

## Conceptualization and Moral Diaxioma in the Transversality of Bioethical Approaches

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### Abstract

*Currently there are various perspectives and understandings on ethics such as metaethics, normative ethics, ethics of minimums, maximalist ethics, and applied ethics where various authors contextualize bioethics from its founding stage with Fritz Jahr in 1927 and Van Rensselaer Potter in 1970 applying them to the proper conduct in relation to man and other living beings along with their concern for their own survival (Sass, 2007; Beauchamp & Childress, 2001; Nuno-Martins, 2018; McPherson, 2022). Complementarily, they have arisen with the passage of time, scientific research and its circumstances both favorable and adverse, varied bioethical approaches, such as bioethics in principled perspective focused on research praxis, or that which assumes the on-personalist approach guided by the integral valuation of human dimensions, also speaks of a bioethics of virtue that assumes the Aristotelian-Thomistic theses regarding the good performance of the human that for that matter would be the professional of health and life sciences; or from inter and transdisciplinary approaches of an ecological bioethics and even a global bioethics, all these approaches being the ones that have caused the most impact generating abundant scientific literature in various languages.*

**Keywords:** *Transversality, Bioethical Approaches.*

### 1. Introduction

Currently there are various perspectives and understandings on ethics such as metaethics, normative ethics, ethics of minimums, maximalist ethics, and applied ethics where various authors contextualize bioethics from its founding stage with Fritz Jahr in 1927 and Van Rensselaer Potter in 1970 applying them to the proper conduct in relation to man and other living beings along with their concern for their own survival (Sass, 2007; Beauchamp & Childress, 2001; Nuno-Martins, 2018; McPherson, 2022). Complementarily, they have arisen with the passage of time, scientific research and its circumstances both favorable and adverse, varied bioethical approaches, such as bioethics in principled perspective focused on research praxis, or that which assumes the on-personalist approach guided by the integral valuation of human dimensions, also speaks of a bioethics of virtue that assumes the Aristotelian-Thomistic theses regarding the good performance of the human that for that matter would be the professional of health and life sciences; or from inter and transdisciplinary approaches of an ecological bioethics and

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even a global bioethics, all these approaches being the ones that have caused the most impact generating abundant scientific literature in various languages.

In the midst of the taxonomies of ethics and bioethical approaches, the notions that underlie and even sustain them, more often than not remain in ambiguity if not in vagueness and confusion, taking for granted their meaning and meaning bringing not only conceptual gaps, but also generate distorting practical applications of reality and, therefore, equivocal decisions at the time of elucidating controversies of bioethical-legal implications. Therefore, this essay proposes to reflect and sustain, with *sui generis* arguments, the concepts of ethics and morality with their axioms, as well as the notion of person in the transversality of bioethical approaches.

Seeking that, with crystal clarity, bioethics is assumed not only as a theoretical understanding, but also as an experiential activity that allows solving problems or, at least, elucidating dilemmas in order to carry out a personal, investigative and professional bioethical praxis as correct as possible from inferred axioms.

## **2. Development**

### **2.1. On ethics and morals: misunderstandings and stipulative clarifications**

The meanings of the notions of ethics and morals have connoted to them different meanings, even opposed to each other. There are those who understand them, assuming the Ciceronian differentiation from the theory-practice dynamic, affirming that ethics is the theoretical study of moral laws, while morality is the practical and evaluative part of ethics (Ortiz-Millán, 2016); however, there are also understandings that present them in a way contrary to the above, that is, that morality has a theoretical character and the ethical the practical aspect, from that point of view, there is for example the position of Paul Ricoeur (2002) when he affirms that ethics is an aspiration of a fulfilled life seen in actions considered good and morality the normative field of obligatory character in coercive and universal compliance. Other authors analyze terminological significance in a historical-comparative key, accepting the simultaneity of meanings (Samitharathana, 2020).

We particularly assume that the differentiation of meanings of ethics and morality under the theory-practice dynamic is not relevant, since both from the etymological meaning of the Greek *ethos* and the *mos*, Latin *moris*, both terms have the same meaning in the practical sense of good custom. under the criterion that, the custom socially accepted as good is so insofar as it has been thought as such, which dispels both epistemic and etymological differentiation, so it is also incorrect to conceptualize ethics as "moral philosophy" or the "science of morality" as assumed by Kidder (2003). The difference between ethics and morality that we propose is in contextual and stipulative perspective: The ancient Greeks -by inference of not being their language- did not use the Latin words *mos*, *moris* but *êthos*, *êthikós*, however, in that mentality the good custom was one that allowed you to live properly in the city-state or polis being accepted into it; That is why I consider that the meaning of ethics has a greater social, citizen connotation; Therefore, ethics is the good habit, the good behavior that being socially accepted allows the person to live well by adapting to what your society accepts as suitable, valuable and worthy or rejects as wrong.

However, another is the stipulative context of *mos*, *moris* from ancient Latin. Greece, after the death of Alexander the Great, went into decline of the polis by the succession to the throne, a situation in which the city-states and their good customs ceased to exist to give way to the Hellenistic monarchies fighting for access to power, being defeated by the Romans with the taking of Macedonia in 148 BC. The Romans of that time were influenced by the Hellenistic philosophy of behavior whose teachings were, due to the situation of social crisis, aspirations of well-being and personal security, assuming the

motto of knowing how to live in the midst of adversity taking as a model the balanced order of nature. From here comes the connotation that I give to the meaning of morality: It is the consideration in conscience and experience of the good, correct and virtuous in personal conviction in the midst of adversity following an order. In this way morality has a greater connotation of personal awareness of the good and proper, but not by subjective perception, but objectively regulated by the rationality of doing good and avoiding the harmful, in the midst of difficult circumstances. This same idea will be complemented by the meaning of Caritas, Christian love.

Based on what has been argued about the precisions of what ethics and morality are, we can infer that, although bioethics -by the construction of the term- can be assumed as the appropriate, socially accepted behavior around the care of all living beings and their environment, particularly man as a person, This is insufficient insofar as it requires the personal, conscious conviction of the reasonable act of doing no harm, at the same time as doing what is good and right as an all-encompassing demand.

## 2.2. Ethical-moral axioms and the inferred bioethical diaxiom

Now let's reflect as a second argumentative premise about the ethical and moral axioms, reasonably deriving from some of them to the specific field of bioethics. Following Aristotle (fourth century BC) in *Later Analytics* an axiom is a self-evident principle, and which, on the contrary, constitutes the basis for subsequent demonstrations (De Risi, 2022). Specifically, logic and mathematics is the proper domain of axioms, such as, for example, the logical principles of non-contradiction, identity and the excluded third, however, by extension, it can be applied to other fields, taking into account the principles of Pascal (1623-1662) set out in the second section of the *Geometric Spirit and the art of persuading* where, among other things, he recommends, not admitting terms that are not defined and refusing to deceive by making equivocal use of the terms, advice that I particularly consider necessary when it comes to analyzing situations and cases in which decision-making about life in life is involved. general and human life in particular, its biophysiology and ecosystem contextualization, topics of the bioethical field and that usually apply to the international health, political and legal organizations motivated by economic and ideological interests, undervaluing and relativizing what in principle they should clarify and decide in criterion of reason.

In historical perspective, there have been over time, principles that constitute guiding criteria of human life and that, due to their clarity and intrinsic evidence, have been constituted in what I call ethical and moral axioms, the first-from the premises raised- in function of orientation, conviction and social acceptance and the second referred to convictions in conscience with universal criterion of a correct reasoning. Thus, we have, for example, an ethical principle, the Law of Talion known by the famous principle an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth that synthesizes a system of proportional justice derived from the most diverse cultures such as the Sumerian Code of your-Nammu (XXII century a.), the Code of Hammurabi of Babylon (XVIII century BC), the Mosaic Law (XIV century BC) and the Law of the XII Tablets of the Romans (II century BC). C). It is important to take into account the particular difference that occurs with the Law of Moses (s. XIV BC), because while the first codes judged and sanctioned faults among its inhabitants, the second not only understood faults as an offense between settlers (civic law) but also as an offense to Yahweh (religious law), and although influenced by talionic regulations, The Mosaic Law had a particular requirement referring to his faith and personal conviction in conscience, a feature that can be traced as the origin of a recognition of moral demand by the presence not only evaluation and judgment of the facts but of the intentions.

The characteristic of evaluation of intentionality on the plane of consciousness was later supplemented, within this tradition, by the teachings of Christ, when he states:

Jesus answered, "Are not even you still able to understand?"

Don't you understand that everything that enters through the mouth goes to the belly, and then leaves the body? (...) Because from within man come the wicked thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, lies and insults. (Matthew 15:16-20. God speaks today.)

In this regard there are numerous New Testament passages in which the teachings of Jesus Christ emphasize the plane of intentionality and the demand of conscience, such as "he who is free from guilt let him cast the first stone" when he saved the adulterous woman from stoning, "I say love those who hate you and do not wish them evil" when he teaches his disciples the demands to follow him, just to mention the most representative statements. In the Middle Ages the biblical teachings on human behavior were complemented and deepened in theological and philosophical studies always in the line of moral demand in intentional conscience and not only of interpersonal affectation of actions, as shown in the writings of Augustine of Hippo (*Of the happy life, Soliloquies; Of Free Will*) and Thomas Aquinas (*Disputed Questions: On Truth, On the Good; On the End of Man, Human Acts, Habits, Of Virtue in the Prima Secundae of the Summa Theologica*).

The rationalized axiomatic relationship between ethics and morality occurred in modernity, particularly with the Kantian categorical imperative, manifested in the affirmation by which it is considered that action, product of the maturity of rationality itself, is -at the same time- wanted to be carried out universally, by all humanity (Kant, 2012). The axis of union between both, moral and ethical by the philosopher of Königsberg, lies in the conscience itself characterized by the 'coming of age of rationality itself' being present there the moral aspect; and, on the other hand, the ethical aspect occurs mediated by the universal character of good reciprocal behavior. Kant ethically rationalizes in modernity what Jesus had already affirmed in a sense of moral authenticity with the 'love thy neighbor as thyself'; Kant causes morality to be absorbed by ethics which, in Jesus, beyond the philosophical sense, was a moral requirement of conscience, which radically surpassed even the ethical legal understandings of the talionic 'eye for an eye' and the 'love your friends and hate your enemies' of the Greeks and Romans.

The Kantian axiomatic rationality that links ethics and morality in modernity, coexists at that same time with ideas in which ethical-moral behavior is placed not so much in a universal rationality, but in a particular, subjective rationality, which becomes the idea that good behavior is so long as 'I' assumes it that way. disinterested in the idea of good and proper behavior is universal acceptance, by one who thinks subjectively, only under the requirement of consensual acceptance of the perception of the self without affecting the rest raised in the thought of Baruc Spinoza between 1661-1675 in his *Ethics* demonstrated according to the geometric order, as Samuel van Pufendorf in *On Natural Law and People* Published in 1672, ideas that are directed towards the subjective-relative understanding of contemporary ethics and morals that overflow towards the contradictory and absurd, and it is so insofar as they contravene in negative affectation to the human being himself and his life, by defining that it is the perceptive feeling and not reason or reality that determines the good, the adequacy and correctness in the personal and political action of the human, which, from its origins in the Frankfurt school around 1930, is relegated to an ethics of constructions-deconstructions (Sartre, 1951; Beauvoir, 1956; Foucault, 1978), a discursive ethic (Apel, 1987; Habermas, 1983), or minimums (Cortina, 2000), whose perspectives seek the re-understanding of human complexity by reassigning the exaltation of the deconstructive of the person through the acceptance of the politically consensual from a superficial subjectivity more often than not counterproductive for concrete human life, and therefore, of its social coexistence.

The notional changes that have occurred historically since the deconstructive approaches, depending on both cognitive and practical relevance, have generated more controversies than effective benefit regarding clarification and decision-making in the face of real bioethical conflicts that have resulted more by exclusively legal regulations, however, I consider it enriching and necessary a systematization of the classic notional contributions

to provide an inferred diaxioma that serves us as a guiding criterion for personal or functional decision-making with which we link. Let's see the following table that synthesizes the ethical-moral axioms manifested as the most important maxims that occurred throughout history and then, in the following section, generate traceability with the paradigmatic approaches of bioethics:

Table 1. System of classical notional contributions and inferred bioethical affirmation

Origin	Sentence	Inferred bioethical assertion
<b>Código Sumério de Ur-Nammu (XXII century BC)</b>	"The orphan must be prevented from being the victim of the rich (...) and the widow of the powerful."	Act with prudence and honesty
<b>Code of Hammurabi of Babylon (XVIII century BC)</b>	Law 227: If a man deceived a surgeon and if he (the surgeon) has removed the mark of the inalienable slave, this man will be killed at his door and buried. The surgeon, who has not acted knowingly, will swear and be free.	Act with prudence and honesty.
<b>Mosaic Law (XIV century BC)</b>	Lev.19, 18: You shall not take revenge, nor hold a grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Lev.25, 25: If your brother is in need and you see that he cannot get out of trouble, help him	Treat kindly and do no harm. Dignity of the human person. Act with prudence and honesty
<b>Law of the XII Tables (s. II a.C).</b>	Art. 1-5, I: The debtor who has not been able to respond to his commitments had to admit his debt before the court.	Act with prudence and honesty
<b>Jesus Christ New Testament</b>	Mt 5:44: But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Mt 22:39: And the second is like this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Matt. 10:16: ... Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.	Treat kindly and do no harm. Dignity of the human person Act with prudence and honesty
<b>Augustine of Hippo (Of the Happy Life)</b>	Chapter IV, par-32: Where there is moderation and temperance, there is nothing left over or lacking.	Act with prudence and honesty
<b>Thomas Aquinas (Summa Theologica)</b>	S.Th. I, 29, 3 Person means that which in all nature is most perfect, that is, subsistent in rational nature.	Dignity of the human person
<b>Immanuel Kant (Foundation of the Metaphysics of Customs)</b>	FMC. IV, 421: Work according to that maxim by which you may want it to become universal law.	Act with prudence and honesty
	FMC. IV, 429: Work in such a way that you always treat the person as an end and never simply as a means.	Dignity of the human person

### 2.3. Human person in bioethical approaches. Transversality

In the praxis of bioethical analysis, notions of particular interest are: person and the action he performs (Reluz and Cervera, 2021). Both notions acquire multiple meanings that can lead to biases and even decisions that can affect the person himself and his dignity. So

much so that Hofman (2023) identifies four bioethical biases: cognitive biases, affective biases, imperative biases and moral biases, assuming that, although their classification is not exhaustive, knowing the biases warns for an adequate decision making in the work of bioethical analysis, recognizing awareness as a preliminary and necessary step for a good analysis of cases.

Based on what Hofman said, I consider that the knowledge of biases, although important for a qualified bioethical analysis, the most essential thing in a decision making is how much it affects the integrity and dignity of the person, and on the other hand, it must be taken into account that bias is inherent to human knowledge where the "exclusive objectivity" would only be proper to artificial intelligence that even aspires to care worthy of patients (Monlezun, 2023) but that, humanly it is an idealization and therefore also a bias, where more than avoiding it is required to take it into account, because a bioethical analysis is not a mental gymnastics, but an action that requires high decision-making responsibility in terms of affectation to the person that even she herself must assume. Therefore, the 'framing' of what is meant by person must be taken into account. It is assumed by person, *strictu sensu*, the human being (assuming his biophysiological qualities of species) with his singular characteristics (assuming his own characteristics as an individual) capable of acting and interacting in himself, on the other (things and other living) and others (people) endowing meaning and meaning according to their stage of development and circumstance, integrating in its multidimensionality the inseparable nature-condition dynamo.

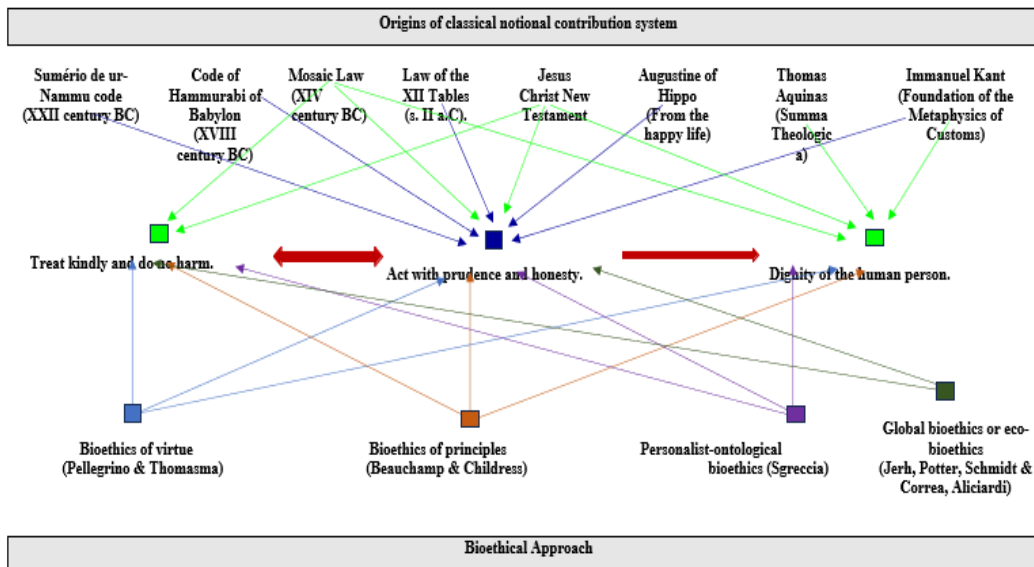
On the other hand, there are bioethical paradigms or approaches in different taxonomy; for example, Ferrer & Álvarez (2005) consider general principlism and hierarchical principlism, the casuistic paradigm, the paradigm of virtues, gender bioethics in a feminist key, Singerian utilitarian bioethics. Other authors add the biolegal paradigm (Aparisi, 2007; Flores-Trejo, 2008; Celi, 2015) and the paradigm of theological bioethics (Gafo, 2003; Guillem, 2023). However, among the various trends, it can be standardized in the following: bioethics of virtue (Pellegrino & Thomasma, 1993; De Santiago 2014), bioethics of principles (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001; Siurana, 2010), personalist-ontological bioethics (Sgrecci, 2009; 2013; Gonzales-Carhuajulca, 2012; Pérez-Bermejo, 2018) and ecological bioethics (Schmidt & Correa, 2007; Aliciardi, 2009; León-Correa, 2020). It is worth mentioning that the approaches are not of epochal predominance, but recursive, coexisting, therefore, the so-called global or ecological bioethics sinks its roots from the origins of bioethics with Jahr and Potter to understand it as a study of the balanced interaction of the human being with all living beings and their environment, demanding the need for guiding principles of action (typical of the bioethics of principles) towards attitudes and virtuous experiences of the person ( bioethics of virtue and personalist bioethics), it is from this interaction where notions can be inferred from which the argumentative transversality of the moral diaxiom that we propose is generated:

Table 2. Focus, main thesis and inferred bioethical statement

Bioethical Approach	Main thesis	Inferred bioethical assertion
Bioethics of virtue (Pellegrino & Thomasma)	The health professional must know and apply the fundamental virtues in the exercise of his work avoiding malpractice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat kindly and do no harm.</li> <li>• Act with prudence and honesty.</li> <li>• Dignity of the human person.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Bioethics of principles (Beauchamp &amp; Childress)</b></p>	<p>There are general principles in biomedical ethics (autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence and justice) that must be respected in clinical practice and research.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat kindly and do no harm.</li> <li>• Act with prudence and honesty.</li> <li>• Dignity of the human person</li> </ul>
<p><b>Personalist-ontological bioethics (Sgreccia)</b></p>	<p>Any human act, whether investigative or professional praxis, must be oriented to the attention and valuation of the person in his dignity and multidimensionality, avoiding his "objectification".</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat kindly and do no harm.</li> <li>• Act with prudence and honesty.</li> <li>• Dignity of the human person.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Global bioethics or eco-bioethics (Jerh, Potter, Schmidt &amp; Correa, Aliciardi)</b></p>	<p>Any human act, whether investigative or professional praxis, must be given with due respect for human life, all life and ecosystem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat kindly and do no harm.</li> <li>• Act with prudence and honesty.</li> <li>• Respect for all forms of life.</li> </ul>

Table 3. Transversality Notional Contributions and Bioethical Approaches



As can be seen in the table referring to transversality, in reading from top to bottom, in the origins of the notional systems of the maxims in the ancient Sumerian codes and the Law of the XII tables of the Romans, the ethical-moral axiom of acting with prudence and honesty under penalty of drastic sanction what we can call normative systems of reciprocal sanction are inferred, while in Augustine of Hippo and Kant prudent and honest action is rationalized as an evident norm of good action, desirable to be carried out by all. Particular attention is presented by the Mosaic Law and the expressions of Jesus Christ, from which axioms of a moral nature are inferred, since in addition to promoting prudent and honest action it orders not to do evil and to do good, not only for compliance with the norm or reciprocal justice but oriented to personal dignity, motivated by his understanding of human origin in divine "image and likeness," according to his confession of faith.

From the bioethical approaches, in reading from the bottom up, it is understood that all of them converge in the two moral axioms inferred from 'treat benevolently and do no harm' and 'act with prudence and honesty' oriented to the valuation of the dignity of the person, with the exception of global or ecological Bioethics that has a valorative scope of all life, from where can it be thought that the two axioms are constituted in themselves and in themselves, without orientation of meaning as if they have the Bioethics of virtue, of principles and of a personalistic nature, for whom the diaxioma is oriented to the sense of human dignity. From a personal perspective, this lack of orientation of the meaning of diaxiom on the part of global bioethics may drag them conceptually deriving to a circumstantial bioethics, relative and, therefore, subject to utilitarian interest.

### **3. Conclusion**

At the beginning, we proposed to reflect and sustain, with sui generis arguments, the difference between the notions of ethics and morality, as well as the concept of person in the transversality of bioethical approaches and the understandings held by the most representative normative systems throughout history so that, together with axioms inferred from them, Bioethics can be assumed as an experiential activity whose theoretical support allows solving problems or, at least, elucidating dilemmas in order to carry out a personal, investigative and professional bioethical praxis as correct as possible.

A first conclusion we reach is that the differentiation of meanings of ethics and morality under the theory-practice dynamic is not relevant, since both the Greek ethos and the mos, Latin moris, have the same practical meaning of good custom socially accepted as such because it has been thought and accepted communally. It is particularly considered that the notion of ethics has a greater social, citizen connotation; Therefore, an action is ethically good if it has been socially accepted as correct and worthy of being assumed in society; while morality, I define, is the consideration in conscience and experience of the good, right and virtuous in personal conviction in the midst of adversity following an order; And, with regard to bioethics, it is inferred that it is the appropriate, socially accepted behavior around the care of all living beings and their environment, particularly man as a person.

In historical perspective, we arrive at a second conclusion, referring to the fact that in the different normative systems that have occurred such as the codes of Sumer and Babylon, the Mosaic Law, the Law of the XII Tables, the teachings of Christ, approaches of Paul of Tarsus, Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, Spinoza, Pufendorf and Kant, Ethical-moral axioms of constant structure are presented from where we infer two axioms oriented to human dignity and that we have called inferred bioethical diaxiom, the first being to perform good and avoid evil; and the second, act with prudence and honesty. From contemporary ethical-moral understandings, ethical axioms cannot be inferred insofar as they deconstruct ethical norms according to circumstantial situations.

A third conclusion refers to the understanding of being a person, stating that in the strict sense we understand it as a human being with its unique characteristics, capable of acting and interacting in itself, on the other and the others, endowing meaning and meaning according to its stage of development and circumstance, integrating in its multidimensionality the inseparable nature-condition dynamo, that is negatively affected if it is unbalanced in its multiple dimensions or a rupture between nature and condition is generated.

Finally, regarding the transversality between the origins of notional systems in relation to contemporary bioethical approaches, we conclude that an adequate and reasonable action can be inferred if the two inferred moral axioms of 'treat benevolently and do no harm' and 'act with prudence and honesty' oriented to the valuation of the dignity of the person



and the care of the environment are experienced. I conclude by commenting on what Heisig (2023) said for whom, in his praise of civility, considers that this is the ordinary honesty that is available to all; Thus, applying to what has been analyzed, "doing good and avoiding evil" as well as "acting prudently and honestly", is available to those who value themselves, others and the environment, in addition to integrating bioethical analyses with a daily living in integrity.

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