**Reading Analysis #1 – Jordan Henstrom – October 4th, 2018**

The base premise of Prima Facie duties is that, given no conflicting duties, we are morally obligated to follow them. They have three important attributes. First, that they are self-evident. Second, that they are non-absolute. Lastly, Prima Facie duties are always morally relevant. Moral dilemmas come from when multiple of these duties conflict. When this happens, it is up to us to figure out which one to weigh over the other. In this paper, I will show three dilemmas that involve multiple duties. Each situation will deal with the duty of justice. My aim is to use these dilemmas to illustrate that, as a rule, justice should have top priority when comparing duties.

**Grading Work**

The first dilemma is one that I have faced personally. While I was a teacher’s assistant I had to grade a lot of students’ work. I distinctly remember the project of one student that came across my desk. It was a very great program. The student had obviously put a lot of time and effort into the project, and they displayed a strong knowledge of the material. However, the student had missed small details that were specified in the rubric. The quality of the work the student created was an A, but I ended up giving them a B- because of the specifications of the project.

In this situation, the two major duties at play are justice and fidelity. I had a duty to reward good with good. The student’s project was objectively good. However, I also had the duty to keep the promise of the guidelines we had set out and give the student the lower grade. I would argue that I was wrong in my decision somewhat. The big reason I think this is because I believe that justice is a higher virtue than fidelity.

Consider this, the duty that I had to grade the homework harshly was in place before the student’s work ever got to me. When the student’s project did get to me though, the quality of work instantly started to erode my duty of fidelity. Anyone who has graded papers or projects can think of a time that they had an assignment from a student that was so good that they were actively rationalizing giving them points even though the project may not have adhered to the guidelines. This erosion of our fidelity is evidence that we intuitively hold fairness and justice higher than fidelity.

**Joe Arpaio**

Joe Arpaio was a buzz word for a bit in 2017. The reason was that he was convicted by a federal court for criminal contempt. Before serving any jail time, he was pardoned by the new President of the United State, Donald Trump.

There are two relevant duties in this event. One was of justice. This was obvious from the fact Joe Arpaio was found guilty of ignore a court order to a practice of “immigrant round-ups”. He committed a crime and, by the that duty, should be incarcerated. I would argue that President Trump also did have a duty to pardon him. This duty was one of gratitude. Joe Arpaio was one of President Trumps strongest supporters while on the campaign trial, and he certainly influenced bringing his base to the President’s side. There is certainly an argument to make that President Trump would have had those votes regardless, however it is undeniable that there was significant reason for the President to show gratitude to Sheriff Arpaio.

In this situation, justice should have taken precedence over gratitude. This is because gratitude has a more direct correlation with other duties than gratitude. If the you follow the principle of justice, it follows that it will likely lead to beneficence and self-improvement. Although this isn’t always true, it is more common than not. This correlation is not as obvious, or common, with the duty of gratitude.

It’s important to note that this is not an argument against commuting people’s sentences. In cases of good behavior, or cooperation to reduce sentence, whether someone’s sentence is commuted would be whether they would commit enough good to warrant that reward.

**Sargent Winter Ihernglass**

In the book *The Thousand Names* there is a character named Winter Ihernglass. She is a solider in an army set in a napoleon like era. She is pretending to be a man and is under the command of an inept lieutenant. Though a sequence of events she relieves him of his command to save their unit and he ends up dying. She does not kill him, but is death is a result of the soldiers not following him and him being outnumbered. When this comes to light, everyone thinks that the Captain is going to court martial the lieutenant, however the Captain instead promotes Winter to the lieutenant’s empty position.

Once again, we have the duties of fidelity and justice. IN this case, the captain has a fidelity to the chain of command that demands that Winter’s violations be punished. On the other hand, he as the duty to reward the good she has done in saving hundreds of lives. IN this case the duty to justice was stronger. Throughout the book, Winter continues to be a key factor in saving lives. It shows that rewarding good is often the best solution because of the old saying that good begets good. I wanted to use this example to show that justice does not have to be tied to law to be relevant. Because of how we view justice it often is, but it is not a requirement.

In conclusion, it is apparent that duty dilemmas are not easy to solve. I they were simple, they would have a different name. However, though careful consideration of the duty of justice, it can give us a starting point to make an educated ethical decision.