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Morality is necessary for happiness

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Abstract An argument for the eponymous conclusion is given through a series of hypothetical syllogisms, the most basic of which is as follows: morality is necessary for self-respect; self-respect is necessary for happiness; therefore, morality is necessary for happiness. Some of the most obvious objections are entertained and rejected.

Keywords Morality · Well-being · Happiness · Egoism · Self-interest · Self-respect · Respect

Since antiquity, the first question of moral philosophy has been "How ought I to live?" (*Republic*, 344e). One fairly trivial way to answer is to say, "Well, you ought to live as well as you can, you ought to live the good life or as happily as possible." This fails to give us guidance, though it does establish a standard to reach for, a goal to obtain. More substantially, common sense seems to tell us that immoral people are as capable of "genuine happiness" and the good life as moral people. Both the Old Testament and Bernard Williams agree: sometimes wicked people may spread like the "green bay tree in native soil" and "horrible" people may be "of the bright eye and gleaming coat, dangerously flourishing".[1] It is easy to imagine people "getting away" with doing terrible things and going on to lead what appear to be perfectly happy lives. Perhaps Joseph Stalin was perfectly happy, and it is easy to imagine the possibility of Lance Armstrong never having gotten caught as a cheater and living "happily ever after". A fictional example of criminal behavior with

[1] The first quote is from Psalm 37, the second is from Williams (1985, p. 46).

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impunity is the character Judah in Woody Allen's *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, who embezzles money from a hospital and arranges for his inconvenient mistress to be murdered and yet, afterward, claims to be living happily. It is not hard to imagine people who are brought up (or learn or train themselves) to not be troubled by whatever they do, however bad, and this lack of guilt, shame, or regret does not seem to impinge on their ability to live happy lives.[2]

The worry, at least since Plato had Glaucon express it, is that immorality has no cost when it is practiced with impunity, and so does not interfere with how well a person's life goes. Indeed, more worriesome is the idea that undiscovered immorality can positively contribute to its perpetrator's happiness since it can help satisfy preferences. So, perhaps the second question of moral philosophy is: how is living a well-lived or happy life related to living morally? Arguably, the most prominent way to articulate the relation of *personal happiness* and *morality* comes by defining "morality" as a check on self-interest or the pursuit of personal happiness, so that morality is at best a necessary evil that we have to put up with in order to have the benefits of living in society: morality only begins when the interests of others affect one's deliberations about what to do. On this "social view" of *morality*, shared by both those who accept and those who reject morality, it is understood in terms of the sacrifices to self-interest or to one's well-lived life that it requires.[3] As a result, it is often thought that being a moral person makes us less well-off than possible, while being immoral makes us happier, as long as we can get away with it.

So, it has long been thought by skeptics, egoists, immoralists, and knaves alike, that "the realpolitik" is to recognize that people of self-respect do not make sacrifices to their self-interest for the sake of others and claim that only self-respecting people can be truly happy. On such a view, morality is for the rubes, dupes, suckers, and fools. On the other hand, there are those who try their best to live by social morality despite the fact that they think that it requires sacrifices to their own well-lived lives. Despite these differences, the ancient debate is over whether or not immorality is consistent with living "the good life" or being truly happy, and the present argument is framed in these terms. What has long been sought, even deemed the "Holy Grail of moral philosophy", is an argument for why immoral people cannot live well, or the converse: one concluding that morality is necessary for happiness or for living as well as one can.[4]

[2] Psychopaths will be left out of the picture. Generally, we take mental illness to be exculpatory of immorality. Perhaps there are ways to argue that psychopaths are culpable for their immoral behavior, but unless we deny their condition, we must accommodate it one way or another in our judgment of them. Such complications go beyond the intent of the argument at hand.

[3] Contemporary assumptions of the social conception of morality are found in Stevenson (1937, p. 31), Baier (1954), Telfer (1968), Harman (1975), Scanlon (1982, 2000), Wolf (1982), Gauthier (1986), Nagel (1991), Kagan (1991), Hills (2003), Darwall (2006), Joyce (2006) and Finlay (2008), Parfit (2011). For less stringent views, see Scheffler (1982, 1992). For further discussion see Bloomfield (2014).

[4] For the term "Holy Grail of moral philosophy" see Blackburn (1984, p. 222) and Hills (2010, p. 1). For a different dialectical set-up but a more developed treatment, see my (2014). A different, more Aristotelian argument for a similar conclusion is given by Badhwar in her (1997, 2014). A different more Parfitian argument for a similar conclusion is given by Brink (1990).

Here is an argument for the eponymous conclusion:

Morality is necessary for treating like cases alike

Treating like cases alike is necessary for fair self-evaluation

Fair self-evaluation is necessary for self-knowledge

Self-knowledge is necessary for self-respect

Self-respect is necessary for happiness

∴ Morality is necessary for happiness

The argument is obviously, trivially valid. So, the structure of what is to come will be first, to define the key moral terms of the argument, but only schematically and as neutrally as possible, so as to avoid begging relevant normative questions. Second is a defense of the premises, from last to first, taking the form of a series of simple hypothetical syllogisms. Third, some of the most obvious objections will be addressed.

1 Morality, self-respect, and happiness

Turning to terms and beginning with "morality", as noted, it is commonly understood in completely other-regarding or social terms. This view is common among those who both accept and reject morality. Insofar as one is acting with one's self-interest or happiness in mind—insofar as one is being "prudent", in Sidgwick's sense of the term—one is not acting morally. Peculiarly moral thought requires that one considers how one's actions affect others, and moral action requires being either motivated by or justified by those considerations. Of course, if the argument above is sound, then a re-evaluation of the meaning of "morality" is required: if morality is necessary for happiness, then there are self-interested reasons to be moral and so it ought no longer to be thought of as purely other-regarding and social. However, this follows from the conclusion and is not assumed by the premises. In evaluating the premise in which "morality" appears, a social conception of *morality* is sufficient, moreover it is appropriate as the traditional debate between moralists and immoralists assumes it.

Self-respect is complicated. As noted, the realpolitik of immoralism claims that self-respecting people do not willingly sacrifice their self-interest in the name of "morality" or the interest of others; self-respect, on such a view, requires doing what is necessary to attain one's goals, wherein the ends justify the means. On the contrary, we can just as easily see people who try to live according to commonsense morality as holding that only people who are honest and forthright have self-respect. So the two sides have different substantial conceptions of what self-respect amounts to. Nevertheless, there is a skeletal conception of *self-respect* which is neutral between them and sufficient for the soundness of the syllogism. This is to accept

that self-respect requires one to respect oneself. This may sound tautological, and in some sense, it is. But if it is a tautology, it is one with bite. For it requires people who have self-respect to respect who they actually are and not merely who they wish they were, and this implies that people can be wrong about whether or not they have self-respect. If this appears surprising, it is an appearance that is easily dispelled.

We begin by considering "reactive attitudes" in general, such as resentment.[5] Importantly, these attitudes have intentional objects. Imagine that something disrespectful happens to you and after some time you come to have a reason to think that I am the cause of it, while in fact it wasn't me but my neighbor who is the actual cause. Before you come to suspect me as the person who disrespected you, you resented "whoever it was" that did the disrespectful thing (in fact my neighbor). However, when you have reason to think it was me, you direct your resentful feelings toward me. Obviously, at this point there is a sense in which you resent me, since I am the one toward whom you direct your resentful feelings. But there is still the sense in which the person you genuinely resent is my neighbor, since the intentional object of your resentment was "whoever disrespected you" and that is my neighbor. We can call the attitude you direct at me *de re* resentment, since I am the one toward whom you actually feel resentment. And we can call "*de dicto* resentment" the attitude you direct toward whomever is actually denoted by the definite description "the person who disrespected me" or, my neighbor. The de re/de dicto distinction itself is not the point, but rather the way it allows us to distinguish "genuine" from "misplaced" resentment. "Genuine resentment" is error-free and when *de re* and *de dicto* resentment are both directed at the same person: we resent (*de re*) the person whom we intended to resent (*de dicto*). And yet, as we see in our toy example, these two forms of resentment can come apart, and when they do, we can call it "misplaced resentment". Evidence for the idea that you always intended to resent my neighbor, despite actually feeling resentment toward me, can be found in the way you would immediately redirect your resentment away from me and toward my neighbor upon learning who the real culprit is. While there is a sense in which a person cannot be mistaken about their *feelings* of resentment, there is more to resentment than mere feelings as it is a reactive attitude with an intentional object. The verb "to resent" is not a success term, resenting can misfire.

We can say the same of "respect" that we say of "resentment". We might have respected Lance Armstrong for his athletic achievements, but when we found out he was a fraud, we learned we respected only a false image of him. *De dicto*, we respected the person who we thought "Lance Armstrong" was and *de re*, we respected the actual man. But in fact our respect misfired, and while we felt respect toward the man, we never genuinely respected him since we never intended to respect a cheater. One might disagree and say, "No, you did in fact genuinely respect Lance Armstrong, but you were simply wrong to do so." And the response is that we felt respect toward Lance Armstrong because we thought he did a variety of things that he did not do. In fact, we were feeling respectful feelings toward a person

[5] Strawson (1962).

who does not actually exist, since Lance Armstrong is not in fact the person he pretended to be. Proof of this is the way our respect ceased when we found out he is not who he said he was. We were not wrong to feel respect toward the person we thought he was: the problem was not that we felt respect given what we knew, but rather that it was respect given based on false pretenses.

We can make the same distinction between genuine and misplaced self-respect. I can respect myself for being who I actually am, or I can respect myself for being who I wish I were but in fact am not. If my self-respect is based on my thinking that I am the greatest philosopher since Socrates, then my self-respect is misplaced. I may *feel* like I have self-respect, but I lack genuine self-respect since I am not directing my feelings of respect toward who I am, my actual self, as I intend, but rather toward a figment of my imagination. I intend to respect myself and yet I fail in this for, in fact, I only respect a false image of myself. In fact, I am fooling myself into thinking I have self-respect when it is actually misplaced, in the same sense of "misplaced" used above. Misplaced self-respect involves feelings of respect, but these feelings of self-respect are not sufficient for self-respect, since it is not the self that is respected. In order for people to have genuine self-respect, they must respect who they actually are. Wishful thinking is not sufficient for self-respect.

Now, of course, no one knows themselves perfectly and everyone is most likely subject to at least a little self-deceit, so the point is not that perfect self-knowledge is required for genuine self-respect. Drawing lines here is, fortunately, not necessary. All we need to see is that people who are greatly mistaken about themselves and base their self-respect on this radically false self-conception, do not genuinely have self-respect regardless of what they think. The flip side of this is that people who are regularly disrespecting themselves, engaging in self-disrespecting behavior, whether they recognize this or not, do not have genuine self-respect, again, whether they recognize this or not.

Notice that in debates about morality and happiness, both sides agree that people can be wrong about whether or not they have self-respect. As noted, the immoralist, insisting not just that morality is unnecessary for happiness but is contrary to it, will typically think that the "self-respect" of people who have accepted conventional morality is misplaced: dupes and rubes might think they have self-respect, but they are fools. According to the immoralist, those who think well of themselves for being honest and up-standing members of their communities have in fact adopted a bovine mentality and have stopped thinking for themselves as self-respecting people do. On the other side, moral people look at those who are shamelessly willing to lie, cheat, and steal in order to possess power, material goods, or to have pleasurable experiences as people who have only meretricious "self-respect", since such shameful acts are actually self-disrespecting regardless of what "rewards" they may bring. Those who are honest and forthright think that self-respect requires people to not stoop to lying or cheating in order to get what they otherwise want. So, both sides agree that the self-respect of those on the other side is misplaced and, to this degree, agree on how they understand "self-respect". They disagree substantially over judgments regarding which people genuinely have self-respect, but share enough of a theoretical conception of it to impose a standard ruling out some putative cases of "self-respect" as being non-genuine (misplaced). Whoever has

"self-respect" based on wishful thinking does not actually have self-respect. This is sufficient for the argument.

The last piece of moral terminology is "happiness". Recently, the ancient Greek concept of *eudaimonia* has resurfaced in moral philosophy, as the name for the best kind of human life possible; mixing languages, *eudaimonia* is the *suum bonum* of human life. Despite other possible translations into English, most agree that "happiness" works best for "eudaimonia", despite the fact that "happiness" and its cognates have many meanings; e.g., as an adjective, "happy" can modify a variety of nouns, including "feeling", "mood", and "life". Perhaps "flourishing" or "thriving" adequately translate "eudaimonia". On the other hand, many philosophers prefer to use the technical term "well-being" "to describe what is non-instrumentally or ultimately good *for* a person".[6] The argument above is intended to be neutral among these terms. So, if the reader is more moved by the conclusion that "morality is necessary for well-being" or "morality is necessary for the good life", then please read the argument in these terms. The key is that the term chosen modifies one's "life as a whole" or engages those issues which concern the broadest and most inclusive evaluation of an individual human life.[7] The question concerns what makes life go best for creatures such as us. The word "happiness" is a placeholder for that since happiness is what everyone seems to want.

As we found with "self-respect", we should not be surprised to find disagreement over which lives are the "happy" ones. But once again there is a dialectical agreement on a schematic understanding of what happiness is, since both sides agree that "living a happy life" is the goal, despite any disagreement over which lives count as the happy ones. So, as with self-respect, both sides agree that people can be wrong about how happy they are. Feeling happy or believing oneself to be happy is not sufficient for being happy, just as feeling self-respect is not the same as genuinely having it, and what both sides want is not merely to feel happy but to actually be happy.

Perhaps those who think that people cannot be wrong about their happiness will demur at this point, but the traditional debate, going back to Socrates' debate with Thrasymachus, simply cannot arise if *happiness* is subjective in this sense. Knaves attack morality because they think conventionally moral people, those with "herd mentality", are not truly happy simply because they think they are. Again, for knaves, morality is for the suckers, dupes, and rubes, who fool themselves into thinking they are happy when they can't tell a phony from the real McCoy. The argument for this is that accepting morality requires accepting that it regularly requires people to curb their desires and accept dissatisfaction for the sake of others or in the name of "Morality" itself. So, the immoralists and knaves will insist that conventionally moral people are not happy regardless of how happy they may take themselves to be. And again, on the contrary, defenders of morality typically think the same of those on the other side: people who are willing to lie and cheat and steal, people who will "stab their 'friends' in the back" when they know they cannot be

[6] Crisp (2014).

[7] On thinking about one's life as a whole, see Annas (1993).

caught, may think they are happy for their plundered booty, but those who embrace morality will see such a life as shallow and pitiful, chock-full of hypocrisy, lacking in integrity, and devoid of genuine relationships with more than instrumental value. Again, despite the substantial disagreement over cases, both sides agree in theory that happiness is the goal and that people can be wrong about how happy they are.

So, we have defined the basic terms of the argument, "morality", "self-respect", and "happiness" in neutral, non-question-begging ways. One final comment on usage merits reiteration: none of these terms are intended to be thought of as representing "all-or-nothing" concepts; they all represent degree concepts and perfection is ruled out for mere mortals. The important point is that *morality*, *self-respect*, and *happiness* are interrelated in heretofore unnoticed ways and they affect each other proportionally: so, for example, the more self-disrespecting an action is, the more harmful it is to an agent's happiness. Small offenses to the self are only be marginally self-harming. So, (excusing the mixed metaphor) though "one swallow does not make a summer", enough grains of sand constitute a heap. Moreover, one truly evil deed, one vulture circling above, may be sufficient to show that something rotten lies below.

2 Defending the premises

Given these terms, we can turn to a defense of the premises. Please consider the following:

(I) Morality is necessary for self-respect

Self-respect is necessary for happiness

∴ Morality is necessary for happiness

(I) may be thought of as a collapsed form of the main argument above. In considering (I), notice the second premise is the final premise of the main argument; so, let us begin there. "Self-respect is necessary for happiness." Why? Well, some inductive evidence for it is that both sides of the debate think it is true. If we think of the famous knaves found in the philosophical canon, they think of themselves as people of great self-respect, to the point of often being downright and self-righteously arrogant. Thrasymachus, Callicles, Machiavelli, Hobbes' Foole, Hume's Sensible Knave, Nietzsche's Übermensch, Rand's Roark, etc., are all people who see themselves as a "cut above", who tend to look down on the common run of folk. On the other side, the historical paragons of morality are also people thought of as having a strong sense self-respect: Socrates, Confucius, Sir Thomas More, or more recently, Eleanor Roosevelt, Nelson Mandela, and the present Dalai Lama. So, we have inductive evidence that the second premise of (I) is not controversial.

Actually giving a straight argument in support of the premise is a bit more difficult. But something can be said in its favor. First, note that the possibility of

self-hating people who are nevertheless be leading happy lives seems to be confused or even self-contradictory: whatever happiness turns out to be, at some fundamental level, we think that self-hatred and happiness are mutually exclusive. We typically think the same of self-loathing or self-abnegation, or any other self-derogating attitude. Whatever happiness may be, exhibiting behavioral forms of self-rejection or lacking forms of self-acceptance do not seem to be coherent options. Given this, consider self-disrespect. True, self-hatred often involves having certain self-reflective attitudes, where self-disrespect often does not. But self-hatred does require self-rejecting behavior which is similar to self-disrespecting behavior, as self-disrespecting people are "bad to themselves", they diminish their own well-lived lives, whether they realize this or not. As such, people who regularly engage in self-disrespecting behavior seem to fall into the same category as those who are self-hating or self-loathing. Even if no one's self-respect is perfectly constituted, it seems reasonable to think that at least some significant amount of self-respect is necessary for happiness, since self-disrespect, despite not always being quite self-destructive, nevertheless does not promote (nor is even neutral with regard to) happiness or well-being. Some very special pleading would be required for any case of serious self-disrespect that purported to make someone happier. Granted, there might be some utterly shameless people who embrace self-disrespect and self-derogation, but this does not happily fit anyone party to the traditional debate: immoralists and moralists do not typically take themselves to be self-disrespecting people. Indeed, as noted, quite the opposite seems true: they each respectively think their immorality or morality is what sustains their self-respect.

What about subjectivists who do not think that anything is necessary for happiness, because happiness is constructed from within the agent's own subjective motivational concerns? This is slightly different than the sort of subjectivism mentioned above, where having feelings of self-respect is sufficient for actually having it. Note, one might think that happiness is subjectively constructed and still hold that people can be wrong about whether or not their lives are actually happy, given their own subjective point of view or standards or values. The point here is not to argue against this sort of subjectivism directly, but to argue only that happiness and a lack of self-respect are incompatible which, by itself, leaves plenty of room for subjectivism.[8] The point is that some conceptions of *happiness* should not even be on the table. One might think of a claim similar to Philippa Foot's claim that we cannot morally approve of people's clasping their hands thrice in an hour.[9] Similarly, anyone who said that their happiness was constituted by clasping their hands thrice in an hour must have a fundamentally flawed conception of *happiness*. So too, the claim goes, for conceptions of *happiness* which make it consistent with

[8] This is intended to understand subjectivism in a way consistent with how Sumner construes it, as "preserving a subject-relative or perspectival character", and he takes Shelly Kagan to make a similar point. See Sumner (1996) and Kagan (1992).

[9] Foot (1958–59).

self-hatred or a lack of self-respect. Making the point conceptually may sound strong, however the claim is not meant to capture what happiness requires for all possible sentient creatures, but only what happiness is for human beings. And this is what seems inconsistent with self-disrespect. Given this, the second premise of (I) seems safely true or the denial of it comes with a heavy burden of proof.

The first premise of (I), "Morality is necessary for self-respect", is more problematic. Why think it is true? The argument for this is another hypothetical syllogism. Consider:

(II) Morality is necessary for self-knowledge

Self-knowledge is necessary for self-respect

∴ Morality is necessary for self-respect

Again, let us start with the second premise, as it is the second to last premise in the main argument, and we have already covered some of this ground. The idea came up in discussing what self-respect is: we think, with a strong necessity attached, that self-respect requires respect for the self; in order for me to have self-respect, I have to respect who I actually am, otherwise I am not respecting myself. And we have already seen why feeling self-respect is not sufficient for it. People can feel like they have self-respect and yet engage in horribly self-disrespecting behavior; consider the Uncle Tom who prides himself on being the best slave he can be.[10] Perhaps people cannot be wrong about having feelings of self-respect, insofar as these are like feelings of, say, pain. But people can be wrong about the object of their attitudes and therefore wrong about what they feel respect toward, and since this is true, people who have self-respect must have more than feelings of self-respect but must also be respecting who they actually are. This requires self-knowledge. (This is obviously meant to be only a necessary but not a sufficient condition for self-respect.)

Again, no one's self knowledge is perfect and probably everyone engages in at least a little self-deception. So, (again) the claim is not that perfect self-knowledge is necessary for self-respect, but that these are again matters of proportionality: the more one is wrong about who one is, the less self-respect one can genuinely have. In general, we must have self-knowledge in order to have self-respect, since it is only through self-knowledge that we are capable of respecting ourselves.

Defending the first premise of (II), or the idea that "morality is necessary for self-knowledge", requires another hypothetical syllogism. Consider please:

[10] Hill (1973).

(III) Morality is necessary for fair self-evaluation

Fair self-evaluation is necessary for self-knowledge

∴ Morality is necessary for self-knowledge

First, the sense of "evaluation" at play here is the one in which scientists evaluate data, courtroom judges evaluate evidence, and doctors evaluate symptoms, and so does not sit happily with various forms of subjectivism and anti-realism. These evaluations can be thought of, from an epistemic standpoint, as *evaluative judgments* which are as factual and capable of empirical truth and falsity as any form of judgment can be. Understanding a situation requires an evaluation of the facts. When evaluative judgments are well-justified, they reliably yield knowledge. And except for their logically reflexive nature, self-evaluation and self-knowledge can be thought of as otherwise unexceptional forms of evaluation and knowledge, respectively. "Fairness" in (III) is meant to imply "accuracy", so another way of stating the second premise is, for example, "Accurate self-evaluation is necessary for self-knowledge". This is intended to be a particular instance of the general idea that knowledge cannot be produced by an inaccurate evaluation of the facts.

Once again, the second premise of (III) is both a premise in the main argument and is less controversial than the first. One must assess or evaluate oneself in order to have self-knowledge, and if these assessments or evaluations are themselves unfair, or inaccurate, then there is no knowledge. It should come as no surprise to find that fair self-evaluation is necessary for self-knowledge.

This leaves us with the first premise of (III) or that "Morality is necessary for fair self-evaluation". The argument for this premise runs through the idea of "treating like cases alike". It is most familiar from discussions of justice and jurisprudence, which seems fitting upon thinking that self-knowledge requires us to, as it were, pass judgment upon ourselves. If we want the self-knowledge that is necessary for self-respect, then we must make self-reflective judgments which are fair and accurate. So, the first premise of (III) can be justified by:

(IV) Morality is necessary for treating like cases alike

Treating like cases alike is necessary for fair self-evaluation

∴ Morality is necessary for fair self-evaluation

The second premise in (IV) is also the second premise in the main argument. And, once again, it is less controversial than the first premise. The thought behind the second premise is that treating like cases alike is necessary for any sort of fair or accurate evaluation. This is so because in order to properly judge a token x, one must take into account other tokens of x or the kind X. Treating like cases alike is necessary for forming consistent, accurate, and fair judgments about the world, without which knowledge, including self-knowledge, is not possible. So, the second premise of (IV) seems well-founded. (If one is tempted to object that people might treat like cases alike and yet still be unfair to everyone, the response is that the claim

is only that treating like cases alike is necessary (but not sufficient) for making fair self-evaluations.)

We turn finally now to the first premise of (IV) or the idea that morality is necessary for treating like cases alike, which is also the first premise of the main argument. This might seem dubious on the surface, since immoral people seem to succeed in judging like cases alike in a variety of different situations and seem to be, in general, no worse at treating like cases alike than anyone else. But in order for it to be true of people that they reliably "treat like cases alike", it must be true that they succeed in doing so when they are making self-evaluations as well as when they are evaluating others, since fair self-evaluation and self-knowledge are only special cases of fair evaluation and knowledge (which encompasses the fair evaluation and knowledge of others). In attending to how immoral people judge themselves relative to others and others relative to themselves, we note that they fail in just this regard. Insofar as a person is immoral, he or she is in fact quite poor at treating like cases alike whenever he or she is one of the "cases" involved. What makes immoral people be immoral is that they are arrogantly, inappropriately partial or biased toward themselves, or their families, or their religion, or country, etc. In those moral situations where we must evaluate what we get or deserve relative to what others get or deserve, morality is necessary to treat like cases alike.

When one is evaluating oneself for the sake of gaining self-knowledge, this cannot be done in a manner abstracted from how one evaluates and gains knowledge of others, at least insofar as everyone is aptly considered as members of a single class. And since we all qualify as rational, human agents, then self-evaluations, including evaluations of what one is owed or what one may take, must be not be invidiously different than the evaluations made of others and what they are owed and what they may take, insofar as there is in fact no important or relevant difference between the cases. Making fair self-evaluations requires making fair evaluations of others and, in part, this is constitutive of being moral. How we ought to judge and treat ourselves does not swing free of how we ought to judge and treat others.[11]

Perhaps there is nevertheless a problem with the generality of the premise, "Morality is necessary for treating like cases alike", given that there are instances of treating like cases alike which do not rely on morality. The claim is not meant to be that moral perfection is required to ever be justified in distinguishing between cases. To be more explicit, the scope here of "treating like cases alike" can be taken as implicitly limited to those contexts in which a person is making self-evaluations, and so the phrase in the premises, explicitly rendered, may be read as "treating like cases like (insofar as this bears on making fair self-evaluations)". Thus, we get an explicit presentation of (IV) as:

[11] There are, by the way, interesting connections inherent between "is" and "ought" here: from the premise that this case *is* like that one, we can immediately infer the conclusion that they *ought* to be treated alike. "Treat like cases alike" is really elliptical for the claim "if cases are alike, they ought to be treated alike". If this bridges a putative gap in logic which Hume and many others have thought they have seen, there nevertheless seems to be no way to coherently deny that like cases ought to be treated alike.

(IV)* Morality is necessary for treating like cases alike (insofar as this bears on making fair self-evaluations)

Treating like cases alike (insofar as this bears on making fair self-evaluations) is necessary for fair self-evaluation

∴ Morality is necessary for fair self-evaluation

This preserves validity of the arguments and does not affect its soundness. Given this, the defense of the premises of the main argument is concluded.

3 Objections and replies

One high-level place to balk concerns the linkages between morality and epistemology and would be to insist that immoral people can make fair epistemic evaluations of themselves regardless of how moral or immoral their behavior is. If one were to respond by saying, "Remember, making any kind of fair evaluation requires treating like cases alike, and so fair self-evaluations cannot be made independently of how evaluations of others are made; we must make fair evaluations of others if we are to make fair evaluations of ourselves", the objector might still reply that there is an equivocation in the use of "fairness" from its epistemic sense to its moral sense: how we judge ourselves and others may bear no necessary relation to whether or not we conduct ourselves morally in our interactions with others.

Unfortunately, the objection misses the bind of the argument. The self-evaluations (and evaluations of others) made by immoral people are either fair and accurate or not. The problem for them is that their self-respect is impaired either way. If they make false, inaccurate self-evaluations, if immoral people are *ipso facto* self-deceiving, then this impugns their self-knowledge and thereby their self-respect, which everyone agreed must be founded on self-knowledge.[12] On the other hand, if they make fair and accurate evaluations of others and themselves and then go onto disregard those evaluations in action, arrogating to themselves more than they acknowledge that they deserve, then the very rejection of their own judgement, their own self-evaluation, which is a form of self-disregard, demonstrates a lack of self-respect. If I wrongly reject my own judgments in a self-alienating way because their truth is inconvenient to me for independent reasons, I disrespect the workings of my own mind, just as much as immoral behavior disrespects its victims. The immoral action slaps the fair self-evaluation in the face, so to speak.[13] Whether they

[12] Dillon's reading of Kant runs in a similar fashion. On this view, immorality is caused by arrogance, which involves a double self-deception: one fools oneself into thinking one deserves more than others and also fools oneself into thinking one's judgments about desert have rectitude. See Dillon (2004).

[13] It is my sense that similar reasoning is behind Fricker's (2007) claim that justice is a hybrid, ethical-intellectual virtue.

make fair or unfair self-evaluations, immoral people end up harming their self-respect and thereby their happiness.

And notice, on the other side, that people who live morally have no such trouble. They live morally because they evaluate themselves and others fairly and accurately, acting in accord with their own best judgments, treating like cases alike in thought and in deed. They do not engage in alienating self-disregard, their self-respect is well-formed and intact. There is integrity.

Another direction to try would be to push-back on the proffered relation between self-respect and happiness, to reject the idea that the former is necessary for the latter. Perhaps, a defender of immorality may fall back on the subjectivist idea that only a sense of self-respect or a feeling of self-respect is sufficient for being happy. This would take the sting out of the argument, but it is deeply concessive from a dialectical point of view. We began with the idea that all parties agreed that self-respect—non-self-deceptive, genuine self-respect—was necessary for happiness. It is hard to imagine Callicles or a Sensible Knave acknowledging that he or she lacked this sort of self-respect, as their original position was to arrogantly look down on commonsense morality which, if anything, indicates an over-inflated sense of self. The Knaves, making a mob of them, are the ones who supposedly thought that the "common run" of humanity adopts a herd mentality and thereby lacks genuine self-respect. They drew a distinction between appearance and reality, claiming that their "realpolitik" ran counter to commonsense morality. But the objection under consideration requires them to give up on the reality/appearance distinction just where they need it. The problem with the objection is not in thinking that only mere feelings of self-respect are necessary for being happy, but rather in their concession that, in the end, having genuine, non-self-deceptive self-respect is actually *incompatible* with living happily. If, as the arguments above conclude, genuine self-respect is not possible unless one treats like cases alike, then immoral behavior is incompatible with genuine self-respect. If immorality is genuinely the only route to happiness, then one cannot be happy and have genuine self-respect.

The Knaves, choosing immorality and limiting themselves to only feelings of self-respect, can have only have the appearance of self-respect, what was called above "misplaced" self-respect and not the genuine article. If so, they have also lost any grounds for criticizing the people they started out attacking as being a bunch of "rubes, suckers, dupes, and fools". Who is fooling whom here? If, for the sake of their own happiness, the Knaves must fool themselves into thinking they have self-respect when they do not, what possible assurance could they have that they are not also fooling themselves into thinking they are happy when they really are not? The answer is that none can be found. Moreover, again, the defender of morality has no such problems.

Perhaps however, we should not be considering only Knaves, in Hume's sense, who are like free-riders preferring everyone else to be conventionally moral, but rather ethical egoists, who at least consistently think everyone should be ethical egoists.[14] They treat themselves as having intrinsic value and everyone else as

[14] Thanks especially to Erasmus Mayr and Roger Crisp for their discussions with me about ethical egoism.

having instrumental value, but consistently expect everyone else to view their own situations in the same way. As Rand said, "Selfishness is a virtue." True, this is consistent as far as it goes, but it still leads to problems when it comes to self-respect.

For we have to imagine what ethical egoists think and feel when they have been successfully manipulated or immorally harmed or tricked by someone else. They either resent the person who manipulates them or not. If they do resent their manipulator, then this shows that, in fact, they do not think it is acceptable to be treated in the very way that they treat other people. This reveals an inconsistency in their thought that engages the argument above. On the other hand, perhaps they do not feel resentment, but think that they got what they deserved, since they were successfully fooled and manipulated, and so they "deserved" whatever they got. The problem is that such a lack of resentment demonstrates a lack of self-respect. It shows that they think it is acceptable to be treated as a tool, as long as the person who is treating them in this fashion can get away with it. But to acquiesce to such a view of one's self is not to have self-respect: notice that on such a view, if the egoists became completely overpowered and subjugated and oppressed, consistency would require them to *accept* such a position, thinking that if people are able to subjugate them, then everyone is getting what they deserve. And if one is used and abused by someone else, truly treated like a dog, and one feels no resentment, then it is hard to see how to maintain that one views oneself as being worthy of respect or having self-respect.

Perhaps the ethical egoist might try to argue that resentment is never justified, but for all real life, non-fictionalized and non-pathological human beings, resentment, again following Strawson (1962), is one important way human beings register the difference between interacting with other agents and mere things. It simply seems impossible for people to acquiesce to a position in which they are mere tools or instruments and maintain their self-respect.

A very different line of objection would be to maintain that some people are in fact better than others, are "a cut above", and as such, these very clever people could be immoral and appropriately respect themselves, given that they base their self-respect on fair evaluations. The problem is that these clever people would be quite conveniently focusing on what makes them different than everyone else while steadfastly and willfully ignoring all the ways in which we are all the same. Kantians have claimed that it is rationality which makes us be peers, or of a kind, while Davidsonians have looked to agency. Naturalists may look to human nature as the foundation of human morality, so that what, for example, confers human rights on us is the fact that we are biologically human beings, members of the species Homo sapiens. None of these options are unproblematic, and none of these theories hold any sway over our very clever Knave. But all these options share a basic presupposition which the Knave would have trouble rejecting. And this is the idea that *human beings are not merely instrumentally valuable*, we are more than mere objects or things and this is a common denominator among us all. (Note this is weaker than claiming that human beings have a "priceless" dignity; it is merely that we have more than instrumental value.) So, even if some particular Knave actually happened to be the cleverest person in the world, or if (more esoterically) some

Knaves think they have a haecceity which "makes them especial", this would in no way justify the Knaves in treating others as less than they are, as if these people were merely of instrumental value. To disrespect people in this way is to disrespect what makes people fundamentally be *people*, and our Knave is a person who is fundamentally just the same as everyone else. If the Knave forms a self-conception that is based on a denial of what the Knave has in common with everyone else, then to that degree the Knave lacks self-knowledge. And the degree to which this is true is the degree to which the Knave lacks self-respect. If this is being the "cleverest person in the world", it is certainly being too clever by half.

There are other ways to object to the argument which have not been considered here.[15] The argument remains persuasive, however, at a common sense level. We typically think that people lie, cheat, and steal either because it is the only way to get what they want or because they are too lazy to do the honest work required to get what they want. It would be very odd to find someone who could win without cheating, someone who is actually the best person competing for a job or a prize, cheating in order to win.[16] If people want to feel better about themselves by beating others, there may be some solace in cheating others and thinking of them as "suckers", but wouldn't it be a significantly greater solace to definitively "beat them at their own game", if one could? Paradigmatic forms of immorality are brought on by one form of weakness or deficiency or another. People who make everyone else think they have "won", when in fact they have only cheated, may fool others into treating them respectfully. But unless they deceive themselves into believing otherwise, they know they do not deserve what they have ignobly attained, and even if they fool themselves into thinking that this doesn't matter or that they do not care, they still have not found a secure basis for their self-respect. Being a "winner" is not the same as being a winner. Even if we succeed in fooling others into doing things or giving to us what they would normally never do or give, when we do this, ultimately, it is always at the price of fooling ourselves as well. We cannot escape from who we really are and while we may deceive ourselves into thinking a pig's ear is a silk purse, it is nevertheless still a pig's ear.[17]

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[15] For further "objections and replies" to similar lines of argument, see section 1.7 of Bloomfield (2014).

[16] "…who is there, or whoever was there, of avarice so consuming and appetites so unbridled, that, even willing to commit any crime to achieve his end, and even though absolutely secure of impunity, yet would not a hundred times rather attain the same object by innocent than by guilty means?" (Cicero 1914).

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