

A Conversation about Communication Ethics with Josina M. Makau

How did you become interested in studying communication ethics?

As an undergraduate, I began an obsession with questions that still drive me: “What is required to make good decisions in everyday life?” “How do we know we’ve made good decisions?” “Where can we turn for reliable guidance?” And, more broadly, “What is required to live a good life?”

In using the term “good” in each of these contexts, I’m including every dimension of life, from the purely pragmatic, practical, material dimensions, to the spiritual, ethical, and philosophical. Clearly, exploration of what it means to have made a “good decision” in pursuit of a “good life” inherently encompasses all of these dimensions.

Early on, I turned to philosophy as the discipline most likely to provide the answer, or answers really, to these and related questions. I found myself attracted as well to the field of speech communication. I joined the debate team, and participated actively in forensics activities, earning a bachelor’s degree in philosophy with a minor in speech communication.

From there, I went on to graduate study in philosophy. When I entered UCLA as a graduate student in 1972, the majority of nationally recognized philosophy departments embraced versions of the western analytic philosophical paradigm. Most faculty in prominent programs at that time shared René Descartes’s view that, in the absence of certainty, humanity would be left with arbitrariness as our only option. Unwilling to accept arbitrariness and its grave consequences in human affairs, philosophy faculty sought pathways to certainty.

With this framework as a guide, philosophers at UCLA applied mathematical principles to a variety of contexts. For example, when studying philosophy of language and linguistics, we applied a sentential calculus. When exploring ethics, we were encouraged to pursue de-ontic logic. We studied modal logic as a resource for epistemological inquiry. This work was extraordinarily interesting and engaging. As philosophers today have become increasingly aware, however, these pursuits offer little practical guidance for ethical and effective decision making in daily life. Indeed, ironically, pursuing the path of logical positivism has a tendency to foster a sense of cynicism regarding the possibility of identifying (or developing) viable guidelines for ethical reflection and practice.

By the end of my first year of graduate study, I became acquainted with the work of Chaïm Perelman and Stephen Toulmin, philosophers who had

mined ancient rhetorical and philosophical texts in pursuit of insights into *practical reasoning*. Rejecting Cartesian dualism, Perelman, Toulmin and other “New Rhetoricians” sought an alternative paradigm.

Excited by the possibilities of this work, I entered UC-Berkeley’s graduate program in Rhetoric. It was wonderful to read Kenneth Burke, Wayne Booth, Stephen Toulmin, Chaïm Perelman, and others whose writing explored such practical questions as “How do we come together to solve the important questions of the day?” “How do we avoid another Holocaust?” “How do we work together as humans to resolve the complex issues confronting us as a human family?” “What are the key elements of reasonableness, and how does this differ from rationality?”

It was wonderful, in particular, to study argumentation theory because here I found a marriage between the ancient field of rhetoric, on the one hand, and contemporary philosophical inquiry on the other. Argumentation theory provided fertile ground for interdisciplinary explorations of ethical and effective decision making in practical contexts.

Stephen Toulmin and Chaïm Perelman identified legal reasoning as a particularly fruitful field of inquiry. Here, they suggested, we had the promise of finding the integration of “rule-based” reasoning applied contextually. Following their counsel, and using argumentation theory as my tool, I studied Supreme Court reasoning. As the highest court in a land which prides itself in living by the rule of law, I reasoned, the United States Supreme Court holds the promise of providing guidelines (and perhaps even principles) for making sound practical decisions. I followed this course of study for more than a decade and learned a great deal.

During the course of this study, I began to notice that most students of rhetoric appeared interested primarily in using rhetoric to its fullest potential as a means for persuasion. They embraced Aristotle’s view of rhetoric as the art of finding, in any given case, all the available means of persuasion. However, they appeared to part company with Aristotle in his quest for applying rhetorical insights in pursuit of *phronesis*.

It soon became apparent to me that my focus on discerning guidelines for ethical and effective decision making fell well outside the “mainstream” of rhetorical studies. At the same time, I found myself increasingly disturbed and discouraged by the adversarial nature of scholarly work in the Academy. Colloquia with great promise for shared exploration of complex theoretical and practical issues felt more like “contests” with highly invested participants “staking ground” (intellectually and professionally). Safe and inviting

spaces for scholarly exchanges were rare. Little attention, if any, was given to exploring the ethical, “real-world” consequences to others of embracing proposed perspectives.

Fortunately, the UC-Berkeley Rhetoric doctoral program included a required demonstration of competency in two selected fields outside the department. My selected outside fields—Law and Philosophy—yielded invaluable resources to address my concerns. Through extensive research into judicial reasoning, I was able to develop a deliberative model integrating the strengths of rhetorical inquiry with those of philosophical study. Berkeley’s doctoral program also provided strong pedagogical training in rhetoric and composition to graduate teaching associates. Experience in this program proved invaluable to my development as an educator.

Upon completion of my doctorate, I joined the Ohio State University Communication Department faculty. Among my primary responsibilities were development of an undergraduate program in argumentation theory and practice, a pre-law program, and related graduate programming. I was responsible as well for administering the university’s “Pro and Con” program. Provided nearly complete autonomy in each of these assignments, I had the opportunity to develop and implement a cooperative model of argumentation pedagogy aligned with the judicial model of reasoning I had crafted earlier.

Shortly after beginning this work, I saw an announcement in *Spectra* regarding development of a national communication ethics commission. Here, I thought, is the marriage; in the study of communication ethics, we have the opportunity to bring it all together. I responded to the ad with enthusiasm.

At about the same time, the *Journal of Communication* published a special issue on “Ferment in the Field.” Articles in this provocative and insightful issue featured explorations of important differences between administrative and managerial communication programs on the one hand, and those embracing critical research and pedagogical models on the other. At my home campus, Ohio State University, the Women’s Studies program was providing faculty an invaluable series of workshops exploring related issues across the humanities and social sciences. Each session introduced us to insights from feminist scholars and researchers in ethnic studies. It was an extraordinary learning opportunity, one I will always remember with gratitude.

These and related experiences nurtured in me a deep and abiding interest in communication ethics. Since then, the opportunity to engage in this study and to teach in this area has been among my greatest passions and joys. It's difficult for me to imagine a more important and worthwhile endeavor for someone driven by lifelong pursuit of guidelines for responsible and effective decision making and for living well.

How do you define communication ethics?

On the surface, this would seem a simple question. And yet so much is potentially conveyed by these terms. I don't have a singular definition. For example, I have taught courses in communication ethics for about 25 years. Some aspects of the coursework change routinely, but there are some elements that have changed very little. Among the latter is recognition that every act of communication has central to it a fundamental ethical component—or perhaps I should put that in the plural, ethical components. Even the decision to smile or not to smile when encountering a stranger on the street has an ethical dimension in the sense that the act is imbued with choice, has consequences to others, reflects our values, and supports a perspective on responsible and responsive communication. How we interact nonverbally with every person we meet, and all other acts of communication every moment of every day of our lives reflect and enact ethical choices. In this sense, all communication has an inherently ethical element. When speaking of the ethics of communication, this comes to mind for me.

Another “constant” is the fact that communication is an inherently key element of living well together. That's where what some people have called “the communicative ethic” is particularly salient, and I'm deeply interested in that as well.

Then there are institutional and structural elements implied by the words “communication ethics.” In light of today's global context, for example, I'm increasingly committed to studying about and teaching media ethics and its partner, media literacy, because it strikes me that we live in an age where increasingly the narratives embraced by the public through consumption of media are instrumental to public policy. But the influence doesn't stop here.

Recently, several colleagues and I were discussing what's going on in many middle and high schools today, the way in which young people are interacting with one another, sometimes in potentially destructive ways. Following our discussion, I asked myself, where do today's youngsters learn

their habits of communication? I think it would be fair to say that mass media play a significant role. On average, children in the United States spend more time “taking in” media images, sounds, and stories than interacting with their parents, teachers, friends, or classmates. In such a context, studying and teaching communication ethics must (of necessity) entail thoughtful attention to mass media production, distribution, and consumption. Similarly, fostering media literacy is an important responsibility for parents and educators in today’s world.

Finally, the graduate school experiences alluded to earlier helped inform my understanding of and commitment to communication ethics. From my perspective, exploring, developing, and applying insights regarding conditions for ethical and effective dialogue are key to studying and teaching communication ethics.

I see “communication ethics” as covering a broad array of issues, questions, and ultimately, pursuit of guidelines. Included is the quest for guidelines, norms, or principles for ethical production, dissemination, and consumption of mass-mediated communication. Narrative ethics, the ethics of interpersonal communication, guidelines for intercultural and cross-cultural communication, principles for ethical uses of technology, dialogic ethics, and much more are included as well. In contrast, the term “communication ethic” is a useful shorthand for each of the many paradigms and frameworks proposed as foundational resources for these pursuits.

Do you understand philosophical ethics as distinct from communicative ethics?

The marriage of rhetoric, dialectic, and logic has been a guiding force in my work for more than three decades. While on the one hand, I appreciate and value discussions of differences between these fields and inquiries—and I have participated in such explorations throughout my academic life—I have found integrative work the most satisfying and fruitful. In terms of the relationship of philosophical ethics to communicative ethics in particular, I believe that each is interdependent upon the other.

For example, the philosopher in me is very interested in such foundational epistemological questions as: “How do we know?” “How do we know we know?” “Are there differences between opinion and knowledge, belief and fact, appearance and reality, and if so how can we discern these differences?” “What is truth?” “Is there such a thing?” “If so, what are the most

reliable sources and pathways to its discovery (or invention)?” “What is wisdom?” “How does one acquire wisdom?” From my perspective, epistemic inquiries of this kind are key to pursuit of reliable *grounds* for moral knowledge. Similarly, I am keenly interested in such ethical questions as: “What is right action?” “What is more or less important?” “What are the most reliable grounds for our judgments about right, wrong, good, bad, in any given context?” Ethical inquiries of this kind are key to ethical action.

As Seyla Benhabib and so many others have shown, however, such inquiries depend upon our willingness and capacity to confront the following core issue: “How do we negotiate our differences ethically, effectively, and justly?” Addressing this issue requires exploration and application of the principles and methods afforded by communication ethics (more specifically, “communicative ethics”). Conversely, resolution of this issue provides invaluable (critical) resources for philosophical ethics.

From my perspective, we can most meaningfully engage such inquiries when rhetorical theory, studies of narrative and story telling, literary theory, aesthetics, cultural studies, meta-ethical inquiry, political theory, psychology, women’s studies, ethnic studies, and philosophical inquiry come together. I’m gratified to see more and more of this kind of interdisciplinary, cross-disciplinary, and trans-disciplinary dialogue and scholarship today.

How would you characterize the integration of communication ethics, philosophy, and law in your work?

My early studies in philosophy of law and legal reasoning introduced me to the importance of communication ethics. Conversely, studying communication ethics has deepened my insight into sound deliberations in legal and related practical contexts.

During the past decade, much of my work has focused on exploring how people who hold fundamentally different perspectives and come from very different backgrounds and interests can come together and contribute meaningfully to their own and each other’s reasoning about critical issues of the day. Few would deny that we face deeply complex and significant issues today. In the United States and across the globe, the human family faces compelling problems. Among these, are urgent challenges associated with growing socio-economic divides and poverty, injustice and inequality, environmental issues, terrorism, auto-immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and other pandemics, corporate control of information, corruption of public

servants, abuses of technology, nuclear proliferation, and the terrible tragedy of war.

The need to connect two different facets of communication ethics—(i) developing guidelines for reasoned deliberations and (ii) fostering conditions for living well together—is more urgent today than ever before. I must confess, however, that the interdependent nature of these two diverse areas of study has only recently become apparent to me. The best way I can explain is to share a story.

One day after working for many months on our book, *Cooperative Argumentation*, Debian Marty and I confronted a difficult moment. Speaking candidly, Debian shared that she had concerns regarding the drafts I'd sent her. I replied with similar candor regarding her contributions. It soon became apparent that neither of us could understand the direction the other proposed to take. You can imagine the intensity of this moment! We had come to the realization that our collaborative effort was not working; we would need to abandon the project.

Several soul-searching hours later we experienced an epiphany. We realized that we had been writing two different books. I had assumed we were writing a volume designed to foster reasoned decision making, my obsession. She had assumed we were writing a book designed to foster conditions for living well together, her obsession. Ordinarily, these would be quite different projects. In all of our training—hers predominately in communication and women's studies and mine predominately in rhetoric and philosophy—we'd never been exposed to a marriage between these pursuits. People either studied practical reasoning or they studied how to live well together; they didn't study both simultaneously. Suddenly, however, it occurred to us that one depends upon the other. Living well together is a prerequisite for reasoning well together and vice versa. From the moment we made this discovery on, our book project flowed.

That experience has helped shaped our most recent work. Today, with our colleagues at California State University-Monterey Bay, we are moved by the commitment to explore how we as members of the human family, who cherish one another's differences, who treasure them, who see difference as a resource, can come together and make meaning together, and hear one another, and learn together; how we can come together to foster peace and prosperity and justice together. That's been our great commitment. We're fortunate because we work on a campus with rich diversity. That makes our work so exciting and rewarding, and it affords us invaluable

opportunities to learn in ways we never might have imagined, which of course then re-enforces our appreciation for difference as an invaluable resource for the human family.

For me personally, the work had always been about using communication ethically and effectively in order to come together to make reasoned just, fair, equitable decisions. Today, I understand that using communication ethically and effectively to live well together is central to this pursuit.

What are your thoughts about a universal communication ethic?

I find this a deeply engaging and complex question. On the one hand, the human family today has greater access to cross-cultural values and guidelines for ethical communication than ever before. Consider, for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This remarkable document acknowledges basic rights to dignity and to freedom of thought and expression for people across cultural boundaries. The fact that this document has been reaffirmed by more than 140 sovereign nations fifty years after its first publication reflects the promise of shared commitments to common values. Similarly, truthfulness, honesty, caring and compassionate communication, and commitments to fairness and justice are among many qualities of communication granted presumption across cultural boundaries. Common ground in these and related areas offers promise for those pursuing a universal communication ethic. I find this a deeply hopeful condition.

At the same time, however, efforts to “universalize” are laden with risk. History is replete with the grave consequences of efforts to generalize the values, beliefs, and behaviors of the “ruling class” upon all other groups. In this age of surveillance, corporate control of information, and increased economic and political control by a small and overwhelmingly powerful elite, such efforts have greater potential for harm than ever. Thus, while I embrace the promises associated with pursuit of a “universal communication ethic,” I join others who admonish caution in these endeavors.

How do the challenges that postmodernity presents affect argumentation and living together?

Postmodern studies have unmasked long-standing privileges, structured relations of inequality, and related relations of power. These invaluable insights have raised critical questions for all students of communication ethics. Simultaneously, technological proliferation, along with unparalleled

demographic shifts, dramatically affects the communication landscape. Together, these factors profoundly affect argumentation and living well together.

Consider, for example, that someone reading the Sunday *New York Times* this week has access to more information than an educated person in the Middle Ages encountered in his or her entire lifetime. And then consider that the information accessible today is likely to seem miniscule within a decade, because it's growing exponentially. This factor alone has significant consequences for communication ethics theory, practice, and pedagogy. At the same time, consider the implications of unparalleled opportunities for cross-cultural interaction. People from radically diverse backgrounds find themselves sharing geographic space for the first time in human history. Demographic shifts across the globe are reshaping communities in ways previously unimagined. Linguistic, religious, ethnic, and other cultural boundaries are being shattered further in cyberspace as people access the Internet and share perspectives with one another.

On the one hand, such a richly diverse communication context offers the hope of democratization of information and knowledge as never before. At the same time, however, the corporatization of media controlled by a smaller and smaller group of transnationals, and the accompanying corporatization of the Academy pose significant challenges. In such a context, we face unparalleled risks of hegemony and tyranny across the globe. As George Gerbner once noted, "those who control the stories of the culture, control the culture." When such a large share of the globe's population receives its "news" of the world from a single, corporate source, we cannot ignore the power of the source's narrative to shape our destiny.

Meanwhile, technological "advances" in communications and related technologies provide powerful resources for potential manipulation of the public. At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, for example, technologists have developed machines enabling bureaucrats to prepare a "video" recording in which a person is shown making statements he or she never made. The "image" and "sound" mixtures are so "real" that sophisticated audiences are unable to discern the misrepresentation. In the arts and humanities, new genres "mixing" documentary and creative expressive arts are becoming widely embraced. Docu-dramas, historical novels, and related artifacts are commonplace in popular culture.

Coupled with research exposing relationships of power to knowledge acquisition and dissemination, these circumstances call upon students of

communication ethics to re-engage basic questions. In such a context questions such as, “What is truth?” “What is the relationship of narrative to truth?” “What is the relationship of truth to power?” “What distinguishes perception from reality, belief from knowledge?” and “How do we know?” pose especially salient challenges.

Guidelines for interaction become at once more compelling and more complex (and difficult) in such an environment. Such a time calls for deep reflection, and for concern. But it’s also a fantastic time. We’re hearing stories from people whose voices we have never been heard. That is so beautiful! That is so exciting! Imagine the insights, wisdom, and knowledge available to us in ways our grandparents never dreamed. In comparison, our ancestors had a very limited store of stories, if you will. And our children’s children are going to have access to even more.

Demographic shifts are especially rich with opportunity. How wonderful that people who have never before had a chance to encounter one another’s ideas, thoughts, ways of being, knowing, and valuing now can communicate with one another. The combination of demographic shift and technological proliferation holds so much potential.

At the same time, however, unless moral progress keeps up with technological progress, the human family will face serious dangers. We’re already seeing ethnic strife and related tragedies. Sissela Bok points out that more people died as a result of military violence in the 20th century than in all the preceding centuries since the Roman Empire. More than 70% of those deaths were civilian. When you think about that, it’s overwhelming. As she points out, and I agree with her, this is a time when we have to think deeply and at a fundamental level. We have to ask the most basic questions over again: “Who are we as a species?” “What are our obligations to one another?” “How can we live well together?” Communication ethics is absolutely at the core of such critical reflection. How we communicate across our differences will make a profound difference in how we ask and answer those questions in my view.

How does a person communicate ethically if he or she is deliberating with someone who holds a different perspective?

This question addresses the heart of my current research and teaching. I am deeply moved by and interested in this inquiry. One relevant contribution that has surfaced in the last several decades, that I have so deeply appreci-

ated, is recognition of the critical role that emotion plays in reasoning. Martha Nussbaum's wonderful book *Upheavals of Thought* is especially illuminating. Although Aristotle, a number of Eastern, Meso-American, African, and other figures in the history of ideas recognized the importance of emotion to deliberation, the fields of philosophy and rhetoric have not made effective use of these potential resources for several generations. Fortunately, during the last decade exploration of this topic has resurfaced in the field.

Exploration into the role of emotion in reasoned deliberation and community building reveals that the heart is extraordinarily important in addressing the question you've raised. If you and I are going to engage in meaningful dialogue, we are going to have to open our hearts. Closed hearts imperil the process, creating impenetrable barriers to meaningful dialogue.

You and Ron Arnett have made valuable contributions in your book on *Dialogic Civility* as well. The notion that we must come together with a basic sense of mutual respect and regard if we are to reach across our differences meaningfully is a critical starting point. Of course, as we can all concede, this is often very difficult.

My colleagues often confront me with a related concern. When I speak of ethical engagement across differences, they often challenge the practicality and wisdom of my perspective. They say such things as, "Josina be real. Do you live in the real world?" The irony is they see me in so many situations that are, let's just say, very "challenging." They have to know I live in the real world—I was a dean! Others who have served as deans will attest that you cannot be a successful dean in any sense of the word and live in a fantasy world.

From my perspective, I don't lose or risk anything *that matters*, and that's the key here, *that matters* by opening my heart to you. Don't get me wrong. I risk a great deal. It's terrifying. It's scary. I risk a great deal, but not what matters—which is that the two of us have a capacity to connect, to reason well together, to serve the public good to the best of our ability, to figure out what that means, to work together, to cross our differences. Opening my heart is the only way I can contribute. Now you may not choose to. I can't control that, but I can control what I do. I understand, of course, that there are limits to that. I don't want you to misunderstand me. There are walls and barriers that are decidedly impenetrable, but it strikes me that we have to at least start by *trying*. That to me is central to addressing the concern you've raised—opening one's heart. A genuine coming to our encounter with

love in our hearts and with the true desire, the true will to serve the public good, whatever that might be.

As a young person I was in competitive debate—and I’ll confess I loved it—but I was disturbed early on by the realization of what was being fostered by that format. My fellow participants and I were taught to listen to others’ presentations for loopholes, weaknesses, to win. I didn’t listen primarily to gain insight. And in talking with fellow participants, I realized they didn’t either. We were never consciously brutal; we didn’t think that it would be worth any trophy to be mean. But I’ll be honest with you, we were very happy to win. And if we could find a “weakness” in our “opponents” presentations, we would seize it, not in pursuit of knowledge, truth, justice, or understanding, but in pursuit of the trophy.

In sum, our communication was not motivated primarily with the goal of learning. It was not driven primarily with the goal of understanding. We listened to others only insofar as we needed in order to get “one-up” on the other person. That was a primary lesson of our participation.

I did a lot of reading after that and paid close attention to the strategies that forensics students across the nation were taught. I want to be very clear. I absolutely understand that students in competitive debate programs learn many important skills. I want to stress that I know that; I was there. I participated. It’s absolutely true, but it’s at a very high cost in my view.

There is another way to teach advocacy and related critical thinking skills, within a different framework, within a different paradigm. That’s where studying the Supreme Court helped. Here’s what I mean.

Being a jurist requires, in the ideal sense, pursuing the *truth* and pursuing *justice*. I use those terms loosely, understanding the complexities. It seems clear, however, that a jurist’s job, to the best of his or her ability, is to make the best possible decision given all the available information.

Fulfilling this responsibility requires jurists to listen well. Advocates play an absolutely critical role in this process. Speaking passionately on behalf of views you honestly embrace is vital to the pursuit of truth and justice. I subscribe to this view fully, and I teach it in my argumentation classes. However, epistemological humility is also key. Imagining at least the possibility that we are wrong enables us to contribute most fully to the pursuit of truth and justice. That’s where cooperative argumentation becomes so vital. What if, in the course of our dialogue, you say something I had never considered? Without listening attentively, this invaluable insight would have slipped by me completely. I would never have had the advantage of

learning from you, and would have limited my capacity to serve the community well as a result.

John Stuart Mill offered these insights long ago in his book *On Liberty*. For all of its challenges, and it has many, this work nevertheless has much of value to say to us. Mill reminds us of the reasons freedom of speech and expression are so important. As he suggests, everyone has the potential to contribute something meaningful to everyone else. If we shut the communication process down, if we don't hear one another, we risk losing access to some measure of truth, some measure of insight, some measure of wisdom.

Do you view cooperative argumentation as a more ethical way of communicating than competitive argumentation?

I'm not sure I'd say one is inherently more ethical. I would say, however, that one is more likely than the other to foster conditions for communicating ethically and effectively across differences, for collaborating in pursuit of reasoned and just solutions to complex problems, for pursuing knowledge, truth, and mutual understanding, and for building community. Additionally, in the classroom, one is also more likely than the other to facilitate development of the skills and dispositional traits associated with ethical reflection and practice. Let me explain.

Cooperative argumentation pedagogy is designed, among other things, to foster empathic and critical listening skills, mutual respect, a sense of reciprocity, critical self-reflection, balanced partiality, moral imagination, epistemological humility, accountability, and a shared commitment to working together in pursuit of reasoned and just resolutions for critical issues. Dialogue is understood as a commitment to hear and be heard, to communicate *with*, rather than "at," "for," or "to" others on this model. Cooperative argumentation fosters the "I-Thou" relationship explored by Martin Buber, Dick Johanssen, Ron Arnett, and so many others in our field. Through cooperative argumentation pedagogy, students learn to distinguish critical judgment from cynicism. They become intimately acquainted with standpoint epistemology and experience first-hand the value of reciprocal commitments to fairness in communicative action. They develop community building and cross-cultural communication competencies. And they develop knowledge, skills, and abilities critical to ethical and effective resolution of conflict across cultural boundaries.

In sum, through this pedagogical paradigm, students are empowered with knowledge, skills, and abilities for ethical reflection and practice in everyday life. My personal experiences and research lead me to believe that models privileging manipulation of others in pursuit of a prize, trophy, or other “success” fail to offer similar promise in fostering such basic dialogic virtues and skills.

For these and related reasons, I believe that cooperative argumentation pedagogy holds greater promise in equipping students with the resources they will need to live virtuous, meaningful, successful, and fulfilling lives in the multicultural, interdependent world they will encounter in the 21st century.

In addressing themes in your scholarship, you’ve mentioned several writers. Are there other works that you would recommend to scholars of communication ethics?

What a wonderful, but difficult question; there are so many valuable resources available! Apart from books alluded to in my responses to earlier questions, let me name a few interdisciplinary, multicultural resources outside of the “mainstream” that I’ve found especially helpful.

For a resource rich with insight into “communicative ethics,” I recommend Seyla Benhabib’s *Situating the Self*. Benhabib’s insights into dialogic virtues and skills and related explorations of the “concrete vs. the generalizable other” are especially illuminating.

Renato Rosaldo’s *Culture and Truth* thoughtfully addresses related issues in social analysis. His explorations into the nature of truth, objectivity, narrative, and culture are especially valuable for contemporary studies of communication ethics.

Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres’s *The Miner’s Canary* explores relationships between race, power, culture, and communication. The authors’ insights are potentially invaluable to students of communicative ethics.

Focusing specifically on pedagogical issues, *Teaching to Transgress* by bell hooks considers education as “the practice of freedom.” In this book, hooks contributes invaluable to explorations of ethical issues related to instructional communication.

Earlier I mentioned Martha Nussbaum’s *Upheavals of Thought*, a book I strongly recommend for communication ethics scholars. Another of her contributions is *Cultivating Humanity*. This book explores issues related to

Socratic dialogue, the role of reason in ethics, dialogic virtues, narrative imagination, and the relationship of communication to liberal education.

Cliff Christians and Michael Traber's edited volume, *Communication Ethics and Universal Values*, contributes valuably as well. Chapters by diverse authors explore critical issues in evolving relationships among principles, norms, values and culture related specifically to communicative action.

Another valuable contribution to the field is Sharon Bracci and Cliff Christians's *Moral Engagement in Public Life*. Authors in this volume share reflections regarding the applicability of diverse theoretical frameworks in the face of postmodern challenges.

For communication ethics scholars and educators seeking a highly practical work, I recommend Sissela Bok's *Lying*. Written several decades ago, the examples may seem "outdated" to many readers. At the same time, however, Bok's exploration of the Principle of Veracity contributes valuably to our understanding of the nature, role, and limits of veracity in diverse communication contexts that are as applicable (and urgently needed) today as ever before.

Mary Field Belenky et al.'s *Women's Ways of Knowing* offers insights into diverse epistemological and pedagogical paradigms. Communication ethics scholars and educators will find a wealth of knowledge (pardon the pun!) directly relevant to the field in this volume.

There are so many, many other resources available. In the interest of time and space, however, I will close by mentioning a book I've found especially valuable for teaching. In *Ethics for the New Millennium*, the Dalai Lama thoughtfully explores the implications of interdependence to ethical reflection and practice. His explorations into the nature of wise discernment, the role of emotions in ethical and effective deliberations, cross-cultural communication and understanding, virtue ethics, and the development of cross-cultural secular guidelines for ethical reflection and practice are especially useful for today's classroom. Communication ethics scholars and educators will find a wealth of insight here.

What challenges do we face regarding communication ethics in a time of postmodernity?

In many ways, today's challenges mirror those confronting the ancients. Problems of demagoguery, issues related to deception and truthfulness, the

purposes of communication, guidelines for ethical communication, grounds for moral knowledge, and related epistemological and ethical issues have changed little throughout the ages.

Similarly, today as during most previous eras, philosophers, dialecticians, and rhetoricians continue to grapple with how to find an ethical balance between pursuit of personal values and interests on the one hand, and pursuit of shared goals and service to the community on the other.

“Are there timeless, a-contextual, universal guidelines for ethical communication, or is all moral knowledge socially constructed?” “What is the most reliable means for discerning or discovering guidelines for ethical communication?” “Where can we turn for reliable *grounds* for ethical justification?” “How do we most reliably negotiate differences between diverse ethical frameworks?” “Is ethics moribund?” “Is ethics simply a tool of those in power designed to hold sway and control over the masses?” “What distinguishes cynicism from critical judgment?” “How can we best discern differences between appearance and reality?” “Does the latter exist independently of human experience?” “When ‘facts’ and ‘Truth’ appear incompatible, which should prevail in ethical reflection and practice?”

Although these questions have changed little over the ages, the human condition has changed dramatically. In this age of ubiquitous media, technological surveillance and potential abuses of technology, global information access, weapons of mass destruction, corporate control of the media and, increasingly in the Academy as well, corruption of public servants, and global interdependence, these questions carry greater complexity and significance. Reframed for the contemporary context, we face especially compelling and complex challenges.

For example, “Given the human condition as we experience it today, how can we best acknowledge, honor, respect, and embrace the rich diversity of cultures co-existing in today’s interdependent world without sacrificing commitment to such cross-cultural ideals as justice, fairness, compassion, love, truthfulness, and moral courage?” “What are the strengths and limits of personal experience in ‘grounding’ guidelines for ethical communication?” “What about cross-cultural dialogue?” “What are its strengths and limits in ‘grounding’ guidelines for ethical communication?” “What are the strengths and limits of modern scientific inquiry in pursuing knowledge, truth and understanding about ethical and effective communication across cultural boundaries?” “How do we distinguish between more or less reliable narratives?” “Whose voices can and must be heard in pursuit of

knowledge, truth, and understanding, justice, and peace, and how can we insure their inclusion in public dialogue and deliberation?” “What are the strengths and limits of free expression in this age of technology?” “To what and to whom are advocates for just causes morally responsible?” “Under what circumstances, if any, do the ends justify the means in public advocacy?” “Whose interests and rights should be privileged in the enforcement of guidelines for responsible public communication?” “What values should drive our uses of technology?” “Whose interests and rights should be privileged in policies related to technological development, access, and use?” “Whose interests, rights, and values should be privileged in communication pedagogy?”

More than ever, humanity’s place in the future will rest upon how we confront these challenges and the opportunities associated with them. It is difficult to imagine a more fertile ground for exploration, a more dynamic and exciting time for communication ethicists, or a more compelling responsibility.

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