

Science and morality - I

Why the fuss about morality?

- Impact = Technology x individual motivations
- SS + S + T → comprehend human impact
- Moral ideas evolve, but isn't power at its base?

Where does morality emerge?

- To acknowledge existence of one's power
- Caring about outcomes of expression of power
- Being aware of one's self-interest in action?
- If one does not understand, then ask around, learn!
- Externally received Vs. self-reflected

When is something NOT in moral purview?

- Killing of a mosquito
- Hunting
- Netflix / entertainment

Is pursuit of knowledge in moral purview?

- Examples
 - 3D printed guns
 - How to make an atomic bomb?
- Motivation behind pursuit of knowledge?
- Should anyone have access to knowledge?
- Who judges what to share and what not to?
- Inhibited Vs Enlightened population?

Is science in moral domain?

- But science is a tool to get to truth
 - 1) Possibility of verification
 - 2) Repeatability - Experimenters/Experiments
 - 3) Quantifiable
 - 4) Acknowledging limitations (Humility)
 - 5) Recording of knowledge (Accessibility)
 - 6) NOT subject to interpretation (Independence)
- Is a tool without a user of any power?

Is a scientist powerful?

- Inherent power
 - Research on solutions/technology
 - Data and understanding of society
- External assigned power:
 - Money and facilities at disposal
 - Social status
 - Contacts with People in power
- Q: Survive as who?

Scientist as an *automaton*

- Loves to play with challenges
- Very skilled and hyper-focus
- Ambitious to prove one's prowess
- Well connected - peers matter
- A perfect 'tool' for the *power-business*
 - Give place and equipment to play
 - Some salary + social value
 - Convince that work is of immense social value

Scientist as an intellectual

- Has worked hard and made oneself an expert
- Has reflected outside the domain of expertise
- Is constantly thinking, questioning, learning
- Is able to detach from self-interest
- Cultivates independent thought
- Cares

A 2500 years old view

"Unless ... either philosophers become kings in our states or ... kings and rulers take to the pursuit of philosophy ... and there is a conjunction of these two things, political power and philosophical intelligence, while the motley horde of the natures who at present pursue either apart from the other are compulsorily excluded, there can be no cessation of troubles..." - **Socrates**

Some examples

- "Judgment at Nuremberg" / Adolf Eichmann
- "The insider" movie
- Culling of elephants in SA / Allan Savory

End

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