
VINCENT BARRY

MORAL

ISSUES

IN 

BUSINESS

THIRD EDITION

MORAL ISSUES IN BUSINESS

Third Edition

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Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont, California
A Division of Wadsworth, Inc.

For Donna Wright

Philosophy Editor: Kenneth King
Production: Stacey C. Sawyer, San Francisco
Copy Editor: Sally Schuman
Cover: Al Burkhardt

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Printed in the United States of America

4 5 6 7 8 9 10—90 89 88

ISBN 0-534-05484-6

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Barry, Vincent E.
Moral issues in business.

Bibliography: p.
Includes index.

1. Business ethics. 2. Business ethics—Case studies. I. Title.

HF5387.B35 1985 174'.4 85-15110
ISBN 0-534-05484-6

PREFACE

Like the first two editions of *Moral Issues in Business*, this edition attempts to: (1) raise students' moral awareness level, (2) provide them with the apparatus to make moral decisions in business and nonbusiness organizations, and (3) expose them to literature dealing with organizations and social responsibility. With these goals in mind, I have tried to write a concise, lucid description of two kinds of ethical theories (consequential and nonconsequential). Each chapter describes organizational practices that can give rise to moral matters, and each includes topical, provocative essays.

Although the book's primary emphasis remains on business, its view has been broadened to include "organizational ethics" or, more simply, the kinds of moral issues that arise anywhere employers and employees come together. This widened perspective will enrich the course for both instructor and student by facilitating the inclusion of materials from diverse work settings (for example, education, health care, government, and the like).

Moral Issues in Business is composed of five parts. Part I, "Ethical Theory," considers some fundamentals of ethics, including values, moral development and reasoning, and competing moral principles. Part II, "American Business and Its Basis," examines some essential fundamentals of business: the nature of capitalism, corporations, and unions. Part III, "The Organization and the People in It," identifies and discusses a variety of moral issues that arise out of the interplay of employer and employee within the organization. Part IV, "Business and Society," focuses on three crucial business and social responsibility issues: consumerism, job discrimination, and environmentalism. Finally, Part V, "Theories of Justice," considers competing views of justice and serves as a capstone to the text. (Although this part can be read earlier—for example, in conjunction with Chapter 2 on moral principles—students seem better able to engage its highly abstract nature and appreciate its relevancy at the end rather than the beginning of their study. Also, the detailed discussion of justice is foreshadowed in Chapter 2 where the utilitarian and Kantian views of justice are compared and contrasted.)

The book's coverage has been expanded and deepened in a variety of ways. Cases play a far more important role than in previous editions. There are now 34 cases, twice as many as in the prior edition. Of these 34, 25 are true accounts and, for the most part, quite recent. Some will be familiar to the well-read student, such as the cases involving Ford's Pinto, the artificial sweetener aspartame, and Nestlé's infant formula. Others might not be: the Tavoulaareas nepotism case at Mobil, the Winans trading case at the *Wall Street Journal*, and the Storms whistle-blowing case in the U.S. Navy. Some involve life and death, as in the asbestos retrospective; others raise questions of exploitation, as in "Burger Beefs," which concerns the treatment of teenage fast-food workers. Still others make us ponder justice and fair play, as in the Supreme Court's Memphis fire fighters ruling. In addition to these formal case presentations, the book presents illustrative case material ranging from the involvement of American companies in South Africa to the health hazards of working in Northern California's "Silicon Valley" to women bringing sex discrimination suits against law firms that unfairly deny them promotions to partner. Taken together, the case material should make a lively springboard for class discussion and applying ethical concepts.

Approximately one-quarter of the book's 25 essays are new to this edition. Chapter summaries have been arranged in easy-to-understand numerical fashion. And bibliographies now contain articles as well as book references.

More specifically, this edition includes discussions of the following new topics:

Chapter 1:

- Moral and nonmoral standards
- The differences between morality and law and etiquette
- Kohlberg's theory of moral development
- Values and their sources
- The role of moral standards and facts in forming moral judgments and assessments
- A sound basis for moral judgments: logic, facts, valid moral principles

Chapter 2:

- Psychological egoism
- Utilitarianism's view of distributive justice
- Illustrated treatment of key moral principles and ethical theories
- Rule qualifications
- Key Kantian concepts

Chapter 3 (new):

- Historical background and key features of capitalism
- Underlying assumptions of the profit motive
- "Property" as implying rights and interests
- Property ownership as a "moral right"
- Adam Smith's moral justification of capitalism

Chapter 4 (new):

- Historical development of corporations
- Corporate responsibility
- Arguments for and against expanding corporate responsibility
- Corporate promotion of the common good
- Corporate moral agency
- The individual within the corporate organization
- Institutionalizing ethics within the corporation
- Historical development of unions
- Union tactics that raise moral concerns

Chapter 5:

- Fairness criteria in personnel matters
- Educational job requirements
- Fairness of disqualifying candidates who have chosen to interrupt their careers
- Nepotism in labor unions
- The role of "displacement counselors" in disciplining employees
- New health and safety hazards introduced by modern technology
- The dismantling of the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA)
- New compensation and promotion systems
- The need for redesigning work

Chapter 6:

- Recent cases involving insider trading; the difficulty of defining "insider"
- Conflicts of interest in banking
- A retrospective of international bribery by major American companies
- Multiple impacts of bribery

Chapter 7:

- The connection between “informed consent” and gathering information on employees
- Moral implications of genetic testing on the job
- Criticism of polygraphs

Chapter 8:

- Determining a just price
- “Informed consent” in establishing a just price

Chapter 9:

- Statistical and attitudinal evidence of ongoing discrimination
- The doctrine of comparable worth
- Arguments for and against comparable worth
- Arguments for and against reverse discrimination

Chapter 10:

- The dimensions of our environmental problems

I continue to be indebted to the many works that have preceded my own. My thanks to Wadsworth philosophy editor Ken King for his assistance. And I owe a special debt of gratitude to Alex Kurak of the University of Minnesota, whose recommendations helped shape the organization and content of this edition and whose unflagging loyalty has been a source of inspiration. Also, the following professors gave unselfishly to make this book a useful teaching tool: Joseph Des Jardins, Villanova University; Robert Hartman, Western Maryland College; Louis Mazzucco, University of New Haven; and John G. Thompson, University of Dayton.

Vincent Barry

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