

## **James Rachels: Egoism & Moral Scepticism**

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. Explain the legend of Gyges. What questions about morality are raised by the story?

The legend of Gyges is all about a shepherd found a magic ring that could make the wearer invisible therefore it would allow him to do anything that he wants without getting noticed by the people. The question that is raised by the story is that why will the virtuous man continue being moral when he will not get any advantage from it.

2. Distinguish between psychological egoism and ethical egoism.

Psychological egoism is the view that humans are selfish in terms of they just think for their own interest or benefits that they will have. Ethical egoism, on the other hand, is where humans who are acting with the reference of right and wrong are obliged to do their own interest.

3. Rachels discusses two arguments for psychological. What are these arguments, and how does he reply to them?

The first argument tells about describing a person's action as selfish, and another person's action as unselfish. He explained that there are at least 2 types of action, first is a set of actions that we do not want to do, but we do it because we want to put something into an end. Lastly, is the actions that we are forced to do because of an obligation in doing them.

The second argument tells about that unselfish actions will always turn out into self-satisfaction. This just tells that the action will become unselfish depending on a situation.

4. What three commonplace confusions does Rachels detect the thesis of psychological egoism?

The first is the confusion of selfishness with self-interest. Second, is the assumption that every action is done either from self-interest or other-related motives. Lastly, it tells about that everyone is only concern for himself, for his own welfare that no one is really concern for others.

5. State the argument for saying that ethical egoism is inconsistent. Why doesn't Rachels accept this argument?

It is impossible that everyone could accept egoism at once because an egoist wants to have his own world in which his own interest is maximized. Rachels does not accept this because he knows already what the egoist wants.

6. According to Rachels. Why wouldn't we hurt others, and why should we help others. How can the egoist reply?

According to James Rachels, we should help others rather than hurting them because we may be caught and put into prison. It is also our responsibility to respect people's rights and interests for others.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Has Rachels answered the question raised by Glaucon, namely, "Why be moral?" If so what exactly is his answer.

Yes, Rachels answered the question raised by Glaucon which was, "Why be moral?". His answers were stating the reasons why a person should not harm others and why help other people.

2. Are genuine egoists rare, as Rachels claims? Is it a fact that most people care about others, even people they don't know?

Yes, I agree with Rachels that genuine egoists are rare. It is a fact that most people care about others, even people they don't know because if these people does not exist, there would be no one who will help people who are in need, like some people who does not have a food to eat.

3. Suppose we define ethical altruism as the view that one should always act for the benefits of others and never in one's own interest, Is such a view immoral or not?

In my opinion, I believe that this is immoral because I don't think that a person does exist in this world without having his own self-interest.

## **John Arthur: Religion & Morality**

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. According to Arthur, How are morality and religion different?

According to Arthur, morality includes attitudes toward different kinds of behavior, normally expressed by rules, rights, and obligations while religion normally involves prayer, worship, beliefs about supernatural, institutional forms, and authoritative texts.

2. Why isn't religion necessary for moral obligation?

Religion is not necessary for moral motivation because a lot of motives for doing the right thing are not related to religion. Another reason is that if someone gets down to it – that he need choose the decision which he thinks is the best, he will not give much of a thought to religion.

3. Why isn't religion necessary as a source of moral knowledge?

Religion is not necessary as a source of moral knowledge because we have different religions that we believe in. I am a Catholic, some a Buddhist, some are Christian, etc. These religions teach differently. They have their own beliefs.

4. What is the divine command theory? Why does Arthur reject this theory?

In the article, the divine command theory stated that it is only God Himself can tell whether a thing or situation is right or wrong. Arthur rejected this theory because we could not know if what we will do is right or wrong unless God will tell us.

5. According to Arthur, how are morality and religion connected?

Religion and morality are connected because without God there would be no right or wrong for the reason that He provides the basis on which morality is grounded. Without God's commands, there would be no moral rules.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Has Arthur refuted the divine command theory? If not, how can it be defended?

Yes, Arthur refuted the divine command theory by telling that they should not believe in it.

2. If morality is social, as Dewey says, then how can we have any obligations to nonhuman animals?

I believe that we treat our pets as one of our best friends. Even though we don't understand each other, we still do communicate through what our hearts and minds say. We can know when they're hungry, sick, mad or scared. They can also feel when we are sad. This relationship is an example of social.

3. What does Dewey mean by moral education? Does a college ethics class count as moral education?

Yes, college ethics class can somehow count as moral education. But we can also learn it by ourselves without the help of others. If we grew up in a good and nice environment, I believe that you don't need to have this "moral education".

## **Friedrich Nietzsche: Master & Slave Morality**

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. How does Nietzsche characterize a good and healthy society?

Friedrich Nietzsche stated that a good and healthy society must give way to the superior individuals to practice their will to power, their drive toward domination and exploitation of the inferior.

2. What is Nietzsche's view of injury, violence, and exploitation?

According to Nietzsche applying this principle means disclosure of will to the denial of life which is a principle of dissolution and decay.

3. Distinguish between master-morality and slave morality.

Master morality is an attitude where good is equivalent to as noble, and bad is to despicable. Slave morality is an attitude which holds to the standard of that which is useful to the weak.

4. Explain the will to power.

According to Friedrich Nietzsche, Will to Power is essentially an activity of interpreting aimed at preserving and enhancing life itself. He also added that the Will wills itself.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Some people view Nietzsche's writings as harmful and even dangerous. For example, some have charged Nietzsche with inspiring Nazism. Are there charges justified or not? Why or why not?

When I finished reading the article, I also felt it the same way with the others who think that his writings are harmful. I felt that way because of him saying that we all have a master who will tell us on what to do. And if we will not obey him, he will punish us.

2. What does it mean to be "a creator of values"?

A creator of values means that he will be the creator of master-morality.

## **Mary Midgley: Trying Out One's New Sword**

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. What is "Moral Isolationism"?

This world is divided into different societies or culture. Moral isolationism is just saying that we should respect and try to understand everyone with different culture.

2. Explain the Japanese custom of tsujigiri. What questions does Midgley ask about this custom?

A Samurai sword had to be tried out because, if it was to work properly, it had to slice through someone at a single blow, from the shoulder to the opposite flank. Otherwise, the warrior bungled his stroke. This could injure his honor, offend his ancestors, and even let down his emperor.

Mary Midgley asked: Does the isolating barrier work both ways? Are people in other cultures equally unable to criticize us?

3. What is wrong with moral isolationism, according to Midgley?

According to Mary Midgley, moral isolation does not allow anyone to have or even express their opinions.

4. What does Midgley think is the basis for criticizing other culture?

Ideals like discipline and devotion will not move anybody unless he himself accepts them. It depends on how a person acts. An attitude can already determine from which culture he came from. Our own culture will be the basis of criticizing other cultures.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Midgley says that Nietzsche is an immoralist. Is that an accurate and fair assessment of Nietzsche? Why or why not?

As for me, it is not accurate and fair for Nietzsche to be called as immoralist because I believe that everyone has his own opinion. And for me, we should respect it.

2. Do you agree with Midgley's claim that the idea of separate and unmixed cultures is unreal? Explain your answer.

No, I don't agree with it because I already saw different kinds of culture in our country. And based on what I know, cultures here are unmixed. They put so much faith in what culture they have. In that case, it has been proven for me that cultures are separated and unmixed.



## **John Stuart Mill: Utilitarianism**

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. State and explain the Principle of Utility. Show how it could be used to justify actions that are conventionally viewed as wrong, such as lying and stealing.

Principle of Utility is something that actions must be for the good of all. It must be something that promotes happiness. Happiness means to produce pleasure, and absence of pain. Some people lie to a person because they feel the pleasure of it. An example for this is lying to be excused from a situation or even crime. Also for stealing, people steal because of insufficient funds. Though sometimes they do it for good reasons, I believe it is still wrong.

2. How does Mill reply to the objection the Epicureanism is a doctrine worthy only of swine?

Mill stated in book that comparison of the Epicurean life to that of the beasts is felt degrading, precisely because a beast's pleasures don't satisfy a human being.

3. How does Mill distinguish between higher and lower pleasures?

Higher pleasure means that a person is feeling the happiness that he wants to have without thinking of moral obligation. An example for this is when he is playing poker. He can get the pleasure that he wants without stepping on someone's foot. Lower pleasure, on the other hand, is the feeling of happiness lower than the higher pleasure.

4. According to Mill, whose happiness must be considered?

According to Mill, happiness must be considered where more people will feel happy.

5. Carefully reconstruct Mill's proof of the principle of utility.

Mill's proof of the principle of utility is said to be that a person who will meet the end will not be happy because he does not want to end his journey yet. Though happiness is what we desire most, it still does not apply in the end of our lives.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Is happiness nothing more than pleasure, and the absence of pain? What do you think?

I don't think that happiness is nothing more than pleasure and the absence of pain because I know some people who get their pleasure but still they are not happy with the pleasure that they are receiving.

2. Does Mill convince you that the so-called higher pleasures are better than the lower ones?

I don't think higher pleasures are better than the lower ones because some people are still not contented with the higher pleasure that they've received and some are already contented with the lower pleasures that they are receiving. But sometime, it is still depends on the situation.

3. Mill says, "In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility". Is this true or not?

I think it's true because I think this golden rule just wanted everyone to do good things.

4. Many commentators have thought that Mill's proof of the Principles of Utility is defective. Do you agree? If so, then what mistake or mistakes does he make? Is there any way to reformulate the proof so that it is not defective?

I do not agree with one of his statement in the book which he stated that everybody have the same happiness or satisfaction.

## **James Rachels: The Debate over Utilitarianism**

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. Rachels says that classical utilitarianism can be summed up in three propositions. What are they?

First, actions are to be judged right or wrong solely in virtue of their consequences. Nothing else matters. Right actions are, simply, those that have the best consequences.

Second, in assessing consequences, the only thing that matters is the amount of happiness or unhappiness that is caused. Everything else is irrelevant. Thus right actions are those that produce the greatest balance of happiness and unhappiness.

Lastly, in calculating the happiness or unhappiness that will be caused, no one's happiness is to be counted as more important than anyone else's. Each person's welfare is equally important.

2. Explain the problem with hedonism. How do defenders of utilitarianism respond to this problem?

Hedonism is the idea that happiness is the one ultimate good and unhappiness the one ultimate evil. The defenders of utilitarianism think that hedonism didn't match to the true meaning of happiness. It does not say that if you are not feeling the happiness it is already bad. Sometimes, unwanted things happen accidentally. And no one wanted to happen it.

3. What are the objections about justice, rights and promises?

In justice, it requires that we treat people fairly, according to their individual needs and merits. And in the case given, the utilitarianism suggested to lie. Therefore it violated the justice.

In rights, utilitarianism is at odds with the idea that people have rights that may not be trampled on merely because one anticipates good results. In the case, they think that their actions were right, but what the utilitarianism did violate a person's right.

In promises, utilitarianism suggested in the situation that it is right to break a promise when you can get your work done. It is not more important than the

trouble it could make with your friend. But a promise is a promise. It is an obligation that you cannot escape so easily. Thus utilitarianism, which says that consequences are the only things that matter, seems to be wrong.

4. Distinguish between rule-and-act utilitarianism. How does rule utilitarianism reply to objections?

Rule-utilitarianism is a new version of utilitarianism which modifies the theory. It is stated that rules will be established by reference to the principle, and individual acts will then be judged right or wrong by reference to the rules. Rule-utilitarianism is an unnecessarily watered-down version of the theory, which gives rule a greater importance than they merit. Act-utilitarianism, on the other hand, is a perfectly defensible doctrine and does not need to be modified. Act-utilitarianism however is recognized to be a radical doctrine which implies that many of our ordinary moral feelings may be mistaken.

5. What is the third line of defense?

The third line of defense, simply says that our moral common sense is, after all, not necessarily reliable. It may incorporate various elements, including prejudices absorbed from our parents, religion, and the general culture.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Smart's defense of utilitarianism is to reject common moral beliefs when they conflict with utilitarianism. Is this acceptable or not? Explain your answer.

Smart's defense of utilitarianism is not acceptable for me because to reject a common moral belief is also same on lying to your self.

2. Utilitarianism is supposed to give moral consideration to all concerned. Who must be considered? What about nonhuman animals? How about lakes and streams?

Everything should be given moral consideration because I believe that we also benefit from the animals; not only from animals, but also with lakes and streams. Without these things, this world would not be perfect.

3. Rachels claims that merit should be given moral consideration independent of utility. Do you agree?

Yes, I agree that merit should be given moral consideration independent of utility because people should be treated on the same way as they treated me.

## **Immanuel Kant – The Categorical Imperative**

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. Explain Kant's account of the good will.

According to Immanuel Kant, it is impossible to conceive anything at all in the world, or even out of it, which can be taken as good without qualification, except a good will. All the skills or talents that we have from God are without doubt good and desirable in many respects. But these gifts can be extremely bad or hurtful when the will is not good. This is the reason why we have the term "character".

2. Distinguish between hypothetical and categorical imperatives.

Hypothetical imperatives can only be applied to people who have goals in life and want them to achieve it. Categorical imperatives, on the other hand, tell us what to do apart from our desires.

3. State the first formulation of the categorical imperative (using the notion of a universal law), and explain how Kant uses this rule to derive some specific duties toward self and others.

According to Kant, the first formulation is: "Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." He explained that the conformity of universal law serves the will as its principle, and must so serve it if duty is not to be everywhere an empty delusion and a chimerical concept.

4. State the second version of the categorical imperative (using the language of means and end), and explain it.

According to Kant, the second version is: "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end and never merely as a means to an end."

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Are two versions of categorical imperative just different expressions of one basic rule, or are they two different rules? Defend your view.

In my opinion, they are two different rules because the first one is saying that our actions are considered as universal law while the second one tells us that we should understand every being in this world.

2. Kant claims that an action that is not done from the motive of duty has no moral worth. Do you agree or not? If not, give some counterexample.

Yes, I agree with what Kant claims that an action that is not done from the motive of duty has no moral worth. One of the best examples that I can think of is when he made a promise to him, then it is his duty to do what he promised. It is not right for him not to do what he promised.

3. Some commentators think that the categorical imperative (particularly the first formulation) can be used to justify non-moral or immoral actions. Is this a good criticism?

Yes, I agree that categorical imperative can be used to justify non-moral or immoral actions and this is a good criticism.

## **Aristotle – Happiness and Virtue**

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. What is happiness, according to Aristotle? How is it related to virtue? How is it related to pleasure?

Based from the chapter: "Aristotle argues that all human beings seek happiness, and that happiness is not pleasure, honor or wealth, but an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue." I believe that people seek for happiness not for others, but for themselves. It is related to virtue in such a way that if we feel the happiness, we think that what we did is right or good. While the relationship of pleasure and happiness are not always the same. Some people get the pleasure they want but they still don't feel that happiness that their seeking for; some can already feel the happiness with the pleasure that they received.

2. How does Aristotle explain moral virtue? Give some examples.

According to Aristotle, there are two kinds of virtue which is the moral and the intellectual. Moral Virtue, according to Aristotle comes from trainings and habits. It is generally a state of character that is mean between the vices of excess and deficiency. Also according to Aristotle, it is something that does not arise by nature.

3. Is it possible for everyone in our society to be happy, as Aristotle explains it? If not, who cannot be happy?

No, it is not possible for everyone in our society to be happy. Based from this chapter, a person who love what he does and put values in it, he will surely feel that happiness. While for some who thinks that pleasure gives them the happiness, then they will just be happy for a short time.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Aristotle characterizes a life of pleasure as suitable for beasts. But what, if anything, is wrong with a life of pleasure?

I agree that a life of pleasures as suitable for beasts because as what I've answered with the previous questions, for some people who think that pleasure will give them the happiness, they are actually wrong. It is true that they will feel the happiness, but it is just temporary. They will not feel the real happiness.



2. Aristotle claims that the philosopher will be happier than anyone else. Why is this? Do you agree or not?

I don't think that what Aristotle claimed is right. I believe that every person can feel the happiness. Like for me, if I'm happy, I feel that I'm the happiest person. This is also applied for others.

## **Joel Feinberg – The Nature and Value of Rights**

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. Describe Nowheresville. How is this world different from our world?

Nowheresville is a world that people are not treated equally because of people does not have rights. This is really different from our world because here, we have and practice our rights. And I believe that everyone is treated equally.

2. Explain the doctrine of logical correlativity of rights and duties. What is Feinberg's position of this doctrine?

According to Feinberg the doctrine of logical correlativity of rights and duties has two parts. First, all duties entail other people's rights, and second, all rights entail other people's duties. Feinberg thinks that it is right and wrong. It is right because all duties are correlated with the rights of those to whom the duty is owed. And it is wrong because there are numerous classes of duties.

3. How does Feinberg explain the concept of personal desert? How would personal desert work in Nowheresville?

According to Feinberg, personal desert is when a person is said to deserve something good from us what is meant in parts is that these would be a certain propriety in our giving that good thing to him in virtue of the kind of person he is, perhaps, or more likely, in virtue of some specific thing he has done.

I don't think that personal desert will work in Nowheresville because that is the place where people have no rights.

4. Explain the notion of a sovereign right monopoly. How would this work in Nowheresville according to Feinberg?

The notion of sovereign right monopoly is the origin of the idea of deserving good or bad treatment from others. This is just saying that anyone can give a reward to a person which he thinks he deserved it. And anyone can also give punishment if he thinks he did something wrong. I think this will work in Nowheresville because of how that world is being run.

5. What are claim-rights? Why does Feinberg think they are morally important?

Right is a kind of claim, and claim is an assertion of rights. Feinberg thinks that this is morally important because he believes that everyone needs to practice their rights.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Does Feinberg make a convincing case for the importance of rights? Why or why not?

Yes, Feinberg made a convincing case for the importance of rights. He fights for the rights that people should have and practiced. I think this is the main point of the chapter.

2. Can you give a noncircular definition of claim-right?

I can't think of any noncircular definition of claim-right.

## **Ronald Dworkin – Taking Rights Seriously**

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. What was Dworkin mean by right in the strong sense? What rights in this sense are protected by the U.S Constitution?

On Dworkin's view, if people have a right to do something, then it is wrong to interfere with them. For example, if citizens have a right to free speech, then it is wrong for the government to interfere with the exercise of this right. The American constitution provides a set of individual legal rights in the first amendment, due process, equal protection and similar clauses.

2. Distinguish between legal and moral rights. Give some examples of legal rights that are not moral rights, and moral rights that are not legal rights.

Legal rights are the rights that are stated in the constitution while moral rights are the rights of a person according to his morality and conscience. An example for legally right but not morally right is divorce.

3. What are the two models of how a government might define the rights of its citizen? Which does Dworkin find more attractive?

The first model recommends striking a balance between rights of the individual and the demands of society. While the second one is that the government inflates a right. Dworkin finds the second model more attractive because he thinks that the first model is not right with the reason that he believes that rights are not important.

4. According to Dworkin, what two important ideas are behind the institution of rights?

According to Dworkin Act of faith by the Majorities and Minorities are the two important ideas that are behind the institution of rights.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Does a person have a right to break the law? Why or why not?

I think we have a right to break the law because I believe that our law is not perfect. Some of us have this thought of what they believe is right.

2. Are the rights in the strong sense compatible with Mill's utilitarianism? (See the footnote about institutional utilitarianism)

Yes, the rights in the strong sense compatible with Mill's utilitarianism.

3. Do you think that Kant would accept rights in the strong sense or not?

I think Kant would accept rights in the strong sense after all.

## **John Rawls – A Theory of Justice**

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. Carefully explain Rawl's conception of the original position.

According to Rawls, original position of equality corresponds to the state of nature in the traditional theory of the social contract. This original position is not, of course, thought of an actual historical state of affairs, much less as a primitive condition of culture. It is understood as a purely hypothetical situation characterized so as to lead to a certain conception of justice.

2. State and explain Rawl's first principle of justice

The first principle of justice states that "Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty of others." It means that everyone is free to do whatever they want as long as nobody will get harm.

3. State and explain the second principle. Which principle has priority such that it cannot be sacrificed?

The second principle states that social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both reasonably accepted to be everyone's advantage and attached to position and offices open to all. It applies to the distribution of income and wealth and to the design of organizations that make use differences in authority and responsibility or chains of command.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. On the first principle, each person has an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty as long as this does not interfere with a similar liberty for others. What does this allow people to do? Does it mean, for example, the people have the right to engage in homosexual activities as long as they don't interfere with others? Can people produce and view pornography if it does not restrict anyone's freedom? Are people allowed to take drugs in the privacy of their homes?

The first principle allows each person to do whatever they want. Yes, people have the right to engage in homosexual activities as long as they will not interfere other people's rights. Overall, people can do anything as long as they don't harm anyone.

2. Is it possible for free and rational persons in the original positions to agree upon different principle than those given by Rawls? For example, why wouldn't they agree to an equal distribution of wealth and income rather than the unequal distribution? That is, why wouldn't they adopt socialism rather than capitalism? Isn't socialism just as rational as capitalism?

I think having our own opinion is also one of our rights. For the question of why do people would not agree to an equal distribution of wealth or income rather than the unequal distribution is basically because people just wanted to be fair to everyone. It's them who work hard to earn that money, I think it is unfair for them who worked hard and share the income with those who just relaxed.

## **Annette Baier – The Need for More Than Justice**

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. Distinguish between the justice and care perspectives. According to Gilligan, how do these perspectives develop?

Gilligan claimed that women are most unlikely to take only the justice perspective. It is in nature with women that care perspective because of their role as primary care takers of their children.

2. Explain Kohlberg's theory of moral development. What criticism do Gilligan and Baier make of this theory?

Kohlberg developed a theory about typical moral development which saw it to progress from a pre-conventional level, where what it seem to matter is pleasing or not offending parental authority figure, through a conventional level in which the child tries to fit in with a group, such as school community, and conform to the standards and rules to a post-conventional critical level, in which such conventional rules are subjected to tests, and where those tests are a Utilitarian, or eventually, a Kantian sort- namely ones that require respect for each person's individual rational will, or autonomy, and conformity to any implicit social contract such wills are deemed to have made, or to any hypothetical ones they would make of thinking clearly.

3. Baier says are three important differences between Kantian liberals and their critics. What are these differences?

The three important differences between Kantian liberals and their critics are relative weight put on relationships between equal, relative weight put on freedom of choice and the authority of intellect over emotions.

4. Why does Baier attack the Kantian view that the reason should control unruly passions?

It is simply because Baier just wanted for us not to forget about the history.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What does Baier mean when she speaks of the need "to transvalue the values of our patriarchal past"? Do new values replace the old ones? If so, then do we abandon the old values of justice, freedom and rights?



What Baier means when she speaks of the need to transvalue the values of our patriarchal past is that we should just continue it. We don't need to replace them, we just need to improve them.

2. What is wrong with the Kantian view that extends equal rights to all rational beings, including women and minorities? What would Baier say? What do you think?

In Kantian view, it is saying that everyone is required to do their duty as a human being. I don't think this is right. With women or minors, I believe that they cannot do everything that men or adults can do.

3. Baier seems to reject the Kantian emphasis on freedom of choice. Granted, we do not choose our parents, but still don't we have freedom of choice about many things, and isn't this very important?

If I will be in her position, I would reject it too. It is true that we cannot choose our parents but it does not mean that we don't have freedom of choice anymore. It is just that we cannot apply it in all situations, it has limitations.