Part I

I chose case 4i on Page 108 of *Thinking Critically About Ethical Issues*. The moral issue in this case is whether or not Jake did the right thing by shooting the man who was trying to rob him. The parties involved are Jake and the robber. To understand the benefits or burdens of each party we must break down the case. After being robbed multiple times in a span of two years Jake finally decides to buy a pistol to help protect himself. This is a smart choice because if he does not take any measures to protect his store, criminals will know he is an easy target and will only continue to rob him. One day a man comes in to try and rob his store again holding a knife to which Jake responds by shooting him 6 times in the chest. The book does not go into detail about whether the criminal died or not but with six shots to the chest it is a safe bet that he probably did not make it. The criminal was holding a knife and Jake had a gun and was behind the counter. In this scenario I don’t think that Jake’s life was in immediate danger, and had no good reason to shoot the criminal, specially 6 times. The most likely reason why Jake fired his gun six times is because he was afraid and did not have proper gun training or experience. The best-case scenario would have been for Jake to point his gun at the criminal, give him a warning and scare him off then call the police. Jake had a right to shoot the criminal but the burden of killing someone who he did not need to kill will weigh on him, he will also have the benefit that he might not get robbed again because now criminals will know that he has a gun to protect himself. For the criminal the burden is that he lost his life or got badly injured but that is a risk he took by doing something illegal.

Part II

Utilitarian’s argue that social and religious customs stand in the way of happiness. I do not agree with this because I think they actually bring happiness to people. Customs bring people together and make them feel in community. However, looking at individual customs through a utilitarian mindset there may be some that bring more burdens than benefits. Today there are many customs which have evolved from what they once were to be more beneficial than burdensome. Another utilitarian argument is that there are higher (intellectual) and lower (physical) pleasures. I would not want to step up in defense of the fool because I agree with Mills that intellectual pleasures are higher. For me intellectual pleasures last longer than an immediate physical pleasure. For example, if I learn to speak another language I will always have that with me to be able to use or to travel to another country and be able to speak that language. An immediate physical pleasure like sex will make me feel good right away but once the deed is done I won’t be able to feel that pleasure again until I have sex again. Looking at things from a utilitarian standpoint a physical pleasure if followed over and over again will probably have more burdensome outcomes than an intellectual pleasure. A good example for this would be drugs, which make you feel good or nothing at all in the moment but once they wear off you will only want more. For this reason people become addicted to drugs and it negatively affects their life.