

**Philosophy 131**  
**Thomson, day 2**

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**Thomson's argument**

1. The Bystander is not morally obligated to sacrifice their own life to save the five.
2. Thus, the one person on the track is not morally obligated to sacrifice their life to save the five.
3. If A is not morally obligated to do x [in a certain situation], then it is wrong to force A to do x [in that situation].
4. Thus, it is wrong for the Bystander to flip the switch.

i. Are there plausible counterexamples to 3?

ii. Revise 3 in light of those counterexamples. Does the revised version still support Thomson's conclusion?

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**A response**

*Call the person on the tracks P*

- a. Assume the Bystander, and P, are not obligated to sacrifice their life to save the five. The explanation for this is that each should value their life more than they value the lives of others.
  - b. From the Bystander's perspective, the life of P is less valuable than P's life is from P's perspective.
  - c. From the Bystander's perspective, P's life is just as valuable as each of the five people's lives.
  - d. Thus, the Bystander is obligated to switch the trolley, but not to sacrifice their own life.
- iii. Does the response to Thomson's argument tacitly rely on any conditionals? If so, what conditionals?
- iv. Are there counterexamples to the conditionals you discussed in iii? If so, revise the conditionals. Do the revised versions still support (d)?
- v. What does the response to Thomson's argument suggest about pushing someone in front of the trolley? Why?