

Study Sheet for Final Exam

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

1. Darwin claims, "There is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties." Cite five of the mental faculties that Darwin argues are shared by humans and non-human animals.
2. Define "veneer theory."
3. Define "psychological egoism" and explain Darwin's reasons for rejecting this doctrine.
4. Explain artificial selection and how it differs from natural selection.
5. Explain the difference between psychological altruism and evolutionary altruism, give an example of a behavior or trait that is psychologically altruistic but not evolutionary altruistic, and give an example of a behavior or trait that is evolutionarily altruistic but not psychologically altruistic.
6. Explain the difference between biological and cultural evolution.
7. State Wallace's thesis (which is endorsed by Darwin).
8. Cite five things Darwin attributes to cultural (rather than biological) evolution.
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 empathy in some subjects and not others?
11. Define "psychological egoism."
12. Explain the distinction between the cause of a desire and the content of a desire and give an example in which the cause of a desire is largely unrelated to its content.
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 "altruism" and describe a prima facie counter-example to it.
16. Define 'incompatibilism'.
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. Explain the difference between weakness of the will and compulsion.
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 what "moral dumbfounding" is.
23. List four of Kohlberg's six stages of moral development.
24. State the principle of alternate possibilities.
25. Describe skepticism about unfree yet intentional action.
26. Explain the distinction between after-the-fact correction and up-front mental control and provide examples of each.
27. Explain the distinction between tracking reasons and responding to reasons.
28. Explain the model of moral judgment Haidt labels "social intuitionism."
29. State the aversive arousal hypothesis and explain how Batson shows that it does not account for the difference in behavior observed between high and low empathy subjects in his experiments.
30. Explain the distinction between system 1 and system 2 cognitive processing and give an example of each.

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

1. Describe Frankfurt's reasons for thinking that one can be held morally responsible for an action even if one could not have acted otherwise than one actually acted. Is Frankfurt's argument against the "principle of alternative possibilities" convincing? Why or why not?

2. Define "altruism" in an informative, non-circular manner and defend your definition from at least two (interesting) potential counter-examples.

3. Darwin admits, "It has been asserted that man alone is capable of [a] progressive improvement; [b] that he alone makes use of tools or fire, [c] domesticates other animals, or [d] possesses property; that no animal (e) has the power of abstraction, or [f] of forming general concepts, is [g] self-conscious and comprehends itself; that [h] no animal employs language; [i] that man alone has a sense of beauty, is liable to caprice, [j] has the feeling of gratitude, mystery, &c.; [k] believes in God, or [l] is endowed with a conscience." Explain Darwin's reasons for thinking that these observations are compatible with the claim that humankind evolved from other primate species via phenotypic variation and various forms of natural selection.

4. Explain and evaluate Darwin's claim, "that any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, the parental and filial affections being here included, would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well developed, as in man." Is this true, what components of a typical person's moral sense does Darwin leave out here?

5. 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? Do Kennett and Fine successfully demonstrate that system 2 processes of reasoning and self-conscious control play a larger role in our moral lives than Haidt's account attributes to them? Defend your answers to these questions with arguments.

6. Explain Kennett and Fine's argument that Haidt's social intuitionist account of moral judgment entails that we are not agents with moral responsibility. Is their argument a good one? How might Haidt respond to it?

7. 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). According to Kennett, and Fine, 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 severe autism? Defend your answer with reasoning.

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

1. Suppose we accept that a given feature of our moral thinking owes its existence to a species-specific feature of our biology or sociology. Suppose, that is, that we have identified a feature of

our moral thinking that is not a feature of all possible moral thinking. Does this undermine our confidence in this aspect of our moral thought in any way? Ought it do so? Consider Darwin's example: Is it possible for human beings to organize themselves socially in the manner in which bees do? If "we" (or animals as similar to us as is compatible with our living like bees) lived like bees we would think all unmarried female "bee-people" obligated to kill their brothers? If we lived like bees, would unmarried female bee people actually have obligations to kill their brothers? What impact, if any, should our answers to these questions have on our belief that an actual, human (wholly "non-bee") unmarried woman who kills her brother therein acts immorally, where the immorality of this act "holds independently" of our (human, wholly non-bee) attitudes to it?

2. What are the main causes and effects of our moral thoughts, judgments and sentiments? Which of these effects are parts of the evolved "function" of morality? That is, which effects of our thinking in moral terms are both heritable and contribute to the reproductive fitness of those who exercise moral judgment (and/or those with whom they interact) and therein (in conjunction with mechanism of individual and group selection) help explain its persistence over time? Cite Darwin's views on this issue in the course of providing your answer.

3. According to Darwin, "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? In what sense are these people "weak"? 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** for society (or society is worse overall) to have people who (because of genetic defect) lack hearing or sight or legs 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. 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?

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?