First Term Paper Proposal

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In her paper, “Turning the Trolley”, Thomson introduces two key principles: the “Letting Five Die Vs. Killing One Principle” and the “Killing Five Vs. Killing One Principle” by presenting two distinct trolley problems. Her argument asserts that if saving five necessitates the sacrifice of one, we should choose for letting five die instead of actively killing one. Thomson’s perspective maintains that allowing one to die is morally superior to deliberately killing one, forming the basis for making ethical decisions in trolley problem scenarios.

Contrary to Thomson’s argument, I contend that there is no substantial difference between letting one die and actively killing one. Excluding external factors, we should invariably choose to sacrifice one to save five. In my paper, I will elaborate on the equivalence between letting one die and killing one. Firstly, both actions lead to the same outcome: the loss of a life. Secondly, numerous external factors influence our moral judgments in these situations, evoking an aversion to making the decision to kill one. Additionally, when we choose to let one die, we are essentially morally culpable for that death.

One potential objection to my argument arises when we consider donating to charity. By not donating, many lives may be lost, and this poses a question: are we responsible for these deaths? In essence, can we be said to have caused their deaths? My response is affirmative; we can indeed be deemed responsible for these deaths. However, as the responsibility is collectively distributed across the global population, individual moral culpability is significantly diminished. Furthermore, individuals are often unaware of their indirect contribution to these deaths which also reduce individual moral culpability.