

Defending the Tao Answer Key

(Sample outlines)

If Defending Lewis

- **Thesis:** Lewis is correct that objective moral values (the Tao) are essential for society.
- **Supporting Points:**
 1. *Text Evidence:* In Lecture I, Lewis warns that denying objective values produces "men without chests" who cannot live virtuously.
 2. *Modern Example:* Debates over AI ethics show the need for universal principles beyond individual opinion.
 3. *Reasoning:* Shared values provide stability and justice; relativism leads to contradiction.
- **Counterargument:** Some argue moral codes change over time.
 - **Response:** Change in practice doesn't erase core principles (e.g., fairness and honesty remain universal).
- **Conclusion:** Upholding objective values is necessary to prevent cultural collapse.

If Critiquing Lewis

- **Thesis:** Lewis's claim about absolute values is too rigid; morality can evolve with culture.
- **Supporting Points:**
 1. *Text Evidence:* Lewis appeals to the Tao, but critics may argue this oversimplifies diverse cultural practices.
 2. *Modern Example:* Shifts in human rights (e.g., abolition of slavery, gender equality) show morality can progress.
 3. *Reasoning:* Flexibility allows societies to adapt to new knowledge and conditions.
- **Counterargument:** Lewis would say denying objective values leads to collapse.
 - **Response:** Evidence shows societies can flourish by expanding, not erasing, moral codes.
- **Conclusion:** Rather than universal absolutes, moral growth depends on cultural dialogue and change.