

Free essay about stealing the ring

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The Ring of Gyges has been somehow given to me as a gift, let's say by my long-lost brother who just time-warped back from ancient Greece.

Regardless of how I came to have it, I do in fact have, and can become invisible whenever I choose. My family has lived in poverty since my long-lost brother left, and despite my brother's warnings about when to use it, I still perceive a dilemma. I can cloak myself and easily steal money, just enough to make it on my own, help my family out, or whatever. On the one side, there is egoism — the urge to satisfy my own needs and desires. On the other hand, there are ethics to consider — my conscience, the compulsion to do what I feel is right. I sit down and think about both sides.

There isn't any need to be a pure egoist, running around wild, doing whatever I feel is in my own interest. There is ethical egoism, which straddles the line a bit; there's strong and weak versions of ethical egoism. If I slant the strong way, I'll probably cloak myself and steal enough money for the good of myself and family, because if it's for my own good, under this theory, then it must be ethical. Things are stickier with weak ethical egoism, and I'd struggle with whether it is truly for my own good or not. I could also go the route of psychological egoism, where I pretty much just trick myself into thinking that by stealing money from those who are richer than myself, I'd be doing it for the greater, altruistic good. I like the idea of being robin hood-like.

Of course, there are ethics that need to be considered too. There are virtue ethics, for starters; my own character — am I really the kind of person who would make themselves invisible and just steal from people I don't know? I don't think I am. Then of course, are the ethics of care, developed from

modern feminists, to consider the morals of right and wrong. It's a little obscure, and doesn't help my dilemma, at least not necessarily in this case. Which is more wrong, to steal, or to leave myself and family hungry? I could take the somewhat less modern feminist approach, in which I want to equal the playing field (Jaggar, 1992). In this case, I may want to assert my equality, I am paid less on the dollar, and whatever man I steal it from probably makes more for doing the same work.

Still, in my case, virtue ethics is probably going to win over. Overwhelmingly, in this particular generation, this seems to be the leading theory. We tend to depend on character rather than inner wants and needs nowadays, whether it be for better or worse. That being said, I think I'll go spy on my friends.

References

Jaggar A. M. (1992). Feminist ethics. In L. Becker and C. Becker (eds.), Encyclopedia of Ethics, New York: Garland Press, 363-364.