

## Lackey

### Pacifism



## Lackey's Strategy

- To consider four pacifist moral positions; that is, moral prescriptions for pacifism.
  - I. Prohibitions Against Killing
  - II. Universal Pacifism
  - III. Private Pacifism
  - IV. Antiwar Pacifism
- What's the standard for determining the moral worth of pacifism?
- "If pacifism is to be a moral theory, it must be prescribed for all or prescribed for none."

## Questions

- How many think killing a fetus is wrong because
  - i) the fetus is an innocent and killing innocents is always wrong;
  - ii) it's life is sacred and killing violates the respect life is owed;
  - iii) it has a right to life and denying that right for any reason is immoral?
- How many think involuntary euthanasia is wrong because it fails to get consent and without that consent killing is a violation of rights?

## Questions

- Are there any great moral goals obtained through war?
- Can there be a just side in war?

## I. Prohibitions Against Killing

- Arguments against killing: central idea of pacifism is the immorality of killing
  - A. Biblical Prohibition
  - B. Sacredness of Life
  - C. The Right to Life

## A. Biblical Prohibition

"Thou shall not kill."

- Is there Biblical evidence to support a prohibition against killing? Might the Bible provide support for Pacifism?
  1. God commands killing in other parts of the Bible
  2. Why think Hebrew Bible expresses God's word? Why think we are morally bound to obey divine commands? Who is bound to OT laws--every one or just children of Israel?
  3. Argument assumes God's existence, but this is difficult to prove.
- Evidence for religious principles is weaker than evidence for moral principles which the religious principles are supposed to justify

## B. Sacredness of Life

- Sacredness of Life argument says that killing violates the respect living things deserve. The preservation of life is the highest value.
  1. Does the life-is-sacred principle imply that nothing should be killed or that as much life as possible should be preserved?
  2. Problem: Some killing might save lives. If killing increased the amount of good in the world, would that not be a good thing?
  3. Problem with view: This view has the consequence that anything which places life at risk is immoral (e.g., rock climbing). So, one has a moral obligation to preserve one's life at all costs.

## C. Right to Life

- Killing violates right to life
  1. Right to life implies right to defend one's right to life; e.g., self-defense
  2. Hence, right to life does not imply the impermissibility of killing.

## II. Universal Pacifism

- The essence of pacifism is the immorality of violence, either in violence of personal relationships or violence between nation-states

A. Christian Pacifism

B. Moral Exemplar Argument

C. Gandhian Pacifism

## A. Christian Pacifism

- Sermon on the Mount (583)

1. Did Jesus teach pacifism? unclear

2. Perhaps pacifism is a set of rules required to be a Christian or to follow Christ?

a. If so, then not everyone has an obligation to follow Christ

b. Hence, not everyone has an obligation to be a pacifist

## B. Moral Exemplar Argument

- Kant-Morally appropriate actions should serve as an example for all humankind
- Tolstoy's argument: If everyone were a pacifist, then the world would be a better place
  1. Problem: argument is purely verbal--If everyone gave up fighting, there'd be no war
    - a. This is true by definition
    - b. This verbal argument can't tell us about moral obligations
  2. Which rule to apply? (i) resist not evil or (ii) use violence, but only in self-defense

## C. Gandhian Pacifism

- For Gandhi, the moral task is not only to be nonviolent but also use the force of the soul--suffering on behalf of justice purifies the soul
  1. Relationship between violence and coercion--Gandhi condemned coercion and yet practiced psychological coercion (e.g., fast until death)
  2. Some corruption of the soul may be necessary to achieve justice

### III. Private Pacifism

- Private pacifism renounces self-defense but supports national defense: personal violence is always morally wrong but political violence is sometimes morally right

**A. Augustine:** justifies military service only for just cause; but once in military, there's no choice about fighting for just cause

**B. Self-defense:** considered a basic right but not allowed according to private pacifism

### IV. Antiwar Pacifism

- Antiwar pacifism justifies self-defense but denies that war can be justified in terms of self-defense or other rights
- War always involves a violation of rights
- All participation in war is morally wrong
  - A. Killing of Soldiers
  - B. Killing of Civilians
  - C. Balance of Good and Evil in War

#### A. Killing of Soldiers

- Antiwar pacifism argues that the killing of soldiers in war is intentional killing. Intentional killing is a violation of the right to life. There is no justification for intentional killing.
- Replies:
  1. Personal self-defense: soldier kills in personal self-defense--but, most soldiers don't die in kill-or-be-killed situations
  2. Assumption of risk: those who freely assume risk are responsible--but, not all soldiers are volunteers and responsibility resides with those who created the situation/war
- Just because some killings are excusable does not mean they are justified. If battlefield killings are excusable, there must be some immorality to be excused.

#### B. Killing of Civilians

- Antiwar pacifism argues that it is immoral to kill civilians. Hence, war is immoral.
  - Reply: Killing civilians is not the intended goal. There exist morally acceptable policies which result in death, e.g., vaccinations, highway speed limits
  - Response: Problem is one of consent--civilians in war time don't consent to their deaths
- Bridge bombing: (a) victims did not order the bombing of themselves through elected officials, (b) victims did not freely consent to the bombings, (c) bombings were not part of a calculated risk assessment of victim's interests

## C. Balance of Good and Evil in War

- Nonpacifist argues that some goods outweigh or balance out the evils. This argument implies a just side to a war.
- Antiwar pacifist responds:
  1. Ends don't justify the means
  2. There are no great moral goods obtained through war, e.g.,
    - a. Mexican war: good for US but not a moral good
    - b. Revolutionary war in America: probably no great suffering if war didn't happen (e.g., Canada)
    - c. WWI: rich would have suffered, that's all
    - d. WWII: does preventing the conquest of USA and England justify the killing of 6 million people?
  3. Preventing one moral wrong does not outweigh committing another moral wrong

## Questions

- What about the current war in Iraq?
- Is there a balance of good over evil?
- Can the arguments for U.S. need for protection from Iraq or regime change justify the deaths of approximately 27,000-30,400 civilians? (Lancet's probabilistic projection is over 100,000)
- Is there a clear moral victory in war? in Iraq?