
PHIL 102, UBC
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Review a little from the videos

http://is.gd/TrolleyProblemVideos
Trolley Driver

the switch
Foot, 1967
Transplant
Trolley driver & transplant

• How does Philippa Foot (1967) explain the difference between these cases?

• What do you think?
Thomson’s response to Foot

- Foot’s solution won’t work for a different case from “trolley driver”: “bystander at the switch”
  
  - Why not?
Bystander at the Switch

Permissible to flip the switch?

Basic Trolley Scenario, Flickr photo shared by John Holbo, licensed CC BY-NC 2.0
Foot’s Driver vs Transplant

I. “Killing one is worse than letting five die” (Thomson 1396)

II. “Killing five is worse than killing one” (Thomson 1397)
Thomson’s main question

“Why is it that the bystander may turn his trolley, though the surgeon may not remove the young man’s lungs, kidneys and heart?” (1401)
How does Thomson answer this question?
Using people as means to ends?

Is the difference between transplant and bystander that:

- in **transplant** the surgeon uses the patient **merely as a means** to save the five others,

- but that doesn’t happen in the **bystander at the switch** case?
No, b/c of loop example (1402-1403)

Bystander

Using a person merely as a means to an end
What do you think of “loop”?

Straw polls on LC:
(attendance not taken; this is just for interest’s sake)

• How many think it is morally permissible for the bystander at the switch w/o the loop to pull the switch?

• How many think it is morally permissible for the bystander at the switch with the loop to pull the switch?
Can we appeal to rights?

- “rights trump utilities” (1404)

- Can we say, then, that (1404):
  1. Surgeon cannot transplant b/c violates rights of patient, but
  2. Bystander can flip switch b/c doing so doesn’t violate rights of the one who is killed?

May still flip switch even if violate rights (1405-1406)
Another way to distinguish bystander from transplant

- **Bystander:** saves 5 by making something that threatens them, threaten 1 instead (1407)

- Not true of **transplant**

- Imagine a case similar to bystander:
  - deflecting lethal gas in hospital from five to one (1407-1408)
“Distributive Exemption”

“permits arranging that something that will do harm anyway shall be better distributed than it otherwise will be—shall … do harm to fewer rather than more” (1408).

Could use this to say:
- Bystander **may** turn the trolley
- We **may** deflect gas fumes in the hospital
- The surgeon **must not** transplant
“Distributive Exemption”

Difference between this and what Foot says about choosing between violating two negative duties?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Driver’s choice</th>
<th>Bystander’s choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killing 1</td>
<td>Killing 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violating negative duty and 1 dies</td>
<td>Violating negative duty and 1 dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killing 5</td>
<td>Letting 5 die</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violating negative duty and 5 die</td>
<td>Not fulfilling positive duty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On Foot’s principle, this may not be permissible
But...

Distributive exemption is only morally permissible if we can deflect a harm from many onto fewer “by means which do not themselves constitute infringements on the rights of the one” (1409)
What do you think of “fat man”?

Straw poll on LC:
(attendance not taken; this is just for interest’s sake)

• How many think it is morally permissible for the bystander to push the large person off the bridge to stop the trolley?
How does Thomson argue that it’s permissible for the bystander to flip the switch but not to push the large person?
Summary & review

• Bystander may flip the switch but surgeon may not transplant—why?

• Bystander may flip the switch but may not push the "fat man"—why?
Summary & review

Why?
Why these weird scenarios?

• What could be the point of unrealistic thought experiments like this?

• Create artificial situations to focus in on particular questions
  o What questions are focused on in trolley driver vs. transplant, bystander at the switch, fat man, loop?