

Musings

The Musings section of *Stance* showcases non-traditional philosophical work. Contributions to this section may be in the form of songs, poetry, dialogue, art, or something else. Submissions for the Musings section will be evaluated with regard to originality and audience appeal. By coupling high quality philosophy papers with creative philosophical works we hope to make *Stance* a truly unique philosophy journal.

Desperate People and Situational Ethics

Robert John Miller, Ball State University

So it's deathly cold outside and when I say deathly cold I mean the cold is killing people. So it's deathly cold outside and when I say deathly cold I mean the cold is killing people and it's your job to collect rent today. It's your job to collect rent today because it's deathly cold and when I say it's deathly cold I mean the cold is killing people who are outside too long and you don't want to be outside too long because you don't want to die so you have to pay your own rent and to pay your own rent it's your job to collect rent from other people. Okay.

So what do you do when they don't have the money to pay rent again? We're talking final notice here. We're talking eviction. We're talking they have to get out today. They have to move because it's not fair for them to live for free or because everyone else has to pay or for another reason or for any number of reasons. We're talking cut and dry, black and white, charts and graphs explanations here. So what do you do when they don't have the money to pay rent again?

On epistemology

Robert John Miller, Ball State University

I know some things and other things I don't know and some things I think I know but don't and other things I know but think I don't and it's all generally speaking rather confusing a lot of the time. Like suppose I know something for the wrong reasons or I don't know something for the wrong reasons or I put a dollar under a hat and someone else takes the dollar when I'm not looking and someone else adds a dollar when I'm not looking then do I know there's a dollar under the hat and how many times can I look away and know there's a dollar under the hat without people thinking I'm crazy? I mean I can't watch my money all the time—that's what hats are for.

Utilitarianism*

Erin Walton and Kalli McBride, Ball State University

There was a guy; his name was Jim;
He was walking in the woods one day.
He came across some rebel men,
But he didn't know what to say.
Until a guy, he said, "Hey Jim,
If you kill one of them, I'll let the rest live."

Oh Jim, remember,
"The greatest good for the greatest number,"
What should he do?
"The greatest good for the greatest number."
What should he do?
Twenty men all plead and beg;
None of them want to die.
But nonetheless Jim must decide,
Which freedom he will buy.
If he won't shoot, then all will die.
If he kills one of them, the rest will live.

Oh Jim, remember,
"The greatest good for the greatest number,"
What would you do?

* The audio version of this song is available
at stance.iweb.bsu.edu
"The greatest good for the greatest number."
What would you do?

So there's a man; he's lying dead;
We don't know who he is.
Jim shot to kill, to save the rest
Now, murder is his biz.
A clear cut choice, that Jim did make.
If he hadn't shot one, they all would be
dead.

Oh Jim, Remember,
"The greatest good for the greatest number,"
The benefits in sight.
"The greatest good for the greatest number,"
With no oversight.
"The greatest good for the greatest number,"
Somehow don't feel right.
"The greatest good for the greatest number,"
Somehow don't feel right.

* The audio version of this song is available at stance.iweb.bsu.edu

On ethics

Robert John Miller, Ball State University

I'm pretty sure there's right and I'm pretty sure there's wrong and I'm pretty sure I do both of them a lot of the time but I'm not sure I know that and I'm not sure I know that I don't know that either.

Is it still attempted murder if the guy I'm trying to kill is already dead when I shoot him? There's a whole Matlock episode on that.

A professor asked me once, he asked me, if I'm supposed to do what I think is right but what I think is right is actually wrong then am I supposed to do things that are wrong? and I said I hope so because that would really get me off the hook for a lot of the stuff I've done.