as an act utilitarian" (70). Act utilitarianism, the *moral theory*, says that whether we know it or not, and however we may have decided what to do, we ought to do whatever leads to the best results. Act utilitarians usually encourage us to follow rules and not to try making our decisions directly on act utilitarian grounds.

Deontological alternatives are assessed in Chapter Six. The rule deontologist bases the morality of what we do on general rules or principles, and the act deontologist holds that "values are capable of being directly or immediately apprehended" (98). Kant is briefly and inadequately considered, and act deontology is criticized for its reliance on self-evidence. Ashmore is sympathetic to *rule* deontology because he is impressed by the need for first principles and by the Aristotelian line about the impossibility of an infinite regress. He argues that while we cannot prove ultimate ends, we can give evidence "that is the equivalent of proof in establishing the credibility of a claim concerning what is intrinsically valuable" (103).

This book differs from many other middle-level introductions by including a detailed treatment of virtue theories. Chapter Seven, the longest chapter of the book, develops the view that "a virtue is a good habit, that is, a relatively fixed disposition to act in an excellent way" (111). Aristotle's distinction between intellectual and moral virtue is taken over, specific virtues are discussed, the relative mean and practical syllogism are explained, and the importance of education and knowledge is emphasized—indeed, "ignorance of universal moral standards" is said to be blameworthy (135). What finally emerges is a very Aristotelian message, and one that is not easily related to the material in the previous chapters. We do not know whether this "virtue theory" is competing with the other normative theories of obligation and value, or presupposing parts of them, or both. Does a "viable" moral system, for example, require the intuition of a duty to maximize happiness?

The concept of "building a moral system" is a useful one around which to build a book, but Ashmore does not actually build a moral system (though he carefully explains and seems to favor Aristotle's), nor does he tell or show us how to build one for ourselves. For the most part we are taken on one more tour of ruined (moral) structures, one more circuit through the fields of decaying claims and counterclaims. What makes this tour different are occasional expressions of social concern, some acute psychological observations, an acknowledgement of the deep complexity, and a strong Aristotelian accent.

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The Elements of Moral Philosophy, James Rachels

Random House, New York, 1986, 168 pages, $24.95 cl; $7.50 pbk.

DAVID B. FLETCHER

"We are discussing no small matter, but how we ought to live." This Socratic quotation serves as a theme for this introductory text in ethical theory by James Rachels. Readers know him for his skillful and innovative philosophizing about practical issues such as euthanasia; as they would expect Rachels thoroughly peppers this primer in moral theory with references to contemporary cases in applied ethics. The first chapter, traditionally entitled "What is Morality?" gets off to a unique start with a detailed discussion of the 1983 Baby Jane Doe case, in which a decision had to be made whether to authorized life-saving surgery for a baby born with microencephaly, spina bifida, and hydrocephaly. A discussion of ethical subjectivism contains a treatment of the subjectivist's playground—the topic of

homosexuality—and religious ethics is examined in light of the abortion controversy. Egoism is enlighteningly discussed in terms of the presumed duty to provide famine relief, utilitarianism in terms of euthanasia and treatment of nonhuman animals, Kantianism in terms of deception and criminal punishment, and contractarianism in terms of Dr. King and the civil rights movement. These examples do more than make the text lively, relevant, and readable, although they certainly do that much. They provide laboratories for detailed examination of *in situ* reasoning and for considering the reasons on either side of issues and the assumptions they make. Rachels's choice of this approach is explained by the suggestion that to "consider in detail . . . important applications . . . may be better than a dry, theoretical discussion" (117).

In the twelve chapters, Rachels introduces the concept of morality and then turns to cultural relativism, subjectivism, morality's alleged dependance on religion, psychological egoism, ethical egoism, two chapters each on utilitarianism and Kantian absolutism, contractarianism, and a concluding chapter on what a satisfactory ethical theory would be like.

The introductory chapter on "What is Morality?" uses the Baby Jane Doe case to show moral reasoning at work among the doctors, family, right to life lawyers, C. Everett Koop, and others. Rachels presents the main points of their arguments and subjects them to critical scrutiny. Koop, who maintained that refusing life-saving surgery for this child was tantamount to discrimination against the handicapped, failed to realize that "her handicap is so severe that . . . she will not be able to have a human life at all," so refusing to authorize it was not a case of discriminating because of handicap (6-7).

Rachels makes two general claims about morality, that moral judgments must be based on good reasons, and that morality requires the impartial consideration of each individual's interests. From those observations, Rachels constructs "the minimum conception of morality," that morality is the effort to guide conduct by reason while giving equal weight to the interests of each individual affected by conduct. Rachels believes that any plausible theory must accept this minimum, though they will vary on what they add to it.

Based on this conception, he presents in the final chapter his sketch of what a satisfactory theory would look like. Rachels advocates "Morality Without Hubris," or MWH, an eclectic but selective compilation of the best in other theories. It lacks the hubris of traditional theories because it is "appropriately modest about the place of human beings in the scheme of things . . . [as beings that] exist by evolutionary accident, as one species among many, on a small and insignificant world in one little corner of the cosmos" (139-140). MWH "combines the best elements of utilitarianism and Kantian respect for persons, but it is not produced simply by stitching those two philosophies together." The primary rule of morality is to "act so as to promote impartially the interests of everyone alike, except when individuals deserve particular responses as a result of their own past behavior."

A mixed theory, as Rachels realizes, it is not especially unique, with affinities to many theoretical approaches offered in applied ethics texts. What is unique is its pronounced secularistic naturalism, which is of course highly controversial in the broader philosophical world, yet nonetheless I believe quite readily separable from the positive claims of the theory. His strongly negative approach to religion's role in a philosophy of life is reflected in the MWH thesis and in slaps at Koop, Falwell, and others who object to euthanasia, homosexuality, and abortion on religious grounds. In his discussion of the relation of religion and ethics, Rachels claims that "religious belief does not affect the calculation of what is best . . . the religious interpretation . . . is an after-the-fact addition—of vital interest to believers, but something that can be ignored by nonbelievers (47). Religious perspectives are either objectionable, as in the case of Falwell, or otiose, as in the case of natural law theorists, who he inaccurately characterizes as holding that ethics is completely "autonomous" from religion. It is certainly odd in terms of the enduring worldwide appeal of religions

even in this scientific age that they have nothing to contribute to the Socratic question of "how we ought to live."

The timeliness of the examples and discussions in Rachels's book has the very considerable virtue of making it extremely useful for teaching, yet it inevitably will mark it as a product of the late 1980s in a way that could not be said for, e.g., Frankena's *Ethics* as a product of the 1960s and 70s. For example, the index shows one reference each to Rawls, Geach, Butler, and Marx, but six to Jerry Falwell!

Having used this book in a social ethics course for one semester, I can report that it is an excellent source for the "theory" component of the course and has been very well received by students. His discussions of the philosophical debates about various ethical theories are excellent. I know of no other book that is as engaging in its treatment of the debate about utilitarianism, for example.

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Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings,
John Perry and Michael Bratman, eds.
Oxford University Press, 1986, 815 pages, $29.95.

HERBERT GRANGER

Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings is a massive anthology of philosophical readings in the analytic tradition, and in its format and content it is similar to the popular anthology of Joel Feinberg, *Reason and Responsibility*. The anthology divides into five major parts. The first consists merely of a short selection from Russell's *Problems of Philosophy* on the value of philosophy. The other parts of the anthology, except for its last, cover the typical topics of introductory courses. These are entitled Reason and Religion, Knowledge and Reality, Mind and Body, and Ethics, and they each include selections or complete works, both books and articles, which typically are either classics in the field or recent important contributions. The last part of the anthology, Puzzles and Paradoxes, is perhaps its only unusual feature. Each part, except for the first, has a short introductory section, which provides a brief summary of the topics of the part and their relevance to other parts of the anthology. No part of the anthology includes articles written merely for student consumption. The anthology also includes a brief preface and a brief appendix on how to read philosophy. A few biographical remarks precede the work of each author, as well as a list of the author's more significant work. There is no index, glossary or explanatory notes. The print is small, but not uncomfortably so, divided into two columns on each page, and reasonably free of errors.

Except for the brief introductory part and the last one on puzzles and paradoxes, each major part of the anthology provides abundant material for instructors to pick from in the development of their courses. For example, the part entitled Ethics subdivides into four sections, two of which further subdivide. The first section, Moral Perplexities, includes four articles, which provide examples of philosophers reasoning about specific moral issues of contemporary concern, and which illustrate how they discern and approach moral puzzles. The next section, Moral Theories, divides into four sections, each of which concerns a major moral theory. The first includes important selections from the classical utilitarians, Bentham and Mill, and five articles by contemporary authors who defend and attack versions of utilitarianism in standard ways: for example, E. F. Carritt argues that utilitarianism cannot