

1  
3  
5  
7  
9  
11  
13

# IT'S NOT *MY* FAULT: GLOBAL WARMING AND INDIVIDUAL MORAL OBLIGATIONS

11 Walter Sinnott-Armstrong

15 Previous chapters in this volume have focused on scientific research, eco-  
17 nomic projections, and government policies. However, even if scientists es-  
19 tablish that global warming is occurring, even if economists confirm that its  
21 costs will be staggering, and even if political theorists agree that govern-  
ments must do something about it, it is still not clear what moral obligations  
regarding global warming devolve upon individuals like you and me. That is  
the question to be addressed in this essay.

25

## 1. ASSUMPTIONS

27 To make the issue stark, let us begin with a few assumptions. I believe that  
29 these assumptions are probably roughly accurate, but none is certain, and I  
will not try to justify them here. Instead, I will simply take them for granted  
31 for the sake of argument.<sup>1</sup>

33 First, global warming has begun and is likely to increase over the next  
century. We cannot be sure exactly how much or how fast, but hot times are  
coming.<sup>2</sup>

35 \_\_\_\_\_  
37 **Perspectives on Climate Change: Science, Economics, Politics, Ethics**  
**Advances in the Economics of Environmental Research, Volume 5, 293–315**  
Copyright © 2005 by Elsevier Ltd.  
All rights of reproduction in any form reserved  
39 ISSN: 1569-3740/doi:10.1016/S1569-3740(05)05013-3

1 Second, a significant amount of global warming is due to human activities. The main culprit is fossil fuels.

3 Third, global warming will create serious problems for many people over the long term by causing climate changes, including violent storms, floods  
5 from sea level rises, droughts, heat waves, and so on. Millions of people will probably be displaced or die.

7 Fourth, the poor will be hurt most of all. The rich countries are causing most of the global warming, but they will be able to adapt to climate  
9 changes more easily.<sup>3</sup> Poor countries that are close to sea level might be devastated.

11 Fifth, governments, especially the biggest and richest ones, are able to mitigate global warming.<sup>4</sup> They can impose limits on emissions. They can  
13 require or give incentives for increased energy efficiency. They can stop deforestation and fund reforestation. They can develop ways to sequester  
15 carbon dioxide in oceans or underground. These steps will help, but the only long-run solution lies in alternatives to fossil fuels. These alternatives can be  
17 found soon if governments start massive research projects now.<sup>5</sup>

19 Sixth, it is too late to stop global warming. Because there is so much carbon dioxide in the atmosphere already, because carbon dioxide remains  
21 in the atmosphere for so long, and because we will remain dependent on fossil fuels in the near future, governments can slow down global warming  
23 or reduce its severity, but they cannot prevent it. Hence, governments need to adapt. They need to build seawalls. They need to reinforce houses that  
25 cannot withstand storms. They need to move populations from low-lying areas.<sup>6</sup>

27 Seventh, these steps will be costly. Increased energy efficiency can reduce expenses, adaptation will create some jobs, and money will be made in the  
29 research and production of alternatives to fossil fuels. Still, any steps that mitigate or adapt to global warming will slow down our economies, at least  
31 in the short run.<sup>7</sup> That will hurt many people, especially many poor people.

33 Eighth, despite these costs, the major governments throughout the world still morally ought to take some of these steps. The clearest moral obligation  
35 falls on the United States. The United States caused and continues to cause more of the problem than any other country. The United States can spend  
37 more resources on a solution without sacrificing basic necessities. This country has the scientific expertise to solve technical problems. Other countries  
39 follow its lead (sometimes!). So the United States has a special moral obligation to help mitigate and adapt to global warming.<sup>8</sup>

1 **2. THE PROBLEM**

3 Even assuming all of this, it is still not clear what I as an individual morally  
5 ought to do about global warming. That issue is not as simple as many  
7 people assume. I want to bring out some of its complications.

9 It should be clear from the start that “individual” moral obligations do  
11 not always follow directly from “collective” moral obligations. The fact that  
13 your government morally ought to do something does not prove that “you”  
15 ought to do it, even if your government fails. Suppose that a bridge is  
17 dangerous because so much traffic has gone over it and continues to go over  
19 it. The government has a moral obligation to make the bridge safe. If the  
21 government fails to do its duty, it does not follow that I personally have a  
23 moral obligation to fix the bridge. It does not even follow that I have a  
25 moral obligation to fill in one crack in the bridge, even if the bridge would be  
fixed if everyone filled in one crack, even if I drove over the bridge many  
times, and even if I still drive over it every day. Fixing the bridge is the  
government’s job, not mine. While I ought to encourage the government to  
fulfill its obligations,<sup>9</sup> I do not have to take on those obligations myself.

19 All that this shows is that government obligations do not “always” imply  
21 parallel individual obligations. Still, maybe “sometimes” they do. My gov-  
23 ernment has a moral obligation to teach arithmetic to the children in my  
25 town, including my own children. If the government fails in this obligation,  
then I do take on a moral obligation to teach arithmetic to my children.<sup>10</sup>  
Thus, when the government fails in its obligations, sometimes I have to fill  
in, and sometimes I do not.

27 What about global warming? If the government fails to do anything about  
29 global warming, what am I supposed to do about it? There are lots of ways  
31 for me as an individual to fight global warming. I can protest against bad  
33 government policies and vote for candidates who will make the government  
fulfill its moral obligations. I can support private organizations that fight  
global warming, such as the Pew Foundation,<sup>11</sup> or boycott companies that  
contribute too much to global warming, such as most oil companies. Each  
of these cases is interesting, but they all differ. To simplify our discussion,  
we need to pick one act as our focus.

35 My example will be wasteful driving. Some people drive to their jobs or to  
37 the store because they have no other reasonable way to work and eat. I want  
39 to avoid issues about whether these goals justify driving, so I will focus on a  
case where nothing so important is gained. I will consider driving for fun on  
a beautiful Sunday afternoon. My drive is not necessary to cure depression

1 or calm aggressive impulses. All that is gained is pleasure: Ah, the feel of  
wind in your hair! The views! How spectacular! Of course, you could drive a  
3 fuel-efficient hybrid car. But fuel-efficient cars have less “get up and go.” So  
let us consider a gas-guzzling sport utility vehicle. Ah, the feeling of power!  
5 The excitement! Maybe you do not like to go for drives in sport utility  
vehicles on sunny Sunday afternoons, but many people do.

7 Do we have a moral obligation not to drive in such circumstances? This  
question concerns driving, not “buying” cars. To make this clear, let us  
9 assume that I borrow the gas-guzzler from a friend. This question is also not  
about “legal” obligations. So let us assume that it is perfectly legal to go for  
11 such drives. Perhaps it ought to be illegal, but it is not. Note also that my  
question is not about what would be “best”. Maybe it would be better, even  
13 morally better, for me not to drive a gas-guzzler just for fun. But that is not  
the issue I want to address here. My question is whether I have a “moral”  
15 obligation not to drive a gas-guzzler just for fun on this particular sunny  
Sunday afternoon.

17 One final complication must be removed. I am interested in global warm-  
ing, but there might be other moral reasons not to drive unnecessarily. I risk  
19 causing an accident, since I am not a perfect driver. I also will likely spew  
exhaust into the breathing space of pedestrians, bicyclists, or animals on the  
21 side of the road as I drive by. Perhaps these harms and risks give me a moral  
obligation not to go for my joyride. That is not clear. After all, these reasons  
23 also apply if I drive the most efficient car available, and even if I am driving  
to work with no other way to keep my job. Indeed, I might scare or injure  
25 bystanders even if my car gave off no greenhouse gases or pollution. In any  
case, I want to focus on global warming. So my real question is whether the  
27 facts about global warming give me any moral obligation not to drive a gas-  
guzzler just for fun on this sunny Sunday afternoon.

29 I admit that I am “inclined” to answer, “Yes.” To me, global warming  
does “seem” to make such wasteful driving morally wrong.

31 Still, I do not feel confident in this judgment. I know that other people  
disagree (even though they are also concerned about the environment). I  
33 would probably have different moral intuitions about this case if I had been  
raised differently or if I now lived in a different culture. My moral intuition  
35 might be distorted by overgeneralization from the other cases where I think  
that other entities (large governments) do have moral obligations to fight  
37 global warming. I also worry that my moral intuition might be distorted by  
my desire to avoid conflicts with my environmentalist friends.<sup>12</sup> The issue of  
39 global warming generates strong emotions because of its political implica-  
tions and because of how scary its effects are. It is also a peculiarly modern

1 case, especially because it operates on a much grander scale than my moral  
3 intuitions evolved to handle long ago when acts did not have such long-term  
5 effects on future generations (or at least people were not aware of such  
7 effects). In such circumstances, I doubt that we are justified in trusting our  
9 moral intuitions alone. We need some kind of confirmation.<sup>13</sup>

11 One way to confirm the truth of my moral intuitions would be to derive  
13 them from a general moral principle. A principle could tell us why wasteful  
15 driving is morally wrong, so we would not have to depend on bare assertion.  
17 And a principle might be supported by more trustworthy moral beliefs. The  
19 problem is “which” principle?

11

13

### 3. ACTUAL ACT PRINCIPLES

15 One plausible principle refers to causing harm. If one person had to inhale  
17 all of the exhaust from my car, this would harm him and give me a moral  
19 obligation not to drive my car just for fun. Such cases suggest:

19 *The harm principle:* We have a moral obligation not to perform an act that  
21 causes harm to others.

21 This principle implies that I have a moral obligation not to drive my gas-  
23 guzzler just for fun “if” such driving causes harm.

23 The problem is that such driving does “not” cause harm in normal cases.  
25 If one person were in a position to inhale all of my exhaust, then he would  
27 get sick if I did drive, and he would not get sick if I did not drive (under  
29 normal circumstances). In contrast, global warming will still occur even if I  
31 do not drive just for fun. Moreover, even if I do drive a gas-guzzler just for  
33 fun for a long time, global warming will not occur unless lots of other people  
35 also expel greenhouse gases. So my individual act is neither necessary nor  
37 sufficient for global warming.

31 There are, admittedly, special circumstances in which an act causes harm  
33 without being either necessary or sufficient for that harm. Imagine that it  
35 takes three people to push a car off a cliff with a passenger locked inside,  
37 and five people are already pushing. If I join and help them push, then my  
39 act of pushing is neither necessary nor sufficient to make the car go off the  
41 cliff. Nonetheless, my act of pushing is a cause (or part of the cause) of the  
43 harm to the passenger. Why? Because I intend to cause harm to the pas-  
45 senger, and because my act is unusual. When I intend a harm to occur, my  
47 intention provides a reason to pick my act out of all the other background  
49 circumstances and identify it as a cause. Similarly, when my act is unusual in

1 the sense that most people would not act that way, that also provides a  
reason to pick out my act and call it a cause.

3 Why does it matter what is usual? Compare matches. For a match to light  
up, we need to strike it so as to create friction. There also has to be oxygen.  
5 We do not call the oxygen the cause of the fire, since oxygen is usually  
present. Instead, we say that the friction causes the match to light, since it is  
7 unusual for that friction to occur. It happens only once in the life of each  
match. Thus, what is usual affects ascriptions of causation even in purely  
9 physical cases.

In moral cases, there are additional reasons not to call something a cause  
11 when it is usual. Labeling an act a cause of harm and, on this basis, holding  
its agent responsible for that harm by blaming the agent or condemning his  
13 act is normally counterproductive when that agent is acting no worse than  
most other people. If people who are doing “no” worse than average are  
15 condemned, then people who are doing “much” worse than average will  
suspect that they will still be subject to condemnation even if they start  
17 doing better, and even if they improve enough to bring themselves up to the  
average. We should distribute blame (and praise) so as to give incentives for  
19 the worst offenders to get better. The most efficient and effective way to do  
this is to reserve our condemnation for those who are well below average.  
21 This means that we should not hold people responsible for harms by calling  
their acts causes of harms when their acts are not at all unusual, assuming  
23 that they did not intend the harm.

The application to global warming should be clear. It is not unusual to go  
25 for joyrides. Such drivers do not intend any harm. Hence, we should not see  
my act of driving on a sunny Sunday afternoon as a cause of global warming  
27 or its harms.

Another argument leads to the same conclusion: the harms of global  
29 warming result from the massive quantities of greenhouse gases in the at-  
mosphere. Greenhouse gases (such as carbon dioxide and water vapor) are  
31 perfectly fine in small quantities. They help plants grow. The problem  
emerges only when there is too much of them. But my joyride by itself does  
33 not cause the massive quantities that are harmful.

Contrast someone who pours cyanide poison into a river. Later someone  
35 drinking from the river downstream ingests some molecules of the poison.  
Those molecules cause the person to get ill and die. This is very different  
37 from the causal chain in global warming, because no particular molecules  
from my car cause global warming in the direct way that particular mol-  
39 ecules of the poison do cause the drinker’s death. Global warming is more  
like a river that is going to flood downstream because of torrential rains. I

1 pour a quart of water into the river upstream (maybe just because I do not  
2 want to carry it). My act of pouring the quart into the river is not a cause of  
3 the flood. Analogously, my act of driving for fun is not a cause of global  
warming.

5 Contrast also another large-scale moral problem: famine relief. Some  
6 people say that I have no moral obligation to contribute to famine relief  
7 because the famine will continue and people will die whether or not I donate  
8 my money to a relief agency. However, I could help a certain individual if I  
9 gave my donation directly to that individual. In contrast, if I refrain from  
driving for fun on this one Sunday, there is no individual who will be helped  
11 in the least.<sup>14</sup> I cannot help anyone by depriving myself of this joyride.

The point becomes clearer if we distinguish global warming from climate  
13 change. You might think that my driving on Sunday raises the temperature  
of the globe by an infinitesimal amount. I doubt that, but, even if it does, my  
15 exhaust on that Sunday does not cause any climate change at all. No storms  
or floods or droughts or heat waves can be traced to my individual act of  
17 driving. It is these climate changes that cause harms to people. Global  
warming by itself causes no harm without climate change. Hence, since my  
19 individual act of driving on that one Sunday does not cause any climate  
change, it causes no harm to anyone.

21 The point is not that harms do not occur from global warming. I have  
already admitted that they do. The point is also not that my exhaust is  
23 overkill, like poisoning someone who is already dying from poison. My  
exhaust is not sufficient for the harms of global warming, and I do not  
25 intend those harms. Nor is it the point that the harms from global warming  
occur much later in time. If I place a time bomb in a building, I can cause  
27 harm many years later. And the point is not that the harm I cause is im-  
perceptible. I admit that some harms can be imperceptible because they are  
29 too small or for other reasons.<sup>15</sup> Instead, the point is simply that my in-  
dividual joyride does not cause global warming, climate change, or any of  
31 their resulting harms, at least directly.

Admittedly, my acts can lead to other acts by me or by other people.  
33 Maybe one case of wasteful driving creates a bad habit that will lead me to  
do it again and again. Or maybe a lot of other people look up to me and  
35 would follow my example of wasteful driving. Or maybe my wasteful driving  
will undermine my commitment to environmentalism and lead me to stop  
37 supporting important green causes or to harm the environment in more  
serious ways. If so, we could apply:

39

*The indirect harm principle:* We have a moral obligation not to perform an

1 act that causes harm to others indirectly by causing someone to carry out  
 2 acts that cause harm to others.

3

4 This principle would explain why it is morally wrong to drive a gas-  
 5 guzzler just for fun if this act led to other harmful acts.

6 One problem here is that my acts are not that influential. People like to see  
 7 themselves as more influential than they really are. On a realistic view,  
 8 however, it is unlikely that anyone would drive wastefully if I did and would  
 9 not if I did not. Moreover, wasteful driving is not that habit forming. My act  
 10 of driving this Sunday does not make me drive next Sunday. I do not get  
 11 addicted. Driving the next Sunday is a separate decision.<sup>16</sup> And my wasteful  
 12 driving will not undermine my devotion to environmentalism. If my argu-  
 13 ment in this chapter is correct, then my belief that the government has a  
 14 moral obligation to fight global warming is perfectly compatible with a  
 15 belief that I as an individual have no moral obligation not to drive a gas-  
 16 guzzler for fun. If I keep this compatibility in mind, then my driving my gas-  
 17 guzzler for fun will not undermine my devotion to the cause of getting the  
 18 government to do something about global warming.

19 Besides, the indirect harm principle is misleading. To see why, consider  
 20 David. David is no environmentalist. He already has a habit of driving his  
 21 gas-guzzler for fun on Sundays. Nobody likes him, so nobody follows his  
 22 example. But David still has a moral obligation not to drive his gas-guzzler  
 23 just for fun this Sunday, and his obligation has the same basis as mine, if I  
 24 have one. So my moral obligation cannot depend on the factors cited by the  
 25 indirect harm principle.

26 The most important problem for supposed indirect harms is the same as  
 27 for direct harms: even if I create a bad habit and undermine my personal  
 28 environmentalism and set a bad example that others follow, all of this would  
 29 still not be enough to cause climate change if other people stopped expelling  
 30 greenhouse gases. So, as long as I neither intend harm nor do anything  
 31 unusual, my act cannot cause climate change even if I do create bad habits  
 32 and followers. The scale of climate change is just too big for me to cause it,  
 33 even “with a little help from my friends.”

34 Of course, even if I do not cause climate change, I still might seem to  
 35 contribute to climate change in the sense that I make it worse. If so, another  
 36 principle applies:

37

38 *The contribution principle:* We have a moral obligation not to make prob-  
 39 lems worse.



1 This principle applies if climate change will be worse if I drive than it will  
3 be if I do not drive.

5 The problem with this argument is that my act of driving does not even  
7 make climate change worse. Climate change would be just as bad if I did not  
9 drive. The reason is that climate change becomes worse only if more people  
11 (and animals) are hurt or if they are hurt worse. There is nothing bad about  
13 global warming or climate change in itself if no people (or animals) are  
15 harmed. But there is no individual person or animal who will be worse off if  
17 I drive than if I do not drive my gas-guzzler just for fun. Global warming  
19 and climate change occur on such a massive scale that my individual driving  
makes no difference to the welfare of anyone.

13 Some might complain that this is not what they mean by “contribute.” All  
15 it takes for me to contribute to global warming in their view is for me to  
17 expel greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. I do “that” when I drive, so we  
19 can apply:

17 *The gas principle:* We have a moral obligation not to expel greenhouse gases  
19 into the atmosphere.

19 If this principle were true, it would explain why I have a moral obligation  
21 not to drive my gas-guzzler just for fun.

23 Unfortunately, it is hard to see any reason to accept this principle. There  
25 is nothing immoral about greenhouse gases in themselves when they cause  
27 no harm. Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide and water vapor, which  
29 occur naturally and help plants grow. The problem of global warming occurs  
because of the high quantities of greenhouse gases, not because of  
anything bad about smaller quantities of the same gases. So it is hard to see  
why I would have a moral obligation not to expel harmless quantities of  
greenhouse gases. And that is all I do by myself.

31 Furthermore, if the gas principle were true, it would be unbelievably  
33 restrictive. It implies that I have a moral obligation not to boil water (since  
35 water vapor is a greenhouse gas) or to exercise (since I expel carbon dioxide  
when I breathe heavily). When you think it through, an amazing array of  
seemingly morally acceptable activities would be ruled out by the gas prin-  
ciple. These implications suggest that we had better look elsewhere for a  
reason why I have a moral obligation not to drive a gas-guzzler just for fun.

37 Maybe the reason is risk. It is sometimes morally wrong to create a risk of  
39 a harm even if that harm does not occur. I grant that drunk driving is  
immoral, because it risks harm to others, even if the drunk driver gets home  
safely without hurting anyone. Thus, we get another principle:

1 *The risk principle:* We have a moral obligation not to increase the risk of  
 harms to other people.<sup>17</sup>

3 The problem here is that global warming is not like drunk driving. When  
 5 drunk driving causes harm, it is easy to identify the victim of this particular  
 drunk driver. There is no way to identify any particular victim of my  
 7 wasteful driving in normal circumstances.

9 In addition, my earlier point applies here again. If the risk principle were  
 true, it would be unbelievably restrictive. Exercising and boiling water also  
 expel greenhouse gases, so they also increase the risk of global warming if  
 11 my driving does. This principle implies that almost everything we do violates  
 a moral obligation.

13 Defenders of such principles sometimes respond by distinguishing signif-  
 icant from insignificant risks or increases in risks. That distinction is prob-  
 15 lematic, at least here. A risk is called significant when it is “too” much. But  
 then we need to ask what makes this risk too much when other risks are not  
 17 too much. The reasons for counting a risk as significant are then the real  
 reasons for thinking that there is a moral obligation not to drive wastefully.  
 19 So we need to specify those reasons directly instead of hiding them under a  
 waffle-term like “significant.”

21

23

#### 4. INTERNAL PRINCIPLES

25 None of the principles discussed so far is both defensible and strong enough  
 to yield a moral obligation not to drive a gas-guzzler just for fun. Maybe we  
 27 can do better by looking inward.

Kantians claim that the moral status of acts depends on their agents’  
 29 maxims or “subjective principles of volition”<sup>18</sup> – roughly what we would call  
 motives or intentions or plans. This internal focus is evident in Kant’s first  
 31 formulation of the categorical imperative:

33 *The universalizability principle:* We have a moral obligation not to act on any  
 maxim that we cannot will to be a universal law.

35 The idea is not that universally acting on that maxim would have bad  
 consequences. (We will consider that kind of principle below.) Instead, the  
 37 claim is that some maxims “cannot even be thought as a universal law of  
 nature without contradiction.”<sup>19</sup> However, my maxim when I drive a gas-  
 39 guzzler just for fun on this sunny Sunday afternoon is simply to have  
 harmless fun. There is no way to derive a contradiction from a universal law

1 that people do or may have harmless fun. Kantians might respond that my  
3 maxim is, instead, to expel greenhouse gases. I still see no way to derive a  
5 literal contradiction from a universal law that people do or may expel  
7 greenhouse gases. There would be bad consequences, but that is not a con-  
9 tradiction, as Kant requires. In any case, my maxim (or intention or motive)  
is not to expel greenhouse gases. My goals would be reached completely if I  
went for my drive and had my fun without expelling any greenhouse gases.  
This leaves no ground for claiming that my driving violates Kant's first  
formula of the categorical imperative.

11 Kant does supply a second formulation, which is really a different prin-  
ciple:

13 *The means principle:* We have a moral obligation not to treat any other  
person as a means only.<sup>20</sup>

15 It is not clear exactly how to understand this formulation, but the most  
17 natural interpretation is that for me to treat someone as a means implies my  
19 using harm to that person as part of my plan to achieve my goals. Driving  
21 for fun does not do that. I would have just as much fun if nobody were ever  
harmed by global warming. Harm to others is no part of my plans. So  
Kant's principle cannot explain why I have a moral obligation not to drive  
just for fun on this sunny Sunday afternoon.

23 A similar point applies to a traditional principle that focuses on intention:

25 *The doctrine of double effect:* We have a moral obligation not to harm  
anyone intentionally (either as an end or as a means).

27 This principle fails to apply to my Sunday driving both because my driv-  
29 ing does not cause harm to anyone and because I do not intend harm to  
anyone. I would succeed in doing everything I intended to do if I enjoyed my  
drive but magically my car gave off no greenhouse gases and no global  
warming occurred.

31 Another inner-directed theory is virtue ethics. This approach focuses on  
33 general character traits rather than particular acts or intentions. It is not  
clear how to derive a principle regarding obligations from virtue ethics, but  
35 here is a common attempt:

37 *The virtue principle:* We have a moral obligation not to perform an act that  
expresses a vice or is contrary to virtue.

39 This principle solves our problem if driving a gas-guzzler expresses a vice,  
or if no virtuous person would drive a gas-guzzler just for fun.

1 How can we tell whether this principle applies? How can we tell whether  
 3 driving a gas-guzzler for fun “expresses a vice”? On the face of it, it ex-  
 5 presses a desire for fun. There is nothing vicious about having fun. Having  
 7 fun becomes vicious only if it is harmful or risky. But I have already re-  
 9 sponded to the principles of harm and risk. Moreover, driving a gas-guzzler  
 for fun does not always express a vice. If other people did not produce so  
 much greenhouse gas, I could drive my gas-guzzler just for fun without  
 anyone being harmed by global warming. Then I could do it without being  
 vicious. This situation is not realistic, but it does show that wasteful driving  
 is not essentially vicious or contrary to virtue.

11 Some will disagree. Maybe your notions of virtue and vice make it es-  
 13 sentially vicious to drive wastefully. But why? To apply this principle, we  
 15 need some antecedent test of when an act expresses a vice. You cannot just  
 17 say, “I know vice when I see it,” because other people look at the same act  
 19 and do not see vice, just fun. It begs the question to appeal to what you see  
 when others do not see it, and you have no reason to believe that your vision  
 is any clearer than theirs. But that means that this virtue principle cannot be  
 applied without begging the question. We need to find some reason why  
 such driving is vicious. Once we have this reason, we can appeal to it directly  
 as a reason why I have a moral obligation not to drive wastefully. The side  
 step through virtue does not help and only obscures the issue.

Some virtue theorists might respond that life would be better if more  
 people were to focus on general character traits, including green virtues,  
 such as moderation and love of nature.<sup>21</sup> One reason is that it is so hard to  
 determine obligations in particular cases. Another reason is that focusing on  
 particular obligations leaves no way to escape problems like global warm-  
 ing. This might be correct. Maybe we should spend more time thinking  
 about whether we have green virtues rather than about whether we have  
 specific obligations. But that does not show that we do have a moral ob-  
 ligation not to drive gas-guzzlers just for fun. Changing our focus will not  
 bring any moral obligation into existence. There are other important moral  
 issues besides moral obligation, but this does not show that moral obliga-  
 tions are not important as well.

35

37

## 5. COLLECTIVE PRINCIPLES

39 Maybe our mistake is to focus on individual persons. We could, instead,  
 focus on institutions. One institution is the legal system, so we might adopt.

1 *The ideal law principle:* We have a moral obligation not to perform an action  
if it ought to be illegal.

3

5 I already said that the government ought to fight global warming. One  
way to do so is to make it illegal to drive wastefully or to buy (or sell)  
7 inefficient gas-guzzlers. If the government ought to pass such laws, then,  
even before such laws are passed, I have a moral obligation not to drive a  
9 gas-guzzler just for fun, according to the ideal law principle.

11 The first weakness in this argument lies in its assumption that wasteful  
driving or gas-guzzlers ought to be illegal. That is dubious. The enforcement  
costs of a law against joyrides would be enormous. A law against gas-  
13 guzzlers would be easier to enforce, but inducements to efficiency (such as  
higher taxes on gas and gas-guzzlers, or tax breaks for buying fuel-efficient  
15 cars) might accomplish the same goals with less loss of individual freedom.  
Governments ought to accomplish their goals with less loss of freedom, if  
17 they can. Note the "if." I do not claim that these other laws would work as  
well as an outright prohibition of gas-guzzlers. I do not know. Still, the  
19 point is that such alternative laws would not make it illegal (only expensive)  
to drive a gas-guzzler for fun. If those alternative laws are better than  
21 outright prohibitions (because they allow more freedom), then the ideal law  
principle cannot yield a moral obligation not to drive a gas-guzzler now.

23 Moreover, the connection between law and morality cannot be so simple.  
Suppose that the government morally ought to raise taxes on fossil fuels in  
25 order to reduce usage and to help pay for adaptation to global warming. It  
still seems morally permissible for me and for you not to pay that tax now.  
27 We do not have any moral obligation to send a check to the government for  
the amount that we would have to pay if taxes were raised to the ideal level.  
29 One reason is that our checks would not help to solve the problem, since  
others would continue to conduct business as usual. What would help to  
31 solve the problem is for the taxes to be increased. Maybe we all have moral  
obligations to try to get the taxes increased. Still, until they are increased, we  
33 as individuals have no moral obligations to abide by the ideal tax law  
instead of the actual tax law.

35 Analogously, it is actually legal to buy and drive gas-guzzlers. Maybe  
these vehicles should be illegal. I am not sure. If gas-guzzlers morally ought  
37 to be illegal, then maybe we morally ought to work to get them outlawed.  
But that still would not show that now, while they are legal, we have a moral  
obligation not to drive them just for fun on a sunny Sunday afternoon.  
39

1 Which laws are best depends on side effects of formal institutions, such as  
 enforcement costs and loss of freedom (resulting from the coercion of laws).  
 3 Maybe we can do better by looking at informal groups.

Different groups involve different relations between members. Orchestras  
 5 and political parties, for example, plan to do what they do and adjust their  
 actions to other members of the group in order to achieve a common goal.  
 7 Such groups can be held responsible for their joint acts, even when no  
 individual alone performs those acts. However, gas-guzzler drivers do not  
 9 form this kind of group. Gas-guzzler drivers do not share goals, do not  
 make plans together, and do not adjust their acts to each other (at least  
 11 usually).

There is an abstract set of gas-guzzler drivers, but membership in a set is  
 13 too arbitrary to create moral responsibility. I am also in a set of all terrorists  
 plus me, but my membership in that abstract set does not make me re-  
 15 sponsible for the harms that terrorists cause.

The only feature that holds together the group of people who drive gas-  
 17 guzzlers is simply that they all perform the same kind of act. The fact that so  
 many people carry out acts of that kind does create or worsen global  
 19 warming. That collective bad effect is supposed to make it morally wrong to  
 perform any act of that kind, according to the following:

21 *The group principle:* We have a moral obligation not to perform an action if  
 this action makes us a member of a group whose actions together cause  
 23 harm.

25 Why? It begs the question here merely to assume that, if it is bad for  
 everyone in a group to perform acts of a kind, then it is morally wrong for  
 27 an individual to perform an act of that kind. Besides, this principle is im-  
 plausible or at least questionable in many cases. Suppose that everyone in an  
 29 airport is talking loudly. If only a few people were talking, there would be  
 no problem. But the collective effect of so many people talking makes it  
 31 hard to hear announcements, so some people miss their flights. Suppose, in  
 these circumstances, I say loudly (but not too loudly), "I wish everyone  
 33 would be quiet." My speech does not seem immoral, since it alone does not  
 harm anyone. Maybe there should be a rule (or law) against such loud  
 35 speech in this setting (as in a library), but if there is not (as I am assuming),  
 then it does not seem immoral to do what others do, as long as they are  
 37 going to do it anyway, so the harm is going to occur anyway.<sup>22</sup>

Again, suppose that the president sends everyone (or at least most tax-  
 39 payers) a check for \$600. If all recipients cash their checks, the government  
 deficit will grow, government programs will have to be slashed, and severe

1 economic and social problems will result. You know that enough other  
2 people will cash their checks to make these results to a great degree inev-  
3 itable. You also know that it is perfectly legal to cash your check, although  
4 you think it should be illegal, because the checks should not have been  
5 issued in the first place. In these circumstances, is it morally wrong for you  
6 to cash your check? I doubt it. Your act of cashing your check causes no  
7 harm by itself, and you have no intention to cause harm. Your act of  
8 cashing your check does make you a member of a group that collectively  
9 causes harm, but that still does not seem to give you a moral obligation not  
10 to join the group by cashing your check, since you cannot change what the  
11 group does. It might be morally good or ideal to protest by tearing up your  
12 check, but it does not seem morally obligatory.

13 Thus, the group principle fails. Perhaps it might be saved by adding some  
14 kind of qualification, but I do not see how.<sup>23</sup>

15

17

## 6. COUNTERFACTUAL PRINCIPLES

19 Maybe our mistake is to focus on actual circumstances. So let us try some  
20 counterfactuals about what would happen in possible worlds that are not  
21 actual. Different counterfactuals are used by different versions of rule-con-  
22 sequentialism.<sup>24</sup>

23 One counterfactual is built into the common question, “What would  
24 happen if everybody did that?” This question suggests a principle:

25

26 *The general action principle:* I have a moral obligation not to perform an act  
27 when it would be worse for everyone to perform an act of the same kind.<sup>25</sup>

29 It does seem likely that, if everyone in the world drove a gas-guzzler often  
30 enough, global warming would increase intolerably. We would also quickly  
31 run out of fossil fuels. The general action principle is, thus, supposed to  
32 explain why it is morally wrong to drive a gas-guzzler.

33 Unfortunately, that popular principle is indefensible. It would be disas-  
34 trous if every human had no children. But that does not make it morally  
35 wrong for a particular individual to choose to have no children. There is no  
36 moral obligation to have at least one child.

37 The reason is that so few people “want” to remain childless. Most people  
38 would not go without children even if they were allowed to. This suggests a  
39 different principle:

*The general permission principle:* I have a moral obligation not to perform an

1 act whenever it would be worse for everyone to be permitted to perform an  
 2 act of that kind.

3  
 4 This principle seems better because it would not be disastrous for everyone  
 5 to be permitted to remain childless. This principle is supposed to be  
 6 able to explain why it is morally wrong to steal (or lie, cheat, rape, or  
 7 murder), because it would be disastrous for everyone to be permitted to steal  
 8 (or lie, cheat, rape, or murder) whenever (if ever) they wanted to.

9 Not quite. An agent is permitted or allowed in the relevant sense when she  
 10 will not be liable to punishment, condemnation (by others), or feelings of  
 11 guilt for carrying out the act. It is possible for someone to be permitted in  
 12 this sense without knowing that she is permitted and, indeed, without anyone  
 13 knowing that she is permitted. But it would not be disastrous for everyone  
 14 to be permitted to steal if nobody knew that they were permitted to  
 15 steal, since then they would still be deterred by fear of punishment, condemnation,  
 16 or guilt. Similarly for lying, rape, and so on. So the general  
 17 permission principle cannot quite explain why such acts are morally wrong.

18 Still, it would be disastrous if everyone knew that they were permitted to  
 19 steal (or lie, rape, etc.). So we simply need to add one qualification:

20 *The public permission principle:* I have a moral obligation not to perform an  
 21 act whenever it would be worse for everyone to know that everyone is  
 22 permitted to perform an act of that kind.<sup>26</sup>

23  
 24 Now this principle seems to explain the moral wrongness of many of the  
 25 acts we take to be morally wrong, since it would be disastrous if everyone  
 26 knew that everyone was permitted to steal, lie, cheat, and so on.

27 Unfortunately, this revised principle runs into trouble in other cases. Imagine  
 28 that 1000 people want to take Flight 38 to Amsterdam on October 13,  
 29 2003, but the plane is not large enough to carry that many people. If all  
 30 1,000 took that particular flight, then it would crash. But these people are all  
 31 stupid and stubborn enough that, if they knew that they were all allowed to  
 32 take the flight, they all would pack themselves in, despite warnings, and the  
 33 flight would crash. Luckily, this counterfactual does not reflect what actually  
 34 happens. In the actual world, the airline is not stupid. Since the plane  
 35 can safely carry only 300 people, the airline sells only 300 tickets and does  
 36 not allow anyone on the flight without a ticket. If I have a ticket for that  
 37 flight, then there is nothing morally wrong with me taking the flight along  
 38 with the other 299 who have tickets. This shows that an act is not always  
 39 morally wrong when it would (counterfactually) be disastrous for everyone  
 40 to know that everyone is allowed to do it.<sup>27</sup>



1 The lesson of this example applies directly to my case of driving a gas-  
2 guzzler. Disaster occurs in the airplane case when too many people do what  
3 is harmless by itself. Similarly, disaster occurs when too many people burn  
4 too much fossil fuel. But that does not make it wrong in either case for one  
5 individual to perform an individual act that is harmless by itself. It only  
6 creates an obligation on the part of the government (or airline) to pass  
7 regulations to keep too many people from acting that way.

8 Another example brings out another weakness in the public permission  
9 principle. Consider open marriage. Max and Minnie get married because  
10 each loves the other and values the other person's love. Still, they think of  
11 sexual intercourse as a fun activity that they separate from love. After  
12 careful discussion before they got married, each happily agreed that each  
13 may have sex after marriage with whomever he or she wants. They value  
14 honesty, so they did add one condition: every sexual encounter must be  
15 reported to the other spouse. As long as they keep no secrets from each  
16 other and still love each other, they see no problem with their having sex  
17 with other people. They do not broadcast this feature of their marriage, but  
18 they do know (after years of experience) that it works for them.

19 Nonetheless, the society in which Max and Minnie live might be filled  
20 with people who are very different from them. If everyone knew that eve-  
21 ryone is permitted to have sex during marriage with other people as long as  
22 the other spouse is informed and agreed to the arrangement, then various  
23 problems would arise. Merely asking a spouse whether he or she would be  
24 willing to enter into such an agreement would be enough to create suspicions  
25 and doubts in the other spouse's mind that would undermine many mari-  
26 riages or keep many couples from getting married, when they would have  
27 gotten or remained happily married if they had not been offered such an  
28 agreement. As a result, the society will have less love, fewer stable marriages,  
29 and more unhappy children of unnecessary divorce. Things would be much  
30 better if everyone believed that such agreements were not permitted in the  
31 first place, so they condemned them and felt guilty for even considering  
32 them. I think that this result is not unrealistic, but here I am merely pos-  
33 tulating these facts in my example.

34 The point is that, even if other people are like this, so that it would be  
35 worse for everyone to know that everyone is permitted to have sex outside of  
36 marriage with spousal knowledge and consent, Max and Minnie are not like  
37 this, and they know that they are not like this, so it is hard to believe that  
38 they as individuals have a moral obligation to abide by a restriction that is  
39 justified by other people's dispositions. If Max and Minnie have a joint  
40 agreement that works for them, but they keep it secret from others, then

1 there is nothing immoral about them having sex outside of their marriage  
(whether or not this counts as adultery). If this is correct, then the general  
3 permission principle fails again.

As before, the lesson of this example applies directly to my case of driving  
5 a gas-guzzler. The reason why Max and Minnie are not immoral is that they  
have a right to their own private relationship as long as they do not harm  
7 others (such as by spreading disease or discord). But I have already argued  
that my driving a gas-guzzler on this Sunday afternoon does not cause  
9 harm. I seem to have a right to have fun in the way I want as long as I do not  
hurt anybody else, just like Max and Minnie. So the public permission  
11 principle cannot explain why it is morally wrong to drive a gas-guzzler for  
fun on this sunny Sunday afternoon.<sup>28</sup>

13 One final counterfactual approach is contractualism, whose most forceful  
recent proponent is Tim Scanlon.<sup>29</sup> Scanlon proposes:

15 *The contractualist principle:* I have a moral obligation not to perform an act  
whenever it violates a general rule that nobody could reasonably reject as a  
17 public rule for governing action in society.

19 Let us try to apply this principle to the case of Max and Minnie. Consider  
a general rule against adultery, that is, against voluntary sex between a  
21 married person and someone other than his or her spouse, even if the spouse  
knows and consents. It might seem that Max and Minnie could not reason-  
23 ably reject this rule as a public social rule, because they want to avoid  
problems for their own society. If so, Scanlon's principle leads to the same  
25 questionable results as the public permission principle. If Scanlon replies  
that Max and Minnie "can" reasonably reject the anti-adultery rule, then  
27 why? The most plausible answer is that it is their own business how they  
have fun as long as they do not hurt anybody. But this answer is available  
29 also to people who drive gas-guzzlers just for fun. So this principle cannot  
explain why that act is morally wrong.

31 More generally, the test of what can be rejected "reasonably" depends on  
moral intuitions. Environmentalists might think it unreasonable to reject a  
33 principle that prohibits me from driving my gas-guzzler just for fun, but  
others will think it reasonable to reject such a principle, because it restricts  
35 my freedom to perform an act that harms nobody. The appeal to reasonable  
rejection itself begs the question in the absence of an account of why such  
37 rejection is unreasonable. Environmentalists might be able to specify reasons  
why it is unreasonable, but then it is those reasons that explain why this  
39 act is morally wrong. The framework of reasonable rejection becomes a  
distracting and unnecessary side step.<sup>30</sup>

1 **7. WHAT IS LEFT?**

3 We are left with no defensible principle to support the claim that I have a  
5 moral obligation not to drive a gas-guzzler just for fun. Does this result  
7 show that this claim is false? Not necessarily.

9 Some audiences<sup>31</sup> have suggested that my journey through various prin-  
11 ciples teaches us that we should not look for general moral principles to  
13 back up our moral intuitions. They see my arguments as a “reductio ad  
15 absurdum” of principlism, which is the view that moral obligations (or our  
17 beliefs in them) depend on principles. Principles are unavailable, so we  
19 should focus instead on particular cases, according to the opposing view  
21 called particularism.<sup>32</sup>

23 However, the fact that we cannot find any principle does not show that we  
25 do not need one. I already gave my reasons why we need a moral principle  
27 to back up our intuitions in this case. This case is controversial, emotional,  
29 peculiarly modern, and likely to be distorted by overgeneralization and  
31 partiality. These factors suggest that we need confirmation for our moral  
33 intuitions at least in this case, even if we do not need any confirmation in  
35 other cases.

37 For such reasons, we seem to need a moral principle, but we have none.  
39 This fact still does not show that such wasteful driving is not morally wrong.  
It only shows that we do not “know” whether it is morally wrong. Our  
ignorance might be temporary. If someone comes up with a defensible  
principle that does rule out wasteful driving, then I will be happy to listen  
and happy if it works. However, until some such principle is found, we  
cannot claim to know that it is morally wrong to drive a gas-guzzler just for  
fun.

The demand for a principle in this case does not lead to general moral  
skepticism. We still might know that acts and omissions that cause harm are  
morally wrong because of the harm principle. Still, since that principle and  
others do not apply to my wasteful driving, and since moral intuitions are  
unreliable in cases like this, we cannot know that my wasteful driving is  
morally wrong.

This conclusion will still upset many environmentalists. They think that  
they know that wasteful driving is immoral. They want to be able to con-  
demn those who drive gas-guzzlers just for fun on sunny Sunday afternoons.

My conclusion should not be so disappointing. Even if individuals have  
no such moral obligations, it is still morally better or morally ideal for  
individuals not to waste gas. We can and should praise those who save fuel.

1 We can express our personal dislike for wasting gas and for people who do  
 it. We might even be justified in publicly condemning wasteful driving and  
 3 drivers who waste a lot, in circumstances where such public rebuke is ap-  
 propriate. Perhaps people who drive wastefully should feel guilty for their  
 5 acts and ashamed of themselves, at least if they perform such acts regularly;  
 and we should bring up our children so that they will feel these emotions. All  
 7 of these reactions are available even if we cannot truthfully say that such  
 driving violates a moral “obligation”. And these approaches might be more  
 9 constructive in the long run than accusing someone of violating a moral  
 obligation.

11 Moreover, even if individuals have no moral obligations not to waste gas  
 by taking unnecessary Sunday drives just for fun, governments still have  
 13 moral obligations to fight global warming, because they can make a dif-  
 ference. My fundamental point has been that global warming is such a large  
 15 problem that it is not individuals who cause it or who need to fix it. Instead,  
 governments need to fix it, and quickly. Finding and implementing a real  
 17 solution is the task of governments. Environmentalists should focus their  
 efforts on those who are not doing their job rather than on those who take  
 19 Sunday afternoon drives just for fun.

This focus will also avoid a common mistake. Some environmentalists  
 21 keep their hands clean by withdrawing into a simple life where they use very  
 little fossil fuels. That is great. I encourage it. But some of these escapees  
 23 then think that they have done their duty, so they rarely come down out of  
 the hills to work for political candidates who could and would change gov-  
 25 ernment policies. This attitude helps nobody. We should not think that we  
 can do enough simply by buying fuel-efficient cars, insulating our houses,  
 27 and setting up a windmill to make our own electricity. That is all wonderful,  
 but it neither does little or nothing to stop global warming, nor does this  
 29 focus fulfill our real moral obligations, which are to get governments to do  
 their job to prevent the disaster of excessive global warming. It is better to  
 31 enjoy your Sunday driving while working to change the law so as to make it  
 illegal for you to enjoy your Sunday driving.

33

35

## NOTES

37 1. For skeptics, see Lomborg (1998, chapter 24) and Singer (1997). A more re-  
 liable partial skeptic is Richard S. Lindzen, but his papers are quite technical. If you  
 39 do not share my bleak view of global warming, treat the rest of this essay as con-  
 ditional. The issue of how individual moral obligations are related to collective moral

- 1 obligations is interesting and important in its own right, even if my assumptions  
about global warming turn out to be inaccurate.
- 3 2. See the chapters by Mahlman, Schlesinger, and Weatherly in this volume.  
3 3. See the chapter by Shukla in this volume.  
4 4. See the chapter by Bodansky in this volume.  
5 5. See the chapter by Shue in this volume.  
6 6. See the chapter by Jamieson in this volume.  
7 7. See the chapter by Toman in this volume.  
8 8. See the chapter by Driver in this volume.  
9 9. If I have an obligation to encourage the government to fulfill its obligation,  
then the government's obligation does impose some obligation on me. Still, I do not  
11 have an obligation to do what the government has an obligation to do. In short, I  
have no parallel moral obligation. That is what is at issue here.
- 13 10. I do not seem to have the same moral obligation to teach my neighbors'  
children when our government fails to teach them. Why not? The natural answer is  
15 that I have a special relation to my children that I do not have to their children. I also  
do not have such a special relation to future people who will be harmed by global  
warming.
- 17 11. See the chapter by Claussen in this volume.
- 18 12. Indeed, I am worried about how my environmentalist friends will react to this  
essay, but I cannot let fear stop me from following where arguments lead.
- 19 13. For more on why moral intuitions need confirmation, see Sinnott-Armstrong  
(2005).
- 21 14. Another difference between these cases is that my failure to donate to famine  
relief is an inaction, whereas my driving is an action. As Bob Fogelin put it in  
conversation, one is a sin of omission, but the other is a sin of emission. But I assume  
23 that omissions can be causes. The real question is whether my measly emissions of  
greenhouse gases can be causes of global warming.
- 25 15. Cf. Parfit (1984, pp. 75–82).
- 27 16. If my act this Sunday does not cause me to drive next Sunday, then effects of  
my driving next Sunday are not consequences of my driving this Sunday. Some still  
might say that I can affect global warming by driving wastefully many times over the  
course of years. I doubt this, but I do not need to deny it. The fact that it is morally  
29 wrong for me to do all of a hundred acts together does not imply that it is morally  
wrong for me to do one of those hundred acts. Even if it would be morally wrong for  
me to pick all of the flowers in a park, it need not be morally wrong for me to pick  
31 one flower in that park.
- 33 17. The importance of risks in environmental ethics is a recurrent theme in the  
writings of Kristin Shrader-Frechette.
- 35 18. Kant (1785/1959, p. 400, n. 1).
- 37 19. *ibid.*, 424. According to Kant, a weaker kind of contradiction in the will signals  
an imperfect duty. However, imperfect duties permit "exception in the interest of  
inclination" (421), so an imperfect obligation not to drive a gas-guzzler would permit  
me to drive it this Sunday when I am so inclined. Thus, I assume that a moral  
obligation not to drive a gas-guzzler for fun on a particular occasion would have to  
39 be a perfect obligation in Kant's view.

1 20. *ibid*, 429. I omit Kant's clause regarding treating others as ends because that  
 clause captures imperfect duties, which are not my concern here (for reasons given in  
 the preceding note).

3 21. Jamieson (n.d.)

5 22. Compare also standing up to see the athletes in a sporting event, when others  
 do so. Such examples obviously involve much less harm than global warming. I use  
 trivial examples to diminish emotional interference. The point is only that such  
 7 examples share a structure that defenders of the group principle would claim to be  
 sufficient for a moral obligation.

9 23. Parfit (1984, pp. 67–86) is famous for arguing that an individual act is immoral  
 if it falls in a group of acts that collectively cause harm. To support his claim Parfit  
 uses examples like the Harmless Torturers (p. 80). But torturers intend to cause  
 11 harm. That's what makes them torturers. Hence, Parfit's cases cannot show anything  
 wrong with wasteful driving, where there is no intention to cause any harm. For  
 criticisms of Parfit's claims, see Jackson (1997).

13 24. Cf. Sinnott-Armstrong (2003) and Hooker (2003).

25. Cf. Singer (1971).

15 26. Cf. Gert (2005). Gert does add details that I will not discuss here. For a more  
 complete response, see Sinnott-Armstrong (2002).

17 27. The point, of course, depends on how you describe the act. It would not be  
 disastrous to allow everyone "with a ticket" to take the flight (as long as there are not  
 too many tickets). What is disastrous is to allow everyone (without qualification) to  
 19 take the flight. Still, that case shows that it is not always morally wrong to do X when  
 it would be disastrous to allow everyone to do X. To solve these problems, we need  
 21 to put some limits on the kinds of descriptions that can replace the variable X. But  
 any limit needs to be justified, and it is not at all clear how to justify such limits  
 without begging the question.

23 28. The examples in the text show why violating a justified public rule is not  
 sufficient for private immorality. It is also not necessary, since it might not be  
 25 disastrous if all parents were permitted to kill their children, if no parent ever wanted  
 to kill his or her children. The failure of this approach to give a necessary condition is  
 another reason to doubt that it captures the essence of morality.

27 29. Scanlon (1998).

30. Scanlon's framework still might be useful as a heuristic, for overcoming partiality,  
 as a pedagogical tool, or as a vivid way to display coherence among moral  
 intuitions at different levels. My point is that it cannot be used to justify moral  
 31 judgments or to show what makes acts morally wrong. For more, see Sinnott-Armstrong  
 (in press, chap. 8).

33 31. Such as Bill Pollard in Edinburgh.

32. Developed by Dancy (1993, 2004). For criticisms, see Sinnott-Armstrong  
 (1999).

35

37

39

1 **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

3 For helpful comments, I would like to thank Kier Olsen DeVries, Julia  
5 Driver, Bob Fogelin, Bernard Gert, Rich Howarth, Bill Pollard, Mike  
7 Ridge, David Rodin, Peter Singer, and audiences at the University of Ed-  
inburgh, the International Society for Business, Economics, and Ethics, and  
the Center for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics in Melbourne.

9 **REFERENCES**

11 Dancy, J. (1993). *Moral reasons*. Oxford: Blackwell.

13 Dancy, J. (2004). *Ethics without principles*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Gert, B. (2005). *Morality: Its nature and justification* (Revised ed.). New York: Oxford Uni-  
15 versity Press.

Hooker, B. (2003). Rule consequentialism. In: *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Avail-  
17 able at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism-rule>

Jackson, F. (1997). Which effects? In: J. Dancy (Ed.), *Reading Parfit* (pp. 42–53). Oxford:  
Blackwell.

19 Jamieson, D. (n.d.). When utilitarians should be virtue theorists. Unpublished manuscript. QA :1

Kant, I. (1959). *Foundations of the metaphysics of morals* (L. W. Beck, Trans.). Indianapolis, IN:  
Bobbs-Merrill. (Original work published in 1785).

21 Lomborg, B. (1998). *The skeptical environmentalist*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Parfit, D. (1984). *Reasons and persons*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

23 Scanlon, T. (1998). *What we owe to each other*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Singer, M. (1971). *Generalization in ethics*. New York: Atheneum.

Singer, S. F. (1997). *Hot talk, cold science*. Oakland, CA: The Independent Institute.

25 Sinnott-Armstrong, W. (1999). Some varieties of particularism. *Metaphilosophy*, 30, 1–12.

Sinnott-Armstrong, W. (2002). Gert contra consequentialism. In: W. Sinnott-Armstrong & R.  
27 Audi (Eds), *Rationality, rules, and ideals: Critical essays on Bernard Gert's moral theory*  
(pp. 145–163). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

29 Sinnott-Armstrong, W. (2003). Consequentialism. In: *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.  
Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consequentialism>

Sinnott-Armstrong, W. (2005). Moral intuitionism and empirical psychology. In: T. Horgan &  
31 M. Timmons (Eds), *Metaethics after Moore* (pp. 339–365). New York: Oxford Univer-  
sity Press.

33 Sinnott-Armstrong, W. (in press). *Moral skepticisms*. New York: Oxford University Press. QA :2

35  
37  
39