

CONTENTS

Preface and Acknowledgments vii

Introduction: Death and the Shallow Pond	1
PART I. THE GIVING PHILOSOPHY	5
1 Vienna, Melbourne	7
2 Oxford: Philosophy Awakes	14
3 Vietnam, East Pakistan	29
4 Bob's Bugatti	43
5 From the Pond to the World	54
6 Turning Point in the Grave	67
7 Growing Pains	79
8 Longtermism	89
PART II. CHARITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS	99
9 Laboratory in the Mind	101

vi CONTENTS

10	Shallow Ponds in Deep Waters	112
11	Moral Math, Play Pumps, and Microloans	126
12	Mrs. Jellyby and Groundhog Day	141
13	The New White Man's Burden	149
14	The Mega-Rich and the Pearly Gates	158
15	Righting Past Wrongs	169
16	Distance and Dignity	174
17	The Harm You Do	180
18	Rattling the Can	195
19	The Art of the Feel	205
	Postscript: Singer's Swan Song	219

Notes 233

Bibliography 247

Index 261

INTRODUCTION

Death and the Shallow Pond

More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. . . . For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and skill to relieve the suffering of these people.

—HARRY TRUMAN, INAUGURAL ADDRESS,
JANUARY 20, 1949

ON YOUR WAY TO WORK, you pass a small pond. On hot days, children sometimes play in the pond, which is only about knee-deep. The weather's cool today, though, and the hour is early, so you are surprised to see a child splashing around in it. As you get closer, you see that she is a very young child, a toddler, and that she is flailing about, unable to stay upright or walk out of the pond. You look for the parents or babysitter, but there is no one in the vicinity. The child is unable to keep her head above the water for more than a few seconds at a time. If you don't wade in and pull her out, she seems likely to drown. Wading in is easy and safe, but you will ruin the new shoes you bought only a few days ago and get your suit wet and muddy. By the time you hand over the child

to someone responsible for her, and change your clothes, you'll be late for work. What should you do?¹

Philosophers sometimes posit scenarios, or "thought experiments," in which it's not clear how you should act. This is not one of those cases. It is not offered as a genuine dilemma. You are not supposed to scratch your chin and seriously weigh up the options. "What should you do?" here is a purely rhetorical question. Indeed, when I present the imaginary situation to my (nonphilosopher) friends, as I have done numerous times, a typical reaction is awkward laughter. The idea that a person could be concerned about being late for an appointment or about getting their garments muddy when a child's life is at stake is obviously preposterous. We'd regard anybody who worried about their clothes in such a situation as morally warped, and quite possibly dangerous.

So if the answer to the thought experiment is not in doubt, what is its point? Well, one philosopher, Peter Singer, uses it as evidence for a radical claim. Over the years, the exact wording of this claim has evolved a little, but the original version went like this. "If it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we ought, morally, to do it."²

Why is this so radical? Because, according to Singer, most of us in the affluent world metaphorically walk past such a shallow pond every day of our lives. You, reader, are probably one of those to whom Singer's argument is addressed. There are people dying of poverty and disease every day. Obviously, that is an extremely regrettable state of affairs. What's more, Singer thinks, these people can easily be helped. There are multiple charities that operate in the developing world with a mission to help those most in need. Many of us are sufficiently well-off to donate to these charities with money that we would other-

wise spend on relatively trivial things. We could donate enough to save a life (or indeed lives). That is what we are morally required to do. If we know we can save a life, and fail to do so, we're no better than the person who ignores the toddler's cries, choosing instead to keep their clothes clean.

It's been described as "the most famous argument in modern philosophy."³ And it is unlikely that any article has been assigned so frequently on university ethics courses as "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," in which the Shallow Pond makes its first appearance. Nor—at least in the Anglo-American world—is there any philosopher better known outside philosophy than its author, Peter Singer, who is, according to taste, admired or despised.

The Shallow Pond has spawned an enormous literature. My aim in this book is to explain its peculiar philosophical power and appeal, as well as the trenchant philosophical criticism to which it has been subjected. But there are more dimensions to the Shallow Pond than just the philosophical. There are riveting psychological, economic, and sociological angles, all of which I explore. Nor is the Shallow Pond of mere academic interest. I will tell the story of how the thought experiment came about and how it has had a huge real-world effect—for the better, it seems to me, though much for the worse according to some detractors.

Its success has derived principally from a movement known as "effective altruism," which began in Oxford more than three decades after the original publication of Singer's article. The founders were two young Oxford-based philosophers, Toby Ord and Will MacAskill. Effective altruism encourages the relatively well-off to give more, but also directs donations toward particular "effective" causes. We might wonder, for example, whether to give money to a college scholarship fund for poor kids, an art museum, a charity to fund lifeboats, a charity supporting military veterans or one supporting sick animals, a cancer research

institute, or a charity providing emergency support for victims of natural disasters. Effective altruists say they can help here. They've been successful in persuading many people—including some mega-rich people—to join their moral crusade. This in turn, they say, has transformed (for the better) the lives of those at the receiving end of these funds. Others deride the benefits of aid as illusionary.

Is the argument from the Shallow Pond watertight? Does this pond provide a compelling analogy with the real world? Should we all be effective altruists? Opponents scattergun those who take seriously the supposed implications of the thought experiment with a range of objections. I will endeavor to impose some order on these misgivings, though the criticisms overlap. One feature they share is that they are expressed in surprisingly trenchant, often *ad hominem* ways. Effective altruists are bad philosophers, and their philosophy is “repugnant.”⁴ Repugnant! It has always been fascinating to me that individuals dedicated to giving away a not-insubstantial percentage of their income have attracted so much abuse and opprobrium.

While the first half of this book tells the story of how the Shallow Pond thought experiment arose, and its impact, the second half is mainly focused on objections to it. *Death in a Shallow Pond* is not a polemic. It presents and attempts to grapple with the arguments. I hope it is evenhanded in its assessment.

If, by the end, you are unpersuaded by the analogy, you will feel justified in carrying on as normal. If, on the other hand, you find it compelling, you may feel duty bound to rethink how you live your life.

INDEX

- abortion: Foot's article on, 23;
 legalization of, 13, 23, 25; Minerva's
 article on, 225–26; moral status of
 the fetus and, 26, 220, 226; Thomson's
 article on, 26
- Abortion Act (Britain, 1967), 23
- Abortion Law Reform Association
 (Australia), 13
- Account thought experiment, 51
- Acemoglu, Daron, and James
 Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*,
 192
- activism, vii, 7, 12, 73, 85
- ad hominem arguments, 4, 214
- Africa: Millennium Villages Project in,
 188; money sent to the poor in, 128;
 PlayPumps in, 130; sanitation systems
 in, 130; snail-borne disease in, 76;
 water-borne disease in, 62
- AI. *See* artificial intelligence
- aid. *See* charity; effective altruism;
 international aid
- AIDS. *See* HIV/AIDS
- Alexander, Scott, 129–30
- Alexandrie, Gustav, “The Life You Can
 Save,” 229, 246n31
- alienation, 121–22
- All Souls College, Oxford, 89
- Althusser, Louis, 32
- Ambrose, Saint, 218
- American Philosophical Association,
 25–26
- Analytic philosophy, 169–70
- Andre, Peter, 196, 244n3
- Animal Liberation Front, 222
- animal rights/welfare, 35–37, 89,
 156–57, 221–22, 227–28
- animals: effective altruism and, 89;
 human romantic/sexual relations
 with, 223–24, 226; human vs.
 nonhuman, 37, 219–20; scientific
 research on, 34, 36; Singer and, 9,
 34–37, 221–22, 227–28; treatment
 of, in food production and scientific
 research, 34–36, 68, 156–57, 227–28.
 See also animal rights/welfare
- Anscombe, Elizabeth, 19; *Mr Truman's
 Degree*, 19
- apes, 222
- Aquinas, Thomas, 218
- Armitage, Richard, 180–82
- Arthur Sims scholarship, 14
- artificial intelligence (AI), 60, 93,
 96–97, 167, 215, 230
- Asana, 165
- Asch, Solomon, 201–2
- Austin, J. L., 16–19; “A Plea for
 Excuses,” 17–18
- Australia: and European Jewry, 8–9;
 Singer's career in, 219, 221–22, 226

- Ayer, A. J., 15–16, 18–20, 22; *Language, Truth and Logic*, 15
- Baked-bean Bandits thought experiment, 24–25
- Baker, Jack, 25
- Balliol College, Oxford, 33–34, 58, 67–68, 77
- Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan), 38–42, 176, 232
- Bankman-Fried, Sam (SBF), 112–21, 124–25, 158–59, 165, 214, 229
- Barrios, Yonni, 197, 198
- Bauer, Peter, *Dissent on Development*, 184
- Beatles, 20, 75
- Beauvoir, Simone de, 22
- Beetle in the Box thought experiment, 103
- Belgium, 172
- Bentham, Jeremy, 12, 37, 115
- Berger, John, 132
- Berggruen Prize, 227, 229
- Bernoulli, Daniel, 239n7
- Besley, Tim, 193
- bestiality, 223–24. *See also* zoophilia
- Biafran famine (1968), 207
- Biden, Joe, 117
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 77
- Billionaire critique, 158–68
- Blair, Tony, 112–13
- blameless wrongdoing, 58
- Blood, Archer, and the Blood Telegram, 40–41
- Bob the Bugatti Owner thought experiment, 52
- Bostrom, Nick, 96, 167
- Brady, Tom, 113–14
- Breeze, Beth, 135
- bribery. *See* corruption/bribery
- Bridgewater Associates, 62
- Britain: food in, 33; social-economic context of the 1960s, 20–21
- Brodeur, Paul, 205
- Broome, John, 68
- Buerk, Michael, 177
- Buffett, Warren, 165, 167
- Burna Boy, 177
- Bystander Effect, 202
- California, 157
- calves, 34, 156–57
- Cambridge. *See* University of Cambridge
- capitalism, 153–54
- capital punishment, 12, 23
- carbon-trading, 73
- Care International, 73, 74
- Carnegie, Andrew, 158, 162, 165
- Caviola, Lucius, 211–12
- Centre for Effective Altruism (CEA), 82–83, 124, 151
- charity: advice for seeking, 159–60; annual US contributions to, 127; compensation/reparations vs., 172–73; criticisms of, 180–94; data on organizations distributing, 60–63, 84, 128, 209; dilemmas involved in, 58, 86; duty vs., 84; effectiveness of, 60–63, 84, 128–40, 183–94, 203–4, 211–12; Marx’s and Engels’s criticism of, 149; maximizing effects of, 3–4, 60–63; mega-rich’s role in, 158–68; moral responsibility for, 2–3, 38, 44–45, 49; motivations behind, 205–14; overhead expenses involved in, 60–61, 63, 203; personal factors in, 122–23, 138, 204, 211–12; pledges for, 38, 56–59, 68–69, 74,

- 77–78, 83, 87, 151, 165, 181, 206, 238n7;
power dynamics in, 175–76; Singer
and, 37–38, 61–62, 66, 143, 165–66,
227–29, 231. *See also* critiques;
effective altruism; international
aid; strangers
- Charles III, King (formerly Prince of
Wales), 135
- charter schools, 163
- chickens, 34–37, 156–57, 224
- Child in a Well thought experiment, 103
- Child or Painting thought experiment,
109–10
- Chile, 196–97
- China, 227
- Chinese Room thought experiment, 103
- Christianity, 41, 69, 177, 225
- civil disobedience, 29–30
- Civil Rights Act (United States, 1964),
25
- Clapham omnibus, 87, 237n14
- Clapton, Eric, 42
- Clare's Decision thought experiment,
58
- climate change, 69, 73, 93, 94
- Clinton, Bill, 112
- Cockburn, Claud, 196
- Cohen, Marshall, 26
- Columbia University, 62
- Combs, Sean "Diddy," 114
- communications, and charitable giving,
84, 87–88, 179
- communications technology, advances
in, 45, 83–84
- Companion of the Order of Australia,
226
- compensation, 172–73
- concert for Bangladesh, 41–42, 176
- Concorde project, 42
- consequentialism, 58, 144. *See also*
utilitarianism
- Continental philosophy, 169–70
- corruption/bribery, 139, 183–85, 187
- critiques: Billionaire, 158–68; Demand-
ingness, 141–48; Effectiveness, 183–94;
Historical Injustice, 169–73; Identity,
177; Institutional, 149–57, 170;
Motivational, 205–14; Numbers,
128–40; overview of, 231–32;
Power, 174–79; Psychological,
45–47, 196–204; Thought Experi-
ment, 105–11; Utilitarian, 118–25
- Crouch, William. *See* MacAskill, Will
- Crypto Bahamas conference, 112
- crypto currency, 113, 115
- cults, 215–17
- cultural programs, effectiveness of gifts
to, 129–30
- Cushman, Fiery, 212–13
- Daily Mail* (British newspaper), 69, 226
- The Daily Show* (television program),
117
- Deaton, Angus, 179, 185–86, 189–91, 194,
217, 231; *The Great Escape*, 186, 190
- Dekkers, Midas, *Dearest Pet: On*
Bestiality, 223–24
- Demandingness critique, 141–48
- democracy: philanthropy and, 163;
rule-following in, 30
- Democratic Party, 117
- Democratic Republic of Congo
(DRC), 171–72
- Denmark, 154
- Dennett, Daniel, 203
- deontological constraints, 109
- Dercon, Stefan, 192–94; *Gambling on*
Development, 188–89

- determinism, 32–33
- developing world, cost effectiveness of
 - giving to, 63, 131, 137
- deworming, 128, 131–32
- Dickens, Charles, *Bleak House*, 143–44
- dilemmas: inevitability of, 27; I–We, 86; Shallow Pond thought experiment and, 1–2
- disability, 220–21, 223, 225, 232, 245n2
- discount rate, 91
- Disease Control Priorities Project (DCPP/DCP₂), 60–61
- distance, as consideration in moral action, 45
- distortion of resources effect, 189
- donors, motivations of, 85, 122–23, 205–14
- Dostoevsky, Fyodor, 69
- DRC. *See* Democratic Republic of Congo
- Dunn, Jamel, 195
- duty. *See* moral responsibility
- Dworkin, Ronald, 38
- Dylan, Bob, 42
- EA. *See* effective altruism
- EA Forum. *See* Effective Altruism Forum
- Easterly, William, 189, 231
- East Pakistan. *See* Bangladesh
- education: effectiveness of gifts to, 129, 132; the mega-rich's influence on, 163
- effective altruism (EA): Bankman-Fried and, 114–15, 117–18, 121, 124, 158–59, 165, 229; causes and issues addressed by, 97, 230; claims and promises of, 3–4, 80; communications in, 84, 87–88, 179; criticisms of, 4, 87, 118, 123–24, 137–40, 149–57, 166, 190, 214–17, 230–32; cult-like aspects of, 215–17; demographics in, 150–58, 215; earn-to-give as basis of, 71, 80–81, 87, 121–22; financing of the operations of, 82–83, 88; growing pains of, 85–88; growth of, 82–88; long-term planning for, 91–97, 166, 215; MacAskill's role in, vii, 3, 67–75, 77–81, 84–87, 114, 127, 230; measurements of effectiveness in, 60–63, 84, 128–40, 183–94, 203, 211–12; and the mega-rich, 158–68; messaging and public relations involving, 84–88; negative attitudes toward, 4, 214–17; Ord's role in, 56–69, 74, 77–79, 85–87; origins of, vii, 3, 55, 59, 66, 68–69, 74, 77–82; Parfit's influence on, 90; philosophical vs. practical aspects of, 87–88; power dynamics in, 176; precursor of, 161; and rationalist movement, 167; scope of, 89; Singer's role in, vii, 66, 74, 82, 115, 122, 127, 165–66, 225, 229; utilitarianism and, 118, 124, 127, 155, 191, 218. *See also* charity; critiques; Giving What We Can
- Effective Altruism Forum (EA Forum), 87, 129–30, 139–40, 152
- Effectiveness critique, 183–94
- effectiveness of charity, 60–63, 84, 128–40, 183–94, 203–4, 211–12
- Effective Ventures Foundation, 139, 230
- Efficiency Movement, 161
- 80,000 Hours, 79–82, 161
- Ellison, Caroline, 119
- Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 19

- Engels, Friedrich, 149
- Envelope thought experiment, 49–50
- environmental politics. *See* climate change
- epistemology, 48, 102–3
- ethics: application of, 19–20, 23–28, 38, 52–53, 73–74; fast vs. slow thinking in, 11–12; intuitionism and, 10; in life-or-death or quality-of-life decisions, 64–65. *See also* moral decision making; moral philosophy; moral responsibility
- Ethiopia, 71–72, 177, 187
- eugenics, 221, 225
- European Union (EU), 157, 194
- euthanasia, 44, 220–21
- Evans, Gareth, 13, 226
- existential risks, 68, 92–93, 96–97, 215, 216
- expected value, 115–16
- Facebook, 97, 164
- Fenwick, Alan (“Snail Man”), 75–78
- fetus, personhood of, 26, 219–20, 226
- Fistula Foundation, 123–24
- Foot, Philippa, 38, 104, 173; *The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of the Double Effect*, 23
- Forbes, Steve, 223
- Foucault, Michel, 31
- Francione, Gary, 246n27
- freedom of speech, 225–26
- Freud, Sigmund, 8
- FTX, 113–14, 117, 119, 214, 229–30
- Future Fund, 117
- Future of Humanity Institute, 60, 96, 167, 215
- future people, 24, 89–95, 204
- Gandhi, Mahatma, 135–36
- Gates, Bill, 161, 162, 165, 166, 229.
See also Gates Foundation
- Gates, Frederick T., 159–62
- Gates, Melinda, 165, 229. *See also* Gates Foundation
- Gates Foundation, 163, 189
- Geldof, Bob, 177
- gender, effective altruism and, 150–57
- gifts. *See* charity
- GiveDirectly, 128, 179
- GiveWell, 63, 97, 110, 128, 132, 182, 191, 231
- GivingMultiplier.org, 212
- Giving Pledge, 165, 231
- Giving What We Can, 59, 66, 68–69, 74, 77–79, 81, 83, 88, 93–94, 128, 151, 182, 212, 230–31. *See also* effective altruism
- global justice, 58, 150, 171–73
- Global Priorities Institute, 215
- Glover, Jonathan, 24, 32; *Responsibility*, 32
- Godfather II* (film), 169–70
- Goldman Sachs, 72
- good life, 147, 227
- Good Ventures, 238n14
- government aid. *See* international aid
- Great Ape Project, 222
- Great Famine (India, 1876–78), 207
- Green Button thought experiment, 146–47
- Greene, Joshua, 211–12
- Green Party (Australia), 222
- Griffin, James, 24, 32
- guilt, for one’s actions/inactions, 40, 85, 201

- Hamilton, Lewis, 113
- happiness, maximization of, 10–11, 104, 115, 118–20
- Hare, R. M., 15, 29–30
- Harman, Gilbert, 47–48
- Harrison, George, 41–42, 176
- Hart, H.L.A., 15, 30
- Hassenfeld, Elie, 61–63
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 30
- Heidegger, Martin, 31, 169
- Helmsley, Leona, 126–27
- hens. *See* chickens
- Historical Injustice critique, 169–73
- Hitler, Adolf, 9, 22
- HIV/AIDS, 61, 70, 76, 96, 183–85, 189
- Holland, Frank, 13
- homosexuality: legalization of, 12, 23; and marriage, 25
- Hopper, Grace M., 126
- Howard University, 222
- Humane League, 156
- humans: existential risks for, 68, 92–93, 96–97, 215, 216; nonhuman animals compared to, 37, 219–20; romantic/sexual relations between nonhuman animals and, 223–24, 226
- Hume, David, 103
- Humphrys, John, 81
- Hutchesons' Grammar School, 70
- Hutchinson, Michelle, 82, 83
- Hutus, 188
- Identifiable Victim Effect, 197–99, 207
- identity, as consideration in moral action, 45–46, 177, 196–99. *See also* strangers
- images, psychological impact of, 207–9
- impartiality, 118, 121–24, 127, 204, 217. *See also* objectivism
- individualism, critique of, 150
- infanticide, 220, 224, 226, 246n20
- Institutional critique, 149–57, 170
- international aid, 164, 178–79, 183–94, 231–32
- interventions, measuring effectiveness of, 61, 64, 132–37, 152, 191
- intuition: formation of, 96, 106; Singer's early exposure to ethics based on, 10; thought experiments as means of examining, 49–52, 92, 104, 119, 203; unreliability/potential for harm of, 96, 106, 109–10, 119; utilitarian critique of, 10–11, 109–10, 119
- intuitionism, 10–11
- intuition pump, 203
- Invisible Hand metaphor, 43
- I–We problems, 86
- Jackson, Frank, 102–3
- Jay-Z, 130
- Jews: Australian response to plight of, 8–9; charitable practices of, 178; Hassenfeld and, 62; Schindler's saving of, 85; Singer and, 8–9, 14, 221; Unger and, 47
- Johnson, Lyndon B., 12
- Journal of Controversial Ideas*, 225–27
- J. P. Morgan, 72
- Just Giving, 209
- Kanbur, Ravi, 193
- Kant, Immanuel, 217
- Karnofsky, Holden, 62–63
- Keneally, Thomas, 85
- Keshen, Richard, 33–34
- Key thought experiment, 107
- Khan, Yahya, 39
- kidney donation, 181–82

- kidney failure, 64–65
- Kindergarten (philosophical discussion group), 18
- Kliemt, H., 221
- knowledge. *See* epistemology
- Kuhse, Helga, and Peter Singer, *Should the Baby Live*, 220
- Kurdi, Aylan, 208
- language, analysis of rules and practices of, 16–18, 72
- La Trobe University, 219
- Lazari-Radek, Katarzyna de, 227
- Lennon, John, 75
- Leonardo da Vinci, 166
- Leslie, Bruce, 129
- LessWrong, 167
- Lévy, Bernard-Henri, viii
- Lewis, David, 48
- Lewis, Michael, 117, 120
- life: characteristics of a “good life,” 147, 227; comparison of interventions concerning, 64; economic calculations concerning, 63–64, 110–11, 128, 132–33, 211
- The Life You Can Save, 128, 228–29, 231
- Lindauer, Matthew, 213–14
- Live Aid, 177, 209
- logical positivism, 15–16, 19, 20
- Longtermism, 91–97, 117–18, 155, 166, 215
- Lynching thought experiment, 10–11
- MacAskill, Will: and Bankman-Fried, 114, 118, 214; commitments to charitable giving and work, 70–74, 78, 123–24, 139, 142, 208–9; criticisms of, 214; *Doing Good Better*, 127, 130, 137, 153, 162; education and academic interests of, 67–72; and effective altruism, vii, 3, 67–69, 74–75, 77–81, 86–87, 114, 127, 230; impact of, vii; and Longtermism, 94–95, 117, 166; philosophy of giving espoused by, 109–10, 123–24, 127, 130–31, 153–54, 168; on psychological impact of images, 208–9; and public relations, 79–81, 84–85, 117–18; short story by, 229; *What We Owe the Future*, 94–95, 117, 166; youth of, 69–70
- Mackie, John, 15
- Make-A-Wish Foundation, 137
- malaria, 60, 64, 128, 132, 134, 142, 162, 182
- Mandela, Nelson, 130
- Marcuse, Herbert, 22
- martyrdom effect, 209
- Marx, Karl, 7–8, 30
- Marxism, 31
- Mary’s Room thought experiment, 102–3, 105
- Mascarenhas, Anthony, 41
- matching donations, 210, 211–12
- mathematics. *See* moral decision making: numbers/statistics used in; moral mathematics; Numbers critique
- Matheny, Jason, 60
- McCartney, Paul, 75
- McCloskey, H. J., 10
- McConnell, Michael, 25
- McCormick, Katharine, 164
- McMahan, Jeff, 225
- Médecins sans frontières (MSF; Doctors without Borders), 191–92
- mega-rich, 158–68
- Mencius, 103
- Mengistu Haile Mariam, 187

- metrics, issues in determining and using, 132–33. *See also* moral decision making: numbers/statistics used in
- Miami Heat, 113
- microfinance, 134–35
- Mill, John Stuart, 12
- Millennium Villages Project, 188
- Minerva, Francesca, 225–26, 246n20
- Missing Shade of Blue thought experiment, 103
- Monash University, 219
- moral decision making: Clare's
 - Decision thought experiment in, 58; Dostoevsky's novels and, 69;
 - in health care situations, 64–65;
 - I–We problems and, 86; numbers/statistics used in, 60–63, 84, 128–40;
 - personal factors in, 122–23, 138, 204;
 - reality conditions for, 106–7; relevance considerations in, 45–47, 49–52, 90–91; role of uncertainty in, 67–68, 73. *See also* moral responsibility
- morally relevant distinctions, 45–47, 49–52, 90–91
- moral mathematics, 137–40. *See also* moral decision making: numbers/statistics used in
- moral philosophy: and applied ethics, 20; objectivity of, 89–91; Oxford approaches to, 15–16, 19–20, 23–25, 30–31. *See also* ethics
- moral responsibility: for acts with negligible effects, 24–25; and blameless wrongdoing, 58; for charity, 2–3, 38, 44–45, 49; charity vs., 84–85; Demandingness critique and, 141–48; determinism and, 32–33; distance as consideration in, 45; Glover's lectures on, 32–33; identity as consideration in, 45–46; Longtermism and, 91–97; psychological considerations not relevant to, 45–47, 58; Psychological critique and, 196–204; relevance considerations in determining, 45–47, 49–52, 90–91; Shallow Pond thought experiment and, 2–3; Singer's basic premise on, 2, 42, 125, 232; special obligations and, 144–48; for strangers, 42, 127, 153, 231; time as consideration in, 91. *See also* good life; moral decision making
- moral status: of fetuses and newborns, 26, 219–20, 226; of human vs. nonhuman animals, 37, 219–20
- Moskovitz, Dustin, 97, 164–65, 182, 231, 238n14
- motivated reasoning, 138–39
- Motivational critique, 205–14
- Moyo, Dambisa, *Dead Aid*, 184, 185, 189
- Mrs. Jellyby (fictional character), 143–44, 148, 153
- Munk, Nina, *The Idealist*, 188
- Murphy, Liam, 145–46
- Musk, Elon, 166–67
- Nagel, Thomas, 26; “War and Massacre,” 27–28
- National Health Service (NHS; United Kingdom), 65, 69, 181
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Britain), 36, 164
- Naughton's Pub, Melbourne, Australia, 12
- Nazis, 20, 85, 221
- New College, Oxford, 32

- News of the World* (British newspaper), 196
- New Yorker* (magazine), viii, 71, 117, 139, 222
- New York Post* (newspaper), 226
- New York Review of Books* (NYRB; magazine), 35, 47
- New York Times* (newspaper), 165, 195
- New York Times* magazine, 61–62
- New York University, 47–48
- NHS. *See* National Health Service
- nonhuman animals. *See* animals
- Nørgaard, Bjørn, *The Horse Sacrifice*, 29
- Northern Ireland, 21
- Not Dead Yet, 223
- number of victims or potential helpers, as consideration in moral action, 46–47, 200–202
- Numbers critique, 128–40
- Nussbaum, Martha, 53, 150, 246n24
- objectivism, 89–91. *See also* impartiality
- obligation. *See* moral responsibility
- Oliver, Alex, 71
- “one thought too many,” 108–9
- One World Together, 179
- Open Philanthropy, 97
- Operation Searchlight, 40
- Oppenheim, David (Prague rabbi), 8
- Oppenheim, David (Singer’s grandfather), 8–9
- Ord, Alexis, 55
- Ord, Toby, vii, 3, 55–69, 74, 77–79, 85–87, 124, 167, 203
- ordinary language philosophy, 16–19
- overhead, of charity organizations, 60–61, 63, 203
- Oxford, 38, 44, 74, 80, 173, 177, 187, 192, 217
- Oxford. *See* University of Oxford
- Oxford Group, 34–35; *Animals, Men and Morals*, 35
- Oxford Review* (journal), 23
- pain, moral relevance of, 37, 87, 155
- Pakistan, 38–42. *See also* Bangladesh
- Paper-clip Problem thought experiment, 96–97
- Parfit, Derek, 24, 32, 86, 89–94, 125; *On What Matters*, 90, 92–93; *Reasons and Persons*, 58, 90, 92, 94
- paternalism, 178, 179
- peer pressure, 202
- Pell, Cardinal, 221–22
- Perry, Katy, 113
- philanthropy. *See* charity; effective altruism
- philosophy: argumentative culture of, 87; motivational value for donors of, 212–14; Oxford approaches to, 15–16, 19–20, 23–25, 30–31. *See also* moral philosophy
- Philosophy & Public Affairs* (PPA; journal), 26–28, 38
- Picasso painting, 109–10
- Plato, *Republic*, 103
- PlayPumps, 130
- pledges: demographics of, 151, 165; determining an amount for, 56–57, 74, 77–78, 181; institutionalization of, 57–59, 68–69, 77–78, 83, 87, 165; personal, 38, 56–57; philosophical underpinnings of, 93–94; psychology of committing to, 74, 181–82, 206; wording of, 93–94, 238n7
- Pliskin, Joseph S., 64–65

- Pogge, Thomas, 58
 polyamory, 216
 Pope, Alexander, 158
 population ethics, 24. *See also* future people
 poverty: causes of, 171–73; extreme, 131, 229
 Power critique, 174–79
Princeton Alumni Weekly, 222
 Princeton University, 129, 222–24, 227; Center for Human Values, 222
 Princeton University Press, 26
 Psychic Numbing, 201
 Psychological critique, 45–47, 196–204. *See also* Motivational critique
 psychopathy, 120
 Pummer, Theron, 146
 Putnam, Hilary, 103

 Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALYs), 65–66, 68, 133–35
 quality of life, 64
 Quine, W.V.O., 72

 race: charity and, 176–77; effective altruism and, 150–57; randomized control trials and, 136–37
Radical Philosophy (journal), 31–32
 randomized control trials (RCTs), 134–36
 rationalist movement, 167, 217
 Rawls, John, 26, 104; *A Theory of Justice*, 26, 229
 RCTs. *See* randomized control trials
 receivers of charity, attitudes of, 206
 reductio ad absurdum arguments, 105
 Réé, Jonathan, 31
 reflective equilibrium, 104–5
 refugees, 8–9, 40–42, 188, 207–8

 Rehman, Zia ur, 40
 religion, effectiveness of gifts to, 129
 reparations, 172–73
 Republican Party, 117
 rich. *See* mega-rich
 Ring of Gyges thought experiment, 103
 Robinson, James. *See* Acemoglu, Daron
 Rockefeller, John D., Sr., 160–62, 166
Roe v. Wade (United States, 1973), 25
 Rolex thought experiment, 108–10
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 162
 Rosenstein-Rodan, Paul, 188
 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 174, 176
 Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Britain), 36
 Russell, Bertrand, 22, 169, 222, 224; *History of Western Philosophy*, 9
 Rwanda, 188
 Ryder, Richard, 34, 37

 Sachs, Jeffrey, 54, 185, 188
 Samaritans, 73
 Sartre, Jean-Paul, 22
 Save the Children, 80, 188, 192, 198
 SBF. *See* Bankman-Fried, Sam
 Scanlon, Tim, 26
 Schindler, Oskar, 85
Schindler's List (film), 85
 schistosomiasis, 76–77
 Schistosomiasis Control Initiative (SCI) [now Unlimit Health], 77, 132, 237n15
 Schwitzgebel, Eric, 212–13
 SCI. *See* Schistosomiasis Control Initiative
 Scope Insensitivity, 200–201, 206
 Searle, John, 103
 sense data, 18

- Shallow Pond thought experiment:
ad hominem arguments against,
4; application of, 42; context for,
170–71; and future people, 95; as
an intuition pump, 203; morally
relevant distinctions involved in
considering, 45–47; overview of,
1–2; significance of, 3, 43–44, 47, 66,
83, 89, 97, 212, 214, 228–29, 231–32;
Unger's application of, 47–53;
variations of, 44. *See also* critiques
- Shankar, Ravi, 41
- Sidgwick, Henry, 9, 12
- Silicon Valley, 118, 161, 164, 166, 167
- Silvers, Robert, 35
- Sims, Arthur, 14
- Singer, Isaac Bashevis, 9
- Singer, Peter: activism of, vii, 7, 12–13;
and animal welfare, 9, 34–37, 89,
221–22, 227–28; on capitalism, 153;
and charity, 37–38, 61–62, 66, 143,
165–66, 213–14, 218, 227–29, 231; on
civil disobedience, 29–30; death
threats against, 222, 223, 225; educa-
tion of, 10–12, 14–15, 19–20, 24–25,
29–33; and effective altruism, 66, 74,
82, 115, 122, 127, 165–66, 225, 229; on
future persons, 97; goals of, 7;
impact of, vii, 8, 227–30; Jewish
heritage of, 8–9, 14, 221; on Marx,
7–8, 30; on moral responsibility, 2,
42, 125, 232; personal life of, viii,
8–15, 33, 222, 223, 225, 227, 231;
philosophical/argumentative
approach of, 11–13, 30, 219; and
politics, 222; reputation of/attitudes
toward, 3, 8, 47, 219–28; and subjec-
tivism, 90; teaching career of, 35, 47,
129, 219, 222–24, 227; and utilitarian-
ism, 10–12, 104–5, 109, 115, 118–19,
124, 219, 224, 231; and vegetarianism,
33–35. *See also* critiques; Shallow
Pond thought experiment; Singer,
Peter, works by
- Singer, Peter, works by: *Animal
Liberation*, 35–36, 47, 219, 222,
227–28; *Democracy and Disobedi-
ence*, 30; *The Expanding Circle*, 94;
“Famine, Affluence, and Morality,”
3, 43–46, 52, 55–56, 63, 66, 71, 74, 84,
85, 97, 124, 143, 182, 229; *The Life You
Can Save*, 44, 73, 137, 165, 228–29;
The Most Good You Can Do, 127;
Practical Ethics, 44, 45–46, 48, 57,
220–21; *Should the Baby Live* (with
Helga Kuhse), 220
- Singer, Renata (née Diamond), 14, 34, 38
- slavery, abolition of, 12
- Slim, Carlos, 162
- Smirl, Lisa, *Spaces of Aid*, 175–76
- Smith, Adam, 43
- Snail Man. *See* Fenwick, Alan
- snails, 75–77
- Society for Ethical and Legal
Philosophy (SELF), 25–26
- special obligations, 144–48
- speciesism, 37
- Spiegel*, *Der* (magazine), 221
- Spielberg, Steven, *Schindler's List*, 85
- Srinivasan, Amia, 151, 156
- Stalin, Joseph, 201
- Standard Oil, 162
- Starr, Ringo, 42
- statistics. *See* moral decision making:
numbers/statistics used in
- stipulation, 106
- St. Petersburg paradox, 115–16, 119,
239n7

- strangers: effective altruists' attitudes
toward, 153, 204, 214, 216; kidney
donations to, 181–82; moral
obligations to, 42, 127, 153, 231;
persons/causes with personal/local
connections compared to, 45–46,
58, 109, 138, 144, 181–82, 204, 205–6,
211; proximity of, 45. *See also*
charity; identity
- Strawson, Peter, 15
- subjectivism, 90
- Sun* (British newspaper), 207
- Sunday Times* (British newspaper), 41,
196
- Swarthmore College, 47
- sweatshops, 153–54
- Swift, Taylor, 114
- Sylvester, James Joseph, 126
- Syrian refugee crisis, 207–8
- taxes, 163
- Temkin, Larry, 108
- 10 percent, designated for charitable
contributions, 38, 57, 93, 166, 218,
238n7
- Teresa, Mother, 195
- Tet Offensive, 22
- Thomson, Judith Jarvis, 26–27, 111
- Thought Experiment critique, 105–11
- thought experiments: Account, 51;
Baked-bean Bandits, 24–25; Beetle
in the Box, 103; Bob the Bugatti
Owner, 52; Child in a Well, 103;
Child or Painting, 109–10; Chinese
Room, 103; Clare's Decision, 58;
critiques of, 105–11; Envelope,
49–50; Green Button, 146–47; Key,
107; Lynching, 10–11; Mary's Room,
102–3, 105; Missing Shade of Blue,
103; Paper-clip Problem, 96–97;
plausibility of, 105–7, 110–11; Ring
of Gyges, 103; Rolex, 108–10;
Transplants, 104–5; Trolley Prob-
lem, 23, 104, 119–20; Twin Earth,
103; Unconscious Violinist, 27, 111;
use of, 102–4; Vintage Sedan, 48–50;
Yacht, 50–51. *See also* Shallow Pond
thought experiment
- Thunderclap Newman, 23
- Time* (magazine), 117, 226
- Times* (British newspaper), 196, 197
- Today* (United Kingdom; radio show),
80–81
- Today* (United States; television
show), 47
- Todd, Ben, 79, 81
- Tony Blair Institute, 112
- trachoma, 59, 64, 131, 189, 213
- transhumanism, 118
- Transplant thought experiment,
104–5
- trolleyology, 23
- Trolley Problem thought experiment,
23, 104, 119–20
- Trouble (dog), 126–27
- Truman, Harry, 1, 19
- Tuesday Group (philosophical
discussion group), 18–19
- Tuna, Cari, 97, 165, 182, 238n14
- Turner, J.M.W., *Blue Rigi*, 130
- Tutsis, 188
- Twin Earth thought experiment, 103
- Uehiro Lectures in Practical Ethics, 66
- UK Department for International
Development, 189
- uncertainty, and moral theorizing,
67–68, 73

- Unconscious Violinist thought experiment, 27, 111
- Unger, Peter, 47–53, 71–72, 99, 107;
Living High and Letting Die, 48–53, 71, 80, 125, 150
- Unit Asking, 206–7
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 49, 51, 53
- United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), 40–42
- United States: charitable contributions from, 127, 158, 166; charitable contributions within, 129–30; Denmark compared to, 154; and Pakistan, 40–41; religious identification in, 129; and Vietnam War, 12, 21–23, 26–29
- University College, Oxford, 14, 35, 38
- University of Cambridge, 70–72
- University of Chicago, 160
- University of Oxford: All Souls College, 89; Balliol College, 33–34, 58, 67–68, 77; effective altruism and, 82–83; Future of Humanity Institute, 60, 96, 167, 215; MacAskill and, 72–73; New College, 32; Ord and, 54–60, 66–68; Oxfam and, 38; philosophy at, 14–25, 29–30; Singer and, 14, 19–21, 24–25, 29–35, 66; students critical of, 30–32; University College, 14, 35, 38; vegetarianism at, 34–35
- University of Victoria, 225
- University of Zurich, 221
- Unlimit Health. *See* Schistosomiasis Control Initiative
- US Supreme Court, 157
- Utilitarian critique, 118–25
- utilitarianism: alienation as outcome of, 121–22; Bankman-Fried and, 115–16, 119–20, 125; criticisms of, 120–21, 173; crude vs. sophisticated, 105, 120; effective altruism and, 118, 124, 127, 155, 191, 218; impartiality of, 118, 121–24, 127; inequality compatible with, 239n16; intuitionism vs., 10–11; MacAskill's schoolboy critique of, 70; maximization of happiness as principle of, 10–11, 104, 115, 118–20; and normal moral guidelines, 11, 120; and pain, 37; Singer and, 10–12, 104–5, 109, 115, 118–19, 124, 219, 224, 231. *See also* consequentialism
- value. *See* expected value
- values: earning-to-give as means of living in accord with, 122; effective altruists', 84; local influence on, 201; Singer's, 9; subjectivist basis of, 90; uncertainty about, 67–68
- veganism, 34, 74, 227
- vegetarianism, 33–35, 70–71, 227
- Verification Principle, 15–16
- Vienna Circle, 15
- Vietnam War, 12, 21–23, 26–29
- Village Voice* (newspaper), 42
- Vintage Sedan thought experiment, 48–50
- Voting Rights Act (United States, 1965), 25
- Waal, Alex de, 180; *Famine Crimes*, 188
- Wall Street Journal* (newspaper), 223
- Walters, Barbara, 47
- Warburton, Nigel, 238n5
- wealth. *See* mega-rich
- Wenar, Leif, 180
- West Pakistan, 38–39

274 INDEX

- Wiesel, Elie, *A Passover Haggadah*, 178
- Williams, Bernard, 108–9, 121, 123, 222
- Wilson, Edgar George, 101, 111
- Wilson, Harold, 21
- Wise, Julia, 83
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig, 16, 19, 103, 215
- Wolf, Susan, “Moral Saints,” 147
- women: in effective altruism movement, 150–57; equal rights for, 12
- World Bank, 183, 185
- World War II, 16, 20
- Worm Wars, 131–32
- Wrong, Michela, 183
- Wytham Abbey, Oxfordshire, 139–40, 230
- Yacht thought experiment, 50–51
- Young, Bernadette (Dette), 56
- Yunus, Mohammed, 134–35
- zoophilia, 226. *See also* bestiality
- Zuckerberg, Mark, 164–65