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#### **Chapter 4:** Trying Out One's New Sword

**Amazon Reference:** <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/>

**Quote:** "All of us are, more or less; in trouble today about trying to understand cultures strange to us."

#### **What I expect to learn:**

I expect to learn what moral isolationism is.

#### **Review:**

This article is about moral isolationism. According to the article, moral isolationism means that we cannot make any moral judgments about the practices of other cultures, because it is impossible to understand other cultures well enough, and because we owe respect to other cultures. For Mary Midgley, she argues that moral isolationism is essentially a doctrine of immoralism because it forbids moral reasoning. And also, according to her, moral isolationism falsely assumes that cultures are separate and unmixed, whereas most cultures are in fact formed out of many influences. I agree to what Mary Midgley said that most cultures are formed out of many influences because it's true that all of the cultures are influenced by other countries. Like the Filipino culture, there are times that some of the practices that the Filipinos do are also the practices that the Spanish people do because Spain conquered Philippines so it's possible that the Spanish people teach the Filipino people about their culture. Well all of us have our own unique culture, but there are times that these cultures are mixed with other culture which is somewhat good because at least these gives people a chance to know more about the other cultures and not just their own culture. As a conclusion, we shouldn't criticize or make any moral judgment about other cultures because we also don't want other people to make judgment about our culture. We could just try to understand the culture of other people and appreciate it rather than criticizing it.

#### **What I learned:**

- Moral utilitarianism

#### **Integrative Question:**

1. What is moral utilitarianism?
2. What is isolating barrier?
3. What is Mary Midgley's point of view regarding moral utilitarianism?
4. What is moral scepticism?
5. What is an example of moral utilitarianism?

## Chapter 5: Utilitarianism

**Amazon Reference:** <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/>

**Quote:** “The utilitarian doctrine is that happiness is desirable, and the only things desirable, as an end; all other things being desirable as means to that end.”

### What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn what utilitarianism is.

### Review:

When I research about the meaning of utilitarianism, I found out that utilitarianism means “a doctrine that the useful is the good and that the determining consideration of right conduct should be the usefulness of its consequences; *specifically*: a theory that the aim of action should be the largest possible balance of pleasure over pain or the greatest happiness of the greatest number.” (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Utilitarianism>)

For John Stuart Mill, utilitarianism means that a person should act to have a result of good consequence for the greatest number of people but within reason. There was one statement in the article that says, “If I am asked, what I mean by difference of quality in pleasures, or what makes one pleasure more valuable than another, merely as a pleasure, except its being greater in amount there is but one possible answer.” For me, what makes one pleasure more valuable than another can be determined whether you are contended with the pleasure or not. It’s like which of the 2 pleasures makes you contended more. Maybe for example, playing actual basketball or playing basketball in the computer. You both get the pleasure doing both acts but you could be more contended if you play actual basketball because you are the one actually playing, and you could feel the excitement when playing. Unlike playing basketball in the computer, yes you do feel pleasure but you can’t really feel the contentment because you are not really the one playing but you are just controlling the player.

### What I learned:

- Utilitarianism
- Principle of utility

### Integrative Question:

1. What is utilitarianism?
2. What is John Stuart Mill’s point of view regarding utilitarianism?
3. What is hedonism?
4. Who are Epicureans?
5. What is difference of quality in pleasures?

## Chapter 6: The Debate over Utilitarianism

**Amazon Reference:** <http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534584306/>

**Quote:** "Utilitarianism is correct telling us to consider the consequences of actions and ion advising us to be impartial, but incorrect in ignoring other important moral considerations such as merit."

### What I expect to learn:

I expect to learn what is John Rachels point of view regarding utilitarianism.

### Review:

For John Rachels, utilitarianism is correct telling us to consider the consequences of actions and ion advising us to be impartial, but incorrect in ignoring other important moral considerations such as merit. He was able to summarized classical utilitarianism in 3 propositions. *"First, actions are to be judged right or wrong solely in virtue of their consequences. Second, in assessing consequences, the only thing that matters is the amount of happiness or unhappiness that is caused. Lastly, in calculating the happiness or unhappiness that will be caused, no one's happiness is to be counted as more important than anyone else's"*

At some point in the article, it discussed the 3 antiutilitarian arguments. First is justice. It was stated that justice requires that people should treat other people fairly, according to their individual needs and merits. The second argument is rights. I think the rights that this argument is talking about are the rights that we have as a human being like right to freedom of religion, right to free speech and many others. The last argument is backward-looking reasons.

John Rachels also stated the 2 kinds of utilitarianism. First is rule-utilitarianism. Rule-utilitarianism means that an action is moral is it follows the rules that would lead to the greatest good. A rule- utilitarian person would ask first, "What general rules of conduct tend to promote the greatest happiness?" The second kind of utilitarianism is act-utilitarianism. Act-utilitarianism means that an action is good based on the amount of good consequences an action has. To make it short, rule-utilitarianism is based on rules it followed while act-utilitarianism is based on the end-result of the action.

### What I learned:

- Classical utilitarianism
- Rule-utilitarianism
- Act-utilitarianism

### Integrative Question:

1. What is classical utilitarianism?
2. What is rule-utilitarianism?
3. What is act-utilitarianism?
4. What are the 3 propositions of classical utilitarianism according to John Rachels?
5. What is John Rachels point of view about utilitarianism?