

Lecture #7: Morality & War II: Pacifism

Case #1: Morality & War



Four Central Questions about Morality & War

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|---|---|
| 1. Is war subject to moral evaluation? | (Nihilism vs. Moralism) |
| 2. Is going to war always morally wrong? | (Pacifism vs. Just-War Theory) |
| 3. Under what conditions is going to war justified? | (<i>Jus ad bellum</i> vs. <i>Raison d'état</i>) |
| 4. Is it permissible to kill non-combatants in war? | (<i>Jus in bello</i> vs. <i>Raison de guerre</i>) |

I. The Definition of Pacifism

- There are several varieties of pacifism
 - Typically, pacifism is a version of absolutism. It asserts that some kinds of act are always wrong, regardless of their consequences, but what kinds exactly?
 - The strongest version of pacifism holds that *Killing is always wrong*.
 - This would include capital punishment, law enforcement, self-defense, &c.
 - A weaker (i.e., less demanding) form holds that *Killing in war is always wrong*.
 - This would require an argument that there is something different about war.
 - There are also non-absolutist versions of pacifism.
 - One non-absolutist version of pacifism—“just-war pacifism”—will be considered later.
 - A presumptivist argument for pacifism might reason (vaguely) as follows:
 - Non-maleficence is ordinarily more weighty than beneficence.
 - Non-maleficence becomes stronger as the harm proposed is stronger & very strong when the harm proposed is death.
 - So, war cannot be justified on the basis of beneficence overriding non-maleficence.

Utilitarian Arguments For & Against Pacifism

- Pro
 1. Any act that promotes the greatest happiness, &c. of people more than any alternative is morally right. [the utility principle]
 2. No acts of killing other people [or wars] promote the greatest happiness, &c..
 3. So, no acts of killing other people [or wars] are morally right.
- Contra
 1. [Same major premise]
 2. Some acts of killing other people [or wars] promote the greatest happiness, &c..
 3. So, some acts of killing other people [or wars] are morally right.
- The Controversy within Utilitarianism:
 - Over the minor premise: what are the consequences of war?

Utilitarian Arguments For & Against Pacifism

- The Controversy within Utilitarianism:
 - Over the minor premise: what are the consequences of war?
 - The utilitarian case against pacifism (defense of Contra-2)
 - 3rd Figure syllogism—using a counterexample to refute a universal claim (Pro-2)
 1. Allied military operations against Hitler promoted the greatest happiness, &c.
 2. Allied military operations against Hitler constituted a war.
 3. So, some wars promoted the greatest happiness, &c.
 - or 1st Figure syllogism
 1. Any act that removes a tyrannical dictator by killing less people than leaving him in place would do promotes the greatest happiness, &c..
 2. Some wars remove tyrannical dictators by killing less people than leaving him in place would do.
 - This would best be defended by example—3rd figure syllogism again.
 3. So, some wars promoted the greatest happiness.
 - The utilitarian case for pacifism
 - This probably works better as a rule-utilitarian defense
 1. Any moral rule that promotes the greatest happiness, &c. is morally correct.
 2. Pacifism (the rule that all wars are wrong) promotes the greatest happiness, &c..
 3. So, Pacifism is morally correct.

C. S. Lewis on the Nature & Structure of Moral Reasoning

Outline of “Why I am Not a Pacifist”

- I. How we decide questions of morals (pp. 33–38)
 - A. Deciding by conscience? (pp. 32–33)
 - i. conscience as pressure
 - ii. conscience as judgment (see B)
 - B. Moral reasoning
 - i. “three elements” (p. 34–35)
 - a. “reception of facts”
 - b. “intuition” (or “self-evident truth”)
 - c. “proof” (or “the art of arranging ...”)
 - [ii. two checks on reasoning—mentioned unsystematically here (p. 35), but more systematically later (p. 39 & 45–53)
 - a. passion
 - b. authority]
- II. Deciding the question of pacifism (pp. 38–53)
 - A. Pacifism cannot be accepted [or rejected] on the basis of intuition alone (p. 38)
 - B. The moral argument about pacifism
 - i. “First, as to the facts” ... (pp. 39–41)
 - ii. “I turn next to the intuition ...” (p. 41)
 - iii. [Arrangement]: “We have next to consider whether reasoning ...” (pp. 41–45)
 - iv. “I turn next to authority ...” (pp. 45–51)
 - v. “It remains to inquire [about] ... the secret influence of any passion” (pp. 51–53)

The Nature of Conscience

- Conscience is not an “autonomous faculty” (like the senses).
 - The operation of senses & of the conscience
 - We “just see” that something is red.
 - We do not “just see” that something is wrong.
 - An argument for the difference
 - Autonomous faculties (like the senses) cannot be argued with
 - Conscience can be argued with.
 - So, conscience is not an autonomous faculties (like the senses) .
- “Conscience” can mean either of two things
 - The pressure one feels upon his will to do what is right
 - in this sense, conscience is always to be followed.
 - One’s judgment as to the content of right & wrong. In this sense ...
 - Conscience is the product of reasoning.
 - Conscience can be wrong.

Lewis’ Moral Reasoning about War

- Facts
 - War is disagreeable
 - Does war do more harm than good?—Some do; some don’t
- Intuitions
 - helping is good = beneficence
 - harming is bad = non-maleficence
- Arrangement
 - Limiting the intuition: Analysis of helping & harming
 - degrees of the duty to help—one needs to compare beneficiaries
 - helping promisees is good (fidelity)
 - helping benefactors is good (gratitude)
 - helping kinsmen & compatriots is good
 - helping & harming
 - helping one could mean not helping someone else
 - helping one could mean harming another

Lewis’ Moral Reasoning about War (cont’d): More Arrangement

- In the situation of an attack ...
 - There is a duty to help
 - There is a duty to help the victim
 - It is at least permissible to help the victim by harming [doing violence to] the attacker
 - why?
 - since it might be necessary to fulfilling the duty to help
 - it might be a duty to harm if the duty to help is strong enough
 - It is permissible to help the victim by killing the attacker
 - why the argument can go this far
 - killing is sometimes the only effective means of restraint
 - It is permissible to help the victim by waging war against the attacker
 - why the argument can go this far
 - it is even clearer that war is sometimes the only effective means of restraint

Another Version of a Presumptivist Argument for Self-Defense

- Facts
 - An attacker is threatening to kill a victim
 - The attacker can only be stopped by killing him
- Intuitions
 - [Ross’ seven duties]
- Strengtheners & weakeners of duties
 - N.B.: The general challenge for presumptivist analysis of moral problems is explaining why one *prima facie* duty outweighs another.
 - Lewis’ insight: beneficence is strengthened by considering the beneficiary
 - The duty of beneficence must be specified—Helping *whom*?
 - A supplementary insight: non-maleficence can be weakened when considering the person to be harmed in the case of
 - harms necessary to helping the victim
 - harms that are not significantly greater than the harm that the malefactor is inflicting
 - Why?
 - The attacker is the one who has created the conflict of duties by creating a situation in which someone will be hurt.
 - He alone can dissolve the conflict (end the situation in a way which leaves no one hurt).
 - So if someone has to be hurt, it should be him, not his victim.
- Relevance of other duties: Justice reinforces Beneficence, since harming the attacker to save the victim provides a more just distribution of goods & harms.

Analogical Extension from Individual Defense to Law Enforcement & War

- Case #2: Law Enforcement
 - A private person’s killing an attacker to protect a victim is morally permissible.
 - The use of lethal force by the police (in specifiable circumstances) is like a private person killing an attacker.
 - So, the use of lethal force by the police (in specifiable circumstances) is in morally permissible.
- Case #3: War
 - The use of lethal force by the police (in specifiable circumstances) is in morally permissible.
 - Resort to war (in specifiable circumstances) is like the use of lethal force by the police.
 - So, resort to war is morally permissible.

Calvin on War

“If kings have been entrusted with the power to preserve the tranquillity of their own territories...and if they justly punish those robbers, whose injuries have only extended to a few persons, shall they suffer a whole district to be plundered and devastated with impunity? For there is no difference, whether he who in a hostile manner invades, disturbs and plunders the territory of another to which he has no right, be a king, or one of the meanest of mankind: all persons of this description are equally to be considered as robbers and are to be punished as such.”



— John Calvin,
Institutes, IV.20.

Points of Analogy & Disanalogy

- The point of similarity is that the duty to do justice causes beneficence to trump non-maleficence, despite the generally greater strength of perfect duties. (See next slide.)
- The points of disanalogy are ...
 - for personal defense & law enforcement
 - Aquinas argues that *only* the state has the right to intend the death of the wrongdoer, though Locke disagrees.
 - Still, this would make war *easier* to justify on this point.
 - for use of law enforcement & war
 - The soldier may kill unless the enemy manifests an intent to surrender.
 - The policeman may not kill unless the suspect manifests an intent to injure & cannot be stopped by non-lethal force.
 - This weakens the analogy, but the difference between enemy soldiers & criminals explains their different treatment.
 - for both other cases & war
 - The level of violence is much greater in war.
 - This weakens the analogy, but of course the goods sought in war can be much greater than those sought in law enforcement.

Lewis' Two Checks on Moral Reasoning

- Authority
 - “We ought to attend to the undemonstrated sayings and opinions of experienced and older people or of people of practical wisdom not less than to demonstrations; for because experience has given them an eye they see aright.” — Aristotle, *Ethics* vi.11
- Passions
 - Knowledge that our passions point us in the direction of our conclusion should make us extra cautious about the soundness of our reasoning.