



Ethics in Interdisciplinary and Collaborative Research

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Different Disciplinary Definitions of Ethics



“In general terms, ethics is the question of being positioned and taking up a position in relation to others. “Ethics” is derived from the Greek word *ethos*, meaning dwelling, or habitat – the place to which one returns....To belong to, and project out from an *ethos* is to take up a position in relation to others. This involves comparison, relation to what is different and to what passes before us. Taking up a position, presenting oneself, therefore requires a nonthematic awareness of temporality and location. And, the intrinsic reference point for temporality, spatial orientation and, therefore difference, is one’s body. Embodiment and ethics are inseparable insofar as we understand human existence in terms of dwelling or spatiotemporal being-in-the-world.”

Diprose, Rosalyn. 2005. A “genethics” that makes sense: Take two. *Ethics of the Body: Postconventional Challenges*. Shildrick, Margrit and Roxanne Mykitiuk (eds). Cambridge: MIT Press, pages 238-258.

 Ethics puzzles me – which is good, since I believe that if you're ever not puzzled by ethics, you're in the realm of moralism, and moralism doesn't puzzle me – it disturbs me... to me, ethics is not about a good or bad answer, or a good or bad action, so much as it is about a certain quality of an encounter.

Fortun, Michael. 2000. Experiments in ethnography and its performance. Mannvernd. Available at www.mannvernd.is.

Ethics in Feminist Science and Technology Studies

-  In an interdisciplinary and/or collaborative encounter, developing an ethical framework can be a challenge
-  Ethics is seen as the ability to respond
-  Must avoid the tendency to move from response to responsibility (not a moral position or a position of taking care)
-  Ability to respond to difference (Response-ability)

Response-Ability and an Emphasis on Everyday Practices

- 🌐 Ability to sit around a table and learn new vocabularies
- 🌐 In interdisciplinary and collaborative work, one must develop the ability to consider and respond to a set of practices that are not one's own
- 🌐 Understanding that not only does ethics influence everyday practices of scientific research, but that by developing an appreciation for specific practices, one can come to a more nuanced and meaningful engagement with ethics
- 🌐 Must learn to work with shared objects of knowledge

From Ethics to Social Justice

- 🌐 Ethics and scientific research are not discrete enterprises – they are mutually constitutive
- 🌐 Some ethical frameworks address concerns either before scientific research has commenced or after the research is completed
- 🌐 A social justice framework can create a collaborative approach to critical analysis as the research develops
- 🌐 Involves community-based and participatory research practices
- 🌐 Social justice frameworks provide a common cause

Interdisciplinary and Collaborative Group in Synthetic Biology at Emory



- 🌐 Engineering Life and Ethical Practices Course
- 🌐 Funded by the National Academies Keck Futures Initiative
- 🌐 Graduate students and faculty from Biology, Chemistry, Neuroscience, Philosophy, Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies and the Institute for Liberal Arts