MILL'S PRINCIPLE OF UTILITY:

A Defense of John Stuart Mill's Notorious Proof

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Michael H. Mitias, Editor

MILL'S PRINCIPLE OF UTILITY:

A Defense of John Stuart Mill's Notorious Proof

Necip Fikri Alican

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To My Father
Fikri Alican
and
To My Mother
Halide Ihlamur Alican

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EDITORIAL FOREWORD

No greater service can be rendered to an adequate understanding of ethical theory than a systematic, focused, and cogent analysis of the principle of moral distinction and consequently the basis of moral obligation and moral evaluation, because such an understanding is indispensable for a clear account of the meaning of moral concepts, principles, and rules, on the one hand, and a rational justification of the criteria of moral judgment, on the other. Necip Fikri Alican makes a serious, and to my mind successful, attempt to meet this challenge in *Mill's Principle of Utility: A Defense of John Stuart Mill's Notorious Proof.* He delineates with admirable lucidity the logic, structure, and mode of analysis involved in explicating and justifying the first principle of morality. No better framework for achieving this purpose can be chosen than Mill's *Utilitarianism*—a work that has attracted, since it was first published in 1861, the most extensive, controversial, and instructive discussion of the supreme moral principle.

Alican's book is the first, and so far the only, book-length study of Mill's proof of the principle of utility. His approach is both historical and analytical. He exemplifies in his study the highest standard of philosophical scholarship: clarity of thinking, logical rigor, synoptic vision, and cogency. He exemplifies, moreover, a virtue almost absent in most contemporary philosophical works: intellectual modesty—the ability to be open-minded, the patience to consider fairly and thoroughly all the possible views on the question under consideration, and the readiness to adhere to the truth of the matter according to the demands of reason alone.

This book is, furthermore, a valuable contribution to the study of value in general and moral value in particular; for it refocuses our attention on the heart of ethical thinking, namely, the foundation of moral values, principles, and judgment. This refocus has definite practical implications and advantages; for how can we say what makes an act moral, what rules to follow in concrete moral situations, or how to translate such rules into particular moral judgments if we do not proceed from a genuine understanding of the fact, or principle, which makes the act or the rule moral? And how can we act on such a fact or principle if this fact, or principle, is not, *as a foundation*, firm or justifiable?

No serious ethicist can, I think, afford to miss reading Alican's challenging and thought provoking analysis of this most important ethical problem.

Michael H. Mitias
Associate Editor

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I am indebted to Gary Varner for fruitful discussions on traditional charges against various aspects of Mill's ethics, which helped shape my initial thoughts on a defense of Mill, eventually leading to the inception of this project.

I am grateful to Carl Wellman, Larry May, and Roger Gibson for their generosity with their time and effort in contributing to the development of the project. I thank Carl Wellman for his painstakingly careful reading of numerous complete drafts of the manuscript, which steadily benefited from his thoughtful comments and criticisms with meticulous attention to detail. I thank Larry May for his expert advice on group morality and collective responsibility, which moved me to reevaluate Mill's position, and to focus and reconsider my own thoughts, on the ontological and moral status of social groups. I thank Roger Gibson not only for his contribution to this particular project, but also for his central role in my intellectual development throughout my academic career.

My earlier intellectual debt is to Feridun Baydar, Michael H. Mitias, and Robert E. Bergmark. Feridun Baydar was singularly responsible for my early education and the development of my character in my formative years. He taught me many subjects through years of Socratic discussion, and, above all, he demonstrated a philosophy of life with a unique wit and wisdom that has always been my desire to emulate. Michael H. Mitias and Robert E. Bergmark introduced me to my formal study of philosophy, facilitated my first encounter with the philosophical classics, and helped develop my skills in recognizing and analyzing philosophical problems. My friend, teacher, and mentor, Michael H. Mitias, inspired and nurtured my passion for the study of philosophy, and he was the greatest influence in my pursuit of an academic career in philosophy.

Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude for the unconditional love and support of my family. My father, Fikri Alican, has consistently exhausted and gone beyond the duties of fatherhood throughout my life, and he has taken his sense of paternal duty and pride to an even higher level in his enthusiastic support and encouragement of my academic pursuits. My greatest intellectual debt is also to my father, who, as the paragon of the academic scholar, taught me by the example he set that knowledge is desirable as an end in itself, and that the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge is an activity that is valuable in its own right. My mother, Halide Ihlamur Alican, has always been the greatest influence in my personal growth and moral education, instilling in me by example and inculcation moral principles that require no proof.

A NOTE ON TEXTUAL REFERENCES

All of my textual references to John Stuart Mill's works are to the standard critical edition of the *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*. Thirty-three volumes. F. E. L. Priestly and John M. Robson, general editors. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963-1991. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963-1991.

I give paginal references to the *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* by identifying the edition as "CW" followed by volume numbers in Roman numerals and page numbers in Arabic numerals. I document references to *Utilitarianism* in greater detail in order to accommodate the reader who follows one of the numerous popular editions: first, I identify *Utilitarianism* as "U" followed by chapter numbers in Roman numerals and paragraph numbers in Arabic numerals; next, I indicate the CW pagination. Likewise, I document references to *A System of Logic* in greater detail in order to reflect the useful organizational divisions Mill himself provides in that work: first, I identify *A System of Logic* as "L" followed by book numbers in large Roman numerals, chapter numbers in small Roman numerals, and section numbers in Arabic numerals; next, I indicate the CW pagination.

Mill's works most relevant to my study are in the following volumes of the *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*: Mill's *Autobiography* is in CW.I.1-290; the eighth edition of *A System of Logic* is in CW.VII-VIII; "Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy" is in CW.X.3-18; *Sedgwick's Discourse* is in CW.X.31-74; *Bentham* is in CW.X.75-115; *Coleridge* is in CW.X.117-63; the fourth edition of *Utilitarianism* is in CW.X.203-59; *Auguste Comte and Positivism* is in CW.X.261-368; *Three Essays on Religion* is in CW.X.369-489; the fourth edition of *On Liberty* is in CW.XVIII.213-310; Mill's *Letters*, in seven volumes, are in CW.XII-XVII and CW.XXXII.

I document my references to sources other than the *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* through the author-date system in the main text, supported with notes collected together at the end of the book and organized according to the chapters in which they originate. The primary purpose of the notes is to direct the reader to multiple sources on issues that are controversial in secondary literature, where this sort of information would be cumbersome to report parenthetically in the main text. Following the notes, I provide an extensive and detailed bibliography in four sections: (1) contents of the critical edition of John Stuart Mill's collected works; (2) John Stuart Mill's separate works; (3) secondary literature in the form of books; (4) secondary literature in the form of journal articles and book chapters.

INTRODUCTION

I propose to analyze, interpret, and defend John Stuart Mill's proof of the principle of utility in chapter four of his *Utilitarianism*. First, my approach is *analytic* in that I isolate and critically examine the steps of Mill's proof after straightforwardly extracting them from the narrow context of the fourth chapter of *Utilitarianism*. Second, my approach is *interpretive* in that I reconstruct and study his proof within the broader context of his general philosophical convictions, including not only his axiology, but also his logic, epistemology, and philosophy of mind. Third, my approach is *defensive* in that I evaluate his proof within the even broader context of his general philosophical convictions juxtaposed with historically popular and currently unresolved traditional charges against the proof.

My aim is not to glorify utilitarianism, in a full sweep, as the best normative ethical theory, or even to vindicate, on a more specific level, Mill's universalistic ethical hedonism as the best form of utilitarianism. I am concerned only with Mill's utilitarianism, and primarily with his proof of the principle of utility. My overarching purpose guiding the entire work is to show that Mill proceeds intelligibly and systematically in pursuing a well-defined project in the fourth chapter of *Utilitarianism*, and that he successfully defends what he sets out to establish in his proof of the principle of utility. To this end, I devote the bulk of my efforts to studying traditionally popular and persistently enduring objections to the proof, and to showing that, although the traditional charges are generally ill-conceived and haphazardly polemical in origin, they are competently set forth and well-argued, but ultimately unsuccessful in overturning the proof. The primary objections to which I respond at length, devoting a chapter to each, are the common charges that Mill commits the fallacy of equivocation, the fallacy of composition, and the naturalistic fallacy in his proof.

These are not the only mistakes a utilitarian theory must avoid. Many philosophically interesting debates surround contemporary reconceptions of utilitarianism, developed to avoid commonly recognized weaknesses in classical utilitarianism. Moreover, numerous traditional objections to Mill's *Utilitarianism* go beyond his notorious proof. Among the ones to which he does not reply explicitly in *Utilitarianism* or elsewhere, at least two stand out as philosophically interesting even today. One in the second chapter concerns his ill-received appeal to competent judges to distinguish higher and lower pleasures in response to charges that utilitarianism is "pig philosophy." The other concerns his underrated efforts to

incorporate into the principle of utility the interdependent conceptions of justice and moral rights he develops in the last chapter. All of these are outside my focus. I examine only traditional objections to Mill's *Utilitarianism*, and, among those, only ones directed specifically at his proof of the principle of utility.

I limit my focus in this way because I find that nothing Mill ever wrote has been criticized and even ridiculed as widely and persistently as his proof of the principle of utility. Commentators disagree not only on the success of Mill's proof but also on the aims, steps, and structure of his proof. Many commentators agree on what conclusion Mill intends to prove, but they disagree in identifying and interpreting his specific arguments, and in determining the logical structure of his proof in general. Some commentators disagree even on what conclusion Mill intends to prove because they disagree more fundamentally on what Mill's principle of utility is: some take the principle as a doctrine of intrinsic value, others take it as a standard of moral obligation, yet others as a guide for ethical justification. Moreover, those who criticize Mill's proof accuse him not merely of giving an unsuccessful proof but of giving one infested with elementary logical blunders and conceptual confusions. He is commonly taken to have committed several logical fallacies, including equivocation and composition, in addition to the naturalistic fallacy.

To be sure, Mill has not been without defenders in this respect. Especially in the second half of this century scholars have contributed their interpretations and defenses of Mill's proof against such traditional charges. Yet even his defenders disagree in their interpretations of the proof, and they focus on one or another but not all of the alleged fallacies. Furthermore, their contributions have been in the form of journal articles and book chapters, and, to my knowledge, there is no book-length treatment of Mill's *Utilitarianism*, focusing exclusively on his proof of the principle of utility, with a view to absolving his work of the traditional charges of elementary logical blunders and conceptual confusions. This would not matter if there were an adequate journal article or book chapter or even a combination of several of these that together provided all we need in order to understand and evaluate the proof and respond to the traditional charges. A plethora of good secondary literature exists and continues to grow in the philosophical community in a scattered point and counterpoint fashion. But I cannot imagine what kind of holistic picture of the proof in its entirety can be developed from bits and pieces authored by different people. My research has convinced me that existing journal articles and book chapters on the subject are generally quite good, but that they are neither severally

nor jointly sufficient to comprise a comprehensive defense that would do justice to Mill's proof of the principle of utility. This kind of comprehensive defense is what I intend to contribute to secondary literature on the subject. Specifically, my ultimate contribution to secondary literature is an interpretation of Mill's proof of the principle of utility in its entirety, absolved of the three fallacies commonly attributed to the proof, yet faithful to the text at all points.

The principle of charity in critical interpretation is my original motivation for seeking alternative interpretations of Mill's proof of the principle of utility that absolve him of the alleged fallacies in his proof. Seeking a charitable alternative is an especially relevant concern with respect to Mill, who is a reputable logician of the nineteenth century, and author of *A System of Logic*, which quickly became one of the most authoritative logic texts of his time. No doubt, one's logical prowess and philosophical reputation do not make one immune to advancing fallacious arguments. However, the quite elementary logical fallacies attributed to Mill, as well as the naturalistic fallacy, are all supposed to be located in the third paragraph of the fourth chapter of *Utilitarianism*. It is difficult to imagine that anyone at all, let alone a logician, would commit several elementary logical fallacies and gross conceptual errors in one short paragraph.

At the other extreme, eager devotion to sympathy tends to generate a powerful and potentially misleading motivation to seek the most charitable interpretation of each part of the proof against which an unreasonable objection is directed. The potential danger is in explicating various parts of the proof with mutually incompatible interpretations, which absolve Mill severally of each allegation, but which do not hang together jointly as a coherent whole that represents the proof in its entirety. Indeed, zealous trial and error might produce a reconstruction that strikes a balance between a successful defense of relevant parts of the proof and a coherent representation of the whole. But a patchwork project is fundamentally wrongheaded even if it fortuitously achieves such a balance.

Any argument can be reformulated with qualifications and presuppositions in order to remove apparent or real fallacies and problems. The authenticity of an interpretation of Mill's proof demands that the qualifications and presuppositions behind the reformulation are Mill's own views, perhaps implicit but preferably explicit. Ideally, the reformulation will continue to represent Mill's original argument; nearly as acceptable, the reformulation might provide an argument that Mill himself did not offer but one that he would have endorsed; otherwise, the reformulation might generate an altogether different argument which Mill should have advanced instead of his

original argument. Methodologically, my intention is not to develop and recommend arguments that Mill should have advanced toward a successful proof that avoids the alleged fallacies. On the contrary, I am convinced that he succeeds in this respect on his own, and I intend to convince readers that this is the case. Methodologically, then, I propose to work with Mill's actual arguments to show that various parts and steps of his proof do not suffer from the alleged fallacies, and that the parts and steps indeed constitute a coherent and successful proof.

A natural progression toward my ultimate goal readily points to a division of the overall project into three parts: (1) exegetical and historical background, introducing Mill's principle of utility, and reporting the academic reception of his proof of the principle; (2) analysis and response to traditional charges against self-contained portions of the proof; (3) reconstruction and implications of the proof in its entirety. I organize the three parts of the book around seven chapters. From a positive and constructive perspective, I proceed with a presentation of my understanding of Mill's principle of utility, along with a preliminary outline of his proof of the principle. From an exegetical and historical perspective, I follow this with a report of the strongest objections to Mill's proof in its academic reception. From a negative and defensive perspective, I devote the next three chapters to evaluating Mill's proof, piecemeal, fallacy by fallacy, until I absolve the proof of each of the alleged fallacies: the fallacy of equivocation; the fallacy of composition; the naturalistic fallacy. As a natural outgrowth of the preceding chapters, I put together the various parts of my defense of the proof against the traditional charges in order to construct a complete interpretation of the entire proof. I conclude with a discussion of the role of the proof in Mill's ethical system, and with a representative sketch of directions for further research.

DISCUSSION NOTES

Notes to Chapter One

1. Mill takes the terms "desirable," "valuable," and "good" as synonyms in certain contexts, but this is neither a problematic practice nor a novel one. He uses the three terms interchangeably in appropriate contexts, where appropriateness is determined by conformity to grammatical and colloquial conventions. To be sure, Mill does not take the terms "desirable," "valuable," and "good" to be interchangeable with one another in every sentence that contains at least one of the terms. For example, Mill might say indiscriminately that friendship is desirable, or that friendship is valuable, or that friendship is good. However, Mill would say that Carlyle is his good friend, rather than that Carlyle is his desirable friend; he would say that gold is a valuable metal, rather than that gold is a good metal; and, in general, he would use the three terms in their colloquial senses, and discriminate among them where formal or informal convention dictates a choice of one over the others.

2. In fact, it is somewhat redundant to say that a normative ethical theory is a utilitarian theory if and only if it is a consequentialist theory. The words "utilitarianism" and "consequentialism" have become synonyms in the ethical terminology of contemporary philosophers. For example, Fred R. Berger warns his readers early on that he is "using the term *utilitarianism* in the broad manner that has become standard among some philosophers, namely, to designate any moral theory that takes consequences (of acts, rules, and so on) as the criterion of right and wrong" (1984, 5).

3. Moreover, *Utilitarianism* itself contains ample evidence that the principle of utility is indeed this kind of moral principle; the strongest evidence for this is probably Mill's following statement: "The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to promote the reverse of happiness" (U.II.2; CW.X.210). This statement is probably the greatest single rival to my definition of the principle of utility as a principle on the highest good.

4. D. G. Brown finally settles on the definition that "happiness is the only thing desirable as an end" (1973, 1, 5, 9, 12).

5. Mill proposes a qualitative distinction between kinds of pleasure, and distinguishes mental pleasures as higher pleasures from bodily pleasures as lower pleasures; he devises a hypothetical empirical test to justify the distinction, and speculates that competent judges, people who have experience of both

kinds of pleasure, would prefer mental pleasures over bodily pleasures (U.II.3-8; CW.X.210-13). Early criticisms of Mill's qualitative distinction between kinds of pleasure converged around the objection that it is inconsistent to hold, both, that pleasure is the only thing that is intrinsically desirable, and that pleasures differ in quality as well as in quantity: if equal amounts of pleasure are not equally desirable, valuable, or good, then pleasure cannot be the only thing that is intrinsically desirable, valuable, or good. The most prominent philosophers among Mill's early critics on this issue are F. H. Bradley (1988, 116-22), G. E. Moore (1993, 129-32), Henry Sidgwick (1981, 94-95, 127-29), and William Ritchie Sorley (1969, 61-63). Contemporary accounts focus on various problems associated with Mill's empirical test as well as his qualitative distinction: they examine the legitimacy of Mill's appeal to competent judges to justify the qualitative distinction between mental and bodily pleasures, as well as the viability of his qualitative distinction between kinds of pleasure. The following is a partial list of contemporary commentators: Fred R. Berger (1984, 31, 37-40); Norman O. Dahl (1973, 37-54); Wendy Donner (1991, 37-65); Benjamin Gibbs (1986, 31-59); Rex Martin (1972, 140-51); Anthony Quinton (1988, 39-43); John Skorupski (1989, 303-07); Mark Strasser (1991, 1-22).

6. The objection that utilitarianism eschews justice and moral rights was one of the major criticisms of utilitarianism in Mill's day, and it is perhaps the single most important objection today. The gist of the objection is two-fold: first, and more fundamentally, the promotion of the greatest happiness of the greatest number is neither a morally relevant consideration in, nor a sufficient justification for, obedience to principles of justice and respect for moral rights; second, and more pragmatically, actions promoting the greatest happiness of the greatest number do not necessarily coincide with actions done in obedience to principles of justice and in accordance with respect for moral rights. From the perspective of justice, critics object that utilitarianism guarantees neither distributive justice (fair allocation of goods) nor retributive justice (fair allocation of punishment). From the perspective of rights, critics object that utilitarianism cannot accommodate even contractual rights, let alone fundamental moral rights. Mill is, no doubt, sensitive to the issue, as he attempts fervently to show that principles of justice as well as a fundamental respect for moral rights are implicitly inherent in the principle of utility (U.V.25, 32-38; CW.X.250-51, 255-59). However, the question is whether his attempt yields satisfactory results, and produces adequate theories of justice and moral rights. The following is a partial list of contemporary commentators who examine this question: Fred R. Berger (1984, 123-225, 289-92); John Gray (1991, vii-xxx; 1981, 80-116); Jonathan Harrison (1974, 93-107); David Lyons (1978, 1-20); Anthony Quinton (1988, 71-81); Alan Ryan (1990, 213-31); Mark Strasser (1991, 223-72).

7. Supererogation is the performance of moral acts above and beyond the call of duty. Strictly speaking, if the principle of utility alone determines moral obligations, then the principle of utility cannot entail the performance of moral acts above and beyond the requirements of moral obligation. However, supererogation in this context, concerns whether the principle of utility entails that the performance of an action is morally obligatory if performing that action produces the greatest balance of pleasure over pain among relevant alternatives, or that the performance of an action is morally permissible insofar as performing that action produces a greater balance of pleasure over pain than does not performing that action, regardless of the availability of relevant alternatives with superior consequences in this respect. The search for supererogation in Mill's ethical theory is motivated by the quest to determine whether Mill is a maximizing utilitarian, who holds conduciveness to happiness as a morally obligatory maximization condition of actions, or a satisficing utilitarian, who holds conduciveness to happiness as a moral standard of demarcation between morally permissible and impermissible actions. The maximization of happiness is the promotion of happiness to the greatest degree possible among relevant alternatives; that is to say, allowing for ties in the promotion of happiness, the maximization of happiness is the promotion of happiness to such a degree that cannot be exceeded but might be matched by a relevant alternative. The potential problem is that the morally obligatory maximization of happiness leaves no room for moral permissibility: if it is morally obligatory to maximize happiness in every situation that is morally charged, then it is morally impermissible not to maximize happiness in any situation that is morally charged. The following is a list of commentators who investigate the presence of supererogation in Mill's ethical theory: D. G. Brown (1982, 27-44); David Copp (1979, 75-98); D. P. Dryer (1979, 63-73; 1969, lxiii-cxiii); David Lyons (1979, 1-19; 1978, 1-20; 1976, 101-20); L. W. Sumner (1979, 99-114).

8. Not all commentators would agree with my interpretation of the first two sentences of *Utilitarianism*. Some maintain, on the contrary, that Mill's haphazard juxtaposition of value, moral obligation, and ethical justification in the first two sentences of *Utilitarianism* (and elsewhere) shows that Mill was confused from the beginning with respect to the differences and interrelationships among value, obligation, and justification in ethics. Fred R. Berger (1984, 112-14), for example, without attributing any confusion to Mill, holds that Mill does not distinguish value and obligation, but admits that "[t]he value judgment and the principle of conduct would be two aspects of one principle" (1984, 114).

9. The following excerpts scattered throughout the second chapter of *Utilitarianism* lend additional support to the contention that the principle of utility functions as a theory of moral obligation: (1) a common objection is that the utilitarian standard is too high because it is "too much to require that people

shall always act from the inducement of promoting the general interests of society" (U.II.19; CW.X.219); (2) utilitarianism concerns "consideration of the consequences of actions" (U.II.20; CW.X.220); (3) utilitarianism involves making a "judgment respecting the rightness or wrongness of an action" (U.II.20; CW.X.221); (4) utilitarianism involves deciding "an action to be good or bad" (U.II.20; CW.X.221); (5) utilitarianism assesses "the morality of actions, as measured by the utilitarian standard" (U.II.21; CW.X.221).

10. In fact, the first passage I quote in this paragraph concerns the definition of "utility" and not a definition of "the principle of utility": "Those who know anything about the matter are aware that every writer, from Epicurus to Bentham, who maintained the theory of utility, meant by it, not something to be contradistinguished from pleasure, but pleasure itself, together with the exemption from pain" (U.II.1; CW.X.209). The context of Mill's discussion makes it clear that the word "it" in this sentence refers to "utility" rather than to "the theory of utility." Mill makes this claim in the midst of his discussion concerning misinterpretations of the meaning of the word "utility."

11. Mill develops a parallel account in the following passage in his essay on *Bentham*. "Every human action has three aspects: its *moral* aspect, or that of its *right* and *wrong*; its *æsthetic* aspect, or that of its *beauty*; its *sympathetic* aspect, or that of its *loveableness*. The first addresses itself to our reason and conscience; the second to our imagination; the third to our human fellow-feeling. According to the first, we approve or disapprove; according to the second, we admire or despise; according to the third, we love, pity, or dislike. The morality of an action depends on its foreseeable consequences; its beauty, and its loveableness, or the reverse, depend on the qualities which it is evidence of" (CW.X.112; editor's footnote omitted). This passage in *Bentham* explains what Mill means in the following passage in his proof of the principle of utility, where he refers to a part's being included in the whole: "If so, happiness is the sole end of human action, and the promotion of it the test by which to judge of all human conduct; from whence it necessarily follows that it must be the criterion of morality, since a part is included in the whole" (U.IV.9; CW.X.237). Mill believes that he has proven the promotion of happiness to be the test by which to judge of the moral, aesthetic, and sympathetic aspects of actions, and therefore, that he has proven the promotion of happiness to be the test by which to judge of the moral aspects of actions.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. In my fifth chapter, I show that G. E. Moore accuses Mill of making two mistakes, neither one of which is a logical fallacy, in charging him with committing the naturalistic fallacy in his proof of the principle of utility. First,

Mill defines "good" as "desired," and confuses and identifies something's being good with its being desired, whereas it is wrong to do so. Second, Mill attempts to prove that happiness is intrinsically good (and subsequently that happiness is the only thing that is intrinsically good), whereas statements purporting to identify intrinsically good things are not capable of proof and disproof.

2. In their exercise sections on fallacies, elementary logic textbooks tend to quote, as fallacies to be identified by students, one or more sentences from the third paragraph of the fourth chapter of *Utilitarianism*. Although the examples are too numerous to list exhaustively, the following is a representative list: Irving M. Copi and Carl Cohen (1994, 152, 155, 639); James Edwin Creighton (1932, 208); Nicholas Rescher (1964, 77); W. H. Werkmeister (1957, 35).

Notes to Chapter Three

1. Adelaide Weinberg (1963, 51-52) quotes the same passage.

2. John M. Robson (CW.X.cxxvi), in his "Textual Introduction" to *Utilitarianism*, mistakenly cites the date of Theodor Gomperz's letter as 18 March 1868. Francis E. Mineka (CW.XVI.1391, n.1, n.7), the editor of Mill's letters, confirms, in two footnotes to Mill's reply to Gomperz, that the correct date of Gomperz's original letter is 26 March 1868. Adelaide Weinberg (1963, 51, n.169) also gives the correct date of the letter as 26 March 1868 in a footnote immediately preceding the letter's citation.

3. John M. Robson (CW.X.cxxvi) quotes the same passage in his "Textual Introduction" to *Utilitarianism*. Adelaide Weinberg (1963, 52-53) also quotes the same passage.

4. The fact that Mill's preliminary remarks mislead Everett W. Hall (1949, 1-18) to devalue the proof is clear in Hall's following claims: "In this situation Mill makes use of two considerations, both of which he got from Bentham, not to *prove* the principle of utility but to *make it acceptable* to reasonable men" (1949, 8); "He is not (if the reader will tolerate another reiteration) trying to *prove* anything" (1949, 9).

5. Norman Kretzmann (1958, 246-58) offers an alternative reading of the significance, for something's desirability, of the number of people who actually desire that thing. He claims that "in the formulae about the desired and the desirable the key words are 'people' and 'actually'" (Kretzmann 1958, 251). He thinks that Mill uses "people" to refer to "the normal observer," not to "all people." He interprets the evidentiary relationship between the desired and the

desirable as follows: "If anything is desired in such a way as to occasion some overt reaction on the part of the normal desirer, and that reaction proves to have been normal for the thing in question, then that thing is desirable" (Kretzmann 1958, 253-54). This does not contradict the use I make of Mill's claim that each person (everyone) desires happiness, because my account is tied specifically to desires for happiness, whereas Kretzmann's concern is to isolate the evidentiary relationship between the desired and the desirable from the context of happiness, and to develop a general account of the evidentiary relationship between the desired and the desirable, no matter the object of desire.

6. I make no pretense to identify the precise nature of the mental state called "desire." Even the most elementary level of inquiry exposes significantly different candidates as alternative targets of desire: there are obvious differences between desiring a thing or activity, and desiring to possess the thing or participate in the activity, and desiring to experience the anticipated pleasure in possessing the thing or participating in the activity. It is indeed important from the perspective of the philosophy of mind to determine precisely what it is that we desire when we desire. However, at this point, I am contrasting "desiring as a means" and "desiring as an end." That distinction cuts across various alternatives for the target of desire: there is still a means-ends distinction in desires, whether I desire the basketball shoes, or to own or use the basketball shoes, or to experience the pleasure I anticipate in owning or using the shoes.

7. Apparently, in the third case, where the object of desire turns out not to be desirable because the end for which it is desired ceases to be important altogether, the particular end in question was not only an end, but also itself a means to some other end. The pertinent distinction is not simply between means and ends, but between means and ultimate ends.

8. Several philosophers emphasize the distinction between means and ends in Mill's conviction that desires are evidence of desirability. Carl Wellman (1959, 268-76) maintains that Mill intends the evidentiary relationship between the desired and the desirable with respect to ends, not means. He explains the difference this makes to Mill's argument as follows: "That is, desires for means may be criticized in terms of the ends to which these means lead. The corollary would seem to be that desires for ends are incorrigible. Here in the dichotomy of ends and means lies the key to Mill's argument" (Wellman 1959, 271). He restates Mill's argument by adding the locution "for itself" to qualify "desired," and by adding "for its own sake" to qualify "desirable" (Wellman 1959, 271-72). George A. Clark (1959, 653) inserts the locution "as an end" in parentheses in his quotations of two statements from relevant passages in the fourth chapter of *Utilitarianism*. Maurice Mandelbaum (1968, 228) inserts the locution "as an ultimate end" in italics to qualify "desirable" in his block quotation of the first three sentences of the third paragraph of the fourth chapter.

Notes to Chapter Four

1. Adhering to Mill's usage, I employ the following locutions interchangeably: the terms "good" and "desirable"; the phrases "good to" and "desirable for"; the phrases "a good" and "a desirable thing" (or "something desirable"); the phrases "a good to" and "a desirable thing for" (or "something desirable for").

2. Reconsider my example of an inference that seems to but does not commit the fallacy of composition: "Each word in this sentence is in English; therefore, this sentence is in English." A possible objection to my example is that there might be a sentence composed entirely of English words that is not a sentence in English because it does not combine them according to the rules of English syntax. The following series of words enclosed within quotation marks might be taken as a counterexample in this sense: "Chicken the white is time in you." I have two responses. One response is that the sentence with which I present my example of an apparently compositional inference is a sentence that refers to itself, and only to itself: "Each word in this sentence is in English; therefore, this sentence is in English." The word "this," in both occurrences, refers to my sentence, and only to my sentence, so that my sentence is unique in this respect. In other words, the inference in my sentence is not the same as the inference in the following sentence: "If each word in a sentence is in English, then that sentence is in English." Therefore, "Chicken the white is time in you" is not a counterexample to my example. Another response is that the word "sentence" refers to a series of words that together make a statement, and not to a series of words that together make gibberish. If a series of words is not meaningful as a collection in the exact order in which the words appear in the series, then that series of words is not a sentence, and thus, not a counterexample to my example. Otherwise, my example can be reformulated as follows by replacing the word "sentence" with the word "argument" in order to avoid disagreement in the meaning of the word "sentence": "Each word in this argument is in English; therefore, this argument is in English."

3. Hugh S. R. Elliot (1910, II: 115-16) also reproduces this passage, and the entire letter of which it is a part, in his edition of *The Letters of John Stuart Mill*. Elliot does not identify the recipient of the letter, and he claims that all but the last paragraph (which I cite in its entirety) was written by Mill's stepdaughter, Helen Taylor.

4. F. H. Bradley, (1988, 113, n. 1), Everett W. Hall (1949, 9), D. D. Raphael (1955, 349), Carl Wellman (1959, 273), S. K. Wertz (1971, 425-26), and Henry Robison West (1972, 257) cite this paragraph of Mill's letter to Jones as evidence that Mill does not commit himself, at least in the third paragraph of the fourth chapter of *Utilitarianism*, to a belief that each person's happiness is a good to every other person. Unfortunately, it is difficult to acknowl-

edge all Mill scholars who incorporate this letter in their commentaries. The philosophers I acknowledge above mention the letter prior to the publication of Mill's letters in the University of Toronto edition (1974), whose painstakingly detailed index enables convenient access to any letter of Mill pertinent to any study of Mill.

5. A related question is whether the general happiness includes the happiness of people whose happiness is grounded in patently immoral contingencies, such as rape, murder, and arson. Does the general happiness include the happiness of a serial killer? Or, more to the point, does the goodness or desirability of the general happiness include or imply the goodness or desirability of a serial killer's happiness? Is it good that Abe and Bob and Carol all be happy, if Abe is a serial killer whose happiness lies in killing people? Questions of this kind are misdirected if they are directed at the general level because such questions are asked and answered at the individual level: Is it good that the serial killer be happy, if killing people from time to time is a psychologically necessary condition of the serial killer's happiness? No, it is not good, and it is, on the contrary, bad, that the serial killer be happy, if killing people from time to time is a psychologically necessary condition of the serial killer's happiness. However, once this is determined at the individual level, it does not pose an additional problem at the general level.

6. Yehoshua Bar-Hillel (1964, 125-26) proposes an amendment to William L. Rowe's account of the fallacy of composition. Though Bar-Hillel agrees with Rowe's analysis, he finds Rowe's terminology technically inaccurate. Specifically, Bar-Hillel finds it misleading to claim that some inferences that conform to the parts-whole form are valid. He finds this claim ambiguous and recommends a distinction between arguments that are valid on the basis of logic alone and those that are valid on the basis of logic supplemented by a set of meaning postulates. He notes that no inferences that fit the parts-whole form are valid on the basis of logic alone but some are valid on the basis of logic supplemented by a set of meaning postulates. However, supporting Rowe's conclusion, Bar-Hillel agrees that we should reserve the term "fallacy" for arguments that are not even valid on the basis of logic supplemented by a set of meaning postulates.

7. W. V. Quine (1951, 189) recognizes my addendum to the base definition of the fallacy of composition; he notes that the distinction between distributive and collective predication is drawn in traditional logic to resolve the fallacies of composition and division. He adds that this distinction in traditional logic is a rudimentary anticipation of the distinction between class inclusion and class membership in quantification theory.

8. Harry J. Gensler (1989, 328-59) and Howard Kahane (1992; 1990, 296-318), among others, list additional requirements for what they call *good*, *cogent*, or *acceptable* arguments, and they claim that an argument need not violate all of the good-making characteristics to be considered a fallacy.

9. Some philosophers, most notably, Charles J. Abaté (1979, 262-66), Howard Kahane (1980, 31-39), Douglas N. Walton (1989, 1987, 1982), and John Woods and Douglas N. Walton (1976, 52-54) argue explicitly that fallaciousness and validity are not mutually exclusive.

10. C. L. Hamblin (1970, 19) and W. Ward Fearnside and William B. Holther (1959, 27-28), in their discussions of the fallacy of composition, are explicitly sensitive to this parallel, that it is just as wrong to assume that what is true of the parts is not true of the whole, as it is to assume that what is true of the parts is true of the whole.

11. John M. Robson, the editor of Mill's *A System of Logic* in the University of Toronto edition, reports that paginal references to Richard Whately's *Elements of Logic* are to the ninth edition published in 1848; Robson adds that Mill, too, used the ninth edition pagination in his references to Whately in all editions of *A System of Logic* following the third (CW.VIII.1233).

12. For example, the following two passages from the second chapter of *Utilitarianism* leave the impression that the general happiness is total happiness: the utilitarian "standard is not the agent's own greatest happiness, but the greatest amount of happiness altogether" (U.II.9; CW.X.213); "the happiness which forms the utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct, is not the agent's own happiness, but that of all concerned" (U.II.18; CW.X.218).

13. One exception is in the following sentence in the second chapter of *Utilitarianism*: "The only self-renunciation which it [the utilitarian morality] applauds, is devotion to the happiness, or to some of the means of happiness, of others; either of mankind collectively, or of individuals within the limits imposed by the collective interests of mankind" (U.II.17; CW.X.218). Here, Mill refers first to the happiness "of mankind collectively," and second to "the collective interests of mankind." These two references contradict my claim that, throughout *Utilitarianism*, Mill talks about the "general happiness," and not something called the "collective happiness." I have no explanation for this anomaly, but I insist that it is indeed an anomaly, and that Mill's references to the "general happiness" are not accidental. I do not have the patience to count and compare the number of occurrences of the phrases "general happiness" and "collective happiness" in all of Mill's writings, but note that, in the two paragraphs following the one in which the anomalous sentence occurs, Mill refers first to the "general good" (U.II.18; CW.X.218-19), and second to the "general

interests of society" (U.II.19; CW.X.219). At any rate, Mill's anomalous references to the happiness "of mankind collectively" and to "the collective interests of mankind" in the second chapter of *Utilitarianism* do not overturn my position that, in the relevant portion of his proof in the third paragraph of the fourth chapter of *Utilitarianism*, Mill uses the locution "general happiness" in a distributive sense to denote each person's happiness.

14. S. K. Wertz (1971, 422-23), too, notes that Mill employs the adjective "general" for distributive modification of a subject, and he reasons that Mill reserves the phrase "general happiness" exclusively as a technical locution for referring severally to each person's happiness. This is one of Wertz's central arguments in his attempt to absolve Mill's proof of the alleged fallacy of composition.

15. S. K. Wertz (1971, 428-29) pursues the appeal to Mill's discussion of "names" in *A System of Logic* further than I do: Wertz maintains that Mill's discussion of "names" shows that he uses "the aggregate of all persons," as well as "the general happiness," in a distributive sense. As evidence for this, Wertz cites Mill's usage of the article "the" to indicate individual names and definite descriptions. Never mind that the article "the" is such a common word that it is difficult to distinguish where Mill uses it to observe grammar and syntax from where he uses it to make a point. I find Wertz's evidence to support the opposite of the thesis he intends to establish: if Mill's usage of the article "the" corroborates Wertz's interpretation that "the aggregate of all persons" is an individual name, then "the aggregate of all persons" cannot be a general name but a collective one. My disagreement with Wertz is that it is inconclusive in *A System of Logic* that "the aggregate of all persons" is a general name, whereas the same work provides evidence that "the aggregate of all persons" is an individual name. For example, in distinguishing general and individual names, Mill claims that "'[t]he 76th regiment of foot in the British army,' which is a collective name, is not a general but an individual name" (L.I.ii.3; CW.VII.28; editor's footnotes omitted). In this respect, it seems to me that "the aggregate of all persons" is more like "the 76th regiment of foot in the British army" and less like "the general happiness." I disagree with Wertz, not because I think Mill does not use "the aggregate of all persons" in a distributive sense, but because I think how Mill uses "the aggregate of all persons" is not conclusive in the passages Wertz cites from *A System of Logic*.

16. For example, another instance of Mill's emphasis on the individual is a parenthetical reference in a letter to Thomas Carlyle (on 12 January 1834), which indicates that Mill takes the good of the species to be the good of its several units. Here is what Mill says in the relevant portion of the letter: "Though I hold the good of the species (or rather of its several units) to be the *ultimate* end, (which is the alpha & omega of my utilitarianism) I believe with the

fullest Belief that this end can in no other way be forwarded but by the means you speak of, namely by each taking for his exclusive aim the development of what is best in *himself*" (CW.XII.207-08; editor's footnote omitted). Mill's parenthetical amendment to "good of the species" provides additional support for my interpretation that, where he attributes the general happiness to the aggregate of all persons, Mill refers distributively to the several happinesses of individual persons. Mill's letter to Thomas Carlyle is reproduced in its entirety in Hugh S. R. Elliot's *The Letters of John Stuart Mill* (1910, I: 87-93) as well as in CW.XII.204-09.

17. The question whether "all" or "most" or "many" or "some" or "few" of the members of a group must be happy in order for the group to be happy is an interesting one. Probably, in ways that are obvious, "all" is not necessary, "few" is not sufficient, and "some" and "many" are vague. Likewise, "most" is vague in that it can mean anywhere between the noninclusive boundaries, "half" and "all." "Half-plus-one-person" and "fifty-one percent" (though not necessarily the same thing) are open to slippery slope objections, whether or not such objections are worthwhile. Though the question is interesting, a definite answer is not necessary for my purposes. The number of happy members needed in order to declare the group happy is beside the point; what is important is that the group is happy only insofar as its members are happy. The distinction is not a quantitative one but a qualitative one: groups are not happy or sad, persons are happy or sad.

18. Moreover, this suggests, with respect to Mill's distinction between general and collective names in *A System of Logic* (L.I.ii.3; CW.VII.28), that the "aggregate of all persons" is indeed a general name and not a collective one. In this context, the phrase "aggregate of all persons" seems to be a general name for the class of all persons. The corroborating evidence for this is in the same passage of *A System of Logic*, where Mill explains the relationship between general names and classes as follows: "It is not unusual, by way of explaining what is meant by a general name, to say that it is the name of a *class*. But this, though a convenient mode of expression for some purposes, is objectionable as a definition, since it explains the clearer of two things by the more obscure. It would be more logical to reverse the proposition, and turn it into a definition of the word *class*: 'A class is the indefinite multitude of individuals denoted by a general name'" (L.I.ii.3; CW.VII.28).

19. Thus, I acknowledge positions that contradict thoroughgoing reductive individualism such as the following, though I am concerned neither to affirm nor to deny them here. From a psychological perspective, mob psychology is fundamentally different from individual psychology, at least in the sense that a person tends to behave differently when acting alone and when acting as a member of a group. From a sociological perspective, the goals, norms, and

standards of a group are different from the personal goals, norms, and standards of its individual members. From a moral perspective, collective moral responsibility transcends individual moral responsibility. For example, we might collectively be morally responsible for the state of the environment even if each one of us affects the environment differently on an individual basis. Shared responsibility does not presuppose or imply direct personal involvement at the individual level: the fact that I personally do not exacerbate environmental degradation does not necessarily absolve me from sharing moral responsibility for the state of the environment with everyone else. However, the difference between happiness and moral responsibility as attributes of groups is that happiness cannot plausibly be attributed to a group of people in any sense above and beyond the several happinesses of individual persons who jointly and exhaustively constitute the group, whereas moral responsibility makes sense at the level of the group as well as at the level of the individual.

Notes to Chapter Five

1. For a nontraditional discussion and complete overhaul of the naturalistic fallacy, confer Jerrold J. Katz's (1990, 235-90) attempt to reformulate the fallacy to avoid what he thinks are shortcomings of G. E. Moore's original conception. Katz is concerned more with challenging attempts to naturalize linguistics and logic than he is with challenging ethical naturalism. He attacks Ludwig Wittgenstein's deflationary naturalism and W. V. Quine's naturalized epistemology, but he is not interested in rehashing Mill's supposed mistakes.

2. For example, William K. Frankena (1939, 464-77) argues that the naturalistic fallacy is not a self-evident mistake, even in the loosest sense of the word "fallacy." That is, Frankena holds that exposing the naturalistic fallacy in an argument does not automatically refute that argument as if a logical fallacy were discovered in it. He claims that an argument identified as containing the naturalistic fallacy must, in addition, be shown to be a bad argument for that reason, and not merely declared to be so. Frankena develops this line of reasoning to reduce G. E. Moore's naturalistic fallacy to a type of fundamental disagreement between "intuitionists" and "definists (naturalistic or metaphysical)" (Frankena 1939, 472). According to Frankena, the issue "is one of inspection or intuition, and concerns the awareness or discernment of qualities and relations" (1939, 475). Moore, perhaps, would not have come down on either side of this issue because he describes himself as an intuitionist only in the sense of denying that propositions which state what things are intrinsically good are incapable of proof (Moore 1993, 33-37): "I imply nothing whatever as to the manner or origin of our cognition of them. Still less do I imply (as most Intuitionists have done) that any proposition whatever is true, *because* we cognise it in a particular way or by the exercise of any particular faculty" (Moore 1993,

36). However, Moore seems to shift from his unusual construal of intuitionism to Frankena's orthodox interpretation, where he affirms that "we are all aware of a certain simple quality, which (and not anything else) is what we mainly mean by the term 'good'" (Moore 1993, 90).

3. Elmer H. Duncan (1970, 49-55) follows a similar approach to examine whether *anyone* has committed the naturalistic fallacy. He agrees with G. E. Moore that the naturalistic fallacy is a mistake, but he denies that any of the prime suspects (for example, Mill, Perry, and Sharp) is guilty of having committed the fallacy.

4. G. E. Moore distinguishes Henry Sidgwick as the only person who, to Moore's knowledge, "clearly recognised and stated" that "good" is indefinable (1993, 69), and "clearly recognised that by 'good' we do mean something unanalysable" (1993, 111). The following is a representative list of philosophers, who, in Moore's opinion, have committed the naturalistic fallacy. The list is in chronological order, and paginal references are limited to those pages where Moore explicitly charges each philosopher with committing the naturalistic fallacy: Aristotle (1993, 225); the Stoics (1993, 164); Hobbes (1993, 148); Spinoza (1993, 164); Leibniz (1993, 175); Rousseau (1993, 93-94); Kant (1993, 164, 177-79); Bentham (1993, 69-72); Mill (1993, 69, 116-26, 155-60); Spencer (1993, 97-106).

5. Secondary literature on G. E. Moore's conception of the naturalistic fallacy, following William K. Frankena's (1939, 464-77) seminal article, has grown too vast for exhaustive coverage in a note of standard length. Among early commentators, Arthur N. Prior (1949, 1-12, 95-107) stands out with his study, which begins with an exposition of the logic behind the naturalistic fallacy, and concludes with a useful survey of the historical background to the fallacy. Among recent commentators, Thomas Baldwin (1990, 66-110) makes a valuable contribution with his detailed and learned discussion in the volume devoted to Moore in Routledge's *The Arguments of the Philosophers* series.

6. G. E. Moore is evidently quite impressed with Bishop Butler's maxim, "[e]verything is what it is, and not another thing," as he quotes it immediately opposite the title page of *Principia Ethica*, as well as in the final chapter of the book (1993, 29, 254).

7. Toward the middle of this chapter, I examine G. E. Moore's *important* sense of "definition," and his contention that "good" is indefinable in that sense (1993, 57-69). Unless I state otherwise, I intend Moore's *important* sense of "definition" wherever I discuss or mention, in reference to Moore, defining or the possibility of defining "good." It is otherwise distracting to make this qualification explicit each time I refer to defining "good."

8. George Nakhnikian (1963, 145-58) closely follows Carl Wellman's (1961, 45-54) lead, by enumerating six widely different mistakes correlative to G. E. Moore's various formulations of the naturalistic fallacy.

9. Carl Wellman's (1961, 45) first interpretation of G. E. Moore's naturalistic fallacy, as the logical fallacy of four terms, is precisely the fallacy I describe in my second and third chapters as Mill's alleged equivocation on "desirable." In the second chapter, my purpose with respect to Moore was to expose his purely logical objections to Mill, independently of his general charge that Mill commits the naturalistic fallacy. Otherwise, I agree with Wellman that the logical error, too, is one of the ways in which Moore conceives of the naturalistic fallacy.

10. G. E. Moore is not explicit as to whether the naturalistic fallacy concerns the concept good or the word "good" or both. To be sure, he discusses the fallacy in both respects, but it is not clear whether he prefers one sense over the other. Any attempt to settle this would have to deal with Moore's tendency to blur the distinction between the concept and the word with his careless use of single quotation marks, which he tends to wrap haphazardly around the four letters without respect to use or mention.

11. Casimir Lewy (1970, 292-303) provides a very useful study of an incomplete manuscript of what G. E. Moore intended to be his preface to a largely revised second edition of *Principia Ethica*, which was eventually reprinted with only minor corrections in 1922. Lewy's research is especially illuminating with respect to Moore's later reflections on his original account of the naturalistic fallacy. Lewy finds that Moore ultimately holds the naturalistic fallacy to be a matter of contradicting the fact that good is not identical with any other property or quality, regardless of whether the target of the mistaken identification is analyzable or not, and regardless of whether it is natural or metaphysical. Lewy also reports that, according to Moore, although the naturalistic fallacy is committed in an *inference* confusing good with something else, the fallacy can be attributed to a *proposition* affirming the mistaken identification, and even to the *confusion* itself.

12. According to G. E. Moore, the metaphysicians commit the naturalistic fallacy in the sense that they relegate the nonnatural to a realm of supersensible existence, where that which cannot be perceived to exist is somehow conceived to exist (1993, 161-66). This charge presupposes a distinction between the nonnatural and the supersensible; or else, Moore's objection to the metaphysicians reduces to a mere disagreement on what things exist. Moore does not distinguish the words "nonnatural" and "supersensible," but, I find it helpful to offer a distinction, which may or may not be implicit in his discussion. Strictly speaking, "nonnatural" and "supersensible" both refer to that which is not natu-

ral, does not have temporal dimensions, and cannot be perceived by the senses. However, in order to bring out the ontological contrast between Moore and the metaphysicians, it is useful to draw an intensional distinction between "nonnatural" and "supersensible," which are extensionally equivalent words: "nonnatural" denotes that which lacks temporal dimensions, and connotes that which does not exist at all; "supersensible" denotes that which lacks temporal dimensions, but connotes that which exists somehow though not in time. I am not confident that Moore would have assimilated this technical distinction into his philosophical terminology, but the alternative seems to be that he fudges on what it means to exist.

13. G. E. Moore applauds the contribution metaphysicians make in epistemology by urging that knowledge is not limited to that which is natural, but he objects that the metaphysicians make an unjustified ontological commitment correlative to their epistemological venture. Specifically, Moore accuses the metaphysicians of making a groundless ontological commitment in asserting propositions such as "this is good": the proposition implies not that "this existing thing is good," but that "this thing would be good if it existed," or that "it would be good for this thing to exist" (1993, 169-71). Moore objects, even more strongly, that when the metaphysicians assert a proposition such as "this is good," they mistakenly take themselves to be ontologically committed, not only to the existence of that particular thing, but also to the existence of good, which is attributed to that thing (1993, 174-76). Moore's particular emphasis with respect to the naturalistic fallacy is, again, on the good, which he thinks lacks temporal dimensions and therefore does not exist at all, whereas the metaphysicians think it exists somehow though not in time.

14. The analogy between G. E. Moore and Plato can be extended beyond the *aporetic* dialogues to include Plato's middle dialogues (those preceding *Parmenides*) in which the Socratic quest for definition is supplemented, and sometimes supplanted, with the Doctrine of Forms. After all, Moore's conception of good as a unique, simple, noncomposite, indefinable, unanalyzable, object of thought is not far to reach from the Platonic Good. However, I would not press this point, for it is a juxtaposition of Moore's moral epistemology and Plato's ontology. To be sure, Moore's wholesale repudiation of attempts to ground an ethical system in a metaphysical system, in contrast to Plato's ethics, which is ruled by his ontology, suggests that I am stretching the analogy (1993, 161-91; especially, 164-66). Strictly speaking, Moore objects to grounding a doctrine of value in a metaphysical system, but he does not deny the connection between theories of moral obligation and metaphysical systems. At any rate, it is interesting that Moore refers to Plato in several places (1993, 139-40, 150, 162, 227, 248) without once including him in the company of "metaphysical ethicists" who commit the naturalistic fallacy: for example, Spinoza (1993, 164), Leibniz (1993, 175), and Kant (1993, 164, 177-79). Moore is so uncomfortable

with affirming that anything exists, unless it has temporal dimensions (he does not require spatial dimensions), that he goes so far as to affirm that "*goodness*" does not "*exist* at all" (1993, 161). If it were not for Moore's reluctance to countenance the supersensible, he might have embraced more of Plato explicitly. I do not mean this in the loose sense that, if he were not British, he might have been Greek. I am not disappointed that Moore does not believe in ghosts, but I think he would have been more consistent to make room in his ontology for good, in addition to "what we mean by the adjective 'good'" and "things or qualities which are good" (1993, 161).

15. I admit that navigating the regional intersection of G. E. Moore's conception of the naturalistic fallacy and Moore's objections to Mill's proof is not a very straightforward approach. However, the apparently more direct route of examining Moore's explicit charges reserved exclusively for instances of the fallacy in Mill's proof turns out to have more detours and obstacles than a clear report can accommodate. The gist of Moore's accusation is that Mill commits the naturalistic fallacy in inferring the good or the desirable from the desired. Moore elucidates this accusation in three separate passages which can be paraphrased to his benefit as follows. First, Mill commits the naturalistic fallacy in arguing that "good" means "desirable," that what is desirable can be determined only by finding out what is desired, and, therefore, that "good" means "desired" (Moore 1993, 118). Second, Mill commits the naturalistic fallacy in attempting to establish the identity of the good with the desired, by confusing the proper sense of "desirable," in which it denotes that which it is good to desire, with the sense which it would bear if it denoted that which can be desired (Moore 1993, 119). Third, Mill commits the naturalistic fallacy in using "the good" and "the desirable" synonymously, and taking "the desirable" to refer to what can be desired, which, in turn, is established by what is desired (Moore 1993, 124-25).

Notes to Chapter Six

1. It is generally not recognized that Mill's psychological principle of association applies to the desirable as well as to the desired, and thus, to goods as well as to desires. However, the text bears this interpretation, both in Mill's formal statements of the principle of association and in his examples of the application of the principle. For example, where he applies the principle of association to money, Mill not only contrasts original and acquired desires for money, but he also discusses what is originally "desirable about money" and the original "worth" of money in contrast to its transformation into a "principal ingredient of the individual's conception of happiness" (U.IV.6; CW.X.235-36). Likewise, desirability is the basis of comparison, where he examines the associational transformation of power and fame, and claims that the "amount of imme-

diate pleasure annexed" to power and fame has "the semblance of being naturally inherent in them" (U.IV.6; CW.X.236). Perhaps the most illustrative passage is where Mill identifies the principle of association as a "provision of nature" that transforms things that are "originally indifferent" into valuable "sources of pleasure" (U.IV.6; CW.X.236), and adds that "[v]irtue, according to the utilitarian conception is a good of this description" in the sense that "through the association thus formed, it may be felt a good in itself" (U.IV.7; CW.X.236). Moreover, I think Mill anticipates his various "ingredients of happiness," which are "desired and desirable in and for themselves" (U.IV.5; CW.X.235), in the first chapter of *Utilitarianism*, where he sets up a "comprehensive formula" as the goal of the forthcoming proof: "If, then, it is asserted that there is a comprehensive formula, including all things which are in themselves good, and that what ever else is good, is not so as an end, but as a mean, the formula may be accepted or rejected, but is not a subject of what is commonly understood by proof" (U.I.5; CW.X.208; editor's footnote omitted).

2. Mill makes it sufficiently clear, even prior to the break in the second part of the proof, that he derives his inclusive conception of happiness from empirical (psychological) fact rather than sterile intuition. For example, with respect to the chief ingredient of happiness, virtue, he states that utilitarian moralists "recognise as a psychological fact the possibility of its being, to the individual, a good in itself, without looking to any end beyond it"; these utilitarian moralists hold that, otherwise, "the mind is not in a right state" (U.IV.6; CW.X.235).

3. Notwithstanding Mill's strategic interest in emphasizing the break in the structure of the second part of the proof, the essential substance of this part of the proof can be represented without the break as follows. (P1) It might seem that happiness is not the only thing that is desired for its own sake. After all, people "do desire things which, in common language, are decidedly distinguished from happiness" (U.IV.4; CW.X.235). Admittedly, the "ingredients of happiness are very various, and each of them is desirable in itself"; in fact, the ingredients of happiness are "desired and desirable in and for themselves" (U.IV.5; CW.X.235). (P2) Indeed, then, quite a few things are desired for their own sakes and desirable as ends in themselves, but only upon transmutation of desires for those things as means to happiness into desires for them as ends, which are then desired and desirable as parts of happiness. (P3) As a matter of psychological fact, with the exception of happiness itself, all things that are desired for their own sakes and desirable as ends in themselves are originally desired and desirable only for the sake of the pleasure inherent in them, and thus only as a means to happiness; if things that are originally desired and desirable only as a means to happiness, through association with the end (happiness) to which they are means, come to be desired for their own sakes and desirable as ends in themselves, and not for the sake of the pleasure inherent in them, then they are

desired and desirable as a part of happiness (U.IV.6&7; CW.X.235-37). (P4) As a psychological principle, then, with the exception of happiness itself, whatever is desired and desirable is originally desired and desirable as a means to happiness; and whatever is desired for its own sake and desirable as end in itself is desired and desirable as a part of happiness. (P5) In this sense, with the exception of happiness itself, whatever is desired and desirable, is desired and desirable, either as a means to happiness or as a part of happiness. (C) Therefore, happiness is the only thing that is desired for its own sake and desirable as an end in itself.

4. On the other hand, Mill believes that the psychological principle of association establishes a different but related connection as an empirical fact of the matter in nature: he claims that the transformation by which things that are originally desired for the sake of happiness and desirable as a means to happiness come to be desired and desirable as ends in themselves is a "provision of nature" (U.IV.6; CW.X.236). Nevertheless, the subject of the provision of nature here is not the connection between desires for happiness and desires for the ingredients of happiness but the transformation of desires for things as means to happiness into desires for them as ends in themselves.

5. For example, W. V. Quine (1981, 55-66) not only agrees that the psychological association of means and ends can lead to the means' being valued as ends, but he also claims that the transmutation of means into ends underlies our moral training in which good behavior is inculcated by penalties and rewards. Of course, Quine does not claim, as Mill does, that if means come to be valued as ends in themselves they then become valued as a part of happiness.

6. Mill gives a similar analysis of things that are desirable in themselves yet desired without anticipation of pleasure in the following passage in *A System of Logic*: "As we proceed in the formation of habits, and become accustomed to will a particular act or a particular course of conduct because it is pleasurable, we at last continue to will it without any reference to its being pleasurable. Although, from some change in us or in our circumstances, we have ceased to find any pleasure in the action, or perhaps to anticipate any pleasure as the consequence of it, we still continue to desire the action, and consequently to do it" (L.VI.ii.4; CW.VIII.842; editor's footnotes omitted). Moreover, toward the end of the fourth chapter of *Utilitarianism*, he evaluates the contribution of habit to value as follows: "That which is the result of habit affords no presumption of being intrinsically good; and there would be no reason for wishing that the purpose of virtue should become independent of pleasure and pain, were it not that the influence of the pleasurable and painful associations which prompt to virtue is not sufficiently to be depended on for unerring constancy of action until it has acquired the support of habit" (U.IV.11; CW.X.239).

7. G. E. Moore entertains such an objection but admits that hedonists have a legitimate defense: "Still it may be said that, even if consciousness of pleasure, and not pleasure alone, is the sole good, this conclusion is not very damaging to Hedonism. It may be said that Hedonists have always meant by pleasure the consciousness of pleasure, though they have not been at pains to say so; and this, I think is, in the main, true" (1993, 142). On the other hand, one might refuse to recognize the objection altogether on the grounds that happiness in general, and even simple pleasures and pains, presuppose experience or consciousness. For example, the chocolate which I regularly find very pleasant is not at all pleasant when it is inserted into my mouth as I lay unconscious in a coma. Likewise, the dentist's drill which can otherwise make me scream in agony is not painful in my numb mouth tranquilized with drugs. However, although Moore admits that hedonists have a legitimate response to the objection, he does not think that the objection and response are superfluous, because he denies that pleasures and pains presuppose experience or consciousness in the sense that there is no such thing as unexperienced or unconscious pleasure and pain (1993, 141-42).

Notes to Chapter Seven

1. A complete account of even one half of the story involves fundamental issues that divide Mill scholars on the precise formulation of Mill's theory of moral obligation but do not particularly concern me here. For example, the promotion of happiness, as the standard of moral obligation, can be made a more discriminating test of right and wrong by distinguishing degrees of promotion which mark the boundaries among morally obligatory, permissible, and impermissible actions: Are we morally obligated to maximize happiness, or merely to increase happiness, or, minimally, not to decrease happiness? Does the standard imply supererogation, or are we morally permitted not to maximize happiness where it is possible to maximize it, or again, what is the parallel question from the less restrictive perspective, are we morally permitted not to increase happiness where it is possible to increase it? Furthermore, it is useful to specify whether actions are morally right insofar as they promote happiness, or insofar as they are performed in obedience to rules of action, which, if generally practiced, promote happiness in the long run. And, perhaps most important of all, it is necessary to explain how Mill's theory of moral obligation accommodates moral rights, and whether it leaves room for an adequate theory of justice. A complete account of Mill's theory of moral obligation must deal with all of these issues, most of which are the standard burden of any moral theory that purports to be utilitarian, and none of which promises general consensus or tolerates makeshift solutions.

2. Mill finds the connection between value, on the one hand, and moral obligation and ethical justification, on the other, so obvious that claims about moral obligation and ethical justification are interspersed throughout his proof of the principle of utility, especially in his intermediate conclusions and summary statements: "Happiness has made out its title as one of the ends of conduct, and consequently one of the criteria of morality" (U.IV.3; CW.X.234); "If so, happiness is the sole end of human action, and the promotion of it the test by which to judge of all human conduct; from whence it necessarily follows that it must be the criterion of morality, since a part is included in the whole" (U.IV.9; CW.X.237).

3. For example, Mill claims that the "directive rule of human conduct" according to the utilitarian standard "is not the agent's own greatest happiness, but the greatest amount of happiness altogether" (U.II.9; CW.X.213). In the next paragraph, he defines the "standard of morality" that follows from the "ultimate end," conceived as "an existence" abundant in the experience of happiness, as "the rules and precepts for human conduct, by the observance of which an existence such as has been described might be, to the greatest extent possible, secured to all mankind; and not to them only, but, so far as the nature of things admits, to the whole sentient creation" (U.II.10; CW.X.214). Furthermore, he affirms explicitly that "the happiness which forms the utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct, is not the agent's own happiness, but that of all concerned" (U.II.18; CW.X.218).

4. Mill's conception of the *general happiness* can be contrasted, both, to Rousseau's conception of the *will of all*, and to Rousseau's conception of the *general will*. Rousseau's *will of all* is the straightforward sum of private wills; Rousseau's *general will* is the common element synthesized from the *will of all* after discounting everything that remains outside the region of overlap among private wills. Mill's *general happiness* is neither like Rousseau's *will of all*, which is a sum of private wills, nor like Rousseau's *general will*, which is a synthesis of private wills. Mill's reference to happiness is distributive in his *general happiness*, which denotes each person's happiness severally, but not the sum of every person's happiness, and certainly not a philosophical synthesis of every person's happiness.

5. Mill's conception of the *aggregate of all persons* can be contrasted to Hobbes's conception of the *leviathan* (the thing not the book). Mill's *aggregate of all persons* is not like Hobbes's *leviathan*, which is an *artificial person* created by the unity of real persons who contract out of the state of nature into civil society. For a more graphic contrast, recall the famous picture on the cover page of the Head edition of *Leviathan* (perhaps more commonly known today as the picture on the cover of the Penguin Books edition): it is the picture of one giant person composed of many small persons. That picture symbolizes the

unity of the contractors in Hobbes's social contract. Mill's *aggregate of all persons* is not analogous to what that picture is intended to represent. Put differently, if one's understanding of Mill's *aggregate of all persons* conjures up in one's mind an image like the *artificial person* pictured on the cover of *Leviathan*, then one has an incorrect understanding of Mill's *aggregate of all persons*.

6. For example, F. H. Bradley (1988, 113) likens the general happiness to pig food in a single trough out of which many pigs eat together; John Stuart Mackenzie (1910, 219-20) compares the aggregate of all persons to the mind of all human beings rolled into one.

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