

December 2014

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Recommended Citation

Mishne, Eric (2014) "Swerve," *The Hilltop Review*: Vol. 7 : Iss. 1 , Article 16.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/hilltopreview/vol7/iss1/16>

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Swerve

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I swerve. I just – swerve. I hear grinding metal and shattering glass – and a woman scream. It's Jerica.

Jerica is my carpool buddy. Well, she's the woman I give a ride to work. She never drives. Twenty minutes. One way. Five days a week. I listen to Jerica talk about her dogs, and her games. Her and her husband have three big dogs – I'm not even sure what kind, she probably told me once but I never bothered to remember – and they are gamers. I mean serious gamers. They spend 2-4 hours every night doing online games – WoW and the like – and 3 nights a week playing some RPG board game that takes 6-8 hours to play. It's a pretty miserable existence if you ask me. But, it's her life.

I'm a teacher. I teach English and Theatre at a private high school. I started the program. My students love me. My co-workers like me. I love my job. I like my life. There is no better feeling than finally meeting the expectations of everyone in your past – Your parents, old professors, and friends. It's fulfilling.

Jerica works for our computer service department. She fixes computers.

I was about 5 minutes from dropping her off. The box truck coming the other direction careened across the centerline and barreled towards my little Prius. There was a wide berm, and no cars behind the truck – I could swerve to the right or the left. The choice was mine.

I once heard a couple of radio DJ's say that most auto accident fatalities are passengers. The drivers walk away. They theorized that it was because of the driver's instinct for self-preservation. They don't even think about it – they just turn themselves away from the danger. That puts their passengers closer to the danger – closer to the impact. Leading to a higher chance of fatality – for the passenger. It makes sense.

In the moments after I saw the truck, and before the moment I turned the wheel, I thought about the conversation of those radio DJ's. Instinct. Right? Instincts of self-preservation. But here – in these moments of slow-motion car and truck screeching towards each other – I have time to think about it. I have time to choose. I can swerve left causing the truck to impact my passenger side – and at that speed most likely kill Jerica. Or I can swerve right, causing the truck to impact the driver side of the car – my side – most likely killing *me*.

It is not often that these kinds of thoughts are able to run coherently through your mind in split seconds like this. But somehow, they do. And I have to make a choice.

Is it a choice? I mean seriously – It's a no brainer right? Self-preservation. Of course I am going to swerve left. Why wouldn't I? Save yourself. That's the only option. I mean when you think about it – cost benefit wise – it's obvious. What would be lost – if she dies in this crash?

Let's look at this from the standpoint of societal value. What does she contribute? She plays games every spare minute of her life. She spends ridiculous amounts of money on her dogs. Just last month she told me they spent \$5,000 on an operation for one of their dogs. FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS! And she still complains about not being able to pay bills. Revolting.

At work – she is expendable. There are hundreds – no, thousands – of programmers and computer nerds out there – most of them better than her. The school would hire her replacement within the week. Nothing lost there. She is on the bottom of the totem pole. She has no societal value.

I guess her husband would miss her. On that thought I shift the scenario the other way. My wife would miss me. My wife of 7 months. We've barely begun our lives together, and she'd be a widow. I can't do that to her.

Plus, I have societal value. I am a teacher. I train kids to think. Analyze. Evaluate. I train kids to explore new places. People. Ideas. They love my classes. They love me. How many students would leave school without a well-rounded education because I wasn't there to give it to them? Sure teachers are a dime-a-dozen, but not teachers like me. I'm a damn good teacher. One of the best – I've been told that many times. I give back. I never ask for anything in return. I volunteer for countless organizations. I give money to charities every year. This world would be a lesser place if I die in this car accident today.

If she dies, oh well.

If I die, it would be a tragedy.

If she dies, no one would blame me.

If I die, my wife would fall apart.

If she dies, her husband would move on, eventually.

If I die, a valuable part of society will be lost.

Swerve left, or right, or left or right. It is an obvious choice. It's a no brainer.

Left

Right.

Left.

Right

Left...

Right...

Left...

Right.....