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High School Ethics Bowl
Regional Ethics Bowl Cases
Season 2014-15

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1. Copying Homework

Gabriella and Vivian have been friends for a long time and are now juniors in high school with aspirations to attend top-notch universities. They have four classes together this year, three of which are AP classes. As such, they are extremely busy with their schoolwork. Unluckily, two of their AP courses happen to have tests scheduled for the same day. To make matters worse, homework is assigned in their fourth common course the day before they must take the tests. It is just a simple worksheet, but it must be submitted for a grade. Gabriella is annoyed that she has to take time away from studying for the tests, but it only takes her thirty minutes to complete the assignment. Vivian, however, studies diligently all evening and forgets to do the worksheet. It just slips her mind.

The next day, Vivian realizes that she has forgotten to complete the homework. She knows that getting a zero on an assignment will be detrimental to her overall average and the teacher does not accept late homework. She decides to ask Gabriella if she can copy her answers to the worksheet.

Gabriella is sympathetic to Vivian's situation but has a few concerns. First and foremost, she could get in a great deal of trouble for letting Vivian copy her work—after all, it's considered cheating. In the eyes of many people, including the school administrators, cheating is always wrong, no matter how small of an assignment it is. Gabriella is also frustrated because she took the time to complete the worksheet while Vivian did not. It seems unfair that Vivian had the extra time to study but will still receive full credit as Gabriella. It is not only unfair to Gabriella, but to all of the students in the class who did the homework on their own.

At the same time, it just a menial worksheet—what some students might call “busy work.” It doesn't seem the same as plagiarizing an essay, and the benefits Vivian will receive if Gabriella lets her copy the worksheet seem to far outweigh the triviality of the rule being broken. Perhaps more importantly, Gabriella wants to help her friend. She certainly doesn't want to see Vivian's grade damaged over a silly worksheet. If Gabriella says no, she knows that it will really hurt her friendship with Vivian.

Study Questions

- (1) Would it be morally permissible for Gabriella to allow Vivian to copy the worksheet? Why or why not?
- (2) Does the fact that Gabriella and Vivian are good friends influence the ethical analysis of whether or not copying would be morally permissible? Explain.
- (3) Is it ever morally permissible to break rules in order to help a friend? If so, what must the conditions be?

2. Army Hairstyles

On March 31, 2014, the United States Army updated regulations to their official appearance and grooming protocol (AR 670-1). The changes establish tougher tattoo, fingernail, and hair and makeup rules, while also outlining how and when Army uniforms should be worn. Soldiers who do not abide by the policy face non-judicial punishment.

New hair regulations for women that were previously authorized are now unauthorized. For example, Chapter 3, Section 2 of the new document states: “Examples of hairstyles considered to be faddish or exaggerated and thus not authorized for wear while in uniform, or in civilian clothes on duty, include, but are not limited to, locks and twists (not including French rolls/twists or corn rows no bigger than a quarter inch); hair sculpting (eccentric directional flow, twists, texture, or spiking); buns or braids with loose hair extending at the end; multiple braids not braided in a straight line; hair styles with severe angles; and loose unsecured hair (not to include bangs) when medium and long hair are worn up.”¹ Many of these unauthorized hairstyles are common among the Army’s population of African American women, numbering 26,700 on active duty².

After 670-1 was published, thousands of soldiers and non-soldiers signed a White House petition calling for the president to order the Army to re-adjust the appearance and grooming policies. Critics cited that the policies were racially-biased against African American women. The updated appearance and grooming policies were also cited as “white-washed” and as unfairly outlawing natural hair.

Sgt. Jasmine Jacobs, of the Georgia National Guard, who created the White House petition, wrote: “Females with natural hair take strides to style their natural hair in a professional manner when necessary; however, changes to AR 670-1 offer little to no options for females with natural hair...the changes are racially biased, and the lack of regard for ethnic hair is apparent.”³ Additionally, female members of the Congressional Black Caucus wrote this in a letter to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, “Though we understand the intent of the updated regulation is to ensure uniformity in our military, it is seen as discriminatory rules targeting soldiers who are women of color with little regard to what is needed to maintain their natural hair.”⁴

In response, Army Officials have said AR 670-1 applies to all soldiers, regardless of race, maintaining that hair grooming standards are necessary to maintain uniformity within a military population. Officials also defended the process they used to devise the new appearance and grooming policies. Hundreds of women, including African American women, were involved in the process of developing the new female hair policies.

Study Questions:

- (1) If the Army is concerned about maintaining uniformity and professionalism, is it ethical to apply different policies for hairstyle for different gender identities? Should hairstyle policies be genderless?
- (2) Are the new hairstyle regulations discriminatory despite the fact they apply to all soldiers?
- (3) The Army requires uniformity for the safety and protection of soldiers when on the field. To what extent should the military maintain uniformity versus embrace ethnic diversity?
- (4) Could a regulation similar to AR 670-1 be applied in other circumstances? For example, should students, employees and/or athletes have a dress code?

¹ http://www.apd.army.mil/pdf/files/r670_1.pdf

² <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/21/us/politics/armys-ban-on-some-popular-hairstyles-raises-ire-of-black-female-soldiers.html>

³ <http://www.armytimes.com/article/20140331/NEWS07/303310051/Black-female-soldiers-say-new-grooming-reg-racially-biased->

⁴ <http://www.armytimes.com/article/20140423/NEWS07/30423005>

4. Immunization Programs as a Cover for Spying Operations

At the 41st World Health Assembly in 1988, a goal was set for the worldwide eradication of polio by the year 2000.¹ The Global Polio Eradication Initiative was undertaken by the World Health Organization (WHO), US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Today, however, polio is still active in Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan. In Pakistan, there are 198 known cases of polio.²

Polio vaccination programs have a long history of controversy among Muslims in Pakistan. Rumors that vaccinations are a Western plot to sterilize women and that some vaccines contains the AIDS virus have gained traction in recent years.³ Some Muslims believe that according to Islamic Law vaccines are unclean. WHO and UNICEF have partnered with Islamic scholars and clerics to issue fatwas (legal opinions in Islamic faith) stating vaccinations are safe to help eradicate polio and other diseases.⁴

Recently, public health officials from Tulane University, Harvard, John Hopkins, and other universities uncovered proof that the recent increase in polio is connected to a secret spy operation. That is, a polio vaccination program was used by the CIA to help gain information on the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan. In January 2013, a total of thirteen Schools of Public Health wrote to President Obama urging him to stop the use of vaccine programs as cover for spying operations. The universities argued that the practice needed to be stopped to protect humanitarian volunteers and gain back the trust of the Pakistani people, many of whom are vulnerable to polio.

In May 2014, Lisa O. Monaco, assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, responded to the thirteen Universities by stating the CIA will now, "...make no operational use of vaccination programs, which include vaccination workers."⁵

Since the inauguration of the vaccination-spying program in Pakistan, more than sixty polio workers, humanitarian volunteers, and security personnel have been killed. Pakistani villagers have chased off humanitarian workers in fear of CIA spying. WHO has stated that polio has re-emerged as a public health emergency in Pakistan.⁶

Study Questions:

- (1) Under what circumstances (if any) is the use of an ostensibly humanitarian program for ulterior purposes justified?
- (2) Under what circumstances (if any) should governments provide aid to countries known to harbor terrorists?
- (3) When is it justifiable for a professional (or profession) to neglect the ethical principles they previously agreed to abide by?

¹ http://www.polioeradication.org/content/publications/19880513_resolution.pdf

² http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/10/health/cia-vaccine-ruse-in-pakistan-may-have-harmed-polio-fight.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&

³ http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/10/health/cia-vaccine-ruse-in-pakistan-may-have-harmed-polio-fight.html?pagewanted=all&_r=2&

⁴ http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/10/health/cia-vaccine-ruse-in-pakistan-may-have-harmed-polio-fight.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&

⁵ <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1164764-monaco-letter-on-vaccine-workers.html>

⁶ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/20/cia-vaccination-programmes-counterterrorism>

6. Heart Attack Grill

John Alleman, the fifty-two year old unofficial spokesman for the restaurant Heart Attack Grill, died of a heart attack in February 2013. A regular of the restaurant since it opened in October 2011, he genuinely enjoyed the food and advocated for the restaurant even though he was never on the payroll. Alleman reportedly ate at the restaurant nearly every day, despite owner "Doctor Jon" Basso's warnings that Triple Bypass Burgers really weren't everyday food. In fact, in February 2012, a man in his forties went into cardiac arrest while trying to finish a Triple Bypass Burger, and was wheeled out to an ambulance.¹

The Heart Attack Grill's slogan is "a burger to die for." According to the Associated Press (AP), it gives free meals to people who weigh more than 350 pounds, and has a warning sign that reads "Caution: This establishment is bad for your health."

Basso is cited as saying that Alleman's death was a wake-up call of sorts, but said that it would not stop him from selling the calorie-laden burgers. One advantage of his establishment, according to Basso, is that people can feel comfortable at the grill and not worry about being judged because of their unhealthy menu choices. For his part, Basso argues that people are free to buy or not buy the food. In an interview with reporter Betty Liu, he stated "The end result of our eating habits is all around us. It's an obesity epidemic that is killing the world. Do I want others to die at my restaurant? No. Actually I want to wake up one morning and open the door and have no one ever come in again, because maybe the world would have learned the truth. Now, I make good money joking about how bad my food is. But at least I'm honest."

After the first incident, the AP reports, officials for the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, a Washington DC based group, sent a letter to the Heart Attack Grill's owner asking him to "declare moral bankruptcy" and close the restaurant. Advocates of the Heart Attack Grill's right to operate and sell whatever food they like disagree, citing Basso's honesty about how bad the food is for one's health, the clearly labeled caloric content of the food posted where it is easy to see, and warning signs at the entrance of the restaurant.

Study Questions:

- (5) Should Basso continue to operate the Heart Attack Grill despite the deaths?
- (6) Do people have the right to eat whatever food they want, even if it kills them?
- (7) Does Basso have an obligation to close the restaurant in light of his statement concerning the obesity epidemic?

¹ <http://sanfrancisco.grubstreet.com/2013/02/heart-attack-grill-vegas-spokesman-alleman-dies.html>

7. Blocking the Uninsured From Refueling

According to the prominent U.K. newspaper *The Mirror*, closed circuit television will be used to block uninsured motorists from refueling. This action is spurred by the U.K.'s attempt to curb the number of uninsured motorists in all of Europe. (One in 25 U.K. motorists is uninsured, totaling 1.4 million people. By contrast, according to a 2009 Insurance Research Council report, one in seven drivers in the United States is uninsured.¹)

The technology involved uses closed circuit television images taken from automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras to record the plate number of a vehicle. Software then cross references the plate number on a vehicle with the database held by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority to check whether the owner of the vehicle is insured or not. A signal is sent to the pump if the driver is uninsured and prevents the pump from fueling the vehicle until the vehicle registers as insured. If the camera fails to log and check the plate number, the pump will not fuel the car.

ANPR cameras are already used on automated toll roads. Toll roads that do not require drivers to stop use the cameras to identify the plate number on the car, cross reference the plate in the relevant licensing database, and calculate the toll owed by the driver of the vehicle. The bill is sent to the address of the plate owner for tolls owed.

Advocates of ANPR camera use argue that the cameras will reduce the number of uninsured drivers and benefit those who have accidents with uninsured drivers. According to *The Mirror*, if everyone in the UK was insured, the families of the 160 people killed and the 23,000 people injured each year in auto accidents involving uninsured motorists would receive compensation as a consequence of ANPR use. They do not currently receive any compensation for those tragedies.²

Critics of ANPR camera use argue that as a consequence of the law, gas station personnel may be put at risk because the angry motorists denied gas may direct their anger toward cashiers and other station clerks. The use of ANPR cameras to shut off fuel pumps puts cashiers in the role of law enforcers, but without training and protection. Further, some argue that ANPR cameras violate privacy due to their increased usage; drivers, they argue, are increasingly recorded and tracked without having done anything wrong.³

Study Questions:

- (8) Are ANPR cameras a morally objectionable invasion of privacy, and if so, why?
- (9) Should ANPR cameras be used to enforce laws requiring motorists to have insurance when mandatory insurance is already a controversial requirement?
- (10) Would the use of ANPR cameras be morally permissible for use in aiding in the enforcement of other laws pertaining to driving or the use of automobiles?
- (11) Many cities in the US use ANPR cameras at stop lights. Should these cameras be permitted?

¹ <http://www.iii.org/fact-statistic/uninsured-motorists>

² <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/cctv-at-petrol-stations-will-automatically-stop-758518>

³ <http://www.v3.co.uk/v3-uk/news/2284452/ico-slams-police-for-invading-motorists-privacy-with-unlawful-anpr-camera-use>

8. Hurricane Katrina and Dr. Pou

During Hurricane Katrina, Memorial Hospital in New Orleans lost power and running water, and was flooded. Dr. Anna Pou and two nurses remained behind to stay with the patients who were too sick to be evacuated from the hospital. After the storm, forty-five bodies were found in the hospital in a makeshift morgue. Critics accused Dr. Pou and the nurses with hastening the death of some patients. After the investigation in July 2006, nearly a year after the storm, Dr. Pou and the nurses were arrested for the deaths of four patients.

Investigators determined that at least 17 patients were injected with morphine or the sedative midazolam, or both. A number of these patients were extremely ill and might not have survived being moved. Several were almost certainly not near death when they were injected, according to medical professionals who treated them at Memorial. An internist's review of their charts and autopsies were commissioned by investigators, but never made public.

Dr. Pou defended her actions, stating that her job during a crisis of that proportion was to ease the pain of her patients. Dr. Pou was indicted with second-degree murder charges, but a grand jury in Orleans Parish refused to indict her; the two nurses were found not guilty of murder.

Today Dr. Pou is an advocate of changing standards of care during emergency situations like those experienced during hurricane Katrina. She stated that informed consent is impossible during disasters and that doctors need to be able to evacuate the sickest or most severely injured patients last—along with those who have Do Not Resuscitate orders—an approach that she and her colleagues used as conditions worsened after Katrina.¹

Study Questions:

- (12) Did Dr. Pou and the nurses do the right thing in hastening the death of some of their patients during Katrina?
- (13) Should doctors be held to different standards of care during emergency situations?
- (14) Should the sickest be evacuated from hospitals first in emergency situations like Katrina, or should they be last because healthier patients have a better chance of surviving?

¹http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/30/magazine/30doctors.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&

9. Lying to Parents

Noah is a twenty-one year old university student. He excels academically, plays on an intramural sports team, and has a part-time job on campus. His parents are very religious and believe that drinking alcohol is morally abhorrent. Noah, however, has recently started having a few beers at parties on weekends. Contrary to his parents, Noah doesn't see anything wrong with drinking alcohol. Although he never gets drunk or drives under the influence, his family would be infuriated if they found out he was consuming alcohol -- and they would practically disown him if he told them that he sees nothing wrong with it. When confronted by his parents about drinking, Noah is unsure how to respond.

In part, Noah thinks that he should tell his parents the truth about his drinking because he has a right to hold his own beliefs and shouldn't have to hide those beliefs—especially from his parents. Although Noah is very grateful to his parents for his upbringing, he doesn't believe that he must live his life exactly the way they want. In any case, he is only having a few beers at parties. If they love him for who he is, thinks Noah, they will accept him despite their differences.

On the other hand, Noah is certain that if he answers their question honestly, it would be very detrimental to his relationship with his parents, the two people that he loves the most in life. Even if his parents eventually come to terms with his drinking, Noah knows that things will never be the same once he tells them. They will feel betrayed and very hurt. They may even withdraw their financial support for him, which includes paying his tuition and living expenses at university. If Noah just lies, he sometimes thinks, he could avoid a potentially damaging situation.

Study Questions:

- a. Should Noah tell the truth to his parents or should he lie? Which choice is morally superior?
- b. What moral obligations does an adult child have to her parents?
- c. Is it morally permissible to tell a lie in order to achieve some greater good? If so, under what conditions?

10. World Cup Controversy

Football, or soccer as it's called in the USA, is the world's most popular sport. Every four years, billions of people from all over the planet tune in to support their nation's team during the World Cup. Hosting the World Cup is an honor, especially for countries as crazy about football as Brazil. However, hosting the tournament comes with a number of expensive obligations, such as building new stadiums, improving transportation infrastructure, and preparing accommodation for the millions of tourists the competition brings. According to most estimates, the Brazilian government spent more than \$11 billion in preparation for the 2014 World Cup.¹ Initially, many Brazilians were elated when Brazil was selected to host the 2014 World Cup; for some, that excitement dwindled as the tournament drew near.

Protests took place in cities all over Brazil, with hundreds of thousands of citizens criticizing the government for the enormous amount of money spent in preparation for the tournament. In a nation in which an estimated 11.4 million people live in poverty in *favelas*—slums—that surround major cities in Brazil, many believe that the taxpayer dollars should have been spent on education and health care rather than World Cup projects. Many Brazilians also felt that the government was catering to wealthy tourists rather than fulfilling its moral duty to provide much-needed social services to its own citizens. Those visiting for the World Cup spent huge amounts of money on vacations while ignoring the fact that millions of Brazilians live in poverty. Protestors carried signs with slogans like “The party in the stadiums is not worth tears in the favelas,” and one woman stated that “we need better education, hospitals and security, not billions spent on the World Cup.”²

Others defend the government's spending, saying that the projects provided jobs for the unemployed and increased confidence for future international investment and tourism in Brazil. Brazilian President Rousseff called the grievances of protestors a “false dilemma,” claiming that the money spent on preparations for the World Cup did not detract from spending on any social services or welfare programs and noted that the infrastructure built would not be taken home by tourists “in their suitcases.”³ Furthermore, it would have been a grave injustice to deny football fans the right to attend the World Cup on account of Brazil's impoverished state. Individuals may do whatever they please with their time and money. It is also argued that the increased tourism is steering many in the favelas away from crime as new jobs are created.⁴ The development the tourists stimulate is actually helping the underprivileged people of Brazil.⁵

Study Questions:

- a. Was it ethical for the Brazilian government to host the World Cup, when some of the public funds it used could potentially have been spent on improving the nation's education and health care systems? If not, does this mean that only nations with top-notch social services should have the privilege of hosting large international events such as the World Cup?
- b. Is it morally permissible for the affluent to spend huge sums of money on traveling and attending an event such as the World Cup, when others are living in extreme poverty?
- c. What obligations, if any, do the wealthy have to those who are not as fortunate?

¹ <http://www.cnbc.com/id/101750395#>

² <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/06/23/uk-brazil-worldcup-protests-idUKKBN0EY2NG20140623>;
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-22946736>

³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-27789775>

⁴ <http://www.theguardian.com/travel/2013/nov/04/rio-de-janeiro-brazil-favela-tourism>

⁵ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/ricardogomel/2013/01/31/eduardo-paes-rio-de-janeiros-mayor-reveals-where-the-money-is-heading-to-in-brazil-favelas/>

11. Drunken Racism

Four college friends are hanging out one night and decide to have a few drinks. None of them has much experience with alcohol. They're all having a good time until one member of the group, Molly, starts endorsing some stereotypes about a racial minority group. Her friends all tell her to stop, but this only fuels her rant; she goes on and on, her rhetoric becoming more hateful and violent. Finally, to everyone's relief, Molly passes out. The next morning, when the others confront Molly about her behavior, she says she doesn't remember any of it and assures them that her statements are not reflective of her true self. "You know me!" she says, "Of course, I don't really feel that way!"

When Molly's friends discuss her behavior amongst themselves, some differences of opinion emerge. Some of Molly's friends are angry, arguing that Molly is fully blameworthy for her drunken behavior. They want, at the very least, a heartfelt apology and show of contrition. Others, however, are not so sure, noting that usually we are only blameworthy for voluntary actions under our rational control. Still others wonder whether her real crime was simply having rather than expressing racist thoughts.

Study Questions:

- a. To what extent is Molly blameworthy for her rant? Explain.
- b. Does Molly owe the group an apology? How is the situation different if one of the friends present that night is a member of the group Molly attacked?
- c. How should Molly's friends react to her claim that her drunken words do not reflect her "true self?"
- d. Can we be blameworthy for bad thoughts that are unexpressed?

12. Eating for Free

Milan is a part-time employee at a local burrito restaurant called Ponchos. She usually works at night after her classes. Milan believes she is a good employee—she shows up on time, is polite to customers, and listens to her managers. The official policy at Ponchos states that employees, not including managers, must pay for food. Managers are allowed to eat one meal for free per day.

Milan is close friends with Kai, one of the managers. Kai is lenient with the employees about Ponchos' food policy, and sometimes lets employees, including Milan, eat for free. As a result, when the restaurant closes at night, Milan often makes herself a burrito and quesadilla without paying for them. Although Milan knows this is against the rules, she believes she is not doing anything wrong because Kai gave her permission. Milan also thinks the food she takes is compensation for not getting paid well. She also knows that leftover food is not saved but thrown directly into the garbage.

Suspecting that employees have been stealing food, Ponchos installed video cameras and announced that employees caught taking food without payment will be fired immediately. Milan is caught on tape, and is fired.

When Milan confronts Kai, who had given her permission to take the food, Kai says that when they're at work, she is a manager, not Milan's friend. Kai does not feel responsible for Milan's firing. Kai believes that Milan was aware of Poncho's policy, and consciously made the decision to keep stealing food.

Study Questions:

- a. What constitutes stealing? Is Milan stealing even when the food is going to be trashed? If Milan secretly took napkins, plastic-ware, and condiments packages instead of food, should this action be valued the same?
- b. What moral obligations do managers have to subordinates who are also their friends? Are they different from the moral obligations managers have to subordinates whom they are not friends with?
- c. It is the manager's responsibility to supervise the compliance of employee rules and ethical standards. When employees violate the rules due to unclear standards, how can ethical lapses between managers and employees be prevented or limited? Provide an example.
- d. Do restaurants have a responsibility to its employees (managers and staff) to provide a meal? Are there benefits to providing employees with free or discounted meals?¹

¹ <http://www.foodservicewarehouse.com/education/restaurant-management-and-operations/managing-employee-meals-in-the-restaurant/c28034.aspx>

13. Anti-Depressants For Mentally-Ill Animals

Your dog won't stop sleeping; he seems morose and uninterested in his usual activities. He's picked up some compulsive habits. He just doesn't seem like himself. For humans, these symptoms would be diagnosed as depression. However, for animals, depression and other mental illnesses are harder to diagnose or are not diagnosed at all. Scientists have increasingly studied mental illness within animals¹. A 2014 *Wall Street Journal* article featured a veterinarian who worked with gorillas at Boston's Franklin Park Zoo. The veterinarian found that gorillas with mood disorders were successfully treated with "human" psychiatric drugs. In fact, he found that more than half of U.S. and Canadian zoos had treated their gorillas with psychiatric drugs.²

Some argue that treating mental illness in animals is a natural extension of treating physical ailments. If an individual's dog has a broken leg, few would argue that medical treatment would be inappropriate. If that reasoning holds, treating depression or mental illness would be reasonable. In "All Animals are Equal," Peter Singer says, "If a being suffers, there can be no moral justification for refusing to take that suffering into consideration."³

Critics may argue that animals are not fully rational and autonomous beings and therefore cannot have mental illnesses in the same way humans do. Therefore, humans have no responsibility to treat these illnesses. Further, treatment of mental illnesses in humans ideally requires consent and cooperation of the patient. Critics would argue that animals cannot "consent" to treatment, and therefore ought not be treated.

Study Questions:

- a. If we assume that non-human animals are capable of having mental illnesses, should they be treated with the same diligence as human mental illness?
- b. Given that an animal cannot "consent" to taking drugs, is giving them anti-depressants an immoral act?
- c. To what extent is the moral status of non-human animals the same (or different) from the moral status of humans? In other words, how do our moral obligations to non-human animals compare to or contrast with the moral obligations to humans?
- d. How does the rationality and autonomy of a being (human or non-human animal) relate to the obligations we owe it?
- e. Considering that babies and children are not fully rational and autonomous beings, how do our obligations to babies and children compare to non-human animals?
- f. How do the interests of non-human animals compare to the interests of humans?

¹ <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/animal-emotions/201111/do-wild-animals-suffer-ptsd-and-other-psychological-disorders>

² <http://online.wsj.com/articles/when-animals-lose-their-minds-1402084124>

³ <http://www2.webster.edu/~corbetre/philosophy/animals/singer-text.html>

14. Photo-Shop Fiction

In January 2003, controversy erupted over the *GQ* magazine cover featuring Kate Winslet in which she was airbrushed and digitally-altered to look leaner. Photo-shopping in advertising has triggered strong public backlash, and as of 2011, it was denounced by the American Medical Association.¹ This medical and public opinion has spurred political action — nationally and globally. In 2009, French parliament member Valerie Boyer proposed a law that would require labels on retouched images.² That same year, political leaders tried and failed to ban all photo-shopping in the U.K.³ In 2011, the U.K.'s National Advertising Division banned retouched Maybelline and Lancome advertisements, saying the advertisements misled consumers about the cosmetic products' benefits.⁴

There are two main arguments supporting government intervention in advertising retouching. First, retouching misleads the consumer on product quality and benefits. Second, photo-shopping contributes to low self-esteem and body-image disorders.

Some critics of government regulation on photo-shopping argue that laws would intrude on a business's right to advertise its product, or on its right to free expression. Further, some critics say that individual consumers, not the government, have the responsibility to separate reality from photo-shop fiction. "We know when images are spurious — no paternalistic formal disclaimer needed," Amanda Fortini wrote in a 2010 *New York Magazine* article, "The problem isn't altered photographs; it's our failure to alter our expectations of them."

Study Questions:

- a. Do businesses, or only individuals, have a right to freedom of speech and expression?
- b. Does the right to freedom of speech and expression have any limits? If so, what kinds of limits ought there be, and how are they justified?
- c. If photo-shopping does have negative psychological effects, does the government have a duty to minimize these harms?
- d. When (if ever) does photo-shopping constitute deception? Explain.

¹ <http://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/fashion/ama-takes-stand-photoshop-medical-association-altering-contributes-unrealistic-expectations-article-1.126921>

² <http://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2009/09/france-considers-warning-label-on-photoshopped-imagery/>

³ http://nymag.com/thecut/2010/08/photoshop_retouching.html

⁴ <http://nymag.com/thecut/2011/07/julia-roberts-ad-banned.html>

15. Violence Against Bullies

Aaron, a high school student, dreaded coming to school each day because Ryan, a fellow student, bullied him. Ryan belittled and humiliated Aaron by making fun of his interests, his clothes, and his racial background. However Ryan never physically hurt Aaron. Still, the taunts began to wear Aaron down. He tried asking Ryan nicely to stop bothering him, especially about his family background, but this just made things worse. Once Ryan knew which insults stung most, he was able to demean Aaron with ruthless efficiency. Aaron contemplated soliciting the help of teachers and school administrators, but worried that doing so would be ineffective: the adults might have scolded Ryan and even handed out some minor punishments, but Aaron doubted that these measures would have made the bullying stop. In fact, Aaron imagined that this strategy might lead Ryan and others to mock him for “tattling” and “crying” for help.

One day, Aaron decided that he was going to take another kind of stand. He walked right up to Ryan in the cafeteria and punched him squarely in the face as students, who had stood by each day as Ryan bullied Aaron, looked on. In the aftermath of the punch, many of the bystanders who had been too afraid to speak out on Aaron’s behalf now felt glad that Aaron had fought back. Others, however, felt differently. “Violence is never the answer,” one teacher said. “You stooped down to his level and could have made things even worse! There’s no shame in asking for help; you should have come to me instead.”

Study Questions:

- a. Is Aaron’s punch morally permissible? Why or why not?
- b. Is it wrong for bystanders to feel happy that Aaron stood up for himself in this way?
- c. Do the consequences of the punch affect its justification? For example, if the punch succeeds in stopping the bullying, does this make a moral difference? What if the punch makes the bullying worse?

