public health, the professional's background knowledge is partly acquired through closely supervised training, and the professional is committed to providing a service to others.*

This is a summary that nicely captures the consensus position in the 21 definitions we surveyed. It captures the consensus both in what it says and in what it doesn't say. In particular, it makes no mention of the two key principles that Beauchamp and Childress have themselves championed.

The summary also captures the consensus in not being ethically neutral. This much is clear: 'the professional is committed to providing a service to others'. They, like every other of the 21, espouse 'service to others' as part of the definition of a profession. This is an expression of another of their four ethical principles, which

they call 'beneficence'. Professional beneficence to one's client, and (though less prominent) towards the public good, is taken as given in the way we define professions. Yet professional non-maleficence and professional respect for client autonomy are not given any similar status. Why so? The answer is unclear to me. It can't be because the definition of a profession is a purely sociological, and therefore ethically neutral, enterprise. None of the 21 definitions are ethically neutral; all are normatively committed.

It also can't be because the two missing principles are optional extras, while service to others is non-optional. For one thing, non-maleficence and beneficence are conceptually intertwined. A professional can't be coherently beneficent while also being maleficent. I'm inclined to think that a professional can't be coherently beneficent while taking no account of client autonomy. Maybe that was acceptable to some degree when professions were more strongly paternalistic, but even then the professional needed to secure client agreement before proceeding with a course of action (except in emergencies, etc.).

Can it be that these principles are so obvious as to not need stating? I don't think so. The whole point of any definition is to state the obvious.

So my discussion ends in puzzlement. I don't know why one principle should be accepted and yet two equally basic principles should go missing. Any suggestions are very welcome.

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## BLOWING THE WHISTLE ON BOWDEN

A reply to Bowden's *The imperatives of teaching whistleblowing* (cont.)

Continued from page 5

whistleblower.

Finally to Bowden's claim that moral philosophers have neglected whistleblowing. While not every business ethics text discusses whistleblowing, many (perhaps most) do. Among the classics (texts published in a number of editions) which do are those by Velasquez; Bowie and Duska; Audi; Ferrell, Fraedrich, and Ferrell; Trevino and Nelson; Beauchamp and Bowie; and De George. This list is indicative only, but it is enough to illustrate that the situation in the literature is not dire, as Bowden suggests. Perhaps if moral philosophers had never discussed whistleblowing, Bowden's complaint against them might have some point. As the matter stands, he throws bricks at straw men. (Actually, it is harder to find a business ethics book that doesn't discuss whistleblowing than to find one that does.)

A passage from Douglas Anderson's article in Fredrick's *Companion to Business Ethics*, one of the texts Bowden criticises, offers appropriate concluding counsel here:

*Whoever has faced the possibility of 'blowing the whistle' on an employer knows that there is more involved than an intellectual assessment of a 'case'. The test is of one's whole character and, as (William) James says: 'From this unsparing practical ordeal no professor's lectures and no array of books can save us.'*

Maybe someday the situation will be the way Bowden believes it is, viz. that blowing the whistle does not involve significant dangers to one's vital interests, dangers that are enough to make whistleblowing other than obligatory. Maybe this will be so because legislative and/or industry protections for whistleblowers are in full bloom. Maybe it will be

because businesses, the professions, and the public sector have become welcoming and appreciative of whistleblowers. But things are not like that yet. Maybe someday, things will be such that there is no need for whistleblowers at all, because, ethically speaking, all is absolutely rosy with industry, the professions, and the public sector. But, of course, that is even more pie in the sky.

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## { NEWS } BOOST FOR APPLIED ETHICS AT UniSA

### Prof Thomas Maak and Prof Nicola Pless

have joined the staff of the School of Management at UniSA's Business School in Adelaide.

**Professor Nicola Pless** comes to UniSA from ESADE Business School and Ramon Llull University in Barcelona, Spain. Before earning her PhD in Management from the University of St. Gallen, she pursued an international human resource (HR) career in the US and Switzerland, working in different HR roles in investment banking in New York City (NYC) and serving at the World Bank Group in Washington, DC. In 2013, she received the 'Faculty Pioneer Award'

for teaching innovation and excellence by the Aspen Institute in NYC. Her research focuses on executive decision making and the micro foundations of strategy, specifically the relationship between responsible leadership and social and economic value creation and the roles of values, empathy, and mindfulness.

**Professor Thomas Maak** is a leading scholar in the area of Responsible Leadership. Prior to joining UniSA as Head of the School of Management, he was a Professor in the Department of People Management and Organization at ESADE Business School in Barcelona, Spain. Prof Maak was also a faculty member at the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland, his alma mater, and a vis-

iting professor at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania in the US, and at INSEAD, France. Prof Maak is a Senior Editor with the Journal of Business Ethics and is the President-elect of ISBEE (2016-2020), the International Society for Business, Economics, and Ethics.

The new professors join a number of others working in applied ethics including current AAPAE vice-president Prof Marc Orlitzky, former AAPAE Presidents Chris Provis and Howard Harris, and president of the International Center for Academic Integrity, Dr Tracey Bretag. Dr Sunil Savur, who has presented papers at recent AAPAE conferences has also been appointed to the staff.

**Welcome everyone!**

'Making the right moves ....'



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### AAPAE Charter

**T**he broad purpose of the AAPAE is to encourage awareness of, and foster discussion of issues in, professional and applied ethics. It provides a meeting point for practitioners from various fields and academics with specialist expertise and welcomes everyone who wants or needs to think and talk about applied or professional ethics.

The AAPAE fosters and publishes research in professional and applied ethics, as well as attempting to create connections with special interest groups.

However, the AAPAE does not endorse any particular viewpoint, but rather it aims to promote a climate in which different and differing views, concerns, and approaches can be expressed and discussed.

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