Name _____

WORKSHEET #6

PHIL 360 Ethical Theory 2pm - Prof Sterrett
Reading and Reflection Questions for September 21st, 2026 Class Meeting
(First meeting on Kant)
"On A Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philanthropic Concerns" by I. Kant
(you may also refer to: "The Truth about Kant on Lies" by James Edwin Mahon
but we will also have a worksheet on that paper next)

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1. Who is the "German philosopher" referred to in the quote from Benjamin Constant? What principle is Constant critical of, and what does Constant say that German philosopher does with the principle he is critical of?

2. How does Constant refute the moral principle he is critical of?

3. Kant regards Constant's attempt at refutation of the moral principle as fallacy (an argument that is not valid.) He distinguishes two questions. What are they? Do you think it is important to distinguish them?

4. What does Kant mean in saying that "a lie always harms another" (even when it doesn't harm any other human being).

5. Kant gives a complicated argument on page 164, concluding that being truthful (honest) is "a sacred and unconditionally commanding law of reason that admits of no expediency whatsoever." What's his reasoning? See if you can summarize it or put the gist of it in your own words.

6. On page 165 Kant says that the "French philosopher" (by whom he means, Benjamin Constant) confuses two things. He uses Latin terms: *nocet* and *laedit.* Look up the meaning of the Latin terms (you can use electronic devices in class to do this if we go over this question in class.) What is the distinction he makes? If you can think of (or have found) an example to illustrate it, give it here, too.

7. What principle does Kant explicitly reject (p. 165), and why does he reject it?

8. Kant distinguishes two dangers on page 166. What is the significance of the distinction, and how does it relate to his statement about actions that are "much worse" than injustices against others?

9. What does Kant mean by saying someone is "already a liar (*in potentia*)?