Paper Topic II: Kantian Deontology and Aristotelian Virtue Theory

You may pick one of the following two topics for your second paper. If you would like to show me a draft of your work, please bring it to my office hours, make an appointment to discuss it in person, or e-mail it to me as an attachment (john5677@umn.edu). If you e-mail it to me, send it no later than Monday, April 9 at 12:00 pm. Your first paper is due on **Tuesday, April 10 by 6:00 pm.**

A. In Rosalind Hursthouse’s article, “Virtue Theory and Abortion,” she explains how virtue theory is able to address specific, contemporary moral problems, in this case, abortion (230 – 236). Using a similar method, explain how virtue theory can be used to evaluate the morality of using torture in ‘the ticking bomb situation’ (explained below). You should provide a short explanation of virtue theory, briefly explain how virtue theory is applied to specific situations (you may provide a short summary of Hursthouse’s application of the theory to abortion in this section), and then apply the theory to ‘the ticking bomb situation’ (in this section, be sure to include a discussion of pertinent virtues, including – but not limited to – courage, beneficence, justice, etc., and the familiar biological facts).

B. Kant argues in favor of capital punishment, claiming that it, in fact, is treating the criminal as an end in and of him/herself. His reasoning is that the criminal committed the crime (assume, for this paper, that the defendant was justly convicted, and actually did commit the crime) knowing what the possible repercussions were. To simply jail this individual would be disregarding his/her rationality, since, as he argues, s/he rationally chose to commit the crime. Using similar reasoning, explain how Kant would morally evaluate using torture in ‘the ticking bomb situation.’ Provide a short explanation of the second formulation of the Categorical Imperative, explain how it would apply in a clear-cut case (e.g. slavery), and then apply the theory to ‘the ticking bomb situation.’

- ‘Ticking Bomb Situation’
  You are an agent of the US government and are responding to a bomb threat. You know, with absolute certainty, that there is a bomb that will go off in the next 24 hours which will kill and injure hundreds of innocent civilians. You apprehend a known terrorist who may or may not be involved in this particular bombing. He refuses to provide any information via interrogation. Should you use torture in this situation? For this particular example, assume that there is no reliable data regarding the success rate of using torture to produce actual leads (this is what should be considered ‘the familiar biological facts’).