

Jamie Goodrich

University of Wisconsin-Madison

will present a talk titled

"Trolleys, Ponds, and Wrongs"

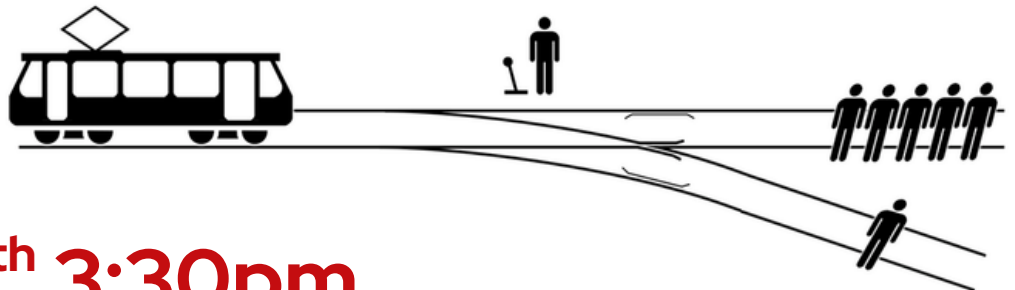
Compare:

Trolley: A trolley is hurling down a track towards five people. You can either rescue these five by turning the trolley onto a sidetrack on which Sidey is trapped, killing her or you can allow the five to die and Sidey to live.

Pond: You can either rescue five people from drowning in a shallow pond or rescue Lonesome from drowning in a shallow pond.

Many moral philosophers believe that if you rescue the five in Trolley, you will infringe Sidey's right not to be killed and thus wrong her (even if it's permissible to do so). But if you rescue the five in Pond, will you infringe Lonesome's right to be rescued? Most think not. But why won't Lonesome be wronged by rescuing the five if Sidey will be?

The best answer to this question, I argue, entails that the five people whom you could rescue in Trolley lack the right to be rescued. This forces our hand: Either it's impermissible to turn the trolley onto Sidey or it's permissible to turn the trolley because the impersonal value of the five's welfare outweighs Sidey's right not to be killed. Deontology must thus either become more restrictive or cozy up to utilitarian forms of reasoning.



Friday Sep 4th 3:30pm

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