

Contractualism Essay Questions

General Themes

- Phenomenological Argument for Contractualism (220608 Q10, 170525 Q10)
- Redundancy (200601 Q9, 130523 Q13)
- Saving the Greater Number (180525 Q10, 160526 Q11)
- Demandingness (210528 Q11)
- Other (190603 Q10)

220608 Q10

'When I reflect on the reason that the wrongness of an action seems to supply not to do it, the best description of this reason I can come up with has to do with the relation to others that such acts would put me in: the sense that others could reasonably object to what I do.' (T. M. SCANLON) How powerful an argument for contractualism is this?

210528 Q11

Are the objections to 'common-sense' moral principles that can be made by those in dire straits stronger than the objections to more demanding alternative principles that can be made by the better off? Discuss the implications of your answer for contractualism.

200601 Q9

'Contractualists tie the wrongness of an action to whether all principles for the general regulation of behavior which permit it can be reasonably rejected. However, whatever explains why those principles can be reasonably rejected can on its own explain why the action is wrong. So, contractualists should drop the talk about reasonable rejection and just talk about what makes actions right or wrong.' Do you agree?

190603 Q10

Does contractualism imply that we have no obligations to beings who do not understand what it means to enter into a contract? What does your answer imply about the plausibility of contractualism?

180525 Q10

Can contractualists explain why, given the choice between saving one person from certain death and saving twenty others from certain death, you ought to save the twenty?

170525 Q10

What is the best argument for contractualism? Does it succeed?

160526 Q11

Suppose that you can either save five innocent people or save one other innocent person, but you cannot save all six. Can a contractualist explain why you ought to save the five, all other things equal? Does she need to?

130523 Q13

'I can only reject a principle reasonably if I have good reason for doing so, but those are also reasons why acting on the principle would be wrong. So contractualism is redundant.' Discuss.