

# Contents

Acknowledgements 13

Preface 15

## PART ONE: PROBLEMS AND METHODS

Chapter 1 The Problems 19

Chapter 2 The Scope and Limits of Moral Argument 22

1. *Preliminaries* 22

2. *Moral Disagreements* 23

3. *The Interplay Between Responses and General Beliefs* 26

4. *Why Have General Moral Beliefs?* 29

5. *Degrees of Guidance* 31

6. *Is It Futile to Propose Moral Beliefs?* 31

7. *Imaginary Cases* 33

8. *The Possibility of Disagreement* 35

## PART TWO: MORAL THEORY

Chapter 3 The Sanctity of Life 39

1. *Direct Objections and Side-effects* 40

2. *Stating the Principle of the Sanctity of Life* 41

3. *The Boundary Between Life and Death* 43

4. *'Being Alive Is Intrinsically Valuable'* 45

5. *'Being Conscious Is Intrinsically Valuable'* 46

6. *'Being Human Is Intrinsically Valuable'* 50

7. *The Concept of a 'Life Worth Living'* 51

8. *Is the Desire to Live the Criterion of a Worth-While Life?* 53

9. *Length of Life* 54

10. *The 'No Trade-Off' View* 57

11. *The Social Effects of Abandoning the Sanctity of Life* 58

## CONTENTS

### Chapter 4 Actual and Potential People 60

1. *Utilitarianism* 62
2. *The 'Person-Affecting' Restriction* 66
3. *Extra Happy People* 69
4. *An Evaluation of the Utilitarian View of Killing* 71

### Chapter 5 Autonomy and Rights 74

1. *Paternalism* 75
2. *When Do Questions of Autonomy Arise?* 76
3. *Respect for Autonomy as an Objection to Killing Independent of Mental-State Utilitarianism* 78
4. *The Preference for Autonomy* 80
5. *Trade-Off* 82
6. *Is There a Right to Life?* 83

### Chapter 6 Ends and Means: Double Effect 86

### Chapter 7 Not Striving to Keep Alive 92

1. *The Sources of Strength of the Acts and Omissions Doctrine* 94
2. *Varieties of Omission* 95
3. *Acts, Omissions and Negative Utilitarianism* 96
4. *Probability of Outcome* 98
5. *Side-Effects* 99
6. *Who is Wronged?* 100
7. *Not Playing God* 102
8. *The View of Father Zossima's Brother, and the Impossibility of Doing All Good Things* 104
9. *Laws and Conventional Moral Rules* 107
10. *Agents and Moral Critics* 109
11. *The Effects of Blame for Omissions* 110

### Chapter 8 Some Conclusions 113

1. *The Direct Wrongness of Killing* 113
2. *Side-Effects and the Wrongness of Killing* 114

3. *The Possibility of Beneficial Side-Effects* 115
4. *Saving Lives* 116

## PART THREE: PRACTICE

## Chapter 9 Abortion: The Traditional Approach 119

1. *The Claim That the Foetus is a Human Being* 121
2. *The Foetus as a Potential Person* 122
3. *When Does One Become a Person?* 123
4. *The Inadequacy of Sharp Boundaries* 126

## Chapter 10 Abortion: Women's Rights Arguments 129

1. *The Appeal to Self-Defence* 130
2. *The Ownership Argument* 131
3. *The Priority Argument* 132
4. *Abortion and Extraction* 135

## Chapter 11 Abortion Reconsidered 137

1. *Abandoning the Sanctity of Life* 138
2. *How Wrong is Deliberate Non-Conception?* 140
3. *Side-Effects of Abortion* 142
4. *The Morality of Freely Available Abortion* 144
5. *When It Is Wrong Not to Have an Abortion* 145
6. *Handicap and Worth-While Life* 147
7. *A Consequence of Some 'Sanctity of Life' Views* 149

## Chapter 12 Infanticide 150

1. *The Problem* 150
2. *Some Traditional Answers* 154
3. *Autonomy* 156
4. *Worth-While Life* 158
5. *The Relative Weakness of the Direct Objections to Infanticide* 162
6. *Side-Effects: Those Closely Affected* 163
7. *Side-Effects and Society: The Wedge Problem* 164
8. *Towards a Social Policy* 168

## CONTENTS

- Chapter 13 Suicide and Gambling with Life 170**
- 1. The Variety of Suicidal and Near-Suicidal Acts 172*
  - 2. Questions for the Person Thinking of Suicide 173*
  - 3. Intervention: The Problems 175*
  - 4. Intervention: A Policy 176*
  - 5. Paternalism and Gambling with Life 179*
- Chapter 14 Voluntary Euthanasia 182**
- 1. Problems of the Euthanasia Request 185*
  - 2. Side-Effects 186*
  - 3. Suggestion 188*
- Chapter 15 Euthanasia without Request 190**
- 1. Repudiation of Involuntary Euthanasia 191*
  - 2. Non-Voluntary Euthanasia 192*
  - 3. Lives Not Worth Living 192*
  - 4. The Alternatives 194*
  - 5. Ordinary and Extraordinary Means 195*
  - 6. Not Prolonging Dying 197*
  - 7. An Assessment of the Alternatives 198*
  - 8. Side-Effects: Franz Stangl 201*
- Chapter 16 Numbers 203**
- 1. Choices in Ignorance 205*
  - 2. The Maximizing Policy 206*
  - 3. Certain Death for a Known Person and 'Statistical' Death 210*
  - 4. Medical Experiments 213*
- Chapter 17 Choices Between People 217**
- 1. Interventionism 218*
  - 2. Lives or Life-Years: The Relevance of Age 220*
  - 3. Side-Effects 222*
  - 4. Quality of Life 223*
  - 5. Moral Status 224*
  - 6. Theory and Practice 226*

## Chapter 18 Execution and Assassination 228

1. *The Absolutist Rejection of Capital Punishment* 231
2. *A Utilitarian Approach* 233
3. *Deterrence and Murder* 236
4. *Deterrence and Political Crimes by Opposition Groups* 240
5. *Deterrence and Political Crimes by the Authorities* 243
6. *Assassination and Terrorism* 246
7. *Gambling with the Lives of Others* 249

## Chapter 19 War 251

1. *The Views of Patriots and Other Believers* 253
2. *Absolute Pacifism* 255
3. *Contingent Pacifism* 258
4. *Government Decisions for and against Nuclear War* 261
5. *Nuclear Threats and Deterrence* 264
6. *Government Decisions for and against Conventional War: Aggression and Defence* 268
7. *Individual Decisions about Participation in War* 270
8. *War Crimes and the Rules of War* 273
9. *Revolution and Wars of National Liberation* 279
10. *Concluding Note* 284

## Chapter 20 Moral Distance 286

1. *Moral Distance* 287
2. *Defence Mechanisms* 290
3. *Rationalist Man* 292
4. *Difficulty and Intuitive Basis* 293
5. *Moral Conservatism* 295

Bibliography 299

Index 325