

# The Morass of Sam Harris's Moral Landscape

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*The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values* by Sam Harris, a best-selling atheist, argues for an objective ethics consistent with his materialist outlook.<sup>2</sup> Written in an engaging style with many concrete examples of ethically charged behavior, Harris conveys his case passionately. He argues that moral truths exist, can be scientifically understood and we determine such ethical values through the consequences of actions.<sup>3</sup> It is surprising to find a ringing diatribe against ethical relativism from an atheist. Most of his examples of unethical actions are indeed repulsive, e.g., the Taliban's treatment of women,<sup>4</sup> forcing such women to wear burqas,<sup>5</sup> the genital mutilation of girls<sup>6</sup> and child molestation.<sup>7</sup> He blasts the Taliban and scrapes at the open wound of the Roman Catholic Church child sexual abuse scandal.<sup>8</sup> The range of child abuse offenses "terminates in absolute evil."<sup>9</sup> In light of these examples, ethical relativism blushes or hides.

Another strength of this book is a well-informed, copiously annotated discussion of his thesis in relation to neuroscience, a field in which Harris holds a Ph.D. from UCLA. This along with his rhetorical force through lurid and sometimes sickening examples makes this book a compelling read in many respects. It will be persuasive to some, no doubt. On the anxious bench of atheism,

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<sup>2</sup> Sam Harris, (New York: Free Press, 2010), 308 pages. Versions I have used include the audio book (which Harris narrates) (Unabridged, Audible Audio Edition published by Simon & Schuster, 2010), as well the paperback and the Kindle editions in my preparation of this paper.

<sup>3</sup> He considers himself a moral realist (moral claims are not just emotional in nature, but are true or false) and consequentialist (that morality is judged by the results of actions in this case on the well-being of conscious persons), 62.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., 37, 65, 74, 212, 223, and 223.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., 27, 43, 45, 65, 223, and 307.

<sup>6</sup> E.g., 20, 27, 46, 300, and 307.

<sup>7</sup> On 96, he uses a particularly graphic example, prefaced by, "While I am reluctant to traffic in the details of these crimes, I fear that speaking in abstractions may obscure the underlying reality," 95.

<sup>8</sup> "Consider the Catholic Church: an organization which advertises itself as the greatest force for good and as the only true bulwark against evil in the universe. Even among non-Catholics, its doctrines are widely associated with the concepts of 'morality' and 'human values.' However, the Vatican is an organization that excommunicates women for attempting to become priests but does not excommunicate male priests for raping children. It excommunicates doctors who perform abortions to save a mother's life—even if the mother is a nine-year-old girl raped by her stepfather and pregnant with twins—but it did not excommunicate a single member of the Third Reich for committing genocide," 34.

<sup>9</sup> Harris, 218.

a few have already walked the aisle and signed the card. Fellow materialist, Richard Dawkins once brazenly thundered, “life has no higher purpose than to perpetuate the survival of DNA...life has no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference.”<sup>10</sup> However, after a few verses of Harris leading “Just as I Am” - Dawkins is singing a different tune: I once was blind, but now I see. Dawkins now confesses, “I was one of those who had unthinkingly bought into the hectoring myth that science can say nothing about morals. The Moral Landscape has changed all that for me.”<sup>11</sup>

If this book has converted Dawkins, might it persuade those whose chief refuge in religion is the grounding of the moral law in God? This book presents a formidable challenge for Christians relating to our apologetical task. One of the well-worn arguments frequently employed in the defense of the faith is that without God there is no objective basis for ethics. Sometimes this is presented as the *argumentum ad Hitlerium* - “So if there’s no God, why was Hitler wrong?” Just throw out this apologetical teargas and moral relativists start gasping for societal convention and breaths of the “greatest possible good” (utilitarian) ethics.

### **Summary of the Argument**

Harris does not admit to a “subjective” ethical standard, nor a simple social convention. He seeks to build a case for an objective ethics through defining what is morally good as human well-being.<sup>12</sup>

I will argue, however, that questions about values – about meaning, morality, and life’s larger purpose – are really questions about the well-being of conscious creatures. Values, therefore, translate into facts that can be scientifically understood: regarding positive and negative social emotions, retributive impulses, the effects of specific laws and social institutions on human relationships, the neurophysiology of happiness and suffering, etc. The most important of these facts are bound to transcend culture -- just as facts about physical and mental health do. Cancer in the highlands of Guinea is still cancer . . . I will argue, compassion is still compassion, and well-being is still well-being.<sup>13</sup>

Like a landscape with mountain peaks and valleys corresponding to peaks of human well-being or valley’s of human misery, he urges that this well-being may be objectively known. Science can discover the knowledge of human well-being since our good can be understood through the scientific disciplines of medicine and neuroscience, psychology and other kinds of empirical investigations. Correct answers to ethical questions may be found in no other inquiry than a scientific inquiry. So far from this is the claim that a god is necessary for ethics, he rehearses

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<sup>10</sup> River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 83.

<sup>11</sup> Cited here:[http://www.samharris.org/site/full\\_text/the-moral-landscape](http://www.samharris.org/site/full_text/the-moral-landscape)

<sup>12</sup> He also makes various qualifications about conscious beings of other types if there be such, but for assessing his argument “human well-being = morally good” is to the point.

<sup>13</sup> Harris, 1.

how religion(s) is often a source of human misery and thus “evil,” rather than what is objectively good.<sup>14</sup>

For example, Harris mercilessly excoriates the Roman Catholic Church with his commentary on pedophile priests.<sup>15</sup>

The evidence suggests that the misery of these children was facilitated and concealed by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church at every level, up to and including the prefrontal cortex of the current pope. In his former capacity as Cardinal Ratzinger, Pope Benedict personally oversaw the Vatican’s response to reports of sexual abuse in the Church. What did this wise and compassionate man do upon learning that his employees were raping children by the thousands? Did he immediately alert the police and ensure that the victims would be protected from further torments? One still dares to imagine such an effulgence of basic human sanity might have been possible, even within the Church. On the contrary, repeated and increasingly desperate complaints of abuse were set aside, witnesses were pressured into silence, bishops were praised for their defiance of secular authority, and offending priests were relocated only to destroy fresh lives in unsuspecting parishes. It is no exaggeration to say that for decades (if not centuries) the Vatican has met the formal definition of a criminal organization devoted – not to gambling, prostitution, drugs, or any other venal sin – but to the sexual enslavement of children.<sup>16</sup>

To the redefinition of goodness and the rhetoric against religion, Harris also enhances his position by arguing that there is a social dimension to human well-being which requires an average or aggregate or total calculation of “maximizing the well-being of a population.”<sup>17</sup> While not strictly defining this he invokes this to limit privatized experiences of human well-being.<sup>18</sup> To illustrate his limitation consider this example from Harris:<sup>19</sup> Suppose you are in the waiting room of a physician who recognizes that five other patients need your organs to live. In this case wouldn’t it increase the aggregate of human well-being to sacrifice you? In this kind of case Harris explains that the kind of world in which unsuspecting patients are killed to have their organs harvested would not be a world which has greater well-being. In this way he evokes the

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<sup>14</sup> See the examples of Islam and the Catholic priest child sex scandal cited above.

<sup>15</sup> The discussion begins on 215ff, citing the Irish Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (CICA).

<sup>16</sup> Harris, 216.

<sup>17</sup> Harris, 71.

<sup>18</sup> He refers to Parfit’s argument, *The Repugnant Conclusion*, 71.

<sup>19</sup> Harris offered this as part of the Q & A in the recorded debate at the University of Notre Dame (4/7/2011) “Morality-- Is the Foundation of Morality Natural or Supernatural? William Lane Craig vs. Sam Harris” available here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rq1QjXe3lYQ>

social and societal dimension of ethics to avoid examples which would be a *reductio* of his own view.<sup>20</sup>

The philosophical soundness of this thesis can be addressed in three considerations and a final section on his over-realized science agenda. Harris is aware of some aspects of these criticisms, but on philosophy considerations, he has chosen not to engage in pedantic academic moral philosophy, frankly stating, “my approach is to generally make an end run around many of the views and conceptual distinctions that make academic discussion of human values so inaccessible.”<sup>21</sup>

### **The Terminological Morass**

This problem centers on the definition of the term, “good.” Harris refers to the “good life” as foundational in his argument.<sup>22</sup> He defines “good” as “that which supports well-being.”<sup>23</sup> Not making “conceptual distinctions” creates blurred uses of “good” in the exact moral sense of ethics. He speaks of “morally good” in several places but it is not clear whether he intends this to be distinct from other uses of the term.<sup>24</sup> For example in his contrast of the “good life” vs the “bad life.” One person is happy, safe and self-fulfilled (“good” life), while the other has suffered many injuries and nearing certain death (“bad” life). He goads the reader who cannot see a distinction between these two.<sup>25</sup> Of course, there is a clear distinction, but it is not strictly an ethical distinction. This is not “good” or “bad” in the ethical sense. A person in these dire circumstances may be acting more virtuously than a person in the “good life” scenario. Moral goodness may contribute to some aspects of human well-being, but *it is not the same as human well-being*. Let me show this by a similar example.

A young African woman has grown up in the midst of tribal warfare and genocidal evil perpetrated against her tribe and family members. Though this warfare has been constant in her life and now she flees with her last living child through the jungle, she has consistently acted to promote peace, protect those around her self-sacrificially, even conveying forgiveness to her enemies. Even now, she could have saved herself and child if she had only been will to falsely accuse her tribal leader of a crime.

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<sup>20</sup> I appreciate his attempt at mitigation. However, what if the same example were the case with the condition that no one else knew about it? Would it then be moral to help five people by murdering one? Harris has not effectively escaped the “ends justify the means” kinds of counter-examples.

<sup>21</sup> Harris, 213, note 1. He says it is to fill the universe with “boredom” to make pedantic distinctions in moral philosophy.

<sup>22</sup> Harris, 6, 27.

<sup>23</sup> Harris, 12.

<sup>24</sup> E.g., 8, 14, 84, 206, and 242.

<sup>25</sup> Harris, 15-16.

A young American woman growing up in relative wealth with the benefit of intelligence, beauty, physical health and high socio-economic standing is now able to live an opulent life with a loving husband. Due to significant financial resources provided by a family trust, she is often even able to contribute to local social causes such as protesting and financially supporting deforestation, supporting gay rights, opposing factory farming and the use of fur as human clothing. She is a caring wife but due to concerns about losing her figure, she and her husband have determined to avoid getting pregnant or terminating any pregnancy that may arise.

Using Harris's words, "Let me simply concede that if you don't see a distinction between these two lives that is worth valuing . . ." then I cannot help you see the distinction between "well-being" and "good." Moral goodness is an ethical property which cannot be equated with safe circumstances, bodily health or mental aptness, even if it can contribute to such states.<sup>26</sup>

One could easily multiply real-life examples when an ethical choice to do good may result in a lack of well-being for oneself or others; or vice-versa. In a "Bridges of Madison County" scenario, a sad wife has an affair which increases her well-being, her lover's well-being, and then she lies to her husband (an ethical violation, on top of the other). But as a result of her fling she is empowered as a wife. So inasmuch as the husband fails to learn the truth, his well-being is also increased. This is like the Matrix (film) when Cypher, though he knew the truth, chose to go back into the Matrix to enjoy the virtual steak and potatoes of Weltanschauung falsehood. For Harris remember, no day of judgment or final movie of life will be shown. The deceived and betrayed, yet flourishing, husband lives happily ever after; so does the adulterous, lying, yet flourishing wife.

### **The Is/Ought Morass**

Related to the definitional morass is the fact/value dichotomy. Many thinkers argue there is a fixed gulf between is and ought. This was first addressed by David Hume who reasoned that it is a logical leap to infer an obligation from mere facts.<sup>27</sup> One must supply from outside of a mere description of nature, that which one "ought" to do. This leaves naturalists with no "oughts." Later the British analytical philosopher, G.E. Moore, named leaping over the chasm between nature to ethics, the "naturalistic fallacy." Further, he reasoned that if someone asserts a utilitarian standard of maximum pleasure as "good," one can always ask if any specific pleasure is itself "good" in the moral sense, drawing a clear distinction between a moral property and a utilitarian-pleasure standard. This is called "the open question argument."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Harris, 2.

<sup>27</sup> Harris, 10.

<sup>28</sup> *Principia Ethica* (Mineola, NY: Dover, [1903] 2004). Cited and basically dismissed by Harris on page 10, where he refers to Moore's "open question argument."

To illustrate, scientifically, one could say, “100-140 million women have experienced genital operations sometimes called female circumcision.” To say, “this procedure is morally wrong,” surely appears to be a non-scientific statement. We have moved from what “is,” to an “ought.”

Harris has another end run. He writes,

If we define “good” as that which supports well-being, as I will argue we must, the regress initiated by Moore’s “open question argument” really does stop. While I agree with Moore that it is reasonable to wonder whether maximizing pleasure in any given instance is “good,” it makes no sense at all to ask whether maximizing well-being is “good.” It seems clear that what we are really asking when we wonder whether a certain state of pleasure is “good,” is whether it is conducive to, or obstructive of, some deeper form of well-being.<sup>29</sup>

Continuing with my illustration, to say, “the resulting effects of female circumcision decreases these women’s well-being,” is claimed to be, in principle, scientific. *And now for the leap*, and after scientifically accessing this decrease in well-being, we “ought” to not permit it. But this “ought” hangs on another assumption - that we “ought” to promote *said* well-being or we ought to oppose misery. Of course a Christian ethics is not opposing this conclusion, but neither do we claim that we derive our “ought” from the natural world. The “ought” of promoting well-being is hiding in the basement all along. It is not arising from a pure consideration of the facts of the case. It is a value added to the descriptive natural knowledge of scientific inquiry.

In the passage above Harris does not see his ambiguity in using “good.” To him, “it makes no sense at all to ask whether maximizing well-being is ‘good.’” It makes no sense if good is not ethical but comprising a state of health or well-being. But even so, why “ought” we to promote human well-being. He has imported moral obligation into the conception morals=human well-being.

Once again, as a definitional problem, if we find examples of ethical goodness which do not result in well-being, then moral goodness is clearly distinguished from well-being. Harris admits such a case.<sup>30</sup>

What if the laws of nature allow for different and seemingly antithetical peaks on the moral landscape? What if there is a possible world in which the Golden Rule has become an unshakable instinct, while there is another world of equivalent happiness where the inhabitants reflexively violate it? Perhaps this is a world of perfectly matched sadists and masochists. Let’s assume that in this world every person can be paired, one-for-one, with the saints in the first world, and while they are different in every other way, these pairs are identical in every way relevant to their well-being. Stipulating all these

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<sup>29</sup> Harris, 12.

<sup>30</sup> Harris, 225-226 in footnote 45.

things, the consequentialist would be forced to say that these worlds are morally equivalent.

This example implicitly admits a contradiction in his theory. Radically contradictory actions (kindness vs torture) are both “moral” on this account, so long as the “is” of nature produces well-being.

### **The Ontological Morass**

On the atheist worldview, what really constitutes ethical “good” or “evil” or the obligation of acting accordingly? How can Harris ontologically account for the existence of objective morality? In his worldview there can be no Lawgiver, no truth in the absolute sense, and no absolute enforcement of ethics. This is why when Harris speaks of “absolute evil” - he seems to be jumping ship from his own worldview.

Harris may wish for actions consistent with human flourishing and may argue for a consensus to agree with him. This is convention, not objective ground. On what ground (ontologically, in terms of what really exists) can his theory be maintained? If reality is nothing more than the accidental processes of time, energy and chance, leading to biological chemical accidents which now through Darwinian natural selection have learned to write best-selling books about ethical theory -- on that view, how can objective morality exist in reality? Moral laws are not chemical processes in brains are they? If they are, why should my chemical reactions bind (objectively) anyone else’s?

The homo-cannibal-serial killer, Jeffrey Dahmer displays an astute logical consistency and a clear insight into ethical ontology when he reported as the rationale of his crimes, “If a person doesn’t think that there is a God to be accountable to, then what’s the point of trying to modify your behavior to keep it within acceptable ranges? That’s how I thought anyway. I always believed the theory of evolution as truth, that we all just came from the slime. When we died, you know, that was it, there was nothing...”<sup>31</sup> It’s hard to see how “objective morality” has a real basis in the universe if after all, “we all just came from the slime.” At the very least, should Harris and Dawkins choose this “morality” - well, good for them. But is there the slightest philosophical and logical force to compel others to do so? Not from materialistic atheism. Dahmer understood. If there is no God, anything goes.

### **Science and Scientism**

Harris is persuasive only in that he slips by these philosophical, linguistic, conceptual and ontological problems while impressing his readers with gripping examples of “evil.” He then appeals for us to “see” that these examples are “evil,” “bad” and “wrong.” Once this is admitted then he leaps to the claim that there is only one objective method for seeing what brings about “good” (per human well-being) and classifying “evil,” “science.” But many of his statements

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<sup>31</sup> Dateline NBC, The Final Interview, Nov. 29, 1994. The interview may be viewed here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljW7bezdddE>

about what is obviously evil or that which creates misery are common sense reactions, shaped by his own cultural biases. He has not presented any “scientific” conclusions to demonstrate that women wearing burqas decrease human well-being. No lab coat-wearing technicians are crunching the data from Harris-devised “well-being-ometers” strapped to Muslim women’s heads. The book is not subtitled, “how common sense based on our cultural prejudices can determine human values,” but “how science can determine human values.”

This leads to a very significant criticism. What does “science” mean in this book? Harris says, “Does forcing women and girls to wear burqas make a net positive contribution to human well-being? . . . I would bet my life that the answer to each of these questions is ‘no.’”<sup>32</sup> His “bet,” which are nothing more than his moral intuitions do not constitute a scientific procedure. This is so with many of his examples. Has anyone, particularly Harris, measured and assessed the data on how faithful Islamic women feel or live out their cultural conception of chastity through this means? Has he performed every possible medical examination to discover the related medical maladies or miracles that these effects may bring about? What if 49% of these women reflect positively on keeping this tradition and 39.2% have a sense of well-being since their bodies are protected? And what if it turns out there are six health risks shared by 67.9% of the population which are avoided by this operation? It is ridiculous to think anyone’s conclusions about whether this “ought” to be done result from such scientific inquiry. Except that--that is exactly Harris’s goal, determining this “may one day fall within the reach of the maturing sciences of mind.”<sup>33</sup>

The claim that science is able to “*determine* human values” has a double sense, though I am not sure Harris intended it this. On the one hand it can mean to *discover* through scientific enquiry what is ethical; but on the other hand it can mean to authoritatively *declare* what is valuable in the sense of “pre-determine” values. Science, apart from other means of human knowledge, art, culture, wisdom, religion, customs will itself “determine human values.” This combined with brain scanning technologies should *put the fear of God in us*. Harris’s vision is like Star Trek without the Prime Directive.<sup>34</sup> It is scientific imperialism with a disregard for human culture and

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<sup>32</sup> Harris, 65.

<sup>33</sup> Harris, 28.

<sup>34</sup> “Nothing within these Articles Of Federation shall authorize the United Federation of Planets to intervene in matters which are essentially the domestic jurisdiction of any planetary social system, or shall require the members to submit such matters to settlement under these Articles Of Federation. But this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII.” Articles of the Federation, Chapter I, Article II, Paragraph VII, Star Trek, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prime\\_Directive#cite\\_note-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prime_Directive#cite_note-2)

religious custom.<sup>35</sup> The tone of intolerance has been noted repeatedly by reviewers of the book.<sup>36</sup> He sounds familiar, like the great scientist, “Weston” in C.S. Lewis’s, *Out of the Silent Planet*, as he seeks dominion over the lesser cultures of an unfallen planet.

‘To you I may seem a vulgar robber, but I bear on my shoulders the destiny of the human race. Your tribal life with its stone-age weapons and beehive huts, its primitive coracles and elementary social structure, has nothing to compare with our civilization - with our science, medicine and law, our armies, our architecture, our commerce, and our transport system which is rapidly annihilating space and time. Our right to supersede you is the right of the higher over the lower. Life -’

‘Half a moment,’ said Ransom in English. ‘That’s about as much as I can manage at one go.’ . . . he began translating as well as he could. The process was difficult and the result - which he felt to be rather unsatisfactory - was something like this:

‘Among us, Oyarsa, there is a kind of hnau who will take other hnaus’s food and - and things, when they are not looking. He says he is not an ordinary one of that kind. He says what he does now will make very different things happen to those of our people who are not yet born. He says that, among you, hnau of one kindred all live together and the hrossa have spears like those we used a very long time ago and your huts are small and round and your boats small and light and like our old ones, and you have one ruler. He says it is different with us. He says we know much. There is a thing happens in our world when the body of a living creature feels pains and becomes weak, and he says we sometimes know how to stop it. He says we have many bent people and we kill them or shut them in huts and that we have people for settling quarrels between the bent hnau about their huts and mates and things. He says we have many ways for the hnau of one land to kill those of another and some are trained to do it. He says we build very big and strong huts of stones and other things - like the pfifltriggi. And he says we exchange many things among ourselves and can carry heavy weights very quickly a long way. Because of all this, he says it would not be the act of a bent hnau if our people killed all your people.’ . . .

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<sup>35</sup> The trajectory of scientism as an eschatology of victory is clear throughout, but consider a few samples: Like physics “right and wrong” morality, it is alleged, “may one day fall within the reach of the maturing sciences of mind” 28, likewise, 8. “But science has progressed by violation of many (if not most) of our innate, proto-scientific institutions about the nature of reality,” 224. “Our notion of ‘health’ may one day be defined by goals . . . [unimaginable now] (like the goal of spontaneously regenerating a lost limb),” 35. “Neuroimaging research on belief and disbelief may one day enable researchers to put this equivalence to use in the study of deception,” 133, such as “mind-reading technology” or “brain scanning” for court-rooms or boardrooms, 133-34. He speaks of mood altering drugs and the “possibility of far more sweeping (as well as more precise) changes to our mental capacities may be within reach,” 83. “Perhaps we will one day develop interventions to change this” [psychopathy], 99. He sharply criticizes the Christian, Francis Collins (director of the National Institutes of Health) who may affect “progress on embryonic stem-cell research,” 170.

<sup>36</sup> He makes a sweeping response to critics here and one can get a sense of some high profile reviews: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sam-harris/a-response-to-critics\\_b\\_815742.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sam-harris/a-response-to-critics_b_815742.html)

[concluding with the Oyarsa saying] ‘It is not for yourself that you would do all this.’  
‘No,’ said Weston proudly in Malacandrian. ‘Me die. Man live.’<sup>37</sup>

Upon further review, “how science can determine human values,” resonates with the same tones of “advancing mankind” in the ideals of eugenics and all other forms of scientism untethered from actual humanity.<sup>38</sup> When his denial of free will and mitigation of moral culpability adds a few screeches, this frightening agenda sounds like the soundtrack to Hitchcock’s, “Psycho.”<sup>39</sup> The dream of men like Harris is really the rule of some men (“scientists”) over all others, as C.S. Lewis points out in the concluding pages of the Space Trilogy’s, *That Hideous Strength*. He writes in prose to the same purpose in *The Abolition of Man*.

Man's conquest of Nature, if the dreams of some scientific planners are realized, means the rule of a few hundreds of men over billions upon billions of men . . . The final stage is come when Man by eugenics, by pre-natal conditioning, and by an education and propaganda based on a perfect applied psychology, [and let us add neuro-scientific technologies] has obtained full control over himself. Human nature will be the last part of Nature to surrender to Man.”<sup>40</sup>

## Conclusion

Why is Harris persuasive in any measure? Not because Harris has done careful moral philosophy, as numerous critics agree. I believe it is because the force of his examples have an emotional, intuitive and even a conscience-gripping appeal to what all human cultures have known, until the rise of relativistic secular atheists: *there is right and there is wrong; there is good and there is evil*.<sup>41</sup> To descriptions of cruelty, moral sensibility arises within us, particularly as our sense has been shaped by the progress of Christian civilization. We can easily identify vivid examples of evil. But it is *evil* in the very ethical sense that we respond to, not “a diminishing of human flourishing” in the utilitarian sense. It is not to statistics relating to human well-being that we cry out, “that is wrong!” When we conclude something is “evil” we are not presupposing utilitarianism, but a Righteous Lawgiver who sits in judgment. Finally, this and this

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<sup>37</sup> The wonderful point of this is to show that when secular scientific imperialism is put into simple language it appears much less grand. *Out of the Silent Planet* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 135ff.

<sup>38</sup> I mean “actual humanity” vs “Man” in the sense of Lewis or “science [pre]determining Human value” in Harris. Actual men are enculturated, hold to religious beliefs and live within received limitations of nature, rather than the limitless possibilities of scientific manipulation.

<sup>39</sup> “Many scientists and philosophers realized long ago that free will could not be squared with our growing understanding of the physical world,” 103. “The problem is that no account of causality leaves room for free will. Thoughts, moods, and desires of every sort simply spring into view-- and move us, or fail to move us, for reasons that are, from a subjective point of view, perfectly inscrutable. . . . Am I free to change my mind? Of course not. It can only change *me*,” 104.

<sup>40</sup> Cited from this online source: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/augustine/arch/lewis/abolition3.htm>

<sup>41</sup> To affirm this universal fact is not to assert that all cultures have agreed upon the specific ethical details, though there has been a great deal of agreement. Lewis argued this point very effectively in such works as *Mere Christianity*, *Miracles*, and *The Abolition of Man*.

alone is the precondition of the intelligibility of an objective ethics. Harris's moral landscape, therefore, is really a moral morass.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> "An area of muddy or boggy ground. A complicated or confused situation," Merriam-Webster.