Test Bank for Ethical Life Fundamental Readings in Ethics and Moral Problems 5th Shafer-Landau

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Instructor's Manual and Test Bank to Accompany *The Ethical Life*, Fifth Edition By Russ Shafer-Landau

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Contents

Instructor's Guide

Summaries and Essay Questions

Preface
A Note on the Companion Volume
Introduction
PART I **The Good Life**
1. John Stuart Mill Hedonism
2. Robert Nozick The Experience Machine
3. Chris Heathwood Faring Well and Getting What You Want
4. Brad Hooker The Elements of Well-Being
5. Susan Wolf Happiness and Meaning: Two Aspects of the Good Life
PART II **Normative Ethics: *Theories of Right Conduct***
6. Plato Euthyphro
7. Thomas Aquinas Natural Law
8. John Stuart Mill Utilitarianism
9. Immanuel Kant The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative
10. Thomas Hobbes Leviathan
11. W. D. Ross What Makes Right Acts Right?
12. Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics
13. Hilde Lindemann What Is Feminist Ethics?
PART III **Metaethics: *The Status of Morality***
14. David Hume Moral Distinctions Not Derived from Reason
15. J. L. Mackie The Subjectivity of Values
16. Gilbert Harman Ethics and Observation
17. Mary Midgley Trying out One's New Sword
18. David Enoch Why I Am an Objectivist About Ethics (And Why You Are, Too)
19. Sarah McGrath Moral Knowledge
PART IV **Moral Problems**
20. Kwame Anthony Appiah What Will Future Generations Condemn Us For?
POVERTY AND HUNGER
21. Peter Singer The Singer Solution to World Poverty
22. Onora O'Neill A Kantian Approach to Famine Relief
EUTHANASIA AND A MODEST PROPOSAL
23. James Rachels The Morality of Euthanasia
24. John Harris The Survival Lottery
IMMIGRATION
25. Christopher Heath Wellman Refugees and the Right to Control Immigration
26. Michael Huemer Is There a Right to Immigrate?
ANIMALS
27. Peter Carruthers Against the Moral Standing of Animals
THE MORAL STATUS OF ANIMALS
28. Alastair Norcross Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases

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THE ENVIRONMENT
29. John Broome The Public and Private Morality of Climate Change
30. Thomas Hill, Jr. Ideals of Human Excellence and Preserving Natural Environments
ABORTION
31. Judith Jarvis Thomson A Defense of Abortion
32. Don Marquis Why Abortion Is Immoral
33. Philippa Foot Abortion and the Doctrine of Double Effect
THE DEATH PENALTY
34. Igor Primoratz Justifying Legal Punishment
35. Stephen Nathanson An Eye for an Eye?
GUNS
36. Jeff McMahan Why Gun 'Control' Is Not Enough
37. Michael Huemer Is There a Right to Own a Gun?
THE LEGACY OF RACISM
38. Martin Luther King, Jr. Letter from Birmingham City Jail
39. Daniel Hausman Affirmative Action: Bad Arguments and Some Good Ones
40. Elizabeth Anderson The Future of Racial Integration
DRUGS
41. Douglas Husak In Favor of Drug Decriminalization
42. Peter de Marneffe Against the Legalization of Drugs

Test Bank: Multiple Choice and Essay Questions

Weblinks

Suggestions for Further Reading

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Instructor's Guide

ABOUT THE BOOK

This book provides a selection of work that ranges across each of the four major areas of moral philosophy. It starts with a part on value theory and the nature of the good life, proceeds to issues within normative ethics, then presents essays in metaethics, and concludes with a very substantial selection of work on specific moral problems. The Web materials that follow are designed to help students work their way through this sometimes difficult material. There are comprehension and critical thinking questions, introductions to each of the pieces included in the book, essay questions, weblinks, and PowerPoint slides that reconstruct the central theses and arguments for each of the readings in the book.

The Ethical Life can serve as a stand-alone survey of moral philosophy, but it also has a companion text, *The Fundamentals of Ethics* (Oxford University Press), which is an accessible introduction to many of the central issues that arise when thinking about the good life, normative ethics, and the status of morality (metaethics). This website provides a good starting point for further exploration of the readings presented in *The Ethical Life*. But for those who seek more philosophical background for the views offered in *The Ethical Life*, the companion text and the materials described in the section of **Suggestions for Further Reading** would be good resources to rely on.

General Features of the Instructor's Manual

For each part of the anthology, this instructor's manual contains:

- A short introduction to the part.
- Essay questions on the main themes of the part.
- Suggestions for further reading.
- Links to relevant websites.

For each entry in the anthology, this instructor's manual contains:

- A summary of the entry, explaining the main arguments of the piece.
- Essay questions on each entry.

The Test Bank section of this instructor's manual contains:

- Broad essay questions for the first three parts of the work.
- Multiple choice questions for each entry.
- Essay questions for each entry.

Table of Contents

1. Part I materials
2. Part II materials
3. Part III materials
4. Part IV materials

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Access Complete Test Bank for Ethical Life Fundamental Readings in Ethics and Moral Problems 5th Shafer-Landau

Part I
The Good Life

Summary

Value theory is that part of moral philosophy that focuses on questions about what is intrinsically valuable (good in and of itself). What is intrinsically valuable is worth pursuing for its own sake, and a good human life will contain much that meets this description. Happiness is on almost everyone's list—the real question is whether happiness is the only thing that is desirable for its own sake or whether there are other things that belong on the roster of essential elements of a good human life. Another important view claims that our lives are good to the extent that we get what we want—whatever we may want. Yet other accounts offer a variety of intrinsic goods rather than just one or two. There are readings here from each of these major theories of value.

Essay Questions

1. What is hedonism? What reasons are there for being a hedonist? What difficulties or objections does hedonism face as a theory of value? Do you find hedonism plausible? Why or why not?

2. What objections does Robert Nozick raise to the theory that happiness is the only thing desirable for its own sake? Can Chris Heathwood's theory of welfare avoid the problems that Nozick raises? Why or why not?

3. Brad Hooker presents a pluralist theory of value, according to which many things are valuable for their own sakes. Evaluate the items on Hooker's list. For each item, discuss whether you think it is valuable for its own sake or merely for the sake of some other good (such as happiness or getting what we want). Do you agree with Hooker that many things are valuable for their own sakes?

Chapter 1
John Stuart Mill: Hedonism

Summary

Mill begins by endorsing hedonism—the view that that happiness is the only thing desirable for its own sake. Mill defines happiness as pleasure and freedom from pain. Noting that many people find hedonism objectionable, Mill clarifies his view by claiming that there are many different kinds of pleasure and that some are more valuable than others. In general, Mill holds that one kind of pleasure is preferable to another if it is preferred by (most of) those individuals who have experienced both kinds of pleasure. Pleasures taken in the use of our "more elevated" faculties (i.e., those faculties that involve reason) are thought to be particularly valuable. Mill goes on to argue for his version of hedonism, first, by claiming that the only possible evidence

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that something is desirable is that people desire it, and second, by trying to show that happiness is the only thing people desire as an end in itself.

Essay Questions

1. Explain what Mill means by "happiness." Then propose an alternative definition. According to which definition is hedonism most plausible? Explain and defend your response.

2. What is Mill's argument for the claim that happiness is the only thing valuable as an end in itself? Do you think the argument succeeds? Why or why not?

3. Explain what you take to be the most forceful objection to Mill's hedonism. How do you think Mill would respond to this objection? Ultimately, do you find this response satisfying? Why or why not?

4. How does Mill argue for his view that happiness is the only thing that people actually desire for its own sake? Do you find his argument compelling? Why or why not?

5. Write an essay critically assessing Mill's doctrine of "higher" and "lower" pleasures. How does Mill think we can determine which kinds of pleasure are most valuable? Do you find his standard plausible? Why or why not? Which kinds of pleasure does Mill claim are most valuable? Do you agree with him about this? Defend your answer.

6. Mill claims that, strictly speaking, first principles cannot be proven, but he then goes on to argue for the principle of utility. How does Mill think we can argue for first principles in ethics? How does he use this method to argue for the principle of utility? Do you find his method to be a plausible one?

Test Bank Questions

1. Mill defines happiness as
    a. having a positive attitude toward one's life.
    b. pleasure and the absence of pain.*
    c. the feeling of tranquility that accompanies philosophical reflection.
    d. the accomplishment of one's goals and projects.

2. Mill says that one kind of pleasure is superior to another if the first kind of pleasure
    a. is more intense than the second.
    b. lasts longer than the second.
    c. is preferred to the second by those who have experienced both kinds.*
    d. is more likely than the second to lead to more pleasure in the future.

3. Mill claims that it is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied because
    a. human beings possess higher faculties than pigs.*
    b. pigs live much shorter lives than humans.
    c. the lives of human beings contain much more variety than those of pigs.

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d. human beings have more freedom than pigs.

4. According to Mill, first principles
    a. must be rigorously demonstrated before we should accept them.
    b. must be known with certainty if one is to live a happy life.
    c. should be accepted on the basis of tradition.
    d. are incapable of proof in the ordinary acceptation of the term.*

5. Mill claims that the only evidence we can have that something is desirable is that
    a. it is recommended by philosophers.
    b. people actually desire it.*
    c. people have been doing it for a long time.
    d. pursuing it does not treat anyone unfairly.

6. Some people hold that virtue is desirable for its own sake. Mill would claim virtue is
    a. desirable only as a means to happiness.
    b. not actually desirable; we are merely socially conditioned to believe it is.
    c. sometimes a part of happiness.*
    d. valuable to others but not to the virtuous person.

7. According to Mill, there is nothing ultimately desired except
    a. happiness.*
    b. virtue.
    c. wisdom.
    d. All of the above

8. According to Mill, all _____ people desire happiness?
    a. rational
    b. virtuous
    c. vicious
    d. All of the above*

9. According to Mill,
    a. both happiness and pain are homogeneous.
    b. happiness is homogeneous and pain is heterogeneous.
    c. happiness is heterogeneous and pain is homogeneous.
    d. both happiness and pain are heterogeneous.*

10. What does Mill mean by “unhappiness”?
    a. Having a negative attitude toward one’s life
    b. Pain and the privation of pleasure*
    c. The feeling of anxiety that accompanies ignorance
    d. The failure of one’s goals and projects

11. What is the central principle of morality, according to Mill?
    a. Treat others as you'd like to be treated.

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b. Actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness.*
c. Always do whatever is in your own interest.
d. An action is right if and only if God commands it.

12. According to Mill, the desirability of a pleasure is determined by its
a. quality alone.
b. quantity alone.
c. quality and quantity.*
d. None of the above

13. According to Mill, what are the liabilities of being a being with "higher faculties"?
a. More is required to make such a being happy.
b. Such a being is capable of more acute suffering.
c. Both a and b*
d. None of the above (there are no liabilities)

14. How does Mill explain the fact that some people pursue lower pleasures rather than higher ones?
a. Such people prefer lower pleasures to higher ones.
b. Such people are incapable of experiencing higher pleasures.*
c. Such people are wicked.
d. There are no such people.

15. According to Mill, some people desire money for its own sake because
a. they are irrational.
b. they are wicked.
c. the attainment of money is part of happiness.*
d. There are no such people.

Chapter 2
Robert Nozick: The Experience Machine

Summary

Nozick asks us to imagine that we are given the option to plug into an "experience machine," which will vividly simulate any experience we would like to have for the rest of our lives. Even if all of our loved ones could plug in as well, most of us would not choose to plug in. Nozick claims that we wouldn't do so because we want to actually *do* certain things and actually *be* a certain way rather than merely to live in a simulated world. If he is right about this, then something matters to us besides how our lives feel "from the inside." Because hedonism states that our well-being is entirely a function of our mental states, Nozick's thought experiment seems to undermine hedonism.

Essay Questions

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1. What is the *experience machine*? Would you plug in? Why or why not?

2. According to hedonism, should you plug in to the experience machine? Why or why not? What does Nozick's thought experiment tell us about the plausibility of hedonism?

3. Construct, in valid form with numbered premises and conclusion, Nozick's argument against hedonism. What do you think is the most powerful objection to this argument? Ultimately, does the objection succeed? Explain and defend your response.

4. Briefly describe a theory of value that is *not* vulnerable to Nozick's experience machine counterexample. What are the strengths of such a theory? What are its drawbacks? Ultimately, do you find such a theory plausible?

5. Write an essay critically assessing Nozick's reasons for not plugging in to the experience machine. Explain each reason clearly, and then say whether or not you think it is a good reason not to plug in. Defend your answers.

6. What, if anything, does Nozick's thought experiment tell us about the nature of value? What, if anything, does it tell us about what we should do? Explain and defend your response.

Test Bank Questions

1. Nozick's aim in discussing the experience machines is to
    a. describe a device that he predicts will soon be invented and widely used.
    b. give an example of a machine that he thinks will be forever beyond our technological capabilities.
    c. create a thought experiment that sheds light on what we value in life.*
    d. show that pleasure is the only thing desirable in itself.

2. According to Nozick, plugging in to the experience machine would be a kind of
    a. suicide.*
    b. lying.
    c. stealing.
    d. injustice.

3. Nozick claims that we should not get into the experience machine because
    a. we couldn't be sure whether it was going to malfunction.
    b. we would not actually be able to *do* anything in the experience machine.*
    c. our loved ones might need us while we are inside the machine.
    d. technology is inherently bad.

4. While in the experience machine, Nozick claims, we would be
    a. courageous.
    b. loving.
    c. whatever we wanted to be.

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d. an indeterminate blob.*

5. From the experience machine thought experiment, Nozick thinks we should conclude that
    a. pleasure is the only thing desirable for its own sake.
    b. technology is helpful but can be dangerous when taken too far.
    c. we often desire things that are not good for us.
    d. we care about things besides how our lives feel from the inside.*

6. According to Nozick, people's disagreement over the use of psychoactive drugs can be explained by disagreement over whether or not
    a. such drugs make their users happy.
    b. people are capable of doing their duty while on such drugs.
    c. such drugs enhance or inhibit our contact with reality.*
    d. such drugs affect how we treat others.

7. If all that mattered to us were our experiences, then we would enter the
    a. experience machine.*
    b. transformation machine.
    c. both a and b
    d. none of the above

8. According to Nozick, the good life a function of
    a. our experiences.
    b. what we do and accomplish.
    c. how we are.
    d. all of the above (and more)*

9. According to Nozick, the *most* disturbing thing about the experience, transformation, and results machines is that they all
    a. deprive us of actual contact with reality.
    b. deprive us of accomplishments.
    c. live our lives for us.*
    d. all of the above

10. If all that matters to us is our experiences and what we're like, then we should enter the
    a. experience machine.
    b. transformation machine.
    c. experience machine and then enter the transformation machine.*
    d. none of the above

11. Which of the following theories of a good life is the experience machine a threat to?
    a. A life is good to the extent it produces positive change.
    b. A life is good to the extent that it is filled with pleasure.*
    c. A life is good to the extent that its desires are satisfied.
    d. A life is good to the extent that it pleases God.

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12. Which of the following *are* attainable in the experience machine?
    a. pleasant sensations
    b. enjoyable experiences
    c. feelings of love
    d. all of the above*

13. Which of the following are *not* attainable in the experience machine?
    a. achieving one's goals*
    b. feeling proud
    c. believing in God
    d. all of the above

14. Which of the following is *not* one of Nozick's reasons for not plugging in to the experience machine?
    a. We want to *do* certain things with our lives.
    b. We want to *be* a certain kind of person.
    c. There is no contact with reality inside the machine.
    d. We cannot serve other people once we are inside the machine.*

15. What does Nozick think that we desire that the experience machine can't provide?
    a. to live in contact with reality*
    b. to feel deeply loved
    c. to feel that we've achieved something truly great
    d. to never have to worry about the future

Chapter 3
Chris Heathwood: Faring Well and Getting What You Want

Summary

Heathwood is interested in what makes a life good for the person who lives it. He endorses a subjectivist *desire theory of welfare*, which claims that what is intrinsically good for us is the satisfaction of our desires. To motivate his view, he considers some plausible candidates for objective intrinsic goods. He then imagines an agent who acquires one of these goods but lacks any positive attitude toward it. Intuitively, the agent is no better off. If this is so, then the candidate is not an intrinsic good after all. Because this reasoning generalizes, Heathwood argues, whether something is intrinsically good must essentially depend on whether we care about it. Considering a handful of objections, Heathwood goes on to clarify and refine his theory, ultimately holding that for something to be good for us, it must satisfy a desire we actually have (as opposed to a desire we would have if we were perfectly informed and rational), and we must be aware of the desire's satisfaction.

Essay Questions

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