

## PARABLE OF THE PARTISANS AND THE HOSTAGES

Alain, <sup>A</sup> partisan, kills an officer of the occupation army. His buddy René is arrested by the Gestapo and told that, unless he says who killed the officer, he and ten hostages picked at random will be executed, whereas if he tells the truth, he will be freed and <sup>only</sup> the killer will be executed. What is René to do? His decision will obviously depend <sup>partly</sup> on the kind of morality he holds, ~~as well as on his courage.~~

If René is a consequentialist, e.g. a utilitarian, he may reason in either of these ways: (a) since the life of a single individual is much less valuable than that of eleven people, he should denounce the killer; (b) since the resistance movement is much more valuable than the lives of eleven people (ten of whom are likely to be passive or even collaborationists),

he should not rat on his comrade. Paradoxically, if René opts for (a) he will be behaving exactly like ~~a non-consequentialist~~ <sup>the deontologist</sup> who abides by the rule "Thou shalt not lie". And if he opts for (b), his behavior will be indistinguishable from that of ~~a non-consequentialist~~ <sup>the utilitarian</sup> who worships the rule "Thou shalt not betray your cause (or your friends)".

Moral 1: Behavior is not a reliable indicator of moral reasoning. Moral 2: The valuations of even the most hardened consequentialists cannot help being tinged by his ideals. Moral 3: *Violence breeds violence.*