Test Bank for Living Ethics An Introduction with Readings 2nd Shafer-Landau

Access Complete Test Bank for Living Ethics An Introduction with Readings 2nd Shafer-Landau

Instructor's Manual to Accompany
Living Ethics 2e
by
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Chapter 1: Moral Theory

Chapter Multiple Choice Questions

1. According to the text, the three core areas of moral philosophy are normative ethics, value theory, and
   a. moral skepticism.
   b. conventional morality.
   c. applied ethics.
   d. metaethics.
   Answer: d

*2. The area of moral philosophy known as "value theory" includes questions such as
   a. Is morality objective?
   b. What do we owe to each other?
   c. What kind of life is most worth living?
   d. How do we know which actions are morally right?
   Answer: c

3. The question "do the ends justify the means?" falls within the area of
   a. value theory.
   b. normative ethics.
   c. metaethics.
   d. moral psychology.
   Answer: b

4. The claim that morality is a human invention and therefore not objective falls within the domain of
   a. applied ethics.
   b. value theory.
   c. normative ethics.
   d. metaethics.
   Answer: d

*5. Skepticism about morality is
   a. a position that no one has ever argued for.
   b. nearly universally accepted.
   c. nearly universally rejected.
   d. deeply controversial.
   Answer: d

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*6. “Conventional morality” is the set of
a. laws of a particular government.
b. principles genuinely believed by a moral agent.
c. traditional principles that are widely shared within a culture or society.
d. true moral principles.
Answer: c

7. Which is *not* a central concern of morality?
a. Protecting people’s well-being
b. Justice
c. Blame
d. Legality
Answer: d

8. What do principles of law, etiquette, self-interest, tradition, and morality all have in common?
a. They all represent a set of standards for how we ought to behave.
b. They all are objective.
c. They all are descriptive.
d. All of the above
Answer: a

9. Some moral actions are
a. illegal.
b. impolite.
c. generous.
d. All of the above
Answer: d

*10. Which of the following questions falls within the domain of metaethics?
a. What is the status of moral claims and advice?
b. What are our fundamental moral duties?
c. Do the ends always justify the means?
d. What is the good life?
Answer: a

11. Which of the following claims falls within the domain of value theory?
a. Morality is objective.
b. Moral knowledge is impossible.

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c. The right thing to do is whatever maximizes happiness.
d. The only thing that matters in order to live well is to get what you want.
Answer: d

*12. What area of moral philosophy deals with questions about what our moral obligations are?
a. Value theory
b. Normative ethics
c. Metaethics
d. Moral epistemology
Answer: b

*13. Which of the following is *not* one of the plausible starting points for moral thinking discussed in the text?
a. Neither the law nor tradition is immune from moral criticism.
b. We are not obligated to do the impossible.
c. The consequences of our actions are the most morally important.
d. Deliberately hurting other people requires justification.
Answer: c

*14. Which of the following is *not* true of critical morality?
a. It can serve as the true standard for evaluating conventional morality.
b. It necessarily generates moral skepticism.
c. It does not have its origin in social agreements.
d. It is untainted by mistaken beliefs, irrationality, or popular prejudices.
Answer: b

15. According to the text, moral skepticism is
a. possibly true.
b. a core area of moral philosophy.
c. absurd or self-defeating.
d. the default view of ethics.
Answer: a

16. The view that an act is morally obligatory just because it is required by God, and that it is immoral just because God forbids it, is known as
a. theism.
b. conventional morality.
c. the divine command theory.
d. value theory.
Answer: c

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*17. The *Argument from Religious Authority* faces difficulties because
a. there are multiple sacred texts.
b. it requires justifying claims that God exists.
c. there are multiple interpretations of sacred texts.
d. All of the above
Answer: d

18. According to the conclusion of the *Divine Perfection Argument*,
a. God exists.
b. the divine command theory is false.
c. God is omniscient.
d. theism is false.
Answer: b

*19. The divine command theory falls within the domain of
a. value theory.
b. normative ethics.
c. applied ethics.
d. moral skepticism.
Answer: b

*20. According to the *Divine Perfection Argument*, if the divine command theory is true, then
a. God is morally perfect.
b. God does not exist.
c. God is morally imperfect.
d. moral skepticism is justified.
Answer: c

Chapter Essay Questions

*1. Are you satisfied with what the text says about the definition of morality? Why or why not? Can you think of a definition of morality? Do you think your definition successfully captures what morality is?
A good essay will:
- Explain and evaluate what the text says about the definition of morality
- Try to think of a definition of morality
- Evaluate the definition you think of

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*2. Do you think there are any elements of conventional morality that are mistaken? If so, which ones, and why?

3. Explain and discuss the *Divine Perfection Argument*. Do you think this argument is sound? Why or why not?

4. Explain and discuss the *Argument from Religious Authority*. Do you think this argument is sound? Why or why not?

*5. Explain and discuss the starting points for moral thinking considered in the chapter. Do you agree that these are all plausible starting points for moral thinking? If not, which ones are not, and why? Can you think of any other plausible starting points not considered in the chapter?

Web Links

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

"Guidelines on Reading Philosophy," Jim Pryor

Pea Soup, an academic blog on ethics and value theory

Practical Ethics, a blog dedicated to ethical analysis of current events

"The Definition of Morality," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

"Ethics," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Key Terms

Atheism: the view that God does not exist.

Conventional morality: the system of widely accepted rules and principles that members of a culture or society use to govern their own lives and to assess the actions and the motivations of others.

Critical morality: a set of moral norms that (i) does not have its origin in social agreements; (ii) is untainted by mistaken beliefs, irrationality, or popular prejudices; and (iii) can serve as the true

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standard for determining when conventional morality has got it right and when it has fallen into error.

Divine command theory: the view that an act is morally required just because it is commanded by God, and immoral just because God forbids it.

Norms: standards that we ought to live up to.

Normative system: a set of norms, that is, a set of standards for how we ought to behave, ideals to aim for, rules that we should not break.

Omniscient: all-knowing.

Theists: those who believe that God exists.

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Chapter 2: Moral Reasoning

Chapter Multiple Choice Questions

*1. In philosophy, an argument is a(n)
   a. formal debate between two parties who disagree.
   b. heated confrontation concerning a key philosophical issue.
   c. chain of reasoning consisting of a set of reasons that supports some conclusion.
   d. objection to a stated philosophical position.
   Answer: c

*2. It is impossible for a valid argument to have _____ premises and a _____ conclusion.
   a. true; false
   b. true; true
   c. false; false
   d. None of the above
   Answer: a

*3. What argument type has the form: "if P, then Q; P; therefore, Q"?
   a. Modus tollens
   b. Affirming the consequent
   c. Hypothetical syllogism
   d. Modus ponens
   Answer: d

4. There is no such thing as a
   a. sound argument that is also valid.
   b. sound argument that is not valid.
   c. valid argument that is also sound.
   d. valid argument that is not sound.
   Answer: b

*5. The conclusion of a sound argument
   a. will always be true.
   b. will always be false.
   c. might be true but also might be false.
   d. will always be relevant to the debate at hand.
   Answer: a

6. What argument type has the form: "if P, then Q; Q is false; therefore, P is false"?

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a. Modus tollens
b. Denying the antecedent
c. Hypothetical syllogism
d. Modus ponens
Answer: a

7. What is the best description of the following argument? *If the sky is yellow, then grass is pink. The sky is yellow. Therefore, grass is pink.*
a. Valid and sound
b. Valid but unsound
c. Invalid but sound
d. Invalid and unsound
Answer: b

*8. When is an argument logically valid?
a. When its premises are true
b. When its conclusion is true
c. When both its premises and conclusion are true
d. When the truth of its premises guarantees the truth of its conclusion
Answer: d

9. What argument type has the form: "if P, then Q; if Q, then R; therefore, if P, then R"?
a. Modus tollens
b. Affirming the consequent
c. Hypothetical syllogism
d. Modus ponens
Answer: c

10. What argument type has the form: "if P, then Q; Q; therefore, P is true"?
a. Modus tollens
b. Affirming the consequent
c. Hypothetical syllogism
d. Modus ponens
Answer: b

11. What argument type has the form: "if P, then Q; P is false; therefore, Q is false"?
a. Modus tollens
b. Denying the antecedent
c. Hypothetical syllogism
d. Modus ponens

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Answer: b

12. A necessary condition is a _____ and a sufficient condition is a _____.
    a. guarantee; requirement
    b. guarantee; prerequisite
    c. requirement; guarantee
    d. precondition; requirement
    Answer: c

*13. Trying to undermine the truth of a position by attacking the person who is advancing it is called
    a. the ad hominem fallacy.
    b. appeal to ignorance.
    c. the straw man fallacy.
    d. appeal to irrelevant emotions.
    Answer: a

14. Depicting a position in a way that makes it easy to refute is known as
    a. the ad hominem fallacy.
    b. appeal to ignorance.
    c. the straw man fallacy.
    d. appeal to irrelevant emotions.
    Answer: c

*15. A claim that supplies a condition that is both necessary and sufficient for something is called a(n)
    a. consequent.
    b. guarantee.
    c. biconditional.
    d. antecedent.
    Answer: c

16. The sentence “An action is wrong if and only if it causes pain” is an example of a(n)
    a. hypothetical syllogism.
    b. appeal to irrelevant emotions.
    c. straw man fallacy.
    d. biconditional.
    Answer: d

*17. Formal fallacies are always

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a. sound.
b. invalid.
c. false.
d. unpersuasive.
Answer: b

*18. Someone who claims plants and trees are conscious simply because it hasn't been proven that they're not is guilty of making an appeal to
a. ignorance.
b. irrelevant emotions.
c. popularity.
d. authority.
Answer: a

19. Which of the following is an example of a formal fallacy?
a. Ad hominen
b. Affirming the consequent
c. Straw man
d. Hasty generalization
Answer: b

*20. Which fallacy occurs when someone makes a sweeping claim about a group based on only a small handful of cases?
a. Ad hominen
b. Affirming the consequent
c. Straw man
d. Hasty generalization
Answer: d

Chapter Essay Questions

*1. What is a valid argument? How can we determine whether an argument is valid or invalid? Provide an example of both a valid and invalid argument in your answer.
A good essay will:
- Define logical validity
- Lay out the three-part test for validity
- Apply the three-part test to the sample arguments provided

*2. What is an *argument* as philosophers use the term? What makes for a good argument?

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3. What is the difference between a necessary condition and a sufficient condition? Why is understanding necessary and sufficient conditions important for ethical thinking?

4. Explain why every instance of modus ponens reasoning is logically valid, using the technical terms *conditional*, *antecedent*, and *consequent* in your answer. Why is the argument form affirming the consequent not similarly valid?

*5. What is a fallacy? Describe the fallacies discussed in the text, providing a concrete example of each.

Web Links

"Moral Reasoning," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

"What Is an Argument?" Jim Pryor

"Vocabulary Describing Arguments," Jim Pryor

"Validity and Soundness," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

"Deductive and Inductive Arguments," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

"Critical Thinking - Fundamentals: Deductive Arguments," Wireless Philosophy

"How to Argue— Philosophical Reasoning," Crash Course Philosophy

Key Terms

Antecedent: the "if" clause of a conditional; the clause that specifies a sufficient condition of the conditional's consequent.

Argument: a chain of thought in which reasons are offered in support of a particular conclusion.

Biconditional: a claim that supplies a condition that is both necessary and sufficient for something; an "if and only if" sentence.

Conditional: an if–then sentence.

Consequent: the "then" clause of a conditional; it specifies a necessary condition of the conditional's antecedent.

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Hypothetical syllogism: An argument of the form: if P, then Q; If Q, then R; therefore, If P, then R.

Logical validity: the feature of an argument that guarantees the truth of its conclusion, on the assumption that its premises are true.

Modus ponens: An argument of the form: If P, then Q; P; therefore, Q.

Modus tollens: An argument of the form: if P, then Q; Q is false; therefore, P is false.

Necessary condition: a requirement, a prerequisite, a precondition

Premises: the reasons within an argument that, taken together, are meant to support the argument's conclusion.

Sufficient condition: a guarantee.

Soundness: the feature that arguments have when they are logically valid and all of their premises are true.

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Chapter 3: Skepticism about Morality

Chapter Multiple Choice Questions

*1. Ethical egoism is the theory that
   a. every human action aims at some personal benefit.
   b. altruism is impossible.
   c. actions are morally right just because they promote one's self-interest.
   d. it is permissible, but not obligatory, to value oneself over others.
   Answer: c

2. Which of the following features of our ordinary moral thinking does ethical egoism disagree with?
   a. Morality requires us to be generous, compassionate and benevolent.
   b. Morality requires the recognition that we are not fundamentally more important than others.
   c. Morality sometimes requires us to sacrifice our own interests for those of needier or deserving others.
   d. All of the above
   Answer: d

*3. According to the text, what is wrong with the *Self-Reliance Argument*?
   a. It is not true that all would be better off if everyone tended to his or her own needs.
   b. The egoist cannot endorse the claim that we ought to do what benefits everyone.
   c. Both a and b
   d. Neither a nor b (The argument is sound.)
   Answer: c

4. What is the relationship between libertarianism and ethical egoism?
   a. If libertarianism is true, ethical egoism must be true.
   b. Libertarianism supports ethical egoism but does not require it.
   c. Ethical egoism supports libertarianism but does not require it.
   d. Libertarianism and ethical egoism are inconsistent.
   Answer: d

*5. Psychological egoism is the theory that
   a. the mind is composed of the id, the superego, and the ego.
   b. people morally ought to pursue their self-interest at all times.
   c. acting solely out of self-interest is psychologically unhealthy.
   d. everything people do is fundamentally motivated by self-interest.
   Answer: d

*6. If psychological egoism is true, it can't be our duty to be altruistic because
   a. psychological egoism says that acting altruistically doesn't make us better off.
   b. altruism would be impossible and we aren't morally required to do the impossible.
   c. according to psychological egoism, an act is right just in case it is self-interested.

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d. All of the above
Answer: b

*7. Which of the following accurately describes the relationship between ethical egoism and psychological egoism?
a. If psychological egoism is true, this supports ethical egoism.
b. If ethical egoism is true, psychological egoism must be true.
c. They are competing theories about what we ought to do.
d. They are competing theories about the way humans actually behave.
Answer: a

*8. Objective moral standards are those that
a. all moral theories agree upon.
b. apply to everyone, regardless of what they believe.
c. are knowable to all.
d. All of the above
Answer: b

9. Someone is a relativist if he or she believes that
a. different cultures have different moral codes.
b. the moral code of a society is a fallible guide to our moral obligations.
c. the guiding ideals of a society determine what is right or wrong.
d. our culture's basic moral code is worse than those of at least some other cultures.
Answer: c

*10. Which of the following would a relativist *not* accept?
a. Different societies have different moral codes.
b. Individuals can be mistaken about what is morally required of them.
c. Some societies have better moral codes than others.
d. There are no objective moral standards.
Answer: c

11. If relativism is true, then the moral values of our culture are
a. superior to the values of other cultures.
b. inferior to the values of other cultures.
c. the exact same values that all other cultures have.
d. no better or worse than the moral values of other cultures.
Answer: d

12. What does relativism imply about iconoclasts who oppose the conventional moral wisdom of a society?
a. They are always a source of moral progress.
b. They are always morally mistaken.
c. They can be morally correct but are often morally mistaken.
d. They are impossible.
Answer: b

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*13. If relativism does not generate contradictions between the moral beliefs of different cultures, then cross-cultural moral disagreement is
a. widespread.
b. rare.
c. impossible.
d. immoral.
Answer: c

14. If relativism is true, what follows about the morality of racism?
a. Racism is always morally acceptable.
b. Racism is morally acceptable in societies that approve of it.
c. Racism is never morally acceptable.
d. Racism is morally irrelevant.
Answer: b

*15. Error theory is the theory that
a. there are no moral features in the world.
b. no moral judgments are true.
c. our sincere moral judgments try, but always fail, to describe moral features in the world.
d. All of the above
Answer: d

16. Which of the following claims would an error theorist accept?
a. There are objective moral standards.
b. There are categorical reasons.
c. Moral judgments try to describe moral features in the world.
d. Moral knowledge is possible.
Answer: c

17. Error theorists accept the existence of
a. objective moral standards.
b. categorical reasons.
c. Both a and b
d. Neither a nor b
Answer: d

*18. According to the *Argument from Disagreement*, there are no objective moral standards because
a. different cultures persistently disagree about all moral claims.
b. well-informed, open-minded, rational people persistently disagree about all moral claims.
c. moral disagreement is a result of sloppy moral reasoning.
d. All of the above
Answer: b

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19. According to the text, what is wrong with the *Argument from Atheism*?
    a. If atheism is true, then it is not true that laws require lawmakers.
    b. Atheism is false.
    c. If atheism is true, then laws require lawmakers.
    d. It will do nothing to convince religious believers.
    Answer: a

20. Which of the following is *not* one of the arguments in favor of error theory?
    a. The *Argument from Disagreement*
    b. The *Argument from Expected Benefit*
    c. The *Argument from the Scientific Test of Reality*
    d. The *Argument from Atheism*
    Answer: b

Chapter Essay Questions

*1. In what ways does ethical egoism require actions that seem to be paradigmatic cases of immorality? How serious of a problem is this for the theory? What should the egoist say in response? Defend your answers.
    A good essay will:
    - Define ethical egoism.
    - Explain what paradigmatically immoral actions the theory requires.
    - Discuss the implications of the above for ethical egoism.

2. What is psychological egoism and how does it provide support for ethical egoism? Do you think psychological egoism is true? Why or why not?

3. What is moral progress? Why is moral progress impossible if relativism is true? How serious of a problem is this for the theory? Defend your answers.

*4. What does it mean to say that an ethical standard is objective? In what ways do relativists deny the objectivity of ethics, and why do you think they do so? Is morality objective? Defend your answers.

*5. Which of the arguments offered by error theorists do you find most powerful and why? Does the argument you chose establish the truth of error theory? Why or why not?

Jeske's "Cultural Relativism" Multiple Choice Questions

1. According to Jeske's analysis, moral disagreement across cultures is
    a. the result of differences in non-moral beliefs.
    b. merely apparent.

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c. a justification for moral skepticism.
d. impossible to resolve.
Answer: a

*2. According to Jeske, if cultural relativism is true, then moral disagreement across cultures is
a. the result of differences in non-moral beliefs.
b. merely apparent.
c. a justification for moral skepticism.
d. impossible to resolve.
Answer: b

*3. Which of the following is *not* part of the appeal of cultural relativism according to Jeske?
a. It explains our reluctance to judge those in other cultures.
b. It makes sense of moral disagreement without forcing us to say that someone must be wrong.
c. It provides the best possible defense against moral skepticism.
d. It seems to encourage the toleration of diversity.
Answer: c

*4. According to Jeske, cultural relativism _____ toleration.
a. is, under no circumstance, compatible with
b. is the best theory to promote
c. necessarily entails
d. is, under certain circumstances, incompatible with
Answer: d

5. Those who accept cultural relativism argue that adhering to a culture-independent moral code
a. leads to moral skepticism.
b. makes moral disagreement merely apparent.
c. encourages judgmental arrogance that leads to intolerance.
d. All of the above
Answer: c

6. Jeske argues that practices such as slavery and lynching show that
a. cultural relativism is true.
b. toleration should not be extended to all cultural practices.
c. moral skepticism is unjustified.
d. cultural relativism encourages toleration.
Answer: b

*7. Jeske argues that in cases of extreme moral disagreement
a. there is usually common ground.
b. the disagreement is usually more apparent than real.
c. resolving the disagreement is always impossible.
d. there is no fact of the matter about who is right and who is wrong.

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Answer: a

8. Which of the following statements is consistent with cultural relativism with speaker-relativity?
   a. "That's right for them even though it's not right for us."
   b. "It is certainly wrong for me to own slaves, but it was not wrong for Thomas Jefferson to own slaves."
   c. "What's right for the members of my culture is right for everyone."
   d. None of the above
   Answer: c

*9. According to Jeske's analysis, our reluctance to judge people in other places and times is best explained by
   a. cultural relativism with agent-relativity.
   b. our recognition that what people are justified in believing is largely a function of their time and culture.
   c. cultural relativism with speaker-relativity.
   d. our embrace moral skepticism.
   Answer: b

10. Jeske argues that moral judgments ought to be sensitive to the culture of the agent being evaluated because
   a. cultural relativism with agent-relativity is true.
   b. we must avoid smug, judgmental arrogance.
   c. cultural relativism with speaker-relativity is true.
   d. culture is relevant to what it is rational for that agent to believe.
   Answer: d

Jeske's "Cultural Relativism" Essay Questions

1. How does Jeske explain our reluctance to judge other cultures? Is her explanation more convincing than that of the relativist in your view? Why or why not?

*2. Jeske claims that rejecting cultural relativism does not entail intolerance and that accepting cultural relativism is actually incompatible with tolerance under certain circumstances. How does Jeske argue for these claims? Are her arguments convincing? Why or why not?

*3. In the final section of her essay, Jeske suggests that there is less moral disagreement across time and place than it initially appears. What is the basis for Jeske's suggestion? Do you find her suggestion plausible? Why or why not?

Mackie's "The Subjectivity of Values" Multiple Choice Questions

*1. Mackie's claim that values are not objective is meant to include which of the following?

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a. Moral value
b. Rightness and wrongness
c. Duty and obligation
d. All of the above
Answer: d

*2. An error theory is a theory
a. that contains an error.
b. that maintains that all judgments of a certain kind are false.
c. about what errors are.
d. about how to best avoid errors.
Answer: b

3. According to Mackie, what is the difference between scientific disagreement and moral disagreement?
a. There is less disagreement about science than there is about morality.
b. Scientific disagreement results from speculative inferences or inadequate evidence while moral disagreement does not.
c. Most scientific disagreement gets resolved while most moral disagreement does not.
d. All of the above
Answer: b

4. Mackie maintains that the mere occurrence of disagreement shows that
a. there are no objective values.
b. there are no objective truths.
c. moral judgments are purely conventional.
d. None of the above
Answer: d

5. According to Mackie, what best explains variations in moral codes?
a. That they reflect ways of life
b. That they express perceptions of objective values
c. That moral judgments lack descriptive meaning
d. All of the above
Answer: a

*6. According to Mackie, if there were objective values, they would have to have which of the following features?
a. They would have to be utterly different from anything else in the universe.
b. We could be aware of them only via some special faculty of moral perception or intuition.
c. Both a and b
d. Neither a nor b
Answer: c

*7. Mackie argues that all moral thinking requires input from

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a. ethical intuition.
b. emotion.
c. reason.
d. delusion.
Answer: a

8. According to Mackie, what is the moral objectivist's best move in response to the argument from queerness?
a. To evade the issue
b. To look for companions in guilt
c. To insist that objective values are not queer
d. None of the above
Answer: b

*9. According to Mackie, moral judgments
a. are false.
b. lack descriptive meaning.
c. should be treated as expressions of desires.
d. All of the above
Answer: a

10. Which of the following moral claims does Mackie think is true?
a. It is morally good to help a deserving person in need.
b. It is morally wrong to inflict needless suffering for fun.
c. You are morally obliged to do what is best for yourself.
d. None of the above
Answer: d

Mackie's "The Subjectivity of Values" Essay Questions

*1. Do you think Mackie succeeds in showing that all moral claims are false? If yes, explain what you think is the best objection to his arguments and why you think it fails to refute Mackie's conclusion. If no, explain why Mackie's arguments fail to establish his conclusion.

2. Compare and contrast moral and scientific disagreement. What does Mackie take to be the most important differences between them? What does he take this to show about each type of disagreement? Do you agree with his assessment? Defend your answers.

*3. Explain the companions in guilt response to the argument from queerness. Which of the companions Mackie discusses do you think is most "queer?" Do you think we should be error theorists about this companion? Defend your answers.

Web Links

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"Moral Skepticism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

"Moral Relativism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

"Moral Relativism," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

"Error Theory," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

"Egoism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

"Egoism," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

"Psychological Egoism," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Key Terms

Altruism: the motivation to benefit others for their own sake.

Atheists: those who believe that God does not exist.

Begging the question: assuming the truth of the conclusion that one's argument is meant to support.

Categorical reasons: reasons that apply to us regardless of whether acting on them will get us what we want.

Error theory: the view that says that (i) there are no moral features in this world; (ii) no moral judgments are true; (iii) our sincere moral judgments try, and always fail, to describe the moral features of things; and, as a result, (iv) there is no moral knowledge.

Ethical egoism: the ethical theory that says that an action is morally right if and only if it maximizes one's self-interest.

Iconoclast: a person whose views are deeply opposed to conventional wisdom.

Infallible: incapable of making a mistake.

Objective moral standards: those that apply to everyone, even if people don't believe that they do, even if people are indifferent to them, and even if obeying them fails to satisfy anyone's desires.

Psychological egoism: the psychological theory that says that the ultimate motivation behind every human action is the pursuit of self-interest.

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Case Study

In 1994, a 17-year-old girl named Fauziya Kassindja entered the United States seeking asylum. She had fled her native country of Togo to escape female genital mutilation (FGM). FGM is a permanently disfiguring procedure that UNICEF estimates up to 200 million women have undergone. Though Fauziya's immediate family opposed FGM, her father suddenly died when she was 16. After her father's death, Fauziya's grandfather arranged for her to undergo FGM (read more on PBS).

Fauziya's mother and sister managed to help her escape to avoid FGM. However, in the United States, Fauziya was imprisoned for two years while the authorities decided what to do with her. She was finally granted asylum but not before becoming center of a controversy about how Americans should regard the social practices of other cultures. A series of articles in the *New York Times* argued that FGM is a barbaric practice that should be condemned. But others were reluctant to be to make such judgments, worrying that it would be intolerant or imperialistic to condemn other cultures' social practices, even if they were clearly immoral by the standards of American culture.

Questions:

1. Suppose we judge that FGM is morally wrong. Are we making a universal moral judgment or merely applying the standards of our own culture? Does cultural relativism entail that the latter kind of moral judgment is the only legitimate kind?

2. Do you think there is anything intolerant or imperialistic about issuing universal moral condemnation of practices like FGM? What about other cultural practices that are less extreme but nevertheless seem morally wrong to us? Is cultural relativism more plausible with regard to some cases than others?

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Chapter 4: The Good Life

Chapter Multiple Choice Questions

1. Going to the dentist is an example of something that is
   a. instrumentally valuable.
   b. intrinsically valuable.
   c. Both a and b
   d. Neither a nor b
   Answer: a

*2. If something is intrinsically valuable, then it must
   a. bring about other good things.
   b. be valuable for its own sake.
   c. be recognized to be valuable by everyone, not just some people.
   d. be attainable by everyone.
   Answer: b

*3. According to hedonism, the key ingredient to a good life is
   a. happiness.
   b. getting what you want.
   c. doing God's will.
   d. being kind to others.
   Answer: a

*4. To say that something is instrumentally valuable is to say that it is
   a. good for its own sake.
   b. good because it helps us to achieve some other good.
   c. good both for its own sake and for what it helps us to achieve.
   d. useful to think it is valuable, even if it isn't really valuable.
   Answer: b

5. What would a hedonist say about a person who sometimes enjoyed being humiliated or manipulated?
   a. These things would sometimes be good for such a person.
   b. These things would never be good for such a person.
   c. Hedonism would not apply to such a person.
   d. The existence of such a person would disprove hedonism.
   Answer: a

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*6. According to the *Argument from False Happiness*, what is wrong with hedonism?
   a. Hedonism says that it is possible for false beliefs to make us happy.
   b. Hedonism says that happiness based on evil actions just as good as any other happiness.
   c. Hedonism says that happiness based on false beliefs is just as good for us as happiness based on true beliefs.
   d. All of the above
   Answer: c

*7. A theory of the good life is supposed to tell us
   a. which policies will make people better off.
   b. why we ought to try to make other people's lives better.
   c. which things are instrumentally good for us.
   d. which things are intrinsically good for us.
   Answer: d

*8. Which of the following does the hedonist believe is intrinsically valuable?
   a. The pain of exercising
   b. The good health that is a result of exercise
   c. The happiness that accompanies being healthy
   d. All of the above
   Answer: c

9. Robert Nozick's "experience machine" thought experiment attempts to show that happiness is
   a. not the sole element of the good life.
   b. not the only thing that is intrinsically valuable.
   c. only instrumentally valuable.
   d. Both a and b
   Answer: d

*10. The *Argument from Autonomy* objects to hedonism on the grounds that
   a. autonomy is intrinsically valuable, even though it cannot make us happy.
   b. autonomy can contribute to a good life even when it fails to make us happy.
   c. happiness is only valuable as insofar as it contributes to autonomy.
   d. autonomy is the only thing that is intrinsically valuable.
   Answer: b

*11. Hedonists respond to the *Argument from Evil Pleasures* by
   a. admitting that the pleasure that comes from doing evil deeds is not valuable.
   b. making a distinction between moral goodness and well-being.

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c. making a distinction between physical and attitudinal pleasure.
d. None of the above (the "Evil Pleasures" objection refutes hedonism.)
Answer: b

12. According to the desire satisfaction theory of human welfare, something is intrinsically good for you
a. *if* it satisfies your desires.
b. *only if* it satisfies your desires.
c. *because* it satisfies your desires.
d. All of the above
Answer: d

13. According to the desire satisfaction theory, getting what you want makes
a. you intrinsically better off.
b. you intrinsically better off only if it makes you happy.
c. everyone intrinsically better off.
d. everyone intrinsically better off if it creates more pleasure than pain.
Answer: a

14. If the desire satisfaction theory is true, then health, wealth, and happiness are
a. always intrinsically valuable regardless of you wanting them.
b. intrinsically valuable if they help to satisfy your desires.
c. instrumentally valuable if they help to satisfy your desires.
d. always instrumentally valuable regardless of you wanting them.
Answer: c

*15. A theory of the good life is an objective theory if and only if it claims
a. to be true.
b. to find a single ingredient (e.g., desire satisfaction) that is essential to a good life.
c. that certain things are good for us independently of our desires and opinions.
d. that welfare is to be found in material possessions rather than psychological states.
Answer: c

16. Which of the following is widely considered an attraction of the desire satisfaction theory?
a. It makes what is good for us "up to us."
b. It explains why happiness is always good for us.
c. It explains why some things are good for us even if they do not satisfy any or our desires.
d. All of the above
Answer: a

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17. According to the text, desire satisfaction does not seem to be sufficient for a good life because
    a. our desires can be based on false beliefs.
    b. it is possible to desire things that are bad for us, like being enslaved.
    c. we sometimes fail to desire things that we would later recognize as improving our lives.
    d. All of the above
    Answer: d

18. Which of the following is *not* one of the three counterexamples to the desire satisfaction theory proposed in the text?
    a. Pleasant surprises
    b. Musicians
    c. Small children
    d. Suicide prevention
    Answer: b

*19. According to the *Motivation Argument*, if something
    a. is intrinsically good for you, then it will satisfy your desires.
    b. will satisfy your desires, then you will be at least somewhat motivated to get it.
    c. is intrinsically good for you, then you will be at least somewhat motivated to get it.
    d. All of the above
    Answer: d

20. What is the desire satisfaction theory's explanation of why we are motivated to benefit ourselves?
    a. Our beliefs about welfare motivate us.
    b. Our desires motivate us.
    c. We are socialized into the habit of benefiting ourselves.
    d. Benefiting ourselves makes us happy, and the prospect of happiness motivates us.
    Answer: b

Chapter Essay Questions

*1. Explain the difference between intrinsic value and instrumental value and give examples of things you take to be valuable in each way. Next, define hedonism. What does the hedonist claim is intrinsically valuable and what do they claim is instrumentally valuable? Do you agree?

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A good essay will:

- Define intrinsic and instrumental value
- Define hedonism
- Explain what hedonists think about value, and either accept or reject it

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

*3. Briefly describe an example of an intuitively valuable life (it can be someone you know personally or someone you just know of). Explain what makes their life valuable. Does hedonism do a good job of capturing all the dimensions of value in the life in your example? Why or why not?

*4. Explain the desire satisfaction theory of the good life. What are some of its advantages and some of its disadvantages? Do you think the desire satisfaction can capture everything about what makes for a good life? Why or why not?

5. Write an essay critically examining the following claim: "Something is good for us only if it satisfies our desires." Are there any cases in which we can be benefited without having any of our desires satisfied? Present a couple of cases that might be thought to have this feature and describe how you think a desire satisfaction theorist would respond.

Mill's "Hedonism" Multiple Choice 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.
   Answer: b

*2. Mill claims 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.
   Answer: c

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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.
   d. human beings have more freedom than pigs.
   Answer: a

4. 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.
   Answer: b

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

*6. 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
   Answer: b

7. 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
   Answer: c

*8. 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. Neither a nor b

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Answer: c

9. 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.
   Answer: b

10. According to Mill, the view that only the quantity of pleasure matters (and not its quality) is
   a. false.
   b. a doctrine worthy only of swine.
   c. true.
   d. Both a and b
   Answer: d

Mill's "Hedonism" 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. 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?

*3. 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.

Nozick's "The Experience Machine" Multiple Choice Questions

1. Nozick's aim in discussing the experience machine is to
   a. describe a device that he predicts will soon be invented and widely used.

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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.
Answer: c

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

*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.
Answer: b

4. While in the experience machine, Nozick claims, we would be
a. courageous.
b. loving.
c. whatever we wanted to be.
d. an indeterminate blob.
Answer: d

*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.
Answer: d

6. 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
Answer: a

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*7. 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
   Answer: c

*8. Which of the following theories of a good life is the experience machine a threat to?
   a. Objective theories
   b. Hedonism
   c. Desire satisfaction theories
   d. All of the above
   Answer: b

9. 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.
   Answer: d

10. 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
   Answer: a

Nozick's "The Experience Machine" Essay Questions

*1. Explain Nozick's "experience machine" thought experiment. Would you plug into the experience machine? Why or why not? What do you think this shows about the good life?

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

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*3. What kind of theory of the good life would best explain Nozick's reasons for not plugging into the experience machine? How much support do you think this provides for that kind of theory? Defend your answers.

Web Links

"Well-Being," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

"Hedonism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

"Hedonism," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

"John Stuart Mill," *Utilitarianism Resources*

"John Stuart Mill: Ethics," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

"Mill's Conception of Happiness," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Key Terms

Autonomy: the power to guide our life through our own free choices.

Desire satisfaction theory: the view that something is intrinsically good for you if it satisfies your desires, only if it satisfies your desires, and because it satisfies your desires.

Hedonism: the view that a life is good to the extent that it is filled with pleasure and is free of pain.

Intrinsically valuable: worth pursuing for its own sake; valuable in its own right.

Instrumental goods: things that are valuable because of the good things they bring about.

Case Study

In her essay "The Meanings of Lives," Susan Wolf asks us to consider a case she calls "The Blob." The Blob is a person who spends every day sitting in front of the TV, drinking beer, and

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watching reruns of the same shows. Imagine that this is truly all the Blob does, day after day. But nevertheless, the Blob is perfectly content—it is all he wants and it makes him happy. He has no health or financial problems, or other things to worry about.

This is an extreme example, but not terribly unrealistic. There are some people who have such low expectations for their lives that they are perfectly content engaging in the same seemingly meaningless activities day after day. Such cases might lead us to wonder whether some subjective condition, like pleasure and the absence of pain, or the satisfaction or our desires, is really all there is to living a good life.

Questions:

1. What do you think about the case of the Blob? Does the Blob live a good life? If not, what does this say about hedonism? What does it say about desire satisfaction theories?

2. What of value (if anything) do you think the Blob's life is missing? What do you think this says about the nature of the good life?

Source: S. Wolf, "The Meanings of Lives." In *The Variety of Values: Essays on Morality, Meaning, and Love.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

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Chapter 5: Consequentialism

Chapter Multiple Choice Questions:

1. Consequentialism is
   a. a family of ethical theories that includes utilitarianism.
   b. one version of act utilitarianism.
   c. inconsistent with utilitarianism.
   d. None of the above
   Answer: a

*2. Consequentialism states that an action is right if and only if it
   a. produces the best results.
   b. gives people what they deserve.
   c. does not harm anyone.
   d. is good for more people than any alternative action.
   Answer: a

*3. The principle of utility can be summarized as
   a. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."
   b. "Do whatever is most useful in the circumstances."
   c. "Maximize overall well-being."
   d. "Always pursue your own self-interest."
   Answer: c

*4. Utilitarians believe that the morality of an action depends on
   a. its expected results.
   b. its actual results.
   c. the goodness of one's intentions.
   d. All of the above
   Answer: b

5. Utilitarians believe in
   a. a handful of absolute moral rules.
   b. only one absolute moral rule: the principle of utility.
   c. breaking conventional moral rules whenever it is in one's self-interest.
   d. no moral rules whatsoever.
   Answer: b

*6. When an action is optimific, it
   a. treats everyone fairly.

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b. makes everyone better off.
c. produces the best overall results.
d. is immoral.
Answer: c

7. Which is *not* an attraction of utilitarianism?
a. It is impartial.
b. It makes it easy to acquire moral knowledge.
c. It justifies many of our basic moral beliefs.
d. It helps us solve moral conflicts.
Answer: b

8. Which of the following best describes the relationship between utilitarianism and consequentialism?
a. Utilitarianism is a form of consequentialism.
b. Consequentialism is a form of utilitarianism.
c. Utilitarianism and consequentialism are completely independent theories.
d. Utilitarianism and consequentialism are inconsistent.
Answer: a

9. What attitudes do most utilitarians take toward moral rules?
a. Many moral rules are absolute and must never be broken.
b. Moral rules can be helpful but can be broken if doing so is optimific.
c. Following moral rules is harmful and ought to be shunned.
d. Utilitarians believe that the idea of a "moral rule" is incoherent.
Answer: b

10. According to utilitarian Jeremy Bentham, what is the relevant question for determining membership in the moral community?
a. Can they suffer?
b. Can they reason?
c. Can they talk?
d. Can they care?
Answer: a

*11. What attitude do most utilitarians take toward nonhuman animals?
a. Their suffering does not matter morally.
b. Their suffering matters morally but not nearly as much as that of humans.
c. If an animal suffers to the same extent as a human, the animal's suffering is equally important.

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d. Animal suffering is morally more important than human suffering because animals are not moral agents.

Answer: c

*12. Being a member of the moral community means that you are
a. part of a society that has certain moral beliefs.
b. part of a group that acts morally.
c. morally virtuous.
d. morally important in your own right.

Answer: d

13. Most utilitarians regard the principle of utility as a
a. standard of rightness.
b. decision procedure.
c. Both a and b
d. Neither a nor b

Answer: a

*14. Utilitarians claim that
a. all moral action is supererogatory.
b. all self-interested action is supererogatory.
c. very few things are supererogatory.
d. no acts are supererogatory.

Answer: d

*15. If utilitarianism is true, it is
a. always acceptable to give preference to the interests of our family members.
b. never acceptable to give preference to the interests of our family members.
c. sometimes permissible to give preference to our family members, but only when doing so is most beneficial.
d. None of the above

Answer: c

16. Utilitarianism states that it is always intrinsically wrong to
a. violate people's rights.
b. kill innocent people.
c. lie to people.
d. None of the above

Answer: d

17. According to the *Argument from Injustice*,

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a. injustice can sometimes be justified in certain circumstances.
b. utilitarianism sometimes requires us to commit serious injustices.
c. justice is not intrinsically valuable.
d. All of the above
Answer: b

*18. Rule consequentialism is the view that
a. an action is morally right just because it is required by an optimific social rule.
b. acts are morally right if and only if they create the greatest amount of well-being.
c. we ought to usually follow consequentialism but may occasionally do otherwise for the sake of self-interest.
d. the best way to maximize happiness is to follow existing social rules.
Answer: a

19. Most consequentialists believe that rule consequentialism
a. is an improvement over act consequentialism.
b. is neither better nor worse than act consequentialism.
c. amounts to irrational rule worship.
d. None of the above
Answer: c

*20. Which of the following responses to the problem of injustice is *not* consistent with utilitarianism?
a. Justice must sometimes be sacrificed for the sake of well-being.
b. Justice is intrinsically valuable.
c. Injustice is never optimific.
d. In almost every case, the just action will also be the one that maximizes well-being.
Answer: b

Chapter Essay Questions

*1. Define consequentialism and explain why act utilitarianism is a form of consequentialism. How does consequentialism differ from rival approaches to ethics? Do you find consequentialism to be a plausible way of thinking about right and wrong? Defend your answer.
A good essay will:
- Define consequentialism and utilitarianism
- Compare consequentialism to other ethical theories
- Explain whether you think consequentialism is a plausible ethical theory

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2. Explain what you take to be the strongest version of consequentialism. What does it count as intrinsically good and bad and how does it understand the balance of good over bad? Explain some advantages of your theory over other versions of consequentialism.

3. What implications does utilitarianism have for our treatment of nonhuman animals? Do you find utilitarians' conclusions about animals plausible? If so, why? If not, how would you respond to their arguments?

*4. Describe a case in which utilitarianism seems to require that someone behave unjustly. Do you think utilitarianism nonetheless gives the correct moral verdict in this case? Why or why not? How might a utilitarian reply to the objection that the theory wrongly licenses injustice?

*5. Write an essay comparing and contrasting act utilitarianism with rule consequentialism. Define each theory and then explain why rule consequentialism is often thought to provide a solution to the problem of injustice that faces act utilitarianism. What objection do act utilitarians often level against rule consequentialism? Which theory do you think is preferable, and why?

Mill's "Utilitarianism" Multiple Choice Questions

*1. The Greatest Happiness Principle holds that
   a. actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.
   b. happiness is the only thing that is valuable, the reverse of happiness is the only thing that is not valuable.
   c. this is the best of all possible worlds because in it is the greatest possible happiness.
   d. the greatest happiness comes from praising God and the greatest pain comes from rejecting God.

   Answer: a

*2. How does Mill understand "happiness?"
   a. As the satisfaction of desires
   b. As pleasure and the absence of pain
   c. As peaceful, detached existence
   d. All of the above

   Answer: b

3. According to Mill, which of the following are desirable ends?
   a. Pleasure

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b. Freedom from pain
c. Both a and b
d. Neither a nor b
Answer: c

*4. On Mill's view, whose happiness is relevant for determining right conduct?
a. Only the agent's own happiness
b. Only the agent's own happiness and the happiness of the agent's loved ones
c. Only the happiness of those who deserve to be happy
d. The happiness of all concerned
Answer: d

*5. Mill maintains that the business of ethics is to
a. tell us what our duties are.
b. determine the worth of agents.
c. identify good motives.
d. All of the above
Answer: a

*6. Mill maintains that, in the long run, the best proof of a good character is
a. popularity.
b. self-confidence.
c. performing good actions.
d. personal happiness.
Answer: c

7. Mill argues that, according to the utilitarian doctrine, lying is
a. always morally permissible.
b. always morally impermissible.
c. usually morally permissible.
d. usually morally impermissible.
Answer: d

8. According to Mill, what is the function of secondary moral principles?
a. To guide decisions via intermediate generalizations
b. To encode exceptionless rules of conduct
c. To determine who is virtuous and who is vicious
d. None of the above (They have no function.)
Answer: a

9. Mill claims that secondary moral principles

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a. have no exceptions.
b. sometimes conflict.
c. are of use only to the feeble minded.
d. All of the above
Answer: b

10. According to Mill, when should the first principles of morality be appealed to in decision-making?
a. Always
b. Never
c. When secondary principles conflict
d. When happiness is irrelevant
Answer: c

Mill's "Utilitarianism" Essay Questions

*1. Explain the Greatest Happiness Principle. Then, come up with what you take to be the most compelling counterexample to it. Ultimately, does your example show that the Greatest Happiness Principle is false? Explain and defend your response.

*2. Mill insists that we should be impartial between our own happiness and the happiness of others. Come up with a case in which partiality seems justified. How do you think Mill would respond to your case? Do you agree with his response? Why or why not?

3. Explain the objection to utilitarianism that it is too much to demand that people always be motivated by the greatest good. How does Mill respond to this objection? Do you find his response satisfying? Why or why not?

Web Links

"Consequentialism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

"The History of Utilitarianism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Utilitarianism Resources

"Act and Rule Utilitarianism," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

"Mill's Practical Philosophy," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

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"John Stuart Mill: Ethics," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Key Terms

Absolute rule: a rule that may never permissibly be broken.

Act utilitarianism: the moral theory that says that an action is morally required just because it does more to improve overall well-being than any other action you could have done in the circumstances.

Consequentialism: The family of moral theories that say that an action or a policy is morally required just because it produces the best overall results.

Decision procedure: a method for reliably guiding our decisions, so that when we use it well, we make decisions as we ought to.

Intrinsically good: valuable in and of itself, and worth having for its own sake.

Moral community: that group of individuals who are morally important in their own right, and as such, owed a certain amount of respect. Membership in the moral community imposes a duty on everyone else to take one's needs seriously, for one's own sake.

Optimific: producing the best results.

Optimific social rule: a social rule which, if nearly everyone accepted it, would yield better results than any competing social rule.

Principle of utility: the central doctrine of act utilitarianism.

Rule consequentialism: the view that an action is morally right just because it is required by an optimific social rule**.**

Standard of rightness: a principle that tells us the conditions under which actions are morally right.

Supererogation: action that is "above and beyond the call of duty."

Vicarious punishment: punishment that targets innocent people as a way to deter the guilty.

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Case Study

Imagine a small town in which there has recently been a rash of murders that all bear the marks of the same culprit. The police investigation has gone nowhere and the town's sense of order is starting to break down. Residents are demanding that the sheriff find a culprit and threatening to exact vigilante justice on perceived criminals until a culprit is found. Given that the real murderer is unknown, the sheriff sees that she can only prevent chaos and bloodshed by framing someone who likely is not the murderer.

The sheriff has someone in mind who could be easily framed—a local man, Jim, who has been in and out of jail for other violent crimes like assault and robbery. He has no family and no one in town would protest if he were to be locked up. Moreover, he is a believable culprit and so would be easy to frame. The sheriff is fairly sure that he is not actually the murderer, so she would likely be framing someone who, while not innocent overall, is innocent of these particular crimes. But she is not sure what else she can do to keep the peace.

Questions:

1. Should the sheriff frame Jim? Why or why not? What does this tell us about utilitarianism, and consequentialism more generally?

2. Does utilitarianism tell us that the sheriff is morally required to frame Jim? If so, is this a problem for utilitarianism? If not, how would the utilitarian explain this verdict?

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