

Climate change & Ethics???



Primer for Responsibility (from yesterday)

Foundational requirements for communicating climate change messages responsibly

- a) Ownership – do you accept the message for yourself?
- b) Justification – if put on the spot, can you defend the message?
- c) Robustness – is the message usefully robust to support a decision

Given these, what are the behavioral patterns we usually see

Some definitions:

Morals – primarily about good and bad of the foundational issues

Values – the set of principles which frame our decisions about good and bad

Ethics – is a branch of philosophy that addresses questions about morality

– a codification of values (as in: a professional set of ethics)

Some postulates:

- what we do is what we believe – our actions betray our words

- choice is conditioned by our world view and our internal passions (greed, selfishness, etc)

- our world view is in part chosen, in part conditioned

- our sense of justice is usually universal on major ethical points (e.g. pre-meditated murder, etc., to the extent an action is understood to be such)

- we differ mostly on secondary values, and tend to focus on these at the expense of the primary morals

- altruism is most readily expressed from a position of security and comfort

A major point of separation:

**Do you subscribe to
moral absolutism, or moral relativism?**

Dialogue from “Carpe Jugulum”, Terry Pratchett

“It’s not as simple as that, it’s not a black and white issue. There are so many shades of grey.”

“Nope.”

“Pardon?”

“There’s no greys, only white that’s got grubby. I’m surprised you don’t know that. And sin, young man, is when you treat people as things. Including yourself”

“It’s a lot more complicated then that---”

“No. It ain’t. When people say things are more complicated than that, they means they’re getting worried that they won’t like the truth. People as things, that’s where it starts.”

“Oh. I’m sure there are worse crimes---”

“But they starts with thinking about people as things”

Worldview: A comprehensive world view (or worldview) is the fundamental cognitive orientation of an individual or society encompassing natural philosophy, fundamental existential and normative postulates or themes, values, emotions, and ethics. (Wikipedia)

“Scientists are people of very dissimilar temperaments doing different things in very different ways. Among scientists are collectors, classifiers, and compulsive tidiers-up; many are detectives by temperament and many are explorers; some are artists and others are artisans. There are poet-scientists and philosopher-scientists and even a few mystics” – Plato, 428/427 BC – 348/347 BC

Subject	Modernism	Postmodernism	Theism
Human Nature	Humans are, purely material machines. We live in a purely physical world. Nothing exists beyond what our senses perceive.	No opinion on this issue, but suspicious of such dogmatic claims to knowledge.	Humans are the only beings on earth created in the image of God. They are spiritual and material.
Free Will (autonomy)	Humans are self-governing and free to choose their own direction	People are the product of their culture and only imagine they are self-governing.	Human free will has been drastically diminished by a moral fall from grace, but they are still responsible for the use of their remaining free will. People's desire to be autonomous is sinful--we were created to depend on God.
View of Reason	People should be "rationalistic optimists." They should depend only on the data of their senses and reason.	There is no such thing as objective rationality (i.e., reason unaffected by bias) in the sense modernists use the term. Rationalism is a myth.	Reason is necessary but not sufficient for understanding reality. Reason can disclose truth about reality, but faith and revelation are needed in addition.
View of Progress	Humankind is progressing by using science and reason.	"Progress" is a code word used by modernists to justify the domination by European culture of other cultures	Humans aren't progressing toward any glorious future. However, advances which relieve suffering and prolong life are good

Our world view strongly tailors our behavior, in particular, our attitudes to:

- individualism (is the individual more important than the group?)
- authority (who, if anyone, are we ultimately accountable to?)
- progress (are we evolving in wisdom? What is the measure of progress?)



This reflects where we are.

Most peoples perspective of current reality is 10 years behind where we are.

10 years ago we didn't even have the awareness of where we would be now.

What will our society and environment be in 2020 ... only 10 years from now!



So, in that mind set, think about the future in 2020 in groups of no more than 4 and derive answers to the following: you're not looking for consensus, so allow for differing opinions

- a) What / Who will be the primary authority?
- b) How will we communicate?
- c) Where will people live?
- d) What will be our staple food?
- e) Where will our energy come from?
- f) How will we be educated?

