

Week 2 Review Sheet

August 23, 2015

1 Vocabulary

You ought to be comfortable with the following terminology:

1. Paternalistic lie
2. Consequentialism
3. Slippery slope argument
4. Vague concept
5. Unconditional good
6. Conditional good
7. Humanity (according to Kant)
8. Formula of Humanity
9. Coercion

2 Study Questions

1. What are some examples of cases where we think it's okay to tell a paternalistic lie?
2. How does consequentialism determine whether an action is right or wrong?
3. What are the only grounds on which a consequentialist can condemn paternalistic lies?
4. If a person is generally in the best position to determine what is best for him or herself, does this mean we ought not to tell paternalistic lies to them? Why might someone think so?
5. What thesis of Utilitarianism is the above line of reasoning in conflict with? Why is it conflict?

6. If a person is uniquely acquainted with their own happiness and the things conducive to it, does this mean we ought not to tell paternalistic lies to them? Why might someone think so?
7. Why might paternalistic lies be permissible on Utilitarian grounds, nonetheless?
8. Why does Sidgwick think that if it's morally permissible to lie paternalistically to children, it must be morally permissible to do so to adults?
9. What axiom does Sidgwick rely on to argue that there is no particular age at which it becomes impermissible to tell a paternalistic lie to someone?
10. Why do vague concepts seem to result in fruitless debates when applied to moral problems?
11. Why are slippery slope arguments particularly weak in ethical debates?
12. Why does Sidgwick find it to be a virtue of the Principle of Utility that it does not measure moral worth in terms of a vague concept?
13. How does Sidgwick respond to the claim that you should never tell a lie, regardless of the consequences?
14. Why does Kant think happiness is only a conditional good?
15. Why does Kant think that any object of our desire is only a conditional good?
16. Aside from our desiring a thing, what else is required to make it good?
17. What does Kant take to be the only unconditional good?
18. When do the things we desire fail to be good? When is the will not good?
19. Why do we value more than just our own free rational choices?
20. How does Kant infer the Formula of Humanity from the fact that the good will is unconditionally good?
21. Why is lying wrong according to the Formula of Humanity?
22. Why is coercion a fundamental wrong according to the Formula of Humanity?
23. Why is deception a fundamental wrong according to the Formula of Humanity?
24. Why do ends obtained by lying lack value according to Kant?
25. Why is there no such thing as a benevolent lie for Kant?

26. Explain Korsgaard's statement, "an end that cannot be rationally chosen by anyone is not a good end."
27. Suppose someone justified a paternalistic lie by saying the one lied to would admit it was for a good end. What would Kant say?
28. Suppose someone justified a paternalistic lie by saying the one lied to would approve of the lie if they knew about it. What would Kant say?
29. Can we lie paternalistically to someone whose autonomy is compromised or not yet developed? What obstacle is there to this approach?
30. Why does Kant think can't we measure autonomy?
31. Why does Kant think must we attribute autonomy to people anyway?
32. Given the Kantian moral framework, why are we obligated never to lie to a person, for any reason?