

I Review of Ethical Egoism.

A. In small groups, present the choice or behavior from “3:10 to Yuma” you picked for the assignment. Does egoism provide informative moral guidance in this case and why did you think so? What if anything did you find acceptable about the ethical egoist account?

B. Plenary discussion One.

II. A. In small groups discuss Rachels’ presentation of the concept of utilitarianism. What is the basic theory? Why do you think philosophers and many others have been attracted to it.

B. Plenary discussion Two.

III A (Individually). Write down in few sentences your initial reaction to the theory and any particular strengths or weaknesses that occur to you at this time? Are there any elements that are confusing?

B Small group After you are through, share your reaction with your group.

C. Plenary discussion Three.

IV A. In Small groups discuss how a utilitarian would decide what to do in following cases

--Suggestion: make a chart, listing alternative actions across the top. Under each action, list people who will be affected and how happy or unhappy they are likely to be made by the action. Try to decide which alternative is likely to maximize happiness. If there is some information, that is reasonably attainable and would be decisive, indicate what it is and how it would effect the utilitarian decision.

CASE 1

You are at a party with two of your friends. One of them gets pretty drunk, and she is the one that drove. She wants to stay at the party, because she is talking to a guy who is only talking to her because she is drunk. You and another friend want to leave. Your drunk friend gives you her car keys and says to just leave the keys under the mat. You try as hard as you can to persuade her to leave, but she won’t. You have a curfew, so you have to go home. Do you take her keys? Do you *force* her to leave (which you would pretty much have to do to get her away)? What do you do as a utilitarian

CASE II (optional)

You have a summer internship and hope that it will turn into a permanent job. After a few weeks you notice that your supervisor is coming to work late on quite a few occasions and seems to have difficulty concentrating on what the workgroup is doing. You have a co-worker who has been in the company a while about it and are told that the supervisor might have “drinking problem” but is working to overcome it. You begin to become worried. This concern comes to a head when your supervisor asks you to lie for her to her boss concerning a fairly serious mistake by the workgroup resulting from your supervisor’s failure to attend to

some important details. Your supervisor asks you to say that the mistake was an accident. The overall boss looks into the matter and asks you directly what happened. Do you lie to the boss?

B. Plenary discussion Four

V Rachels summarizes “classical” utilitarianism in three propositions(p. 102)

- (1) Actions are to be judged morally right or wrong solely in virtue of their consequences
- (2) In assessing the consequences the only thing that matters is the happiness or unhappiness that is created, and
- (3) Each person’s happiness counts the same.

He sees the “hedonism” of (2) as inessential to the overall utilitarian position

A. In small of group discuss his two counter-example to classical utilitarian theory. the McCloskey lynching case and the York vs. Story case and its extensions (pp. 103-106).

Exactly how are these counterexamples? [In your discussion, make it clear what is being claimed--is it that some action would be morally right (or morally permissible), but utilitarianism would call it wrong? Or that some action would be morally wrong, but utilitarianism would call it right?]

B. Rachels then considers various defenses of utilitarianism against these kind of counterexamples in section 7.5 (pp. 108-116). In Small group discuss his account. Has he convinced you?

C. Rachels ends chapter 7 with comments about Gunnar Myrdahl (p. 115-116). In small group discuss what the comments suggest about Rachels overall assessment of utilitarianism. What is your take on utilitarianism after reading Rachels’ account.

D. Plenary discussion Five

 **Assignment for next Tuesday, April 22: Read** Rachels Ch’s 8 and 9 **Post** a utilitarian analysis of a choice or behavior from “3:10 to Yuma” This could be a choice you have previously discussed or not. **Post a reply** comment on the submission from at least one of your classmates.