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Morality and Identity: A New Framework

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MORALITY AND IDENTITY: A NEW FRAMEWORK

by

ADRIANA SEDA

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

Moral identity, moral personality, and moral emotion have all been suggested to influence moral behavior individually, however, the results have been mixed and contradictory. Furthermore, they have never been tested together to determine their relative contribution in predicting moral decision-making. An anonymous online survey was administered to undergraduate students ($N = 432$). Moral Reasoning was assessed by a series of six hypothetical moral dilemmas. Participants were asked which of two choices they would prefer, one being a more deontological choice, in other words, follow a principle such as “tell the truth”, and the other being a more utilitarian choice, such as “lie to spare a person’s feelings”. In addition, participants were asked how confident they felt that they made the right choice in each dilemma. Other measures in the survey battery included Moral Identity which has two subscales, one for Moral Importance, or the degree to which they feel being a moral person is important, and one for Moral Expression, or the degree to which they try to behave consistently with their moral values; a survey of Moral Emotion with subscales for Shame and Guilt; and a measure of Moral Personality variables otherwise known as the dark tetrad: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, Sadism, and Psychopathy. Age and moral expression were the only significant predictors of utilitarian choices on hypothetical moral dilemmas. Although guilt was also correlated with utilitarianism, it failed to be a significant factor when all variables were combined into one regression equation. The degree of confidence participants expressed in their decisions on the hypothetical moral dilemmas was correlated with shame and moral importance, however, none of the morality variables was a significant predictor of confidence ratings when entered together into a

regression equation. Possible reasons for the lack of significant results are explored and suggestions for future studies are suggested.

DEDICATIONS

For my Mother, who has always been my #1 cheerleader and has never doubted any single one of my endeavors. Thank you for always pushing me to be ambitious and reach for the opportunities that have shaped me into the person I am today.

For my Stepfather, who was always available to give me words full of wisdom when I was doubting myself, and who enjoyed all of my achievements as if they were his own.

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INTRODUCTION

Past studies have found links among such things as moral personality, moral identity, moral emotions, and moral reasoning (Bartels & Pizarro, 2011; Djeriouat & Trémolière, 2014; Karandikar et al., 2019), however, the results have been mixed and contradictory (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Chapman & Anderson, 2014; Hertz & Krettenauer, 2016; Tangney et al., 2007). One reason for these inconsistent findings might be that these factors tend to be examined two at a time, thereby clouding their combined effect. This study proposes to examine multiple factors to determine their predictive validity regarding how people choose to respond to hypothetical moral dilemmas.

A common way to measure an individual's moral reasoning is by using moral dilemmas. Moral dilemmas are hypothetical situations that force an individual to decide between two, often extreme choices (McConnell, 2002). The situation has a moral value, i.e standards of good and bad. Individuals tend to have a moral orientation; the perspective from which they approach decision making (Levitt & Aligo, 2013). Depending on the moral orientation that an individual has, the choices are identified as right and wrong. One such example is called the Footbridge dilemma by Thomson (1976), a variation of the Trolley Dilemma:

Edward is the driver of a trolley, whose brakes have just failed. On the track ahead of him are five people; the banks are so steep that they will not be able to get off the track in time. The track has spur leading off to the right, and Edward can turn the trolley onto it. Unfortunately, there is one person on the righthand track. Edward can turn the trolley, killing the one; or he can refrain from turning the trolley, killing five. (Thomson, 1976, p. 206)

The choice of turning the trolley to kill one person is considered to be a utilitarian choice, whereas deciding to refrain from turning the trolley would be a deontological choice.

Deontology suggests that the most ethical choice is the one that can be made into a universal law and that respects its nature (Gray & Schein, 2012). Utilitarianism, on the other hand, prioritizes the happiness of the greatest amount of people (Gray & Schein, 2012). The choice someone makes suggests a series of meanings ascribed to terms such as “good” and “bad.”

There are other ethical systems which someone could use to analyze a moral dilemma, such as, egoism which equates the moral choice to be the one that benefits the self; virtue ethics which emphasizes the role of virtue, character, sense of honesty and practical wisdom; and pragmatism where an action is deemed morally right if it is practical, logical, and useful. For the sake of this thesis, the focus will be mostly on the utilitarian versus deontological framework because it is the common approach adopted in many studies about morality. Specifically, this framework includes consequentialism (focus on individual rights) and formalism (focus on common good) which are often used as synonyms for deontology, with its emphasis on rules and principles of justice, and utilitarianism, with its emphasis on promoting happiness to the greatest number of people (Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007).

In addition, this thesis seeks to examine whether the responses to moral dilemmas varies as a function of other factors such as moral identity, moral emotions, and personality. Further, the populations of studies in prior research have mostly been inmates, clinical, and subclinical samples. Whether the findings from these studies can be replicated with non-clinical participants will also be examined.

Background

Antisocial Personality Disorder appears in the Cluster B section of personality disorders in the DSM-V (American Psychiatric Association, 2013); individuals with this disorder show

little remorse for the consequences of their acts and they fail to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behavior (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Furthermore, people with Antisocial Personality Disorder tend to be insensitive, cynical and disdainful towards the feelings, rights, and suffering of others (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Personality disorders in Cluster B have been called “moral disorders” because of their significant relationship to morality (Azimpour et al., 2019); in the case of Antisocial Personality Disorder it would be “lack of empathy.” Psychopathy is described in the DSM-V as the pervasive pattern of disregard for, and violation of, the rights of others that begins in childhood and continues to adulthood (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). That pattern is the essential feature of Antisocial Personality Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). This might explain why these two terms share many similarities and are often used interchangeably, even though they are not the same thing. Psychopathy also includes traits like lack of empathy, inflated selfappraisal and superficial charm (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Many studies have found that those who have Antisocial Personality Disorder and psychopathy tend to choose a utilitarian standpoint when confronted with a moral dilemma such as the Trolley Dilemma (Glenn et al., 2010; Koenigs et al., 2012; Wrenn, 2020).

The utilitarian choice in moral dilemmas focuses on making the choice that maximizes the happiness for the greatest amount of people, which is not necessarily an evil choice. The utilitarian ethical system focuses on the consequences rather than the rules and norms, and since individuals with Antisocial Personality Disorder and Psychopathy disregard any set of rules, it logically follows that they would focus more on the outcomes of their choices. This does not mean those who endorse utilitarianism disregard norms either. Rather utilitarians are placing more importance in the consequences of actions, whereas those with Psychopathy and Antisocial

Personality Disorder actively disregard them i.e they simply do not care about rules. More importantly, it is also possible they are choosing the utilitarian choice not necessarily to maximize the happiness and welfare for most people, but because they would choose to harm anyone regardless of the benefits. In the trolley dilemma, the deontological choice (doing nothing to divert the train) adheres to the Commandment “Thou shalt not kill.” Many might choose this option even though it results in more deaths because it keeps them from actively violating a rule and thereby decreases their feelings of guilt and responsibility. The psychopathic or antisocial individual is neither overly concerned with rules nor guilt, so the logical choice seems to be the utilitarian one of reducing the number of deaths by actively turning the track. However, a person with a strong sense of morality (and guilt) could also make this choice because they see the passive choice of doing nothing as cowardly and not living up to the moral imperative of doing the right thing by saving the many over the one. Thus, the link between psychopathy and utilitarianism should not be seen as proof of the moral inferiority of this position. This is due to the fact that the motivation for the decision is more telling than the decision itself in regard to the actor’s moral turpitude.

Moral Emotions

Moral emotions are said to be the motivational force behind moral decisions because they help the individual understand people’s behavioral adherence to moral standards (Tangney et al., 2007). Tangney and colleagues (2007) did a meta-analysis in which they reviewed all of the current theories and research done on moral emotions, with a focus on shame and guilt, among others, and where they fell in the realm of moral emotions. They determined that those emotions were not equally moral emotions, in the sense that guilt was more adaptive and even beneficial for the individuals whereas shame could be more destructive. To further illustrate the way they

work, shame is associated with behaviors like attempts to deny, hide or escape the situation; guilt, on the other hand, corresponds to more proactive pursuits like apologies, confessions and undoing the consequences of the behavior. Nonetheless, the benefits of guilt can be lost if it fuses with shame. Furthermore, shame-free guilt in college students was associated with less likelihood of abusing drugs and alcohol, whereas the opposite happened with shame proneness. Before making a decision, individuals are able to anticipate their emotional reaction (e.g., guilt, pride, disgust). This suggests that emotional reactions can, indeed, exert a strong influence on moral behavior.

Koenigs and colleagues (2012) conducted a study with inmates ($N = 64$) that were classified, with the help of the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised, as low-anxiety individuals with psychopathy, high-anxiety individuals with psychopathy, and individuals that did not meet the criteria for psychopathy. They had to make moral judgements in a series of 24 moral dilemmas that had a utilitarian choice and a deontological one. The dilemmas were also divided into personal and impersonal variations. One of the features of these type of moral dilemmas is that the personal option requires the person to be physically involved in the decision (i.e. push the person onto the train tracks), whereas the impersonal one requires minimal involvement (i.e. pulling a lever). There is also the emotional component that has been associated with the personal choices (Koenigs, 2012). The results indicated that, specifically, low-anxiety individuals with psychopathy were the ones that endorsed the utilitarian choice, suggesting there is an alternative emotional/social deficit that underlies that particular subtype. The emotions of shame, guilt, embarrassment, and pride seem to function as an emotional moral barometer by providing immediate feedback on our social and moral acceptability (Tangney et al., 2007). In a way, moral emotions can function as the basis for moral identity.

Moral Identity

In the general sense, an identity is described as a self-conception or a self-definition; it is a combination of old and new identification fragments (Erikson, 1964a). Moral identity is described as a specific kind of identity that revolves around the moral aspects of oneself and the extent to which being a moral person is important to the self-identity (Hardy & Carlo, 2011; Bergman, 2002). It also acts as a self-regulatory mechanism that sets the standard for the individual's behavior and motivates moral action (Erikson, 1964b). Aquino and Reed (2002) argued that moral identity has two dimensions: internalization and symbolization. Internalization is the degree to which moral traits are central to the self-concept, whereas symbolization reflects the degree to which these traits are expressed publicly through actions in the world. Their concept of moral identity is based on the social identity theory (Tajfel, 1959; Tajfel et al., 1979; Turner & Oakes, 1986); this theory links moral identity with traits that are associated with moral behavior.

Glenn and colleagues (2010) examined the importance of moral traits in moral identity and the extent to which they influence moral behavior. In the first study the participants were adult volunteers ($N = 170$) that visited a website to fill out the questionnaires. The second study was composed of the adult volunteers that did not participate in the first study ($N = 214$). They found that individuals with self-reported psychopathy were less likely to describe their self-concept using moral traits. If individuals believe that moral traits (e.g., being honest, kind, compassionate) are central to describing their personal identity, then they have a strong moral identity (Hertz & Krettenauer, 2016). Furthermore, if their self-concept does not involve moral traits, then they may lack the motivation needed to behave morally (Glenn et al., 2010). This suggests that moral identity can be a major motivational force behind moral behavior (Glenn et

al., 2010; Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007). Erikson (1964b) pointed this out by stating that an individual has a strong need to act consistently with his or her identity.

Hertz & Krettenauer (2016) conducted a meta-analysis, which included 111 studies, in order to examine the relationship between moral identity and moral behavior. Their concept of moral behavior was identified as having two types of categories based on the motivational processes of approach versus avoidance. For the actual analysis, three categories of moral behavior were examined: avoidance of antisocial behavior, prosocial behavior, and ethical behavior. The specific measures were either observed or obtained through self-reports. The results of the study suggested that moral identity predicted moral behavior, however the predictive effect was small to moderate in size. Thus, moral identity does not appear to be a strong predictor of moral behavior. Instead, it seems that moral identity tends to predict general behavioral dispositions rather than actual behavior in highly circumscribed situations. Due to these results, Hertz & Krettenauer (2016) determined that there is no reason to prioritize moral identity as a predictor at the expense of other factors i.e. moral emotions and moral judgement. Instead, it should be taken into consideration in a broader conceptual framework where it interacts with other personological and situational factors that bring about moral actions.

Lefebvre and Krettenauer (2019) conducted a meta-analysis ($N = 57$) examining the relationship between moral identity and moral emotions. They took a close look at both self-evaluative emotions (e.g., guilt, shame, pride) and other-evaluative emotions (e.g., empathy, contempt, moral outrage). Self-evaluative emotions were defined as representations of emotional inconsistencies within the self; thus they impact the self. Other-evaluative emotions are rooted in the notion that morality binds not only to the self but also to everyone in the individual's moral community and are usually experienced when observing others engaging in moral and immoral

behavior. Lefebvre and Krettanuer (2019) found that self-evaluative emotions are not as strongly related to moral identity as other studies might suggest (c.f., Kingsford, 2018). However, moral identity does seem to amplify moral emotions such as guilt, shame, pride, and empathy.

Moral Personality

The personality trait of Machiavellianism is part of the Dark Triad, along with narcissism, and psychopathy. The Dark Triad is described as a set of socially malevolent personality traits that are different but still overlap with each other (Furnham, 2013). This could be due to a common underlying characteristic such as tendencies toward self-promotion, emotional coldness, duplicity, and aggressiveness (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Narcissism is described as an exaggerated feeling of superiority, a high level of self-centeredness and self-love (Djeriouat & Trémolière, 2014). Psychopathy's main elements include high impulsivity and thrill-seeking along with low empathy and anxiety (Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

Machiavellianism is based on the writings of 16th century philosopher Nicolo Machiavelli, the political advisor of the Florentine Medici family. He heavily advised the use of force by a monarch to instill enough fear so that the citizens would have no choice but to obey. This is the reason Machiavellianism is described as “the manipulative personality” and consists of traits such as the exploitation of others, a cynical disregard for morality, the use of strategic manipulation, and a focus on self-interest and deception (Wrenn, 2020). Furthermore, it involves interpersonal behaviors such as flattery and lying with the purpose of gaining prestige and success (Wrenn, 2020). The goal that follows from the manipulation of others in Machiavellian behavior, is often for personal gain, despite the harm it may cause to those that are involved (Wrenn, 2020). Paulhus & Williams (2002) found that Machiavellianism was strongly correlated to psychopathy. Psychopathy in general was more strongly correlated to Machiavellianism and

narcissism, which made the researchers believe that psychopathy might be the core feature of dark personalities. Studies have been conducted to analyze how the Dark Triad traits interact with moral dilemmas (Bartels & Pizarro, 2011; Djeriouat & Trémolière, 2014; Karandikar et al., 2019).

Wrenn (2020) examined the relationships among the individual dimensions of the Dark Tetrad and moral decision making. The Dark Tetrad is similar to the Dark Triad with the addition that it includes sadism. In this thesis, the Dark Tetrad will be utilized as opposed to the Dark Triad, as the influence of sadism in moral dilemmas has not been widely explored. Sadism is the engagement or intention to engage in cruel, demeaning, and aggressive behaviors for the purpose of pleasure or dominance (Plouffe et. al., 2017). In this study, impersonal and personal moral dilemmas were administered to undergraduate student participants ($N = 212$) along with two measures for each of the Dark Tetrad constructs. The difference between the personal and impersonal choices lays in whether physical force is involved. Taking the Footbridge dilemma as an example, the utilitarian choice is considered personal because it requires the individual to push someone onto the train tracks. In order to make it impersonal, instead of pushing someone, the individual could pull a lever, thus avoiding physical contact. It was found that individuals who scored high on the Dark Tetrad, specifically Machiavellianism and psychopathy, were more likely to deem it morally permissible to sacrifice one person to save five. Wrenn (2020) explained that results could have been driven by the distinction of defining behavior as “morally right” versus “permissible”; regarding a behavior as permissible does not give any indications whether the individual genuinely believes the behavior is morally right or wrong.

Karandikar and colleagues (2019) also examined the association of the Dark Tetrad traits with moral dilemmas and moral foundations. Their participants ($N = 355$) were adults recruited

through an online website; they were given moral dilemmas as well as one measure for each construct of the Dark Tetrad. Their concept of moral judgements was based on the moral foundations of harm/care, fairness/reciprocity, ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect and purity/sanctity. It was suggested that individuals with these dark traits might have chosen utilitarian responses due to their lower concern for moral values considering the content of the selected moral dilemmas incorporated the welfare and active or passive harm to others (Bartels & Pizarro, 2011; Karandikar et al., 2019).

Bartels and Pizarro (2011) approached this conundrum differently than previous studies. Instead of directly linking psychopathy and other personality disorders to utilitarianism, they administered a battery of personality assessments to undergraduate student participants ($N = 208$) as well as moral dilemmas with utilitarian and non-utilitarian alternatives to examine which personality traits were more associated with a utilitarian judgement. Bartels and Pizarro (2011) predicted that the variability on the personality traits that display a devaluation of life, emotional callousness and manipulateness would be able to predict a utilitarian preference. In the context of subclinical populations, a preference for utilitarian choices could be due to either a tendency to favor rational deliberation when making moral decisions or a muted aversion to causing a person's death such as that observed in brain-damaged patients. Their results suggested that those who scored higher on measures of Machiavellianism and psychopathy also indicated a preference for utilitarian responses in moral dilemmas. However, they also claimed that their study illustrated that sacrificial moral dilemmas failed to distinguish those who endorsed a utilitarian choice because of an emotional deficit or a genuine concern for the welfare of others.

Rationale

The literature has explored several different aspects of morality and how they interact with personality disorders and dark personality traits (Bartels & Pizarro, 2011; Djeriouat & Trémolière, 2014; Furnham, 2013; Glenn et al., 2010; Karandikar et al., 2019; Koenigs et al., 2012; Paulhus & Williams, 2005; Wrenn, 2020). Other studies have explored the connections that exist between different morality areas, such as moral identity and moral emotions (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Chapman & Anderson, 2007; Hertz & Krettenauer, 2016; Lefebvre & Krettenauer, 2019; Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007; Tangney et al., 2007). Connections between moral identity, moral emotions and personality had been reported, however some studies encountered weak and/or mixed results (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Chapman & Anderson, 2014; Hertz & Krettenauer, 2016; Tangney et al., 2007). The reasons for these inconsistencies could be because they all used one factor of morality in order to predict moral reasoning. Taking into consideration all of the studies reviewed in this thesis, it was suggested that the process of moral reasoning was dependent upon the following factors: moral emotions, moral identity, and moral personality traits.

Because morality had been shown to be a multi-faceted construct, it was measured in this thesis as such rather than a single dimension. This approach was suggested in other studies that had obtained mixed results and thus concluded that additional factors should be taken into consideration when measuring morality (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Chapman & Anderson, 2014; Hertz & Krettenauer, 2016; Tangney et al., 2007).

It was hypothesized that:

- 1) Moral personality (the Dark Tetrad), moral emotions (guilt and shame) and moral identity (moral importance and moral expression) together would predict moral reasoning (Utilitarian or Deontological) better than any one of them alone.

2) Moral identity would better predict the confidence ratings on the moral dilemmas scale than moral personality or moral emotions.

METHODS

Participants

This study included 432 participants that were recruited from a large pool of undergraduate students at a large metropolitan university in the southeastern United States. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 51 ($M_{\text{age}} = 19.90$, $SD = 3.88$). The gender breakdown included 68.5% females, 28.8% males, 1.8% non-binary, 0.2% transgender, and 0.2% other. The ethnic breakdown included 57.4% White, 19.6% Hispanic, 8.3% Black, 8.8% Asian or Pacific Islander, 0.2% Native American or Alaskan Native, and 5.6% Mixed or Other. The breakdown of education included 50.9% freshmen, 17.6% sophomores, 19.6% juniors, 11.3% seniors, and 0.5% non-degree seeking.

Measures

Demographic Questionnaire. Students were asked to report their age, sex, ethnicity, and educational level.

Short Dark Tetrad (SD4; Paulhus et al., 2020). This questionnaire consisted of 28 items that captured various traits of the Dark Tetrad: narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy and, sadism. There were 7 items for the 4 subscales. Participants were asked to rank their agreement with each statement using a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). Examples of items from each subscale are the following: narcissism (“I have a unique talent for persuading people”), Machiavellianism (“It’s not wise to let people know your secrets”), psychopathy (“I tend to fight against authorities and their rules”) and, for sadism (“Some people deserve to suffer”). Paulhus and colleagues reported a Cronbach alpha of .80 for narcissism, .75 for Machiavellianism, .81 for psychopathy and .81 for sadism. The

Cronbach alpha of each subscale within the current study were found to be .75 for narcissism, .73 for Machiavellianism, .81 for psychopathy and .82 for sadism.

The Self-Importance of Moral Identity Measure (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Reed II & Aquino, 2003). This measure had 10 items that assessed the participants moral identity. There were 2 subscales with 5 items each: internalization (i.e. moral traits are central to the individual's identity), and symbolization (i.e. the extent to which moral traits are expressed publicly through behaviors). To increase clarity, in this thesis the internalization scale will be referred to as moral importance and the symbolization scale will be referred to as moral expression. Before the participants started the measure, they were instructed to imagine someone who has 9 specific moral traits. Next, they used a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) to indicate their agreement on the 10 items. Example items for the subscales were the following: moral importance ("It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics") and, moral expression ("I often wear clothes that identify me as having these characteristics"). On Aquino & Reed's study the Cronbach alpha was .78 for internalization (moral importance) and .69 for symbolization (moral expression). The Cronbach alpha for the moral importance and moral expression scales within the current study was found to be .78 and .74 respectively.

Personal Feelings Questionnaire 2 (Harder & Zalma, 1990; PFQ2). This questionnaire contains 16 items with 2 subscales of guilt and shame. Participants were asked to indicate on a 5-point scale (0 = never, 1 = rarely, 2 = sometimes, 3 = frequently, 4 = always) how common the feeling described in the item was for them. Example items for the subscales are the following: guilt ("Worry about hurting or injuring someone") and, shame ("Feeling humiliated"). Harder & Zalma's study had a Cronbach alpha of .72 for the guilt subscale, and .78 for the shame subscale.

The Cronbach alpha was found to be .75 for the guilt subscale and .84 for the shame subscale for the current study.

Critical Decision Making and Problem Solving Scale – Moral Dilemmas (Kurtines et al., 1995). This measure consisted of 6 moral dilemmas, each with two choices modeled after the ethical systems of utilitarianism (i.e. ethical choice is the one that brings happiness to most people) and deontology (i.e. the ethical choice is the one that adheres to the norms/law). Taking the first moral dilemma titled “Lying” as an example, the utilitarian choice would be “Don’t tell the truth” whereas the deontological would be “Tell the truth.” In addition, participants were asked to indicate on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all sure, 5 = extremely sure) how strongly they believe the choice they picked was the right one. Two subscales were calculated, a Moral Dilemma Confidence scale (the mean of all the confidence ratings), and a Utilitarian/Deontological Continuum for the binary choices offered on each moral dilemma. For this latter scale, the choice was multiplied by the confidence rating for each dilemma. For a Deontological choice, the rating was multiplied by -1 (e.g., if a participant was very confident (score 5) with a deontological choice, he would receive a score of -5) For a Utilitarian choice, the confidence rating was multiplied by +1 (e.g., a utilitarian choice with a confidence rating of 4 would receive a score of 4). The scores were then averaged across dilemmas to provide a continuum that ran from a minimum of -5 (extremely deontological) to a maximum of +5 (extremely utilitarian). The Cronbach alphas for the subscales were .61 for the Moral Dilemma Confidence scale, and .39 for the Utilitarian/Deontological Continuum.

Procedure

This project was submitted to the author’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. Once the approval was received, it was submitted to the Psychology participant recruitment

system known as SONA for further review and approval. SONA participants were mostly students from psychology courses such as General Psychology. After the second approval was received, the participants were able to choose this study from a list of all available studies being conducted in the department of psychology. Participants received academic credit toward a Psychology course and were able to access the study through the research participant website (SONA). Those who selected this study clicked on a link that brought them to the Explanation of Research in which they were offered the option to participate in the study or not. Those who wanted to participate were directed to the surveys and those who did not want to participate were redirected to the end of the survey where no data was collected, or credit given. The surveys were given anonymously and online through Qualtrics. Students who did not wish to participate in research but still wanted the equivalent credit were offered alternative assignments requiring similar time and effort.

RESULTS

Descriptive and Preliminary Analyses

The means, standard deviation, possible range and actual range for each measure is reported in Table 1 (See Appendix C). A frequency distribution for dilemma responses is presented in Table 2 (See Appendix D), and a correlation matrix with all the measures is presented in Table 3 (See Appendix E). T-tests were conducted between each variable to test for gender differences. Results indicate that on the Short Dark Tetrad (SD4), there was a significant difference found for Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and sadism subscales. Males ($M = 3.40$, $SD = .68$) were found to have significantly higher scores on the Machiavellianism subscale, compared to females ($M = 3.20$, $SD = .62$, $t_{(430)} = 3.01$, $p = .003$). Additionally, males ($M = 1.93$, $SD = .65$) were found to have significantly higher scores in psychopathy, compared to females ($M = 1.75$, $SD = .65$, $t_{(429)} = 2.67$, $p = .008$). Males ($M = 2.88$, $SD = .76$) had significantly higher scores in sadism than females ($M = 2.05$, $SD = .75$, $t_{(430)} = 10.32$, $p < .001$). Significant differences in gender were also seen for the confidence average on the moral dilemma task. Males ($M = 3.69$, $SD = .61$) were found to have significantly higher ratings of confidence in their moral choices than females ($M = 3.54$, $SD = .61$, $t_{(429)} = 2.53$, $p = .012$). Finally, t-tests were conducted for the moral identity variables. Females ($M = 4.64$, $SD = .48$) were found to have significantly higher levels of moral importance than males ($M = 4.38$, $SD = .68$, $t_{(430)} = -4.60$, $p < .001$). This relationship was true for moral expression as well, with females ($M = 3.46$, $SD = .69$) having higher levels of moral expression than males ($M = 3.07$, $SD = .72$, $t_{(430)} = -5.29$, $p < .001$).

To determine if scores on all variables differed by ethnicity and grade level, multiple one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)s were conducted. Results indicate that there was a significant difference in scores of guilt found between different ethnicities ($F_{(5, 426)} = 2.29$, $p =$

.045). LSD post-hoc tests indicate that Asian/Pacific Islander participants scored higher on guilt compared to all other ethnicities analyzed. Additionally, significant differences between grade levels were found for moral decision making ($F_{(4, 422)} = 3.87, p = .004$) and confidence on moral decisions ($F_{(4, 425)} = 3.62, p = .006$). LSD post-hoc tests indicate that there were significant differences between year at university and moral decision making. Juniors and seniors had significantly lower scores than freshman and sophomores in moral decision making. More specifically, juniors and seniors were more deontological in orientation, rather than utilitarian. Additionally, juniors were found to have significantly higher confidence ratings on moral decisions than freshman.

Main Analyses

Hypothesis one (Moral personality (the Dark Tetrad), moral emotions (guilt and shame) and moral identity (moral importance and moral expression) together would predict moral reasoning (Utilitarian or Deontological) better than any one of them alone) was analyzed using a stepwise linear regression. Age and sex were entered on step 1, moral personality, moral emotion, and moral identity were entered on step 2, with moral reasoning as the dependent variable. The overall model was significant ($R^2 = .074$, Adjusted $R^2 = .052$, $F_{(10,418)} = 3.35, p < .001$). Moral reasoning was significantly predicted by age ($\beta = -.174, t = -3.62, p < .001$) and moral expression ($\beta = -.163, t = -2.98, p = .003$). The negative beta weight suggests that higher scores on moral expression were associated with more deontological responses on the moral dilemmas. The other moral factors were not significant predictors, thus, hypothesis one was not supported. This is because the framework that was proposed on this thesis was that moral personality, moral emotions, and moral identity together would be able to predict choices made

on moral dilemmas better than any of them alone. In these results, only one aspect of moral identity, specifically the subscale of moral expression, was a significant predictor.

Hypothesis two (Moral identity would better predict the confidence rating on the moral dilemmas scale than moral personality or moral emotions) was analyzed using a stepwise linear regression. Age and sex were entered on step 1, moral personality (the dark tetrad) and moral emotion (guilt and shame) were entered on step 2, and moral identity (moral importance and moral expression) was entered on step 3, with confidence rating as the dependent variable. The overall model was significant ($R^2 = .096$, Adjusted $R^2 = .074$, $F_{(10,421)} = 4.45$, $p < .001$).

Confidence rating was significantly predicted by age ($\beta = .206$, $t = 4.35$, $p < .001$) and gender ($\beta = -.118$, $t = -2.27$, $p = .024$). The hypothesis was deemed to be supported if (1) the addition of Step 3 (moral identity) resulted in a significantly larger F statistic and (2) moral identity had a larger beta weight and t statistic than moral emotions and moral personality. This hypothesis was partially supported, as moral identity resulted in a larger F statistic and had a larger beta weight and t statistic than moral emotions and moral personality. It was not fully supported because at step 3 although moral importance was found to be significant ($p = .037$), moral expression was not ($p = .082$).

DISCUSSION

The framework presented in this thesis that moral emotions, moral identity, and moral personality all together would best predict moral decision-making was not supported. Specifically, age and moral expression were the only predictors of moral decision-making. In Gotowiec and van Mastrigt's (2019) study of the role of moral identity moral importance and moral expression in prosocial behaviors, moral expression was found to be a stronger predictor than moral importance; our results were consistent with this finding. Their study implemented the same measure of moral identity as the one used in this thesis. The authors concluded that moral expression has a significant effect on moral behavior regardless of whether the action is done publicly or in private. Hertz and Krettenauer (2016), on the other hand, conducted a meta-analysis and found that moral identity did predict moral behavior, but the strength of the relationship varied greatly depending on how moral behavior was measured. Moral behavior can be measured by self-report, reports of others, or direct observation, and self-report can be either reports of past behavior or intentions for future behavior.

Furthermore, shame proneness and moral identity (i.e., both moral importance and moral expression) were significantly correlated with the confidence rating scale, whereas guilt proneness and the subscale of moral expression were significantly correlated with the actual choice made on the moral dilemmas. Shame was negatively correlated with the confidence scale meaning that the more confident the participants were on their choices the less shame they felt. Guilt was shown to be significantly correlated with the actual choices made by the participants on the hypothetical moral dilemmas, specifically guilt-prone participants were more likely to endorse utilitarian choices on said dilemmas (e.g., giving an extra coin to Dale, even though Sam worked harder, just so he can pay for his mother's surgery). Perhaps the more utilitarian

participants were more likely to feel guilty about violating a moral principle, even though it was done to help someone, whereas the more deontological participants were less likely to feel guilty about causing harm to someone when they were following a moral principle. Tangney (1994) studied the adaptive and maladaptive aspects of shame and guilt among undergraduate students and found that self-reported moral behaviors (e.g., “I am honest with the way I deal with people”) were correlated to guilt-proneness and unrelated to shame-proneness. Participants who gave more deontological responses to moral dilemmas also tended to have higher scores on the Moral Expression scale suggesting that those who favor the importance of following moral rules despite negative consequences are more likely to see themselves as tending to act morally (consistent with their moral principles).

A study by Kautsar and colleagues (2017) also analyzed the correlation between shame and moral identity among undergraduate students. They found a small but significant correlation between shame and moral identity. They theorized that perhaps shame only affects moral identity when the individual has to evaluate how others judge his/her behavior (Kautsar et. al., 2017). This is similar to the current thesis, as participants were asked to indicate on a confidence scale how sure they were of their choices in each of the moral dilemmas. Thus, their responses were evaluated. According to Tangney (2007) shame invokes the individuals to evaluate themselves and their actions, hence why they would incur in behaviors such as hiding and denying. This is because shame makes the person focus more on how their behavior is going to be perceived, rather than whether it’s morally good or wrong, thus it generates those type of responses (i.e. hiding).

Regarding the moral personality traits, i.e., the Dark Tetrad, they did not have any significant effect on moral decision-making. One possible explanation for this could be that the

other predictors overpowered the effect that these traits could have had, or dark personality traits do not actually influence moral decision-making. Svensson and colleagues (2017) mentioned in their handbook on offender decision-making that individuals that do not have the capability of experiencing shame and guilt lack the power to feel empathy. Lack of empathy is one of the key features of the Dart Tetrad, thus considering how moral emotions had strong correlations with the decision made on the moral dilemmas, perhaps the proportion of participants that did possess these dark personality traits to any large degree was too small to have a significant effect on moral decision-making.

Furthermore, the second hypothesis was not supported. It proposed that moral identity better predicted the confidence rating on the moral dilemmas scale than moral personality or moral emotions. This might have been due to the number of variables that were used in this thesis. They might have suppressed the effects of the other variables. Another reason could be that perhaps there was a common underlying variable in all of the measures. This idea is consistent with the framework of this thesis in that these categories of morality did correlate with each other in various ways. Hardy & Carlo (2011) referred to the moral emotions as the affective bases of moral identity.

The moral dilemmas that we used were different from the Trolley Dilemma, which is one of the most commonly used moral dilemmas. One of the key differences is that the Trolley Dilemma could be described as a sacrificial moral dilemma, in the sense that there is a life or death decision (e.g. kill one to save five). The moral dilemmas used on this thesis do not involve any sacrifice and explore different situations of moral importance, such as lying, punishment, and monetary issues. Due to the nature of the Trolley Dilemma, it is possible that it might elicit different responses from the participants. The most significant predictor of choices on the moral

dilemmas was moral expression (i.e. moral identity), thus it could be argued that non-sacrificial dilemmas such as the ones used on this thesis, might be able to account better for moral reasoning than others like the Trolley Dilemma.

On the moral dilemmas of this thesis, the utilitarian and deontological choices were divided equally. The dilemmas that represented situations that are commonly frowned upon in our society (e.g. Stealing, Lying, Punishment), produced more deontological responses from the sample. On the other hand, the more morally ambiguous situations (e.g. Fair Day's Pay, Breaking A Promise, You Broke It You Bought It) elicited more utilitarian responses.

In this thesis, the participants were not as consistent in their choices as the literature on moral decision-making suggested. The low internal consistency of the dilemmas used in this study ($\alpha = .39$) suggests that participants were extremely inconsistent in the way they responded to each dilemma. Rather than consistently responding in a utilitarian or deontological manner, many participants went with principle (deontological) on one dilemma and consequences (utilitarian) on another. This would be less apparent in a study that relied on only one dilemma (e.g., the train dilemma), and suggests that perhaps most people are more pragmatic, balancing the importance of upholding principles while not doing harm; weighing and measuring how much harm is tolerable in order to uphold a principle. Other possible reasons for this inconsistency in response patterns could be because our sample consisted heavily of freshman undergraduate students as compared to other studies that involved individuals who were inmates or were diagnosed with a personality disorder. On the other hand, different ways to measure moral decision-making are still being developed. The framework that was proposed did not work in that many of the theorized predictors of moral choice did not pan out. These findings combined with the fact that other studies that were discussed in the literature review of this

theses have had contradictory results suggests that much more research is needed to clarify these issues. Perhaps it is the nature of moral decision-making and the different influences it has that makes it complicated to measure.

Limitations and Future Studies

The limitations of this thesis included the fact that the participants used self-report to respond to the survey. This is a limitation because it relies on both the accuracy and honesty of the participants in assessing themselves. Collateral reports from significant others and/or clinical interviews can sometimes be helpful to insure the accuracy of self-assessments. Another limitation was that the analysis was conducted at a single point in time, therefore it might not capture the intra-individual range of responding (e.g., on good days versus bad) nor is it able to evaluate growth and change over time. Longitudinal studies might be helpful in this regard. In addition, most of the sample was freshman college students, with a mean age of approximately 19 years old. One study that had a sample of both undergraduate and graduate students, suggested that formal education positively influences moral development (Bateman, 1998). The sample used on this thesis most likely hasn't had a formal experience with ethical issues, hence their moral development is probably still evolving. Another limitation is the correlational nature of the data analyses which precludes any definitive causal explanations. Again, longitudinal studies would be helpful to address this. Finally, a common limitation in studies of this nature is that the moral dilemmas used in this thesis were hypothetical situations, which might not indicate how participants would react if they were confronted with similar situations in real life. This is a harder limitation to address because it would be ethically unacceptable to place people in real life dilemmas. At best we can question people about past real life more decisions made, but this type of study would be limited by retrospection. However, such studies while not being definitive

would still enhance the literature that has leaned heavily and exclusively on hypothetical moral decision making.

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Institutional Review Board

FWA00000351
IRB00001138, IRB00012110
Office of Research
12201 Research Parkway
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

September 15, 2021

Dear Steven Berman:

On 9/15/2021, the IRB determined the following submission to be human subjects research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Moral Identity
Investigator:	Steven Berman
IRB ID:	STUDY00003454
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRP-254 Explanation of Research for Moral Identity 3.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • HRP-255 Moral Identity 3.docx, Category: IRB Protocol; • Survey.docx, Category: Survey / Questionnaire;

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made, and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please submit a modification request to the IRB. Guidance on submitting Modifications and Administrative Check-in are detailed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request so that IRB records will be accurate.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Kamille Birkbeck
Designated Reviewer

Appendix B: Explanation of Research



UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL FLORIDA

EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH

Title of Project: Moral Identity

Principal Investigator: Dr. Steven L. Berman

Co-Principal Investigator: Adriana Seda, Reilly Branch

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you.

We are interested in examining your sense of morality. You will be asked to answer questions about your moral values and what you might do in certain hypothetical moral dilemmas. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential and no identifiable information will be collected.

The survey should take you around 30 minutes to complete.

You will receive SONA credits for your participation. If you choose not to participate, you can complete an alternate assignment of equal time and effort for equal credit through your psychology course.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in this study at any time without prejudice or penalty. Your decision to participate or not participate in this study will in no way affect your relationship with UCF, including continued enrollment, grades, employment, or your relationship with the individuals who may have an interest in this study.

You must be a UCF student and 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or please contact Reilly Branch (reillybranch@knights.ucf.edu), Co-Principal Investigator, or Dr. Steven Berman (steven.berman@ucf.edu), Principal Investigator.

IRB contact about your rights in this study or to report a complaint: If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or have concerns about the conduct of this study, please contact Institutional Review Board (IRB), University of Central Florida, Office of Research, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901, or email irb@ucf.edu.

**Appendix C: Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for All Study
Variables**

Table 1**Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for All Study Variables**

	Mean	SD	Possible Range	Actual Range
Machiavellianism	3.26	.64	1.00 – 5.00	1.00 – 5.00
Narcissism	3.02	.65	1.00 – 5.00	1.14 - 5.00
Psychopathy	1.80	.65	1.00 – 5.00	1.00 – 5.00
Sadism	2.30	.84	1.00 – 5.00	1.00 – 5.00
Shame	2.72	.68	1.00 – 5.00	1.00 – 5.00
Guilt	2.59	.70	1.00 – 5.00	1.00 – 5.00
Dilemma Confidence	3.58	.58	1.00 – 5.00	2.00 - 5.00
Utilitarianism	-.26	1.76	-5.00 – +5.00	-5.00 - +4.17
Moral Importance	4.56	.56	1.00 – 5.00	1.00 – 5.00
Moral Expression	3.34	.72	1.00 – 5.00	1.00 – 5.00

Appendix D: Frequencies of Moral Dilemma Response

Table 2

Frequencies of Moral Dilemma Response

Moral Dilemma	Deontological	Utilitarian
Lying	58.3%	41.7%
Fair Day's Pay	32.6%	67.4%
Breaking a Promise	45.7%	54.3%
You Broke It You Bought It	39.1%	60.9%
Stealing	69.6%	30.4%
Punishment	62.9%	37.1%

Appendix E: Correlation Matrix

Table 3**Correlation Matrix**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	--									
2. Machiavellianism	-.06	--								
3. Narcissism	.04	.16***	--							
4. Psychopathy	-.01	.21***	.25***	--						
5. Sadism	-.12*	.37***	.06	.06***	--					
6. Shame	-.15**	.18***	-.20***	-.20***	.08	--				
7. Guilt	-.07	.06	-.18***	-.18***	.10*	.65***	--			
8. Moral importance	.00	-.11*	.04	.04	-.35***	.03	-.04	--		
9. Moral expression	.10*	-.11*	.26***	.26***	-.34***	-.05	-.05	.35***	--	
10. Dilemma Confidence	.22***	-.00	.03	.03	.00	-.12*	-.03	.12*	.11*	--
11. Utilitarian	-.19***	.04	-.07	-.07	.07	.07	.11*	.02	-.18***	-.15**

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Appendix F: Survey

DEMOGRAPHICS

SEX: Indicate your gender

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Other (explain)

AGE: Type your age

ETHNICITY: Select the ethnic/racial identifier that best describes you:

- White, non-Hispanic
- Black, non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latino/a
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Native American or Alaskan Native

Mixed ethnicity or Other (Specify): _____

EDUCATION: Indicate year in school

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Non-degree Seeking
- Graduate Student
- Other

SHORT DARK TETRAD (SD4)

Rate your agreement with each statement using a 5-point scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

IDENTITY 1: "CRAFTY"

1. It's not wise to let people know your secrets.
2. Whatever it takes, you must get the important people on your side.
3. Avoid direct conflict with others because they may be useful in the future.
4. Keep a low profile if you want to get your way.
5. Manipulating the situation takes planning.
6. Flattery is a good way to get people on your side.
7. I love it when a tricky plan succeeds.

IDENTITY 2: "SPECIAL"

8. People see me as a natural leader.
9. I have a unique talent for persuading people.
10. Group activities tend to be dull without me.
11. I know that I am special because people keep telling me so.
12. I have some exceptional qualities
13. I'm likely to become a future star in some area.
14. I like to show off every now and then.

IDENTITY 3: "WILD"

15. People often say I'm out of control.
16. I tend to fight against authorities and their rules.
17. I've been in more fights than most people of my age and gender.
18. I tend to dive in, then ask questions later.
19. I've been in trouble with the law.
20. I sometimes get into dangerous situations.
21. People who mess with me always regret it.

IDENTITY 4: "MEAN"

22. Watching a fist-fight excites me.
23. I really enjoy violent films and video games.
24. It's funny when idiots fall flat on their face.
25. I enjoy watching violent sports.
26. Some people deserve to suffer.
27. Just for kicks, I've said mean things on social media.
28. I know how to hurt someone with words alone.

THE SELF-IMPORTANCE OF MORAL IDENTITY MEASURE

Listed below are some characteristics that might describe a person:

Caring, Compassionate, Fair, Friendly, Generous, Helpful, Hardworking, Honest and Kind.
 The person with these characteristics could be you or it could be someone else. For a moment, visualize in your mind the kind of person who has these characteristics. Imagine how that person would think, feel, and act. When you have a clear image of what this person would be like, answer the following questions.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

1. It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I often wear clothes that identify me as having these characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I would be ashamed to be a person who had these characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The types of things I do in my spare time (e.g., hobbies) clearly identify me as having these characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The kinds of books and magazines that I read identify me as having these characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Having these characteristics is not really important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The fact that I have these characteristics is communicated to others by my membership in certain organizations.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I am actively involved in activities that communicate to others that I have these characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I strongly desire to have these characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5

PERSONAL FEELINGS QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: For each of the following listed feelings, to the left of the item number, please place a number from 0-4 reflecting how common the feeling is for you.

0	1	2	3	4
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always

1. Embarrassment	0	1	2	3	4
2. Mild guilt	0	1	2	3	4
3. Feeling ridiculous	0	1	2	3	4
4. Worry about hurting or injuring someone	0	1	2	3	4
5. Self-consciousness	0	1	2	3	4
6. Feeling humiliated	0	1	2	3	4
7. Intense guilt	0	1	2	3	4
8. Feeling “stupid	0	1	2	3	4
9. Regret	0	1	2	3	4
10. Feeling “childish”	0	1	2	3	4
11. Feeling helpless, paralyzed	0	1	2	3	4
12. Feeling of blushing	0	1	2	3	4
13. Feeling you deserve the criticism for what you did	0	1	2	3	4
14. Feeling laughable	0	1	2	3	4
15. Feeling disgusting to others	0	1	2	3	4
16. Remorse	0	1	2	3	4

CRITICAL DECISION MAKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING SCALE – MORAL DILEMMAS

Part 1: Critical Thinking (Items I-IV)

I. Lying

The adventures told here begin on a fine morning, early in the spring. Rob, the more enterprising of the three, had decided to try a hand at farming. Rob had purchased a few acres of farmland not far from where they lived and, because Hobbits are a close knit people, Sam and Dale volunteered to help get the farm started.

As they were walking along the road to the farm, Rob and Sam began talking about Sam's father. Sam had been on a trip to a far away land that took several weeks. While he was away, his father had become seriously ill of an incurable disease and had died. Sam did not find out about his father's death until he returned. Because Hobbits are very close, Rob had spent the last few days taking care of Sam's father. Sam's father had suffered a great deal during his last few days. Rob and Sam were talking about his father, and Sam asked Rob how his father's last days had been and if he suffered much. Rob thought about what to tell Sam. On the one hand, he could tell Sam the truth, that his father had suffered greatly during his last days. Now, Rob knew that Sam felt very bad about his father's death and telling him that he had suffered would only make him feel worse. On the other hand, he could tell Sam that his father had not suffered very much. This would not be the truth, but Sam would probably not feel as bad if he did not think his father had suffered. Sam would never find out the truth if Rob did not tell him because there was no one else with his father during the last days. Rob was not sure about what to do so he considered his choices. On the one hand, he felt he had a duty or obligation to tell Sam the truth even though it would hurt him. On the other hand, he felt that by not telling him the truth he would spare him some pain.

If you were Rob, what would you do?

- a) Tell the truth.
- b) Don't tell the truth.

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Not at all sure and 5 = Extremely sure, how strongly do you believe this is the right choice?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all sure				Extremely Sure

II. Fair Day's Pay

Rob, Sam and Dale continued on their journey and soon arrived at the farm. The farm was obviously going to need a lot of work. The three Hobbits set to work and the farm quickly began to take shape.

As the day drew to a close, work on the farm stopped. Hobbits, we noted earlier, delight in receiving as well as giving presents and Rob, grateful for the help of Sam and Dale, decided to

surprise them each with a nice present. Rob had five gold coins that he wanted to give them as presents for helping. A Hobbit gold coin is quite valuable. The trouble is that Rob could not decide how to share the coins. Both Hobbits had worked all day but Sam had worked harder than Dale. Rob felt he had an obligation to reward Sam more because he had worked harder than Dale. However, Rob also knew that Dale had been saving money for an operation that his mother needed to restore her eyesight, which was failing rapidly. Dale needed only three more gold coins. Rob was not sure about what to do so he considered his choices. On the one hand, he could give Dale three coins and Sam two, even though Sam had worked harder than Dale. That way Dale would have enough for his mother’s operation. On the other hand, he could give Sam three coins and Dale two, even though Dale needed the extra coin for the operation. That way Sam would be rewarded for his extra work.

If you were Rob what do you think you would do?

- a) Give three to Dale and two to Sam.
- b) Give three to Sam and two to Dale

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Not at all sure and 5 = Extremely sure, how strongly do you believe this is the right choice?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all sure				Extremely Sure

Part 2: Critical Discussion (Items III – VI)

III. Breaking a Promise

The adventures told here begin on a fine morning, early in the spring. Rob, the more enterprising of the three, had decided to try a hand at farming. Rob had purchased a few acres of farmland not far from where they lived and , since Hobbits are a close knit people, Sam and Dale volunteered to help get the farm started.

After a long day of work, the three Hobbits began to prepare dinner. And it was a splendid supper indeed, for all of the hard work and fresh air had given the Hobbits a healthy appetite. Later, while sitting on the porch, Sam told Rob that he had found a magic black mushroom in the field. Black mushrooms were said to have many different types of powers. For example, it has been said that one bite of a black mushroom could make someone feel very happy. Black mushrooms, however, have also been said to make Hobbits act in strange ways, sometimes even causing them to harm themselves. Now, while Sam had a warm and friendly disposition, he was also noted for being very impulsive and for doing foolish things. Consequently, Sam asked Rob to keep the black mushroom for him. However, before giving Rob the mushroom, Sam made Rob swear a double solemn oath, which Hobbits take very seriously, to give him the black mushroom back whenever he asked for it.

Later on in the evening, in the middle of a fitful sleep, Sam woke up. He had been feeling very bad about his father, and he asked Rob to give him the black mushroom back because he wanted to eat some. Rob was not sure about what to do so he considered his choices. On the one hand, he felt that he had an obligation to give him the mushroom back because he had made

a solemn promise to do so. On the other hand, he felt that if he did give it back Sam might do something to hurt himself.

If you were Rob what do you think you would do?

- a) Give the mushroom back.
- b) Keep the mushroom.

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Not at all sure and 5 = Extremely sure, how strongly do you believe this is the right choice?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all sure				Extremely Sure

IV. You Broke It You Bought It

Work on the farm continued. There was much to be done and the Hobbits worked with great enthusiasm. In fact, Dale and Sam even went so far as to go into town to borrow a plow from The Merchant in order to speed up clearing the field. While they were plowing together in the field, Sam began talking to Dale about the trip he had taken to a far away land, in spite of Dale's protests that he should pay more attention to their task. Suddenly, the plow struck a huge boulder and the blade broke. The plow was ruined. The Hobbits took it back to The Merchant and The Merchant asked Rob who was going to pay for the plow. Now, Hobbits do not have a formal court system in the same way that we "Big Folk" do. When a Hobbit violates one of "The Rules," as they refer to their laws, which have been handed down since ancient times, it falls upon the master of the house to serve as a combination policeman, judge, and warden. Because Dale and Sam live on Rob's farm The Merchant demanded that Rob insure that he receive nine gold coins for the broken plow.

After listening to The Merchant, Rob decided that his claim was justified and Sam and Dale would have to pay for the plow. One would have to pay five coins and the other would have to pay four, but he was not sure which one should pay more. To make matters worse, "The Rules" prevented Rob from getting personally involved with the settlement. Sam had told Rob that he could only afford to pay four coins for the plow because he needed to pay off the balance of the mortgage on the house he owns in town. He had been saving all year to pay it off. The balance due was one hundred gold coins and Sam only had one hundred and four coins. If he had to pay The Merchant more than four coins he would not have enough left for his mortgage, and since it was due next week he would lose his house. Rob was not sure what to do so he considered his choices. On the one hand, he felt he had an obligation to make Sam pay more than Dale because it was Sam's carelessness that caused the plow to break. On the other hand, if he made Dale pay the extra coin Sam would not lose his house.

If you were Rob what do you think you would do?

- a) Have Dale pay more than Sam.
- b) Have Sam pay more than Dale.

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Not at all sure and 5 = Extremely sure, how strongly do you believe this is the right choice?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all sure				Extremely Sure

V. Stealing

After they had finished their affairs with The Merchant, the Hobbits had dinner and went to bed. They got up early the next morning and began working. While the Hobbits were working in the field, a friend of Rob's came by with news of his mother. Rob's mother had a problem with her eyesight. She needed an operation to restore her eyesight which was failing rapidly. Unfortunately, Rob did not have the money for this operation. He needed one hundred gold coins. Rob's friend told him that his mother's eyesight was getting worse and that she might go blind. The only one who had that much money was Mr. Maggot, a miserly old Scrooge who lived on the next farm. Rob went over to ask him for the money, and Mr. Maggot turned him down. He said that he had worked and saved for a long time and that he wanted to keep his coins. Rob left Maggot's farm, but while he was leaving he saw that Mr. Maggot was going in to town for the afternoon. Rob had seen where Mr. Maggot kept his gold coins and he knew that he could come back in the afternoon and steal the 100 coins. Mr. Maggot had a whole room full of gold coins and would probably never even miss one hundred. Rob knew that there was no other way for him to get that many coins. He wasn't sure about what to do so he considered his choices. On the one hand, he felt he had an obligation to respect Mr. Maggot's right to keep the coins. On the other hand, he knew that if his mother did not have an operation she would probably lose her eyesight.

If you were Rob what do you think you would do?

- a) Not take the coins.
- b) Take the coins.

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Not at all sure and 5 = Extremely sure, how strongly do you believe this is the right choice?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all sure				Extremely Sure

VI. Punishment

Suppose that before Rob could decide what to do, Sam, who knew about Rob's mother, had already taken the money, and that he had a friend help him. Together, they had taken 200 coins. When Mr. Maggot got back from town he discovered right away that the coins were missing (because it was his peculiar habit to count them three times a day) and went immediately to

Rob's farm. At the farm he asked Rob to search the house and they found the 200 coins in Sam's room where he had hidden them. Confronted with the evidence, Sam confessed that he had indeed stolen them. Since Sam and his friend came under Rob's jurisdiction, Mr. Maggot demanded that Rob punish them for stealing the coins, because Hobbits consider stealing a very severe violation of "The Rules." Rob knew the standard punishment for an offense as severe as stealing was to serve time with one's head and hands locked in the pillories in the town square as a form of public humiliation. It was Rob's decision about how much time each Hobbit should spend in the pillories.

After confessing, Sam said that he took the coins to give his half to Rob for his mother's operation. Sam's friend, on the other hand, said that he took the coins so that he could use his half to take a vacation trip that he had always wanted. Rob knew that stealing was a very serious offense and he thought about how he might punish Sam and his friend. On the one hand, he felt that he had an obligation to sentence them both to the same amount of time as punishment because they had both committed the same offense. On the other hand, he could sentence Sam to less time because he had taken the money in order to try and do some good.

If you were Rob what do you think you would do?

- a) Punish Sam less than the friend.
- b) Punish Sam and the friend equally.

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = Not at all sure and 5 = Extremely sure, how strongly do you believe this is the right choice?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all sure				Extremely Sure

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