Philosophy 131 Smith

Smith's view: If A earns more than \$100,000 per person in A's household, then A is morally obligated to give everything above \$100,000 away to the suffering who need it.

Underlying principle:

If A can reduce suffering and chooses not to, and [A already is and will continue to be comfortable / doing so will not significantly harm A's well-being] then this is morally wrong.

Supporting examples:

- An adult can easily stop 5 children from beating 1 child up, and chooses not to.
- A hedge fund manager is burning money in front of homeless children.
- A can easily stop someone from burning to death (A has a fire extinguisher) and does not.
- A can save a drowning child but doing so would ruin A's nice shoes; A does not save the child.

Counterexamples:

• An adult can easily stop minor suffering (e.g. stop someone from popping a child's balloon), but does not.

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- A can stop B's suffering against B's will (euthanizing suffering, terminal patient against their will)
- A is very uncertain about how to end the suffering (need more specific example).
- A can only prevent one of two people from suffering (need more specific example).
- A can rescue a [mass murderer] from prison (need a case that clearly does reduce suffering).
- 1. Revise the *underlying principle* in light of the counterexamples.
- 2. Are there counterexamples to the new version of the *underlying principle*?
- 3. Does the *underlying principle* support Smith's view? Does it also support a stronger claim (one that says more things are obligatory)?