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| Story Name | Key Points |
| Grandmother’s Vase | |
| My grandmother left me with a prized vase from World War 2 Germany. She told the story that her grandfather had stolen it when he defected from Germany ultimately personally saving numerous Jewish lives. He had kept it as a keepsake to remember the evil things humans are capable of. My grandmother kept this vase to remind her of the immense strength our family has shown during times of great peril.  The electrician here to fix an problem in the house noticed the vase. Knowing only of the evils of the Nazi soldiers and nothing of my great grandfather, the electrician smashed it to pieces citing the inherent evil of Nazi art.  When taken to court over the vandalism of an unreplaceable family heirloom, the jury found the electrician guilty. He was sentenced to replace my vase with two identical looking vases to pay his debt to my grandmother and to society.  Was justice done in this case? | * Every individual item, or human, has their own value to the world that cannot be replaced. Although you can swap them out without losing function, the individual value the original piece had is gone forever. |
| Murdering Mother | |
| A mother upset with her fussy toddler decides to drown her. She runs a bath and holds her under until she stops struggling. Looking at her lifeless child she is filled with regret and uses CPR to revive the infant. Once the child wakes up she unsurprisingly becomes fussy again which reminds the mother why she had killed the infant in the first place. Again, the defenseless baby girl is drowned to death.  The commotion wakes the father who had been sleeping in the next room. When he comes to investigate he sees his daughter floating face-up in the bath while her mother sits with her back against the wall staring blankly. The father grabs the child and attempts to revive her, but there is no life left in the baby’s cold blue face. His daughter murdered he contacts the police and has his wife arrested.  In court, she pleads guilty. Her debt to society is decided. She will remain imprisoned until she births two children for her (ex) husband or she will be charged with murder.  There has recently been an invention made that allows the judge to talk to the unborn children. When the judge asks the two potential children what they want they both say that they want to be alive. These two children will only be born If the mother agrees to have two children.  The father argues that because of the heinous act the mother deservers to be charged with murder. He says that he does not want his previous wife to birth anymore children because she’s evil.  The judge is unsure, on the one hand the mother is guilty of murder, but on the other surely the lives of the two unborn should not be taken as a result and two lives existing is better than one.  What should the judge do? | * Ending human life is like taking a color out of the rainbow, it cannot be replaced. * If two lives are better than one, why don’t we sentence murderers to have two babies as a sentence? * The “Playing God” argument is important because we cannot see the future and “final” solutions are irreversible. |
| Ends and Means | |
| A doctor has two patients who are both in need of organ transplants.  Because there are no organs available, she goes and murder a person in an undetectable way. She notifies 9-11 immediately so they can get the bodies and save the organs.  The two patients the doctor had live.  Does the ends here justify the means? | * Regardless of who does it or why, ending human life is wrong. In this case we would say that what she did was murder and she should be tried. * She may save two lives, but the way she did it was unethical. * The person who was murdered had done nothing to permit force being used against her against her will. Although you could argue that the greater good was done, you could not argue that there was justice for the innocent woman. |
| Alien Visitors | |
| Some aliens are tasked with saving one of two species.  The first, a species that to maximize human health commits regular human sacrifices. Although this has no actual effect on the society’s wellbeing, the placebo effect and knowing that it wasn’t them that died makes the people feel better leading to an overall happier society.  The second, you may be familiar with. It’s us! The United States of America. Although people are less happy overall, people have the right to personal sovereignty and can expect not to be sacrificed. As they are unaware of the other planet, they live like people who have never faced the possibility of sacrifice and therefore take their security for granted.  Which civilization would you save? | * Human sacrifice is wrong, even if it’s for the greater good. * Socrates talks about this type of situation when he says that it would be better to be the most hated and despised person in the world but be a moral person, rather than be unethical and be universally loved. |

I brought up Rousseau and mentioned the body politic argument last Thursday. What I meant was: according to Rousseau’s social contract we must be gaining more rights/freedoms than we give up. Therefore, if a person does not wish to be part of the society he’s essentially going against his best interests and must be “forced to be free”. Implying that you’re going to be part of society whether you want to or not, because we know what’s best for you.

In his analogy of society being like the human body, it would be ridiculous to think of your right big toe going on strike. Therefore, if the society is to function toward the general will everyone must work together.