

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Ethics

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UTILITARIANISM

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-73060-0 — Utilitarianism
Tim Mulgan
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108730600

DOI: 10.1017/9781108582643

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First published 2020

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-73060-0 Paperback

ISSN 2516-4031 (online)

ISSN 2516-4023 (print)

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Utilitarianism

Elements in Ethics

DOI: 10.1017/9781108582643
First published online: January 2020

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Abstract: Utilitarians identify morality with the impartial promotion of well-being. This Element asks how utilitarianism might develop in possible futures broken by climate change or transformed by new technologies. It argues that concern for future people should dominate our ethical thinking, that an adequate utilitarian future ethic must be collective and pessimistic, and that future utilitarians must think imaginatively about the nature of well-being, the value of possible future populations, and the threat of human extinction. Utilitarianism is presented as a living ethical tradition, not an abstract set of timeless principles or a purely historical artefact.

Keywords: Utilitarianism, Future Ethics, Moral Philosophy

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ISBNs: 9781108730600 (PB), 9781108582643 (OC)
ISSNs: 2516-4031 (online), 2516-4023 (print)

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