

famine affluence and morality

famine affluence and morality is a powerful ethical framework that prompts individuals and societies to confront their responsibilities toward global poverty and suffering. This article explores the origins and implications of this influential concept, examining its philosophical roots, central arguments, and ongoing relevance in today's interconnected world. Readers will discover how the theory challenges traditional moral boundaries, why it remains highly debated, and how it shapes modern perspectives on charity, wealth, and global justice. With a thorough analysis of key ideas, practical examples, and opposing viewpoints, this guide provides a comprehensive understanding of famine affluence and morality. Stay engaged to learn how ethical reasoning, affluence, and the reality of famine intersect to demand a reevaluation of what we owe to others.

- Understanding Famine Affluence and Morality: An Overview
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Understanding Famine Affluence and Morality: An Overview

The concept of famine affluence and morality addresses the ethical obligations of individuals and societies in the face of global poverty, famine, and suffering. Rooted in moral philosophy, this framework asserts that those living in relative wealth have a duty to assist others in dire need, especially when such aid can be given without sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance. The theory challenges the traditional distinction between charity and duty, proposing that failing to help when one can do so easily is morally indefensible. As humanitarian crises and wealth disparities persist worldwide, famine affluence and morality remain central to discussions about justice, responsibility, and ethical action.

Origins and Philosophical Foundations

Famine affluence and morality emerged in modern philosophy through the influential work of Peter Singer, particularly his 1972 essay "Famine, Affluence, and Morality." Singer's utilitarian perspective argues that, since suffering and death from lack of food, shelter, and medical care are bad, and if it is within our power to prevent something bad from happening without sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we are morally obligated to do so. This approach draws from the utilitarian tradition, which prioritizes actions that maximize overall happiness and minimize suffering. The philosophical foundation of famine affluence and morality thus rests on reason, impartiality, and the universality of moral obligation, making it a significant milestone in contemporary ethical theory.

Peter Singer's Thought Experiment

Peter Singer famously illustrates his point with a thought experiment: if you see a child drowning in a shallow pond and can save them at minimal cost to yourself, it would be morally wrong not to act. Singer extends this logic globally, arguing that geographical distance or lack of personal connection does not diminish our moral duty to help those suffering from famine and poverty.

Key Arguments in the Famine Affluence and Morality Debate

The famine affluence and morality argument relies on several key premises that challenge conventional moral intuitions. These arguments have sparked widespread debate in philosophical, economic, and humanitarian circles.

Moral Obligation vs. Charity

Traditional ethics often view charitable giving as supererogatory—praiseworthy but not required. The famine affluence and morality framework rejects this distinction, asserting that giving is a moral duty when it can prevent significant harm at a minimal cost.

The Principle of Sacrifice

Central to this theory is the principle that if we can prevent something bad without sacrificing anything of comparable moral significance, we ought to do

it. This idea redefines the limits of moral responsibility, especially for affluent individuals and nations.

Impartiality and Universality

Another major argument is that moral obligations should not be influenced by proximity, nationality, or personal relationships. Moral impartiality requires that we value the lives and well-being of all humans equally, regardless of geographic or social distance.

- Charity as duty, not generosity
- Obligations extend beyond borders
- Minor sacrifices can save lives
- Distance does not diminish responsibility

Critiques and Counterarguments

While famine affluence and morality has influenced many to reconsider their ethical obligations, it has also faced significant criticism. Philosophers, economists, and ordinary individuals have raised practical, philosophical, and psychological objections.

Demandingness Objection

Some critics argue that the theory is too demanding, requiring individuals to give away much of their income and resources until they reach the level of those they are helping. This, critics claim, is unrealistic and could undermine motivation to help at all.

Practical Effectiveness

Others point out that simply transferring wealth or resources does not always lead to effective solutions. Issues such as corruption, dependency, and inefficiency in aid distribution raise concerns about whether such moral obligations can actually achieve their intended outcomes.

Psychological and Social Factors

Psychological studies suggest that people naturally prioritize those closer to them, emotionally and geographically. Critics argue that moral theories must account for human nature and social context, rather than imposing overly abstract and universal duties.

Contemporary Relevance and Real-World Applications

The famine affluence and morality framework has shaped contemporary debates on global justice, humanitarian intervention, and ethical consumption. As global communication and travel have made the world more interconnected, the boundaries of moral concern have expanded, making these questions more urgent than ever.

International Aid and Philanthropy

Many philanthropic organizations and global aid campaigns draw inspiration from the ideas behind famine affluence and morality. Movements such as "effective altruism" encourage individuals to donate to the most effective charities, based on rigorous evidence and ethical reasoning.

Government Policy and Global Responsibility

Governments and international bodies are increasingly expected to address global poverty and famine as part of their moral and political obligations. This includes commitments to foreign aid, humanitarian relief, and fair trade policies that reduce economic disparities.

Personal Lifestyle Choices

On an individual level, the theory has motivated people to reconsider their spending habits, consumption, and priorities. Many now choose to allocate a portion of their income to effective charities or to support ethical businesses that contribute to global well-being.

Ethical Implications for Individuals and Societies

Famine affluence and morality has significant ethical implications for how individuals and societies think about wealth, responsibility, and justice. It encourages a reevaluation of what constitutes a good life and where our duties to others truly lie.

Redefining Luxury and Necessity

The theory challenges individuals to distinguish between genuine needs and luxuries. It suggests that spending on non-essential items while others suffer is ethically questionable when those resources could prevent harm.

Collective Action and Systemic Change

Beyond individual giving, famine affluence and morality highlights the importance of systemic change—reforming institutions, addressing structural inequalities, and creating policies that promote global justice.

1. Encouraging responsible global citizenship
2. Motivating collective action against poverty and famine
3. Promoting ethical business practices and fair trade
4. Supporting effective charities and interventions

Conclusion

Famine affluence and morality continues to provoke critical reflection on our ethical obligations in a world marked by inequality and suffering. By challenging assumptions about charity, duty, and the scope of moral responsibility, this framework remains a powerful tool for evaluating personal and societal choices. Its relevance endures as we confront ongoing humanitarian crises and strive for a more just and compassionate global community.

Q: What is the main idea behind famine affluence and morality?

A: The main idea is that individuals and societies with relative wealth have a moral obligation to help those suffering from famine and poverty, especially when they can do so without sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance.

Q: Who developed the famine affluence and morality argument?

A: Philosopher Peter Singer is most closely associated with the famine affluence and morality argument, particularly through his influential 1972 essay on the topic.

Q: How does famine affluence and morality redefine charity?

A: It redefines charity as a moral duty rather than a voluntary, supererogatory act, insisting that helping others in need is an ethical obligation when the cost to oneself is minimal.

Q: What is the demandingness objection to this theory?

A: The demandingness objection argues that famine affluence and morality requires too much of individuals, potentially obligating them to give away most of their wealth, which critics see as unrealistic or overly burdensome.

Q: How is famine affluence and morality relevant in today's world?

A: The theory remains highly relevant as global communication and economic interdependence increase, raising new ethical questions about wealth, responsibility, and the fight against poverty and famine.

Q: What role does effective altruism play in this context?

A: Effective altruism is a movement inspired by famine affluence and morality, encouraging people to use evidence and reason to determine how to help others most effectively and to donate to the most impactful causes.

Q: Does the theory account for practical challenges in aid distribution?

A: While the theory emphasizes moral obligation, critics point out that real-world challenges like inefficiency, corruption, and dependency complicate the effectiveness of aid.

Q: Are there limits to our moral obligations according to this framework?

A: The framework suggests we are obligated to help as long as we do not sacrifice anything of comparable moral importance, but debates continue about where exactly these limits lie.

Q: How does famine affluence and morality influence government policies?

A: It encourages governments to view foreign aid, humanitarian intervention, and fair trade not merely as political choices, but as ethical responsibilities toward global well-being.

Q: What is one practical example of applying famine affluence and morality?

A: Donating a portion of one's income to highly effective charities that fight global poverty or famine is a direct application of this ethical framework.

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Famine, Affluence, and Morality: Why We Must Act

The stark contrast between opulent affluence in the developed world and devastating famine in others presents a profound moral dilemma. This isn't just a distant tragedy playing out on our

screens; it's a challenge to our fundamental values and responsibilities as global citizens. This post dives deep into Peter Singer's seminal work, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," exploring its core arguments, criticisms, and the enduring relevance of its ethical challenge in today's interconnected world. We'll examine the moral obligations of affluent individuals and nations, exploring practical implications and ways we can contribute to alleviating suffering on a global scale.

Singer's Core Argument: A Duty to Prevent Suffering

Peter Singer's 1972 essay, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," revolutionized discussions surrounding global poverty and our moral responsibilities towards those less fortunate. His central thesis is simple yet radical: if it is within our power to prevent something bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we ought, morally, to do it. He argues that the suffering caused by famine is preventable, and that those of us in affluent nations have a moral obligation to alleviate it, even if it requires significant personal sacrifice.

This isn't about charity; Singer frames it as a moral duty, comparable to the moral obligation to rescue a drowning child. The proximity of the child doesn't change the moral imperative; similarly, geographic distance shouldn't excuse inaction in the face of preventable suffering.

The Proximity Problem and its Rebuttal

A common criticism of Singer's argument centers around the concept of "proximity." Critics argue that we are less obligated to help those far away than those in our immediate vicinity. Singer counters this by highlighting the irrelevance of physical distance in the age of global interconnectedness. We can readily donate to aid organizations, and our actions, however small, contribute to a larger collective effort to alleviate suffering. The scale of the problem doesn't diminish our individual responsibility; rather, it emphasizes the urgency and collective nature of the solution.

The "Drowning Child" Analogy and its Implications

Singer's powerful "drowning child" analogy remains one of the most discussed aspects of his essay. He posits that if we were to see a child drowning in a shallow pond, we would have a moral obligation to rescue them, even if it meant ruining our expensive shoes. The analogy extends to global poverty; the cost of saving a life through donations is significantly less than the cost of maintaining a luxurious lifestyle. This isn't about abandoning our own needs but about re-evaluating our priorities and making conscious choices to allocate resources to prevent suffering.

Criticisms and Counterarguments to Singer's Philosophy

Singer's essay has not been without its detractors. Some argue that his argument leads to an unsustainable level of obligation, potentially demanding the impoverishment of affluent individuals to alleviate global poverty. Others question the practicality of his proposals, citing issues of efficient aid distribution and potential unintended consequences. Additionally, some argue that governments, not individuals, bear the primary responsibility for addressing global poverty.

However, these critiques don't entirely invalidate Singer's central point. The essay encourages a reevaluation of our priorities and a more mindful approach to our consumption patterns. Even if complete eradication of poverty isn't immediately achievable, a significant reduction in suffering is possible through collective action and a change in individual attitudes.

Practical Steps Towards Moral Action

Singer's work isn't merely theoretical; it calls for concrete action. This could involve:

Donating a significant portion of our income to effective charities: Researching and supporting organizations with a proven track record of delivering aid efficiently.

Advocating for policy changes: Supporting initiatives aimed at promoting fair trade, debt relief, and sustainable development.

Making conscious consumer choices: Reducing our environmental footprint and supporting ethical and sustainable businesses.

Raising awareness: Educating ourselves and others about global poverty and inspiring collective action.

Conclusion: A Continuing Moral Imperative

"Famine, Affluence, and Morality" remains a profoundly relevant and challenging work. While criticisms exist, the core ethical challenge it presents remains undeniable. The stark reality of widespread suffering in the face of abundant resources necessitates a fundamental shift in our priorities and a collective commitment to alleviating global poverty. By acknowledging our moral obligations and taking concrete steps, we can make a tangible difference in the lives of those less fortunate.

FAQs

1. Isn't it the government's responsibility to address global poverty, not individuals? While

governments play a crucial role, individual actions are also vital. Collective action, fueled by individual contributions and advocacy, can put pressure on governments and organizations to act more effectively.

2. How do I know which charities are truly effective? Thorough research is crucial. Websites like GiveWell and Charity Navigator offer independent evaluations of charitable organizations, helping donors make informed decisions.

3. Won't my small contribution make little difference? Even small donations, when aggregated with those of others, can create a significant impact. Furthermore, individual actions can inspire others to contribute, creating a ripple effect of positive change.

4. What if I can't afford to donate significant amounts of money? Donating time, volunteering skills, or advocating for policy changes are equally valuable contributions.

5. Doesn't addressing global poverty require complex systemic solutions? While systemic change is essential, individual actions are a crucial catalyst for systemic change. Our individual choices influence markets, policies, and ultimately, the direction of societal change.

famine affluence and morality: *Famine, Affluence, and Morality* Peter Singer, 2016 As Bill and Melinda Gates point out in their Foreword, Singer's classic essay *Famine, Affluence and Morality*, is as relevant today as it ever was. It is published here together with two of Singer's more popular writings on our obligations to those in poverty, and a new introduction by Singer that brings the reader up to date with his current thinking.

famine affluence and morality: *The Life You Can Save* Peter Singer, 2009-03-03 For the first time in history, eradicating world poverty is within our reach. Yet around the world, a billion people struggle to live each day on less than many of us pay for bottled water. In *The Life You Can Save*, Peter Singer uses ethical arguments, illuminating examples, and case studies of charitable giving to show that our current response to world poverty is not only insufficient but morally indefensible. *The Life You Can Save* teaches us to be a part of the solution, helping others as we help ourselves.

famine affluence and morality: *The Moral Demands of Affluence* Garrett Cullity, 2006-09-21 Given that there is a forceful case for thinking that the affluent are morally required to devote a substantial proportion of what they have to helping the poor, Garrett Cullity examines, refines and defends an argument of this form. He then identifies its limits.

famine affluence and morality: *The Most Good You Can Do* Peter Singer, 2015-04-07 An argument for putting sentiment aside and maximizing the practical impact of our donated dollars: "Powerful, provocative" (Nicholas Kristof, *The New York Times*). Peter Singer's books and ideas have been disturbing our complacency ever since the appearance of *Animal Liberation*. Now he directs our attention to a challenging new movement in which his own ideas have played a crucial role: effective altruism. Effective altruism is built upon the simple but profoundly unsettling idea that living a fully ethical life involves doing the "most good you can do." Such a life requires a rigorously unsentimental view of charitable giving: to be a worthy recipient of our support, an organization must be able to demonstrate that it will do more good with our money or our time than other options open to us. Singer introduces us to an array of remarkable people who are restructuring their lives in accordance with these ideas, and shows how, paradoxically, living altruistically often leads to greater personal fulfillment than living for oneself. Doing the Most Good develops the challenges Singer has made, in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, to those who donate to the arts, and to charities focused on helping our fellow citizens, rather than those for whom we can do the most good. Effective altruists are extending our knowledge of the possibilities

of living less selfishly, and of allowing reason, rather than emotion, to determine how we live. Doing the Most Good offers new hope for our ability to tackle the world's most pressing problems.

famine affluence and morality: The Ethics of Assistance Deen K. Chatterjee, 2004-04-08 As globalization has deepened worldwide economic integration, moral and political philosophers have become increasingly concerned to assess duties to help needy people in foreign countries. The essays in this volume present ideas on this important topic by authors who are leading figures in these debates. At issue are both the political responsibility of governments of affluent countries to relieve poverty abroad and the personal responsibility of individuals to assist the distant needy. The wide-ranging arguments shed light on global distributive justice, human rights and their implementation, the varieties of community and the obligations they generate, and the moral relevance of distance. This provocative volume will interest scholars in ethics, political philosophy, political theory, international law and development economics, as well as policy makers, aid agencies, and general readers interested in the moral dimensions of poverty and affluence.

famine affluence and morality: Applied Ethics Larry May, 2017-07-05 This best-selling text continues to fill an existing gap in the literature taught in applied ethics courses. As a growing number of courses that include the perspectives of diverse cultures are being added to the university curriculum, texts are needed that represent more multicultural and diverse histories and backgrounds. This new edition enhances gender coverage, as nearly half of the pieces are now authored by women. The new edition also increases the percentage of pieces written by those who come from a non-Western background. It offers twelve up-to-date articles (not found in previous editions) on human rights, environmental ethics, poverty, war and violence, gender, race, euthanasia, and abortion; all of these topics are addressed from Western and non-Western perspectives.

famine affluence and morality: The Methods of Ethics Henry Sidgwick, 1874

famine affluence and morality: Peter Singer Under Fire Jeffrey A. Schaler, 2011-09-30 One of the leading ethical thinkers of the modern age, Peter Singer has repeatedly been embroiled in controversy. Protesters in Germany closed down his lectures, mistakenly thinking he was advocating Nazi views on eugenics. Conservative publisher Steve Forbes withdrew generous donations to Princeton after Singer was appointed professor of bioethics. His belief that infanticide is sometimes morally justified has appalled people from all walks of life. Peter Singer Under Fire gives a platform to his critics on many contentious issues. Leaders of the disability rights group Not Dead Yet attack Singer's views on disability and euthanasia. Economists criticize the effectiveness of his ideas for solving global poverty. Philosophers expose problems in Singer's theory of utilitarianism and ethicists refute his position on abortion. Singer's engaging "Intellectual Autobiography" explains how he came by his controversial views, while detailed replies to each critic reveal further surprising aspects of his unique outlook.

famine affluence and morality: *Current Debates in Global Justice* Gillian Brock, Darrel Moellendorf, 2006-03-30 Issues of global justice dominate our contemporary world. Increasingly, philosophers are turning their attention to thinking about particular issues of global justice and the accounts that would best facilitate theorizing about these. This volume of papers on global justice derives from a mini-conference held in conjunction with the Pacific Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association in Pasadena, California, in 2004. The idea of holding a mini-conference on global justice was inspired by the growth of interest in such questions, and it was hoped that organizing the mini-conference would stimulate further good writing in this area. We believe that our mission has been accomplished! We received a number of thoughtful papers on both theoretical and more applied issues, showing excellent coverage of a range of topics in the domain of global justice. A selection of some of the very best papers is published in this special issue of The Journal of Ethics. In particular, we tried to include papers that would reflect some of the range of topics that were covered at the conference, to give readers a sense of both the scope of the field as it is currently emerging and the direction that the debates seem to be taking. As a result of increased attention to theorizing about global justice, cosmopolitanism has enjoyed a resurgence of interest as

well.

famine affluence and morality: *The Point of View of the Universe* Katarzyna de Lazari-Radek, Peter Singer, 2014 Tests the views and metaphor of 19th-century utilitarian philosopher Henry Sidgwick against a variety of contemporary views on ethics, determining that they are defensible and thus providing a defense of objectivism in ethics and of hedonistic utilitarianism.

famine affluence and morality: *Famine, Affluence, and Morality* Peter Singer, 2015-11-04 In 1972, the young philosopher Peter Singer published *Famine, Affluence and Morality*, which rapidly became one of the most widely discussed essays in applied ethics. Through this article, Singer presents his view that we have the same moral obligations to those far away as we do to those close to us. He argued that choosing not to send life-saving money to starving people on the other side of the earth is the moral equivalent of neglecting to save drowning children because we prefer not to muddy our shoes. If we can help, we must--and any excuse is hypocrisy. Singer's extreme stand on our moral obligations to others became a powerful call to arms and continues to challenge people's attitudes towards extreme poverty. Today, it remains a central touchstone for those who argue we should all help others more than we do. As Bill and Melinda Gates observe in their foreword, in the age of today's global philanthropy, Singer's essay is as relevant now as it ever was. This attractively packaged, concise edition collects the original article, two of Singer's more recent popular writings on our obligations to others around the world, and a new introduction by Singer that discusses his current thinking.

famine affluence and morality: Strangers Drowning Larissa MacFarquhar, 2015 What does it mean to devote yourself wholly to helping others? In *Strangers Drowning*, Larissa MacFarquhar seeks out people living lives of extreme ethical commitment and tells their deeply intimate stories; their stubborn integrity and their compromises; their bravery and their recklessness; their joys and defeats and wrenching dilemmas. A couple adopts two children in distress. But then they think: If they can change two lives, why not four? Or ten? They adopt twenty. But how do they weigh the needs of unknown children in distress against the needs of the children they already have? Another couple founds a leprosy colony in the wilderness in India, living in huts with no walls, knowing that their two small children may contract leprosy or be eaten by panthers. The children survive. But what if they hadn't? How would their parents' risk have been judged? A woman believes that if she spends money on herself, rather than donate it to buy life-saving medicine, then she's responsible for the deaths that result. She lives on a fraction of her income, but wonders: when is compromise self-indulgence and when is it essential? We honor such generosity and high ideals; but when we call people do-gooders there is skepticism in it, even hostility. Why do moral people make us uneasy? Between her stories, MacFarquhar threads a lively history of the literature, philosophy, social science, and self-help that have contributed to a deep suspicion of do-gooders in Western culture. Through its sympathetic and beautifully vivid storytelling, *Strangers Drowning* confronts us with fundamental questions about what it means to be human. In a world of strangers drowning in need, how much should we help, and how much can we help? Is it right to care for strangers even at the expense of those we are closest to? Moving and provocative, *Strangers Drowning* challenges us to think about what we value most, and why.

famine affluence and morality: *The Ethics of Care and Empathy* Michael Slote, 2007-08-07 Eminent moral philosopher Michael Slote argues that care ethics presents an important challenge to other ethical traditions and that a philosophically developed care ethics should, and can, offer its own comprehensive view of the whole of morality. Taking inspiration from British moral sentimentalism and drawing on recent psychological literature on empathy, he shows that the use of that notion allows care ethics to develop its own sentimentalist account of respect, autonomy, social justice, and deontology. Furthermore, he argues that care ethics gives a more persuasive account of these topics than theories offered by contemporary Kantian liberalism. The most philosophically rich and challenging exploration of the theory and practice of care to date, *The Ethics of Care and Empathy* also shows the manifold connections that can be drawn between philosophical issues and leading ideas in the fields of psychology, education, and women's studies.

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famine affluence and morality: The Demands of Consequentialism Tim Mulgan, 2005 According to consequentialism, we should always put our resources where they will do the most good. A small contribution to a reputable aid agency can save a child from a crippling illness. We should thus devote all our energies to charity work, as well as all our money, till we reach the point where our own basic needs, or ability to keep earning money, are in jeopardy. Such conclusions strike many people as absurd. Consequentialism seems unreasonably demanding, as it leaves the agent no room for her own projects or interests. Tim Mulgan examines consequentialist responses to this objection. A variety of previous consequentialist solutions are considered and found wanting, including rule consequentialism, the extremism of Shelly Kagan and Peter Singer, Michael Slote's satisficing consequentialism, and Samuel Scheffler's hybrid moral theory. *The Demands of Consequentialism* develops a new consequentialist theory, designed to be intuitively appealing, theoretically sound, and only moderately demanding. Moral choices are first divided into distinct realms, primarily on the basis of their impact on the well-being of others. Each realm has its own characteristic features, and different moral realms are governed by different moral principles. The resulting theory incorporates elements of act consequentialism, rule consequentialism, and Scheffler's hybrid theory. This original and highly readable account of the limits of consequentialism will be useful to anyone interested in understanding morality.

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famine affluence and morality: Giving Well Patricia Illingworth, Thomas Pogge, Leif Wenar, 2011-01-14 So long as large segments of humanity are suffering chronic poverty and are dying from treatable diseases, organized giving can save or enhance millions of lives. With the law providing little guidance, ethics has a crucial role to play in ensuring that the philanthropic practices of individuals, foundations, NGOs, governments, and international agencies are morally sound and effective. In *Giving Well: The Ethics of Philanthropy*, an accomplished trio of editors bring together an international group of distinguished philosophers, social scientists, lawyers and practitioners to identify and address the most urgent moral questions arising today in the practice of philanthropy. The topics discussed include the psychology of giving, the reasons for and against a duty to give, the accountability of NGOs and foundations, the questionable marketing practices of some NGOs, the moral priorities that should inform NGO decisions about how to target and design their projects, the good and bad effects of aid, and the charitable tax deduction along with the water's edge policy now limiting its reach. This ground-breaking volume can help bring our practice of charity closer to meeting the vital needs of the millions worldwide who depend on voluntary contributions for their very lives.

famine affluence and morality: Doing and Allowing Harm Fiona Woollard, 2015 Fiona Woollard presents an original defence of the Doctrine of Doing and Allowing, according to which doing harm seems much harder to justify than merely allowing harm. She argues that the Doctrine is

best understood as a principle that protects us from harmful imposition, and offers a moderate account of our obligations to offer aid to others.

famine affluence and morality: Distant Strangers Judith Lichtenberg, 2014 Lichtenberg argues for a practical and moral approach to reducing poverty, exploring concepts such as altruism, responding to criticisms of the effectiveness of aid, and asking whether and how the world's richer populations should assist. This book is for those interested in ethics, political theory, public policy and development studies.

famine affluence and morality: Ferraris for All Ben-Ami, Daniel, 2012-03-14 The growth of the economy and the spread of prosperity are increasingly seen as problematic rather than positive - a trend Daniel Ben-Ami has termed 'growth scepticism'. Prosperity is accused of encourage greed, damaging the environment, causing unhappiness and widening social inequalities. Ferraris for all: A defence of economic progress is a rejoinder to the growth sceptics. Using examples from a range of countries, including the US, the author argues that society as a whole benefits from greater affluence. Action is needed - but to increase abundance and spread it worldwide, not to limit prosperity, as the sceptics would have it. The lively and provocative hardback edition was published to widespread coverage in 2010, and triggered debate and dissent in equal measure.

famine affluence and morality: Moral Tribes Joshua Greene, 2014-01-02 A ground-breaking and ambitious book that promotes a new understanding of morality, one that will help us to solve society's biggest problems. Our brains were designed for tribal life, for getting along with a select group of others (Us), and for fighting off everyone else (Them). But modern life has thrust the world's tribes into a shared space, creating conflicts of interest and clashes of values, along with unprecedented opportunities. As the world shrinks, the moral lines that divide us become more salient and more puzzling. We fight over everything from tax codes to gay marriage to global warming, and we wonder where, if at all, we can find our common ground. A grand synthesis of neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy, Moral Tribes reveals the underlying causes of modern conflict and lights a way forward. Our emotions make us social animals, turning Me into Us. But they also make us tribal animals, turning Us against Them. Our tribal emotions make us fight, sometimes with bombs, sometimes with words, and often with life-and-death stakes. Drawing inspiration from moral philosophy and cutting-edge science, Moral Tribes shows when we should trust our instincts, when we should reason, and how the right kind of reasoning can move us forward. Joshua Greene is the director of Harvard University's Moral Cognition Lab, a pioneering scientist, a philosopher, and an acclaimed teacher. The great challenge of Moral Tribes is this: How can we get along with Them when what they want feels so wrong? Finally, Greene offers a surprisingly simple set of maxims for navigating the modern moral terrain, a practical road map for solving problems and living better lives.

famine affluence and morality: 10th Anniversary Edition The Life You Can Save Peter Singer, 2019-12-01 In this Tenth Anniversary Edition of The Life You Can Save, Peter Singer brings his landmark book up to date. In addition to restating his compelling arguments about how we should respond to extreme poverty, he examines the progress we are making and recounts how the first edition transformed the lives both of readers and the people they helped. Learn how you can be part of the solution, doing good for others while adding fulfillment to your own life.

famine affluence and morality: Working Virtue Rebecca L. Walker, Philip J. Ivanhoe, 2007-01-04 Working Virtue is the first substantial collective study of virtue theory and contemporary moral problems. Leading figures in ethical theory and applied ethics discuss topics in bioethics, professional ethics, ethics of the family, law, interpersonal ethics, and the emotions. Virtue ethics is centrally concerned with character traits or virtues and vices such as courage (cowardice), kindness (heartlessness), and generosity (stinginess). These character traits must be looked to in any attempt to understand which particular actions are right or wrong and how we ought to live our lives. As a theoretical approach, virtue ethics has made an impressive comeback in relatively recent history, both posing an alternative to, and, in some ways, complementing well-known theoretical stances such as utilitarianism and deontology. Yet there is still very little material available that presents

virtue-ethical approaches to practical contemporary moral problems, such as what we owe distant strangers, our parents, or even non-human animals. This book fills the gap by dealing with these and other pressing moral problems in a clear and theoretically nuanced manner. The contributors offer a variety of perspectives, including pluralistic, eudaimonistic, care-theoretical, Chinese, comparative, and stoic. This variety allows the reader to appreciate not only the wide range of topics for which a virtue-ethical approach may be fitting, but also the distinctive ways in which such an approach may be manifested.

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