

Study Sheet for Final Exam

Short Answers: *You'll have to answer 15 out of 20 questions for 2 points each.*

1. Explain the difference between natural selection and artificial selection.
2. Explain the difference between individual selection and group selection.
3. Describe four of the seven similarities between humans and other animals that Darwin cites when arguing that humans only differ from other animals in *degree* not *kind*.
4. Describe five of the eleven characteristics that are supposed to distinguish humans from other animals in kind but not degree, contrary to Darwin's position in *Descent*.
5. Describe Darwin's reductive account of the human moral sense or conscience by listing the capacities or faculties out of which he thinks it is composed.
6. (a) State Sober and Wilson's definition of "altruism." (b) Define the technical concept of "evolutionary altruism." (c) Explain how an act that is altruistic according to Sober and Wilson's conception of altruism might nevertheless fail to be evolutionarily altruistic in the technical sense attached to that phrase.
7. Describe Darwin's account of the "authority" we attach to moral sentiments of regret and remorse.
8. Explain Darwin's Humean account of the relation between sympathy and perceived similarity.
9. Explain the difference between a purely instrumental and a non-instrumental desire and give an example of each.
10. Describe Batson's experiment aimed at proving the existence of altruism. How does Batson propose to instill higher levels of empathy in some of his subjects in comparison to others?
11. Define "psychological egoism."
12. Explain what is meant by the "underdetermination of theory by evidence."
13. Define "self-directed desires" (either the primary or alternative definition will suffice).
14. Explain the difference between altruistic desires and moral principles.
15. State Sober and Wilson's definition of "empathy" and describe a prima facie counter-example to it.
16. State Wallace's thesis.
17. Define 'second-order volition' and explain what distinguishes a second-order volition from a mere second-order desire.
18. Explain Frankfurt's distinction between freedom of action and freedom of will.
19. Define and explain Haidt's conception of "moral dumbfounding."
20. State the empathy-altruism hypothesis.
21. State the aversive arousal hypothesis and explain how Batson shows that it does not account for the difference in behavior between high and low empathy subjects.
22. Explain the distinction between system 1 and system 2 cognitive processing and give an example of each.
23. Define "heuristic" as a description of a cognitive process.
24. Explain the distinction between after-the-fact correction and up-front mental control and provide examples of each.
25. Explain the distinction between tracking reasons and responding to reasons.
26. List four of Kohlberg's six stages of moral development.
27. What is the defining issues test?
28. State the principle of alternate possibilities.
29. Describe skepticism about unfree yet intentional action.
30. Explain the difference between biological evolution and cultural evolution.
31. Explain the (purported) distinction between moral rules and non-moral conventions.

Short Essay Questions: You'll have to answer 2 out of 3 questions for 15 points each.

1. Which aspects of a given person's moral view are innate? Which aspects are learned or inculcated through cultural means? When defending your answers to these questions discuss Darwin's theory of the biological evolution of the moral sense and the cultural evolution of different moral systems (religions and philosophies).
2. What is psychological egoism? Explain Batson's attempt to design experiments that disprove psychological egoism. Are Batson's experiments successful? Do they successfully support the hypothesis that empathy causes altruism?
3. Describe some of the experiments Haidt uses to argue that moral judgments are typically caused by cognitive impressions (or immediate emotional reactions) rather than reasoning (or the application of general principles). Do the experiments Haidt discusses successfully support the hypothesis that moral judgments are typically caused by intuitions rather than reasoning? Defend your answer with arguments.
4. Explain Kennett and Fine's argument that Haidt's social intuitionist account of moral judgment entails that we are not agents. Is their argument a good one? How might Haidt respond to it?
5. Greene argues that patients with damage to VMPFC have statistically abnormal responses to the trolley problem because they are reasoning in a manner unencumbered by emotion. Describe the trolley problems, Greene's analysis of the responses VMPFC patients have to these problems, and Greene's use of this analysis in mounting an indirect argument for utilitarianism (and against the doctrine of double effect). Explain how Demaree-Cotton and Kahane argue against Greene's argument, focusing on their analysis of the reliability of emotions. Does Greene effectively argue against deontology?

Longer Essay Questions: You'll have to answer 2 out of 3 questions for 20 points each.

1. Darwin argues that many if not all of our moral obligations are contingent in the sense that we (or the creatures who would have evolved in our place had evolution taken a different course) would not have these obligations if we (or the creatures in question) had a different biology and consequently a different means of reproducing, eating, moving etc. In particular, if human societies were organized like beehives, "unmarried females...would think it a sacred duty to kill their brothers." Is he right about this? Would acceptance of the relativity of human morals to human biology undermine our belief in the objectivity of human morals? Would abandoning belief in the objectivity of human morals undermine the confidence with which we judge people immoral? More specifically, suppose we came to agree with Darwin that if we lived like bees, unmarried female bee people really would be obligated to kill their brothers. Can we make this concession while nevertheless insisting: (a) that an actual, human (wholly "non-bee") unmarried woman who kills her brother therein acts immorally, where (b) the immorality of this act "holds independently" of our (human, wholly non-bee) attitudes to it? What is the relationship between contingency and subjectivity?
2. Evaluate Darwin's optimistic account of moral change—on which it is positive development to ever more universal and deeply entrenched forms of sympathy and love—in light of the events that have transpired since the publication of *Descent* in 1871: recall that there have been two World Wars, several genocides and attempted genocides, the recent resurgence of fundamentalist religions, growing inequality, dangerous changes in the climate, the resurgence of white

nationalism in the United States and Europe, etc. (Of course, there has also been an advance in medical and labor-saving technologies and consequent improvements in the standards of living for many people.) Are humans becoming more moral? Or are we becoming worse (by our own lights)? Does all this talk of “high” and “low” lead Darwin to uncritically assume that European culture is superior to the culture of those “savages” Europeans exterminated or colonized? Does it lead him to assume that humans are better than other animals? How are these value-laden, normative assumptions related to biological science? Does Darwin reject Hume’s claim that we ought always to distinguish “ought” from “is” and clearly indicate when we are inferring normative conclusions from value-neutral (or “scientific”) premises?

3. Darwin writes,

With savages, the weak in body or mind are soon eliminated; and those that survive commonly exhibit a vigorous state of health. We civilised men, on the other hand, do our utmost to check the process of elimination; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick; we institute poor-laws; and our medical men exert their utmost skill to save the life of every one to the last moment. There is reason to believe that vaccination has preserved thousands, who from a weak constitution would formerly have succumbed to small-pox. Thus the weak members of civilised societies propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man. It is surprising how soon a want of care, or care wrongly directed, leads to the degeneration of a domestic race; but excepting in the case of man himself, hardly any one is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed.... if we were intentionally to neglect the weak and helpless, it could only be for a contingent benefit, with an overwhelming present evil. We must therefore bear the undoubtedly bad effects of the weak surviving and propagating their kind; but there appears to be at least one check in steady action, namely that the weaker and inferior members of society do not marry so freely as the sound; and this check might be indefinitely increased by the weak in body or mind refraining from marriage, though this is more to be hoped for than expected.

What moral standard does Darwin assume in arguing that the world is worse on the whole because people with physical and mental “handicaps” or impairments are able to reproduce at higher rates than they would in the absence of social welfare programs? What is the relation between the concept of “bad” utilized in the judgment that losing one’s hearing or sight or legs is “**bad** for you” and the concept of “bad” utilized in the judgment that “it is **bad** of society (or society is worse overall) to have people who (because of genetic defect) lack hearing or sight or legs to reproduce at a rate equivalent to the rate at which those who lack these defects reproduce”? When Darwin says that he “hopes” (though does not expect) that the “weaker and inferior members of society” will refrain from marriage and reproduction, what kind of values does he express or betray? How do these values compare with the values affirmed in our declaration of independence and constitution: e.g. the claim that all men are created equal, or that we are all equal in the eyes of the law?

4. According to Kennett and Fine, psychopaths lack both proper affective response (moral reason-tracking capacities) and proper self-awareness and self-control (moral reason-responding capacities). Kennett and Fine also argue that those diagnosed as strongly but fairly high-functioning autistics lack robust perspective taking and normal affective responses (moral reason-tracking capacities) but can develop the proper self-awareness and self-control necessary to be guided by moral reasons. Kennett and Fine argue on this basis that autistics can be moral agents but that it is unclear whether psychopaths can be. Reconstruct and evaluate their reasoning on

this issue. Is this the correct stance to take toward psychopaths and people with autism? Does it mean that psychopaths can't be justly or fairly blamed for their harmful behaviors but that autistic people can? Defend your answers with reasoning.

5. Watson says,

What this difficulty shows is that the notion of orders of desires or volitions does not do the work that Frankfurt wants it to do. It does not tell us why or how a particular want can have, among all of a person's 'desires' the special property of being particularly his 'own'. There may be something to the notions of acts of identification and of decisive commitment, but these are in any case different notions from that of a second (or n-) order desire. And if these are the crucial notions, it is unclear why these acts of identification cannot be themselves of the first-order—that is, identification with or commitment to courses of action (rather than with or to desires)—in which case, no ascent is necessary, and the notion of higher-order volitions becomes superfluous or at least secondary.

What are Frankfurt's views of free will and moral responsibility? Describe Watson's criticisms of Frankfurt's view of free will (i.e. the criticisms given in the passage above). Are Watson's criticisms of Frankfurt's view devastating? If you think they are not, describe how Frankfurt might answer these criticisms. If you think the criticisms do refute Frankfurt's view, describe Watson's own view of free will and raise a problem for it.

6. Explain the superficial problem of moral luck and the supposedly "deeper" problem of moral luck. Are these real problems? Can they be resolved?