

Pages:

1. Introduction & beginning of 2
2. Kant says that it's not morally permissible to lie
  - a. Explain how K determines moral actions through duty and categorical imperative test.  
(Situate this in the context of only one version of the CI.)
3. Utilitarians say that it is morally permissible to lie
  - a. Explain how U determines moral actions through consequentialism
    - i. Given several choices, a utilitarian would pick the morally correct choice by using the Greatest Happiness Principle. By judging whether that choice will produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people, one morally correct choice can be determined.
  - b. Example where if one lies, action produces greater happiness than if not lying
    - i. This is an example derived from an episode of the Outer Limits...By killing themselves, the students have made the morally correct decision because their action will yield the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. Clearly, lying about whether one is able to survive in captivity will produce the greater happiness, even though the liars will never enjoy any of that happiness. Williams has already argued that a logically consistent utilitarian cannot hope to appeal to the psychological effect, which involves taking into account the psychological stress on the liar while he/she is thinking about a decision. However, many utilitarians undoubtedly would want to make some kind of appeal, seeing that simple utilitarian calculus has led to an unacceptable result. Although it is clear that committing suicide is the morally correct choice for utilitarians, few utilitarians in our troubled philosophy class would want to drink the cyanide first. Our conscience, as Williams calls it, is troubled by the decision made by utilitarian calculus.

- c. Example where if one lies, action produces less happiness than if not lying
    - i. Any situation of discovered deceit or law-breaking is a good example of how lying can produce less happiness than telling the truth. Clearly, if I deceived my philosophy teacher about
  - d. Explain that the determination of the moral act is different in the above examples based on thinking about the consequences of each action
4. The Kantian approach is better because...
- a. Consider this example
5. An objection to 4 is...
- a. Consider this example. This example was inspired by an episode of *The Outer Limits*, the title of which I have forgotten. Imagine that an introductory philosophy classroom, students and all, has been transported onto a spacecraft headed for a distant star. The aliens explain that they have gone to many different worlds, capturing a roomful of philosophy students on each one. Their purpose is to see whether the students can survive in captivity. If the students survive, the aliens will capture all of humankind and make them slaves on the aliens' homeworld. However, if they do not survive, then the rest of humankind will be saved.
  - b. Now here is the point around which this situation pivots. The students can willingly choose to kill themselves by exposing themselves to a deadly alien disease. They
  - c. I believe this to be a more extreme case than any we have studied in philosophy so far. Many readers in our class were troubled by Jim's dilemma in Williams' *Utilitarianism and Integrity*. Jim had to choose between personally killing one person and allowing 19 others to live, or doing nothing and watching 20 people die. However, in the example proposed above, our troubled philosophy class must choose between the lives of all humankind and their own lives.
  - d. There are two options that our troubled philosophy class can make. It can choose to

6. However, the objection can be rebutted by knowing that... p. 494R:

- a. "There exists no moral system under which there do not arise unequivocal cases of conflicting obligations" (Mill 494). Mill also explains why this is so: "It is not the fault of any creed, but of the complicated nature of human affairs, that rules of conduct cannot be so framed as to require no exceptions..." (Mill 494). Human affairs are indeed complex, as given by the example of the captured philosophy class. In that case, one had to decide to pick the "lesser of two evils," as the cliché goes. However, one cannot hope to be truly moral, simply because one is trying to choose between two actions which, if dealt with separately, would both be immoral. Certainly, President Clinton's lying to the nation about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky did not have any more moral value than lying to his wife. Both were immoral actions, but a

7. Conclusion