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Three Short Philosophy Papers on Human Freedom

Explain Stace's 'Compatibilism'. What is the major objection to that view and how would Stace deal with that objection?

Stace is a 'compatibilist', meaning that he believes freedom to be compatible with causal determinism. His position is that for a behavior to be free is not for it to be uncaused but is rather for it to be caused in a certain way by one's mental condition. If I black out and, while falling, hit my head on the light switch, thereby causing the lights to turn off, I did not freely turn off the light, for the reason that, even though I did turn off the light, my doing so did not appropriately result from my psychological condition. (It may well be that it did result *in some way or other* from my psychological condition; it may be that my blacking out, and therefore my accidentally turning off the light, was a consequence of my choosing to drink alcohol. But it did not *appropriately* result from my psychological condition, being a mere accidental by-product thereof.) By contrast, if, while in full possession of my faculties, I coolly and deliberately flip the switch, knowing that doing so will cause the lights to turn off, then I have freely turned off the light, since in this case the operative behavior *did* appropriately result from my psychological condition.

The standard objection to this position is as follows. If the world is deterministic, then our behaviors are the inevitable result of forces that lie outside our control and we are therefore not responsible for those actions. But there is a flaw in this reasoning. True—if the world is deterministic, then our actions result from forces outside of our control. But sometimes those forces operate via our agency, this being our ability to decide how to act, and when this happens, the resulting actions are free.

What is Galen Strawson's 'Basic Argument' for our not being free? Does that argument go through?

Strawson's 'basic argument' for the non-existence of personal freedom is as follows: What you do is determined by how you are. So you are responsible for what you do only if you are responsible for how you are. But you are not responsible for how you are, since how you are precedes any possible action of yours and in any case is a function of the condition of the universe before you even existed. So you are not in any way free and are therefore not morally responsible for anything.

I do not believe that this argument goes through. For a behavior on x's part to be 'free' is for that behavior to arise in a certain way out of x's psychological structure. If x has an epileptic fit, his bodily spasms do not arise in the appropriate way out of x's psychological structure, and such behaviors are therefore not free. If x robs a

convenience store, x's conduct does so arise and therefore is free. It may well be that x's behavior is predetermined by forces outside x's control, but because those forces operated through x's own agency, x is responsible for them.

What evidence is there that the psychological realm is causally deterministic?

There are two kinds of evidence psychological causal determinism. First, there is indirect evidence. Everything that happens in the mind is a function of what happens in the brain. The brain is physical. The physical world is deterministic (at least to a high degree of approximation). Therefore, the mind is deterministic.

Second, there is direct evidence taken from our knowledge of psychology itself. When we know a person's motives and beliefs, we can predict their behavior infallibly. People are predictable to the extent that they are known. Prediction is possible only where there is causal determinism. (If I push the elevator button, I can predict that the elevator will come if, and only if, the causal mechanisms linking the two events are intact.) Therefore, since people are predictable to the extent that they are known, they are causally determined to the extent that they are known. And given that they are

causally determined to the extent that they are known, it stands to reason that they are completely causally determined.

The Paradox of Religious Institutions

Religious *values* can exist without an institutional host, but an actual religion cannot possibly do so, simply because a religion is itself a social institution. There may well have been people in the year 10,000 BC who had Christian *values*, even though Christianity did not yet exist. If a given set of values are to give rise to a religion, they must be embodied in shared norms of conduct and must therefore be institutionalized. Consequently, a certain minimum degree of institutionalization is implicit in a religion's very existence. That said, I will argue in the present paper that the more a given religion is institutionalized *in excess* of that bare minimum amount, the more it estranges its practitioners from the values that it supposedly represents.

"Christian practices...communicate the meaning of faith", write Stone and Duke (p. 15). "Children learn, for example, that being Christian involves going to Church and knowing how to behave there---when to stand, sit or kneel, and when to listen, pray, or sing. From words and actions together comes an entire set of meanings associated with the faith." These points *mutatis mutandis* hold of any given religion. One cannot be a

Muslim or Buddhist without participating in shared rituals. These practices, as Stone and Duke, are not incidental to one's involvement in a religion, but are vehicles for it.

"Theological understandings", Stone and Duke continue (p. 15), "are embedded in these actions, no less than in the grammar and vocabulary of the language of faith." In other words, religious faith is not merely about having certain beliefs or sentiments; it is an existential commitment that involves compliance with certain community practices. So while it is well and good to say that someone who has such and such values (e.g. generosity, kindness, fair-mindedness) but does not engage in Christian practices (e.g. going to Church) is 'more of a Christian' than someone who lacks those values but does engage in those practices, that contention distorts the nature of religion. A religion is not merely a set of values; it is a set of values that have been 'embedded', as Stone and Duke put it, in certain practices. Someone who has the values but skips the practices is not a Christian, and someone who engages in the practices but lacks the values is also not a Christian.

Religion is often contrasted with *institutionalized* religion. It is often said that although religion X has such and such virtues, religion X may cease to have those virtues once it becomes institutionalized. The standard example—though by no means the only one—is Christianity. Obviously, Jesus had very definite values; and, equally obviously, the Catholic Church has sometimes advocated very different values. The values of the Catholic Church during the Inquisition were probably not Jesus's values, and the present-day Catholic Church's values are also probably not Jesus's values. (Jesus's values were

perhaps more 'liberal' than those of the Church during the Inquisition and perhaps more 'conservative' than those of the Catholic Church today.) On the basis of such facts, it is said that institutionalized Christianity is not always identical with *true* Christianity, 'true Christianity' being a religion whose values are identical with Jesus's values. And on *this* basis, and on the basis of other similar claims, it is said that institutionalized religion is not 'true' religion.

This line of reasoning involves a logical error. If someone says that the Catholic Church in 1500 was not 'true' Christianity, what is being said is not that in 1500 there was Catholicism and, alongside it, some other religion, namely true Christianity, but rather that Catholicism in 1500 did not represent truly Christian values. When people talk about 'true Christianity', they are referring not to an actual but to an idealized religion---a religion that doesn't exist but that, if it did exist, would embody certain values. But could 'true Christianity' (whatever one believes that to be) *actually* exist without being to some degree institutionalized?

It could not. "It is not Scriptures alone", write Stone and Duke (p. 75), "but the whole life of the Church that is to preserve and communicate the Gospel. Worship, rituals, sacraments, activities in the outside world are the means by which the Gospel is communicated." In other words, although an intellectual understanding of the Gospel may be possible while spurning all Christian traditions and practices, participation in religious rites and practices is necessary for a genuinely religious connection to the

Gospel. Stone and Duke are speaking of Christianity specifically, but their points can be mapped onto any religion. I can read a work by the Buddha and comply with the principles therein, but that does not make me a Buddhist. It makes me a non-Buddhist who happens to agree with certain Buddhist values. Being a Buddhist involves being embedded in Buddhist traditions and practices. Without engaging in a given religion's practices, one can have an intellectual understanding of its tenets but one cannot truly belong to it. The reason is simply that belong to a religion is a way of life; it is not just a set of beliefs.

All religions demand compliance with at least some formalities, and all religions are therefore institutionalized to at least some degree. Alleged religions (e.g. 'secular humanism') that make absolutely no formal demands of their followers are, for that very reason, *anti-religions*, not religions proper—alternatives to religions, as it were, but not religions in any conventional sense. The relevant question, then, is not how to deinstitutionalize religion---for that is not an option—but rather how to separate the helpful from the hurtful institutional aspects of religion. "Christians cannot accept *everything* tradition has to offer", Stone and Duke write (p. 52). "Some of the elements of religion do not deserve to be called resources for theological reflection. They are trivialities, liabilities, nasty habits---or even poisons, harmful to Christians and other living things." The question arises where the useful aspects of tradition and ritual end and these "trivialities" and "liabilities" begin.

Stone and Duke give us the elements of a cogent answer to this question. Although “matters of faith are not rightly thought of in scientific terms”, they write (p. 53), “reasoning is part of theological reflection. It is involved in interpreting Scripture, tradition and experience.” In other words, one must use reason to find the best way to connect with the meanings hidden beneath the traditions. Reason “also plays a role in every effort to assess alternative accounts of the Christian faith in search of the most adequate one” (p. 53). To generalize this point, there are different versions of practically any given religion, and one must use reason to find the one that best suits one.

“Experience plays a significant role in theological reflection,” write Stone and Duke (p. 54), and “[t]he life of faith embraces the totality of our experiences” (p. 55). Life experience is what makes us need religion, and it is what gives religion meaning for us. For someone who has experienced nothing—neither loss nor conflict nor self-doubt--- religion can do little, its blessings being confined to those who have experiences that they need to understand and integrate into a larger moral understanding. Moreover, “[e]xperience often serves as a reality check against overblown and false theological assertions”, Stone and Duke write (p. 56). “A certain televangelist, for example, made a fortune for himself that if they would surrender their hearts and bank-accounts to God...they would assuredly prosper.”

There we have it. When the institutional aspects of religion become a hindrance to the use of reason, including the insight given us by our experiences, they are to be

discarded or at least 'flagged' for further review, as it were. When the institutional aspects of religion are extensions of reason and experience, they are to be accepted. To me, this suggests that what libertarians say about government (rightly or wrongly, I do not know) is true of religious tradition. According to libertarians, governments should be just large enough to prevent violent crime and enforce contracts; and if they get any larger, they undermine the people they are supposed to serve and therefore lose legitimacy. Similarly, I would contend, religious institutions and traditions should be sufficiently present in one's life as to help one find meaning and connect with God; but if they become obtrusive, they drain life of meaning and therefore subvert their own function." Religions, like governments, have a tendency to get bigger than they should. Jesus had a minimalist conception of religion: he urged people to temper religious dictates with conscience and common sense. "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone", said Jesus, his point being that, when it comes to religion, it is the spirit, not the letter of the law that counts.

We find a very similar message in Martin Luther King's *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*. "How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust?", King asks. "A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law....Any law that degrades human personality is unjust." King is referring to laws in the legal sense; he is not referring to religious traditions. But his point is easily mapped onto religion: just as governments

exist to serve the public, and should be resisted when they do the opposite, a religion's rites and rituals exist to connect its followers to God and Truth and should be discarded when they separate him from them.

"Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their 'thus saith the Lord' far beyond the boundaries of their home towns," King writes, "and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid." King's point is that true religion is driven by conscience and therefore by the experience and intellect embodied therein.

I therefore conclude that, although religion cannot and should not be completely deinstitutionalized, it should only be as institutionalized only as much as it has to be to help its followers connect to God and find meaning in life. When that threshold is exceeded, religion becomes legalistic and undermining. For a religion to have vitality, traditions must be retained while being updated and in some cases pruned. "The dynamic process of passing on the Christian message", Stone and Duke write (p. 53), "involves an interplay of continuity and change. Whatever is handed over from one context to another is subject to reinterpretation." The institutional side of religion is therefore not to be rejected, but it is to be kept up-to-date and relevant, and this is not possible when religion becomes too institution-heavy.

Different Perspectives on Religious Belief:

O'Reilly v. Dawkins. v. James v. Clifford

There were two facets to the discussion between Richard Dawkins and Bill O'Reilly. The first concerned whether God exists and, what is obviously closely related, whether we have adequate reason to believe that He does. Bill O'Reilly starts off strong, putting forth a version of the *Teleological Argument* (otherwise known as the Argument from Design:.) Basically, the world is organized, like a clock, and, just as we know clocks to be made by clock-makers, so must by analogy assume the world to be have been made by clock-maker. Richard Dawkins doesn't address this argument directly, but ops out with the platitude that the scope of science is growing constantly---which, though true, rather begs the question against the Teleological Argument, since science presupposes that the world is organized and therefore, at lest by the lights of the advocated of the Teleological Argument, presupposes that there is indeed a Great Clockmaker.

O'Reilly then lamely says that, although cannot prove that his own (Christian) belief is 'true' simpliciter, he *does* know that it is true *for him*, though not necessarily for others. Which, as Dawkins seems to note, amounts to saying that it is *not* true.

O'Reilly then says, less trivially, that his faith does him good. Dawkins rightly grants that, while this may be true, it doesn't follow that O'Reilly's faith is actually true. O'Reilly doesn't quite understand the point that Dawkins is making.

O'Reilly then says that the worst murderers of all time were atheists and, so O'Reilly claims it follows, that religion has a normalizing and morally salutary effect on people. Dawkins responds predictably, by citing counter-examples and then claiming on that basis that religion is not morally salutary.

Clifford's position is: Believe if and only if the evidence warrants and would probably opt for an atheistic position. That said, the teleological argument is not exactly an anti-empirical argument. As for O'Reilly's other claim, that religion has a centering and moralizing effect on people, Clifford would rightly respond that this is an empirical question, to be decided on the basis of the historical data.

William James would agree with this last point, but with a couple of pro-religious qualifications. First, James seems to hold that one of religion's *virtues* is its irrationalism—its requirement that people believe on faith. James holds that if belief is too closely hewed to data, it becomes confining and inhibits growth and action. James also holds that the element of irrationality in religion puts those who are religious in touch with creative energies of theirs. Finally, James would have some sympathy for O'Reilly's point that "Christianity is true for me though it may not be true for you." James would say that, although Dawkins may well be right about the purely factual

matters being debated, O'Reilly is in touch with religion's ultimate function, which is not so much to describe the world as to give people purpose and life meaning.

Schopenhauer on Suicide

Ultimately, Schopenhauer does *not* recommend suicide. Schopenhauer's attitude towards life—and death, including voluntary death (suicide)—is Buddhist in nature. He holds not that death *per se* is desirable, but that the *extirpation of suffering (Nirvana)* is desirable. Buddhists hold that suffering is inevitable and, paradoxically, that it is only by accepting its inevitability that one can escape it. Schopenhauer holds—more for reasons of a biological than a theological nature—that suffering is inevitable, or nearly so. And given that death brings an end to suffering, it would seem that Schopenhauer would favor suicide.

But he doesn't. His position, in fact, is that “suicide thwarts the attainment of the highest moral aim by the fact that, for a real release from this world of misery, it substitutes one that is merely apparent.” What Schopenhauer regards as the highest state is not exactly one of *not* suffering—a *rock* doesn't suffer, after all, but there is nothing sublime about a rock's condition---but is rather a state of having a living mind that is not suffering. When a person is dead, he is not there: *he* is no more there to *not*

suffer than he is to suffer. So the absence of pain associated with death is merely the absence of there being anything to experience pain.

What Schopenhauer regards as the sublime condition for *humans* is, almost tautologously, that of *existing* (i.e. being conscious, not being dead) *and* not suffering. This condition is *death-like* in that it involves an absence of suffering, but *non-death-like* in that it presupposes the existence of the human subject. And so it is that through Schopenhauer's writings, he speaks of momentary pleasures---e.g. the joy of a good laugh or of a gentle caress---as being supremely valuable. And so it is that Schopenhauer writes:

Cheerfulness is a direct and immediate gain,—the very coin, as it were, of happiness, and not, like all else, merely a cheque upon the bank; for it alone makes us immediately happy in the present moment, and that is the highest blessing for beings like us, whose existence is but an infinitesimal moment between two eternities. To secure and promote this feeling of cheerfulness should be the supreme aim of all our endeavors after happiness (Schopenhauer, Arthur. The Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer: the Wisdom of Life (p. 12). Kindle Edition.)_

So no—Schopenhauer is not *pro*-suicide. In fact, he regards suicide as a mistake—as a mistaken way of attempting to achieve the (in Schopenhauer’s view) very legitimate goal of not suffering. And because the goal of suicide (viz. the elimination of pain) is (in Schopenhauer’s view) legitimate, Schopenhauer regards suicide as a *mistake that is not a crime*:

*In my chief work I have explained the only valid reason existing against suicide on the score of mortality. It is this: that suicide thwarts the attainment of the highest moral aim by the fact that, for a real release from this world of misery, it substitutes one that is merely apparent. But from a mistake to a crime is a far cry; and it is as a crime that the clergy of Christendom wish us to regard suicide.*¹

1. (<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/s/schopenhauer/arthur/pessimism/chapter3.html>)

Schopenhauer plausibly holds that the macrocosm and microcosm—the macro (external, objective) and the micro (internal, subject, psychological)—should be ‘of a piece’ and thus have the same sorts of properties and the same sort of structure. Some background will help make it clear what Schopenhauer has in mind. According to David Hume, there are no forces in reality: when one observes the world, says Hume, one witnesses events, but no forces connected events. Schopenhauer denies this, saying that one’s experience of one’s own states is replete with awareness of forces: of urges, compulsions, desires, action-inducing jolts and pricks, and the like. Schopenhauer then says that, since we are ourselves are a part of nature, and not outside, it follows that there are forces within nature, contrary to what Hume says. Schopenhauer also seems to hold that, since there are forces within us, it would be odd if reality in general were not permeated with forces. Schopenhauer’s implicit reasoning being that, if forces resided only in the human psyche, then each human being would be a kind of singularity—a pocket of non-subjection to natural law. And, so the rest of Schopenhauer’s implicit thought process seems to run, it would be methodologically contraindicated to supposed that each human being, rather than being a part of nature, were an exception to it.

And so it is that Schopenhauer, on the basis of his holistic view of reality—his view that the micro (internal, psychological) mirrors the macro (external, physical)---

leads him to hold that reality as a whole contains forces and, more generally, mental activity, this being why he described the world as being “will and idea.”

Schopenhauer thus holds that the world, including the psychological component of it, has a *fractal structure*: the micro replicates the macro. And this line of thinking—though not yet known to be correct—is *a priori* more reasonable than its opposite, according to which the existence of mind represents an inexplicable cleavage in world governed by laws that are fundamentally non-psychological in nature. Schopenhauer’s view is also *a priori* more reasonable than the pseudo-scientific denialism characteristic of modern materialism, according to which the mind either does not exist (which is an absurd and also self-undermining view) or does exist but only by virtue of being identical with something—namely, the physical: the world governed by physical and chemical laws---to which it appears to bear no resemblance.

Theodore Roszak’s Views on Bicameral Consciousness

Explain this quote by Theodore Roszak: “The epistemological systems that have been developed since the time of Descartes have often been ingenious . . . But all of them

are marked by the same curious fact. They leave out the Angel of Truth—as indeed Descartes himself did.”

The great epistemological doctrines of the modern age all begin with doubt—oftentimes, as in Descartes case, involving a hypothetical ‘evil demon’ who fills people’s minds with hallucinations that they take them for veridical perceptions. So modern epistemology is informed by a kind of skepticism and cynicism. And this all-consuming doubt, in addition to being artificial, is also rather sterile, since if one takes that doubt as one’s starting point, it is very produce a theory of knowledge that does justice to our intuitions about what we know. It would be better if we started with belief—with an Angel of Truth—and then tried toe explain error in terms of knowledge, rather than starting with disbelief—with an Evil Demon—and then tried to explain knowledge in terms of error.

Philosophy Exam Questions and Answers

Who was Faust and why, according to Sheldrake, is he a symbol of modern science?

Faust was a kind of Dr. Frankenstein figure who tried to rise above nature. He sold his soul for infinite knowledge, in an effort to be Godlike. But human beings are a part of nature; we are not above it. And if we try to rise above it, we lose our way, like Faust. In Sheldrake's view, modern scientists are trying to rise above nature and separate themselves from it, in much the way that was Faust was trying to do.

Summarize any one of the ten objections from 'Utopian Neuroscience'. then, summarize any one of Pearce's responses to that objection. how might the objector reply to Pearce?

The technical objection: While it makes sense to speak of becoming 10 times taller, does it really make sense to speak of becoming 10 times happier? It does not seem so. And if not, then how can modern science (e.g. gene splicing, neuro-rewiring) make us 10 times happier?

Pearce's response: First of all, even if doesn't make sense to measure increments of happiness, it does make sense to speak of becoming happier (or less happy) than we currently are. And there is plenty of reason to believe that this can be done through

changes to our biochemistry. Second, even though happiness, considered as a subjective phenomenon is not quantifiable, the neural underpinnings of it (e.g. the numbers of neurons firing when we eat chocolate vs. when we use heroin) are quantifiable.

What is bicameral consciousness, according to Julian Jaynes? Illustrate by either:

i. his analysis of the Greek epics; or ii. his analysis of the Old Testament

According to Jaynes, in contexts where we would have thoughts, primitive peoples would externalize those would-be thoughts in the form of hallucinations. So if a primitive person was dealing with stimuli that he couldn't automatically process, the 'left' brain-hemisphere would transfer its thought-contents to the 'right' hemisphere, which in turn would generate auditory hallucinations of verbal representations of those thoughts. And those hallucinations were taken to be the voices of the gods or of God, this being why God/the gods were such a potent presence in the mind of early man. In Jayne's view, the Greek Myths and the Old Testament were not exactly made up, so much as they were hallucinated, viz. 'told' to the people who produced these myths in the form of auditory hallucinations.

What is religion, according to Julian Jaynes: (i) during the bicameral era; and (ii) today?

According to Jayne, during the bicameral ear, religious doctrines were not so much accepted on faith or even 'believed' as they were experienced, in the form of auditory hallucinations.

What modern man thinks, primitive man 'heard', through auditory hallucinations. So religion for primitive man was experienced. But for modern man it consists of doctrines that, not being experienced, have to be believed to be accepted. And since they are not very plausible, they tend to little or no hold on people.

“But wherefore does my life say this to me?” what ancient work is this line from, and what is its significance, according to Julian Jaynes?

This is from the Iliad. And according to Jaynes, it shows that we experience as thoughts, they experienced as voices. People doubt what they think, not what they experience. For this reason, says Jaynes, for the people of Homer's time, religion had a

reality that it simply couldn't have for us. And this is why religions now consist of slightly comic fairy tales, whereas for the people who actually invented religion, these 'fairy tales' were simple truths.

how are UFOs 'hermetic', according to Davis / Vallee?

In this context, "hermetic" means "relating to ancient traditions or modes of thought." According to David/Vallee, UFO-sightings are modern man's equivalent of what God-sightings were to the ancients. UFO-sightings are glimpses (of the delusional variety, of course) of Gods that are dressed up modern (scientific) form.

how does the phenomenon of blindsight help Jaynes advance his bicameral thesis?

Blindsight is seeing without knowing that one is seeing. According to Jaynes, primitive man was conscious but not self-conscious. He believed without knowing that he believed, and therefore experienced his beliefs as outer realities.

how is god found in the figurants, in the trash stratum? why is god more likely found there?

We no longer really believe in God, at least not in the way in which we believe in the existence of people with whom we are acquainted (or have seen on T.V. or even just heard of). We do not believe in God in the way in which the ancients believed. The ancients did not even have to 'believe' in God since they never doubted His existence in the first place. In any case, for us, God is a background figure--a proper, a supporting actor. He exists when we need Him--as when we are in A.A. or we are need a shoulder to cry on but don't have a human shoulder to cry on. He has a second-class existence and plays only a supporting role, like a figurant (dancer who dances only as part of a group) or no role (like a piece of discarded trash).

What is a H.A.D.D? What are exopsychic decision procedures?

An H.A.D.D. is a hyper-active agent detection device. Animals must obviously be able to detect motion. And it behooves animals to be able to distinguish between 'inanimate' motion, e.g. leaves being blown in the wind, and 'animate' noise, e.g. the footsteps of a predator. A H.A.D.D. is an overactive tendency on a creature's part to interpret noises and other disturbances as evidence of animate motion. Many dogs bark frantically whenever they hear the slightest noise, for the reason that they take practically all such noises as indications of another animal (and, indeed, as indications of a predatory). Such a dog has an agent detection-device of the hyper-active variety.

An exopsychic decision procedure is a case of working through a problem by experiencing one's thoughts on the matter as external voices, in a literal sense, or in any case as visitations of some kind, some tangible and real kind, from the outside world.

how does Dennett explain the origins of shamanic healing?

According to Dennett, shamanism is a "biosocial paradigm of consciousness and healing." Basically, it is a kind of community-hypnosis that the community-members believe in and that therefore works. So it works through a placebo effect--but, for that very reason, does in fact work.

Locke, Aristotle and Kant on Virtue

The author tells us that philosophical ideas should be evaluated on their own terms, not in terms of who put them forth. In other words, when making a case for philosophical position X, it is not an argument to say “Kant said X” or “Locke said X.” What matters is not who supports X, but what the arguments for X are. “In a philosophical paper”, the author writes, “the argument matters most, and the essential questions are whether the conclusions follows from the premises and whether the premises are true.”

Yes, I suppose. But there is another even important question, namely: Is the author saying anything that isn't totally obvious? Does anyone stand to *learn* anything by reading the work the question? And in this case, the answer is a resounding “no.” As in the passage titled “Rule 3-2”, the author isn't saying anything that isn't obvious and therefore isn't really saying anything.

In Nicomachean Ethics, Book I, Chapter 13, Aristotle introduces his conception of “virtue.” Explain the general relation between virtue and the soul (according to

Aristotle). Next, explain Aristotle's distinction between virtues of thought and virtues of character.

Etymologically, the word "virtue" means "truth", and this seems to be the sense in which Aristotle is using the word. Aristotle begins by saying that "happiness is a certain sort of activity of the soul in accord with perfect virtue." Aristotle seems to be saying that one achieves happiness by being *true* to what one is. According to Aristotle, to be human is to be rational (or at least capable of being so). Therefore, holds Aristotle, a human being is true to what he is to the extent that is rational. And since, as Aristotle says in the above quotation, happiness is activity of the soul that embodies fidelity to one's nature, it follows, if we accept Aristotle's premises, that happiness is identical with rationality.

It must be made clear that rationality is not identical with intelligence. To be rational is not to *be* intelligent; it is to be intelligent *and* to apply one's intelligence in the management of one's own affairs, including one's internal (psychological) affairs. So rationality might be thought of as applied or *integrated* rationality.

For Aristotle, rationality---not kindness, not altruism, not generosity---is the supreme virtue. At first, this may seem odd. But it ceases to be odd when it is clearly explained. For Aristotle, there is no way to be rational without being temperate, honest

with oneself, self-disciplined and generally centered. And, Aristotle also holds, one cannot be centered if one is manipulative, deceptive, or petty. So for Aristotle, rationality, this being experientially integrated intelligence, involves a certain decency towards others. In Aristotle's view, having a balanced and therefore rationally structured soul cannot be distinguished from having fair-minded relations with others.

Aristotle distinguishes two kinds of virtues of the soul, namely, virtues of thought and virtues of character. Virtues of thought include "wisdom, comprehension and prudence." (By "prudence", Aristotle seems to mean *judgment*.) A virtue of thought is an embodiment of intelligence, this being why "comprehension" (understanding, acuity) qualifies as a "virtue" of thought.

Virtues of character include "generosity and temperance." (Presumably kindness and mercifulness would also be virtues of character.) A "virtue of character" seems to be a character-trait that is not an embodiment so much of intelligent as of general psychological health and vitality. Whereas the spiteful person is, as it were, small and shriveled, this being why spite is a vice (the opposite of a virtue), the magnanimous person is large and psychologically, this being why magnanimity is a virtue.

Logic Lecture for Erika

Please go to the following websites if you are in trouble:

<http://legacy.earlham.edu/~peters/courses/log/treeprop.htm>

<https://tellerprimer.ucdavis.edu/pdf/1ch9.pdf>

PROBLEM 1: This problem is by far the hardest. The others are easy. Anyway....

An argument is valid if the conclusion is true whenever the premises are true.

Here we are using tree diagrams to determine validity. This will involve some memorization on your part.

Here is a problem from your homework:

$A \rightarrow (B \rightarrow C)$

$A \rightarrow$

 B

$A \rightarrow$

C

Here is how we use tree diagrams to determine validity. First of all, memorize the following rules. If you cannot see them, go the website:

<http://legacy.earlham.edu/~peters/courses/log/treeprop.htm>

5. Branching represents inclusive disjunction: the statement is true under one or the other or both of the conditions that branch below it. Non-branching represents conjunction: the statement is true only under both the conditions listed below it.

6. The decomposed components of a compound must be listed at the bottom of every open branch below the compound.

Truth Tree Decomposition Rules

Branching Rules

$A \supset B$		$A \vee B$		$\sim(A \cdot B)$		$A \equiv B$		$\sim(A \equiv B)$	
$\sim A$	B	A	B	$\sim A$	$\sim B$	A B	$\sim A$ $\sim B$	A $\sim B$	$\sim A$ B

In constructing your tree on paper, it helps to draw the branching graphically, for example converting this

$A \supset B$	
$\sim A$	B

into this

Non-Branching Rules

$A \cdot B$	$\sim(A \supset B)$	$\sim(A \vee B)$	$\sim\sim A$
A B	A $\sim B$	$\sim A$ $\sim B$	A

NEXT STEP: Write out each line of the formula EXCEPT FOR THE CONCLUSION:

$$A \rightarrow (B \rightarrow C)$$

$$A \rightarrow B$$

Next step: Write out the NEGATION of the conclusion. The conclusion is $A \rightarrow C$. So the NEGATION of the conclusion is:

$$\sim(A \rightarrow C)$$

So this is what you should now have:

$A \rightarrow (B \rightarrow C)$

$A \rightarrow B$

$\sim(A \rightarrow C)$

NEXT STEP: Refer to the rules in the picture above. Look up the rule for: $\sim(A \rightarrow C)$

NOTE: There are two kinds of rules: BRANCHING and NON-BRANCHING. The rule for $\sim(A \rightarrow C)$ is NON-BRANCHING. Anyway, that rule is this:

$\sim(A \supset B)$
A
$\sim B$

This means that underneath the $\sim(A \rightarrow C)$, you put A and $\sim B$ in a column, like so:

A

$\sim C$

NON-BRANCHING rules form columns. BRANCHING rules form branches.

Anyway, you put that underneath what you have already. What you already have is:

$A \rightarrow (B \rightarrow C)$

$A \rightarrow B$

$\sim(A \rightarrow C)$

So when you add the extra two lines, you get:

$A \rightarrow B \rightarrow$

$C \ A \rightarrow B$

$\sim(A \rightarrow C)$

A

$\sim C$

NEXT STEP: You are now going to deal with the premises, i.e. with $A \rightarrow (B \rightarrow C)$ and $A \rightarrow B$. So look up the rule for: $A \rightarrow B$

Here is that rule:

$A \supset B$		
$\sim A$	B	

This is a BRANCHING rule. This means that you create two branches underneath what you already have, and you put $\sim A$ on the left branch and B on the right branch. So here

is what you should have:

$A \rightarrow (B \rightarrow C)$

$A \rightarrow B$

$\sim(A \rightarrow C)$

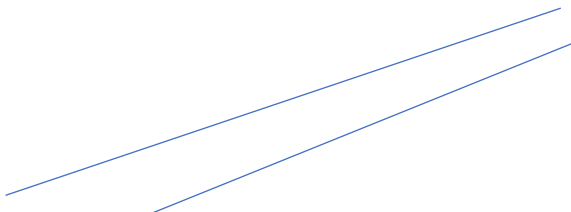
A

$\sim C$

\sim

A

B



$\sim A \vee B$

NEXT STEP: We have to deal with the other premise. The other premise is: $A \rightarrow (B \rightarrow C)$. Once again, the rule is going to be:

$A \supset B$		
$\sim A$	B	

The resulting entries are lines 6 and 7 (boldfaced, italicized):

$A \rightarrow (B \rightarrow C)$

$A \rightarrow B$

$\sim(A \rightarrow C)$

A

$\sim C$

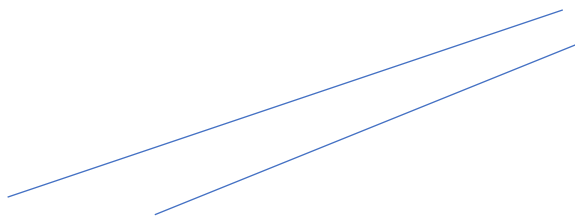
$\sim A$

$(B \rightarrow C)$

~

A

B



$\sim A$ B

NEXT STEP: We can only start drawing lines when we have simple statements (i.e. statements without 'or', 'and' or 'arrow'). So we draw a line from our new $\sim A$, leaving us with:

$A \rightarrow (B \rightarrow C)$

$A \rightarrow B$

$\sim(A \rightarrow C)$

A

~C

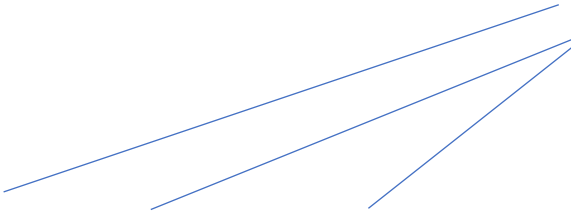
~A

$(B \rightarrow C)$

\sim

A

B



$\sim A \vee B \vee \sim A$

NEXT STEP: Before we can do anything with $(B \rightarrow C)$, we have to break it up into its parts, using the same rule as the last two times, namely:

$A \supset B$		
$\sim A$	B	

$A \rightarrow (B \rightarrow C)$

$A \rightarrow B$

$\sim(A \rightarrow C)$

A

$\sim C$

$\sim A$

$(B \rightarrow C)$

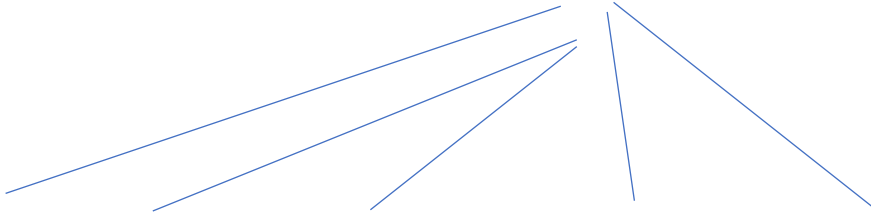
~

B

C

~A

B



$\sim A \ B \ \sim A \ \sim B \ C$

NEXT STEP: Now it gets easy. Just take what we have so far. And in the 'trunk' (i.e. the column of letters and formulas at the top), get rid of the complex expressions. This leaves us with:

A

$\sim B$

$\sim A$

\sim

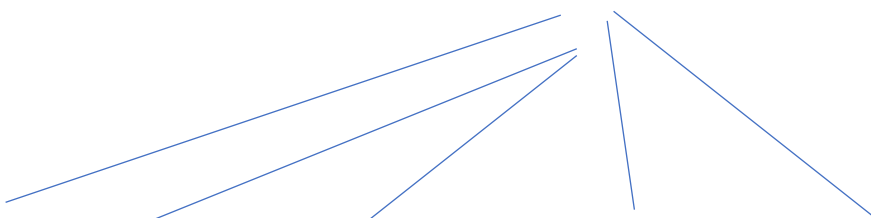
B

C

\sim

A

B



$\sim A \ B \ \sim A \ \sim B \ C$

NEXT STEP: Go through each of the guys at the end of the branches. The first one is $\sim A$.

Now what you do, is you look at the 'trunk', and you see if you can find its negation (i.e. you see if you can find A). As it happens, you can. So you put that A underneath that $\sim A$, and you 'close off' the branch with an X. Then you repeat the same procedure for each of the other branches. This leaves you with the following:

A

$\sim B$

$\sim A$

\sim

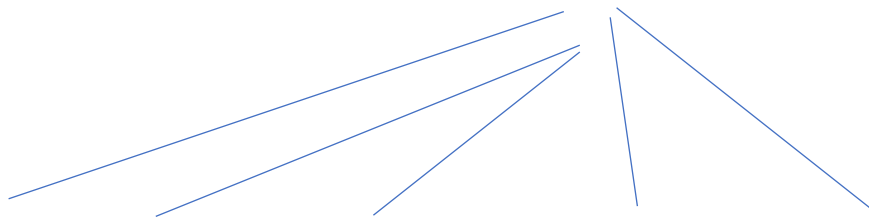
B

C

\sim

A

B



$\sim A B \sim A$

$\sim B C A \sim B$

A B $\sim C$ X X

X X X

Since each branch closes off with an X, the original argument is valid.

If there had been a branch that DID NOT close off with an X, the argument would have been INVALID. We will discuss this when we meet. We will also go over some simpler examples, so that you get the hang of it.

Problem 2: Here we have to make alterations to some of the arguments in Problem 1 and then determine validity. Consider (e) in Problem 1:

$B \rightarrow (A \rightarrow$

C)

$A \rightarrow (B \rightarrow$

C)

First of all, this is valid. (We can talk about how I know that.) Anyway, your professor is telling us to replace $p \rightarrow q$ or $\sim p \vee q$. This is because these two formulas are equivalent. So here is what this leaves us with.

$$\sim B \vee (\sim A \vee C)$$

$$\sim A \vee (\sim B \vee C)$$

Your professor then tells us to 'use the laws of equivalence in chapter 3 to simplify' these formulas, so as to determine validity. I don't have the book, but presumably he is referring to the fact that disjunction is associative (meaning you can drop/move parentheses) and to the fact that it is commutative (meaning that order is irrelevant. In light of which, the above argument comes out as follows:

$$\sim A \vee \sim B \vee C$$

$$\sim A \vee \sim B \vee C$$

This is obviously valid, since the two lines are the same.

Problem 3

Your prof tells us to use the tree method to determine whether the following statement is a tautology:

$$A \rightarrow (B \rightarrow C) \equiv (A \rightarrow B) \rightarrow (A \rightarrow C)$$

It is a tautology, and we'll go through it together when we meet.

Your prof also tells us to do this formula what we did in Problem 2, which we'll do when we meet.

Problem 4

Here we have to translate and then determine validity. Let's look at 4(a)

First we

abbreviate: H:

Holmes bungled

W: Watson's

abroad.

M: Moriarty will escape.

$$(H \vee W) \rightarrow M$$
$$\sim M \rightarrow H$$

We are supposed to use the tree method, which we can do when we meet. But there is a simpler way.

$\sim M \rightarrow H$ is equivalent with $M \vee H$

So the argument comes to:

$$(H \vee W) \rightarrow M$$
$$M \vee H$$

Let's keep on getting rid of arrows. When we get rid of all of

~~them, we have:~~ $(\sim H \wedge \sim W) \vee M$

$$M \vee H$$

Is this valid? No. Suppose that $\sim H \wedge \sim W$ is true. In that case the first line is true, but the second can be false. So---not valid.

As for the other problems, we can go through those in person. See you in a few!

1. How does Kant define a "good will," and why is it so important to his moral philosophy? (200 words)

2. Give an example from your own life, the news, movies/t.v. or simply create a fictional example, which illustrates a person acting "in conformity with duty but not [acting] from duty." Hint: First you will need to give an example of a duty, then explain how the subject is acting in conformity with that duty but not from that duty. Example: {Duty} Killing is wrong. {Example} I didn't kill that guy who cut me off on the freeway because I would go to jail, not because killing is wrong. (200 words)

1. First of all, for Kant, there are two kinds of goodness: hypothetical and categorical. Something is *hypothetically* good if it is good as a means. Thus, a car is good *as a means* to an end, that end being driving, and a car is thus hypothetically good. Hypothetical goodness is the same thing as *conditional* goodness. A car is good *on the condition* that one needs to drive somewhere; otherwise not good. Thus, hypothetical goodness is the same thing as *instrumental* goodness.

Something is *categorically* good if it is good in and of itself. Thus, something is categorically good if it is *intrinsically* good, i.e. if it is non-instrumentally or unconditionally good, as opposed to good as a means to some end.

According to Kant, the only that is categorically (non-hypothetically, unconditionally) good is a *good will*. Kant's argument is simply that anything besides a good will embody immorality. Thus, thus the happiness of a villain is not a good thing, says Kant, and neither is a villain's intelligence, as each embodies viciousness, not virtue.

Obviously, moral goodness is a kind of *intrinsic* goodness, not a kind of instrumental or conditional goodness.

From these premises, Kant deduces that the only thing that is categorically (unconditionally) good is a good will. Kant's argument is simply that any other 'good' thing is only conditionally good and for that reason fails to be good (except instrumentally) in at least some circumstances. So, for example, the happiness of a villain, though good *for him*, is not intrinsically good, since it embodied moral turpitude; and the intelligence of a villain, though good *for him* (vis-à-vis certain objectives of his), is not intrinsically good, since it can be used in furtherance of evil.

2. There are many examples of this. Suppose that I save a drowning toddler, but that I do so to impress my boss, who is witnessing the situation. In that case, my act is "in conformity with" the requirements of morality, even though, being done for reasons of self-interest and personal gain, it does not itself embody any morality. To take

another example: Suppose that a wealthy woman writes a book and asks me to tell her what I think of it. In actuality, the book is extremely good, and I therefore have an obligation to tell her as much. And that is what I do. But I do it solely to curry favor with me, so that she will marry me and bestow her riches upon me. I have absolutely no desire to do the right thing, being driven entirely by a desire for gain, for which I am totally willing to lie but which in this particular context involves me telling the truth. To give an example from my own life: My housemate is very clean and respectful; he never leaves a mess and never makes noise. I myself am the same way towards him, and indeed it is my moral obligation to be this way. But my reasons for so behaving are purely pragmatic, not ethical in nature: I simply don't want to have to get another housemate, since, if I did, that person would almost certainly be more difficult to live with than my current housemate. But if I could get away with it, I would leave my clothes all over the place, be noisy, and so on. So my behavior in this context, though in conformity with my moral duties, do not *embody* any genuine morality.

Van Cleve on Epistemic Circularity

Explain what van Cleve means by epistemic circularity, justified inference, and reliable inference. Now consider the rule of inference he writes "Most of the A's I have examined were B's. Hence, the majority of all A's are B's." How, according to van Cleve, can we come to know that this rule is reliable? How might we know that it is justified (he considers two ways)? Explain why the reliabilist way doesn't involve epistemic circularity.

Epistemic circularity is the use of a supposed source of knowledge to justify that same source of knowledge. If I used sense-perception to justify sense-perception, I am guilty of epistemic circularity. So if asked how I know that I am not dreaming, and I say 'I just pinched myself and it hurt, which it wouldn't if I were dreaming', I am guilty of epistemic circularity. I am guilty of epistemic circularity if I try to justify induction on the basis of induction (as I would be doing if, when trying to justify inferences from the past to the future, I said 'because in the past such inferences have always gone through').

Van Cleve is concerned with how to non-circularly justify induction. His position is based on a 'reliabilist' theory of knowledge. Reliabilism is the view that a belief is justified if caused by a reliable (i.e. consistently truth-conducive) mechanism. Just as the height of the column of mercury in a thermometer must reliably correlate with the temperature if it is to tell them time, so our beliefs must reliably correlate with external realities if they are to be justified.

Van Cleve's position concerning induction is that, even if we don't *know* what the mechanisms are that ensure that our inductively arrived at beliefs are on track, as long as those mechanisms are in fact responsible for our beliefs, they are justified. So in Van Cleve's view, we don't have to justify induction (or know of any such justification) in order for our inductively arrived beliefs to be justified.

Explain the lottery paradox. Make sure to explain the role of "epistemic closure". According to Hawthorne, what is distinctive of "lottery propositions"? Explain by comparing the proposition that you won't win the lottery to the proposition that not all 60 golfers will get a hole-in-one on Heartbreaker. Explain how Hawthorne thinks "Parity reasoning" can threaten even perceptual knowledge. Now think about the coin flipping cases from DGH. Is the proposition that the coin won't land tails every time a lottery proposition in Hawthorne's sense?

Suppose that a million tickets for some lottery are sold. Before the winner is announced, I don't *know* that the ticket I bought will lose, even though it is highly probable that it will lose. This suggests that a belief is knowledge only if the evidence on which it is based makes that belief 100% likely to be true. The problem is that in most cases the evidence we have for our beliefs falls short of certainty. Intuitively, I 'know' that if I commit a murder in front of police officers, I will be arrested. But it is a

theoretical possibility that they won't arrest me for some reason. By parity of reasoning--or, as Van Cleve puts it, if we use 'parity reasoning'---practically any case of empirical knowledge falls short of being 100% likely and therefore seems not to be actual knowledge. ' In other words, if we take a given case of what we regard as knowledge and show it to have a probability of less than 100%, we can show by 'parity reasoning' (by an argument from analogy, in other words), that we know little or nothing about the external world. Van Cleve's position regarding the coin tosses (whether we can know that a given coin won't land tails if flipped 10 times in a row) is unclear. Van Cleve seems to hold that if we know that the coin is fair, we don't know this, for much the same reasons that one doesn't know that one's lottery ticket will lose. But he also seems to say that since it is always a possibility that the coin is weighted and since a streak of tails would suggest as much, the coin-situation is not analogous to the lottery situation. (Of course, lotteries can be rigged, just as coins can be weighted, but Van Cleve doesn't mention this.)

DGH (Dorr, Hawthorn, Goodman) argue that those who accept Fair Coins are under pressure to accept Possible Future Unlikelihood, and that doing so has worrying skeptical implications. Explain their argument (the one involving Strong Autumn Leaf). What do they suggest this shows about the connection between knowledge and chance.

According to FAIR COINS (FC) “If you know that a coin is fair, and for all you know it is going to be flipped, then for all you know it will land tails.” Technicalities aside, DGH say that FC is false, the argument being that, even though one may not of a given coin toss whether it end up heads or tails, one *does* know of a large enough aggregate of coin tosses that some will end up heads and some will end up tails. In general, one can know of aggregates of cases (of particle-displacements, fluctuations in the stock-market, etc.) that some will go one way and others some other way without knowing of any one case what the outcome will be. To use DGH’s own example, one can know that by winter a tree will be more or less bare of leaves, even though one cannot know of any given leaf whether it will be on the tree. DGH allege that if FC is true, we lack knowledge of the future, for the same reason that we cannot know of a given coin toss how it will land. The idea is that when a belief has a chance of being false (as with the belief that a given leaf will fall), it isn’t knowledge, but when it doesn’t have a chance of being false (as with my believe that most of the leafs will fall), it can be knowledge.

What is supposed to be paradoxical about a teacher announcing that she will give a surprise exam in the next month? Explain why the paradox relies (i) on the ‘double-K’ principle that, if you know something, then you know that you know it, and also (ii) on the assumption that student won’t lose knowledge. Now consider the surprise exam paradox in the case of a pop quiz -- the teacher says “I am going to give you an exam

right now, and when I do it will be a surprise". Explain why this version is puzzling too.

What might this suggest about the role of (i) and (ii) in solving the original puzzle?

The short answer to this question is: A surprise that is expected isn't a surprise. Long answer: if a student is told that next month he will be given a surprise test, he can reason as follows. It can't be on the 31st since by the time the 31st comes, he'll know that it must be happen; nor can be it be on the 30th day, since he knows that it can't be on the 31st day and therefore knows to expected it on the 30th day; nor by parity of reasoning can it be on the nth day (for any n less than 30). Of course, if the student forgets what the teacher has told him, then it can be a surprise. So this paradox assumes that the student retains what he knows. Also, unless the student *knows* that he is aware of the teacher's instructions, then he can't use the previously described reasoning to make a case to himself that the teacher won't give the test. So the 'double k principle' (one cannot know without knowing that one knows) is involved, at least to this extent.

5) Explain what is going on in McKinsey's "Anti-individualism and privileged access". More specifically: What does he means by "anti-individualism", and what argument does he give for it? Explain the disagreement between Burge and McKinsey regarding the compatibility of anti-individualism and privileged access (being sure to

explain what McKinsey means by "privileged access"). Explain how someone might appeal to reliabilism to defend Burge's position against McKinsey's argument.

According to 'anti-individualism', what our concepts are concepts of depends in part on their modes of origination. I (Erica) have a concept of my roommate Mary, not of Twin-Mary, and Twin-Erica has a concept of Twin-Mary, not of Mary, and the reason is that, even though my psychological states are (aside from their modes of origination) identical with Twin-Erica's mental states, mine are caused by Mary and hers are caused by Twin-Mary.

According to Van Cleve, if anti-individualism is correct, then we don't have 'privileged access' to the contents of many mental states of ours to which we believe ourselves to have privileged access. (In other words, we don't have direct and infallible knowledge of those states.) Right now I am thinking about Mary. Surely, so I believe, I know with complete certainty that I am in fact thinking about Mary right now. But my mental state (so far as I am aware of it) is just like Twin-Erica's mental state (same qualification), and Twin-Erica is thinking about Twin-Mary, not Mary. So anti-individualism seems to entail that I don't know that I am not thinking about Mary, as opposed to Twin-Mary, or about water, as opposed to Twin-water, etc.

Tyler Burge believes that anti-individualism is incompatible with the presumption that I know myself (with the certainty that only privileged access can

afford) to be thinking about Mary, as opposed to Twin-Mary. Burge's argument is not easy to understand but seems to come to this. It can be doubted whether I am in fact thinking about Mary, Twin-Mary, or neither. But *if* I am in fact thinking about Mary, *then* I can know with complete certainty that I am thinking about her. The idea seems to be that the connection between the second-order thought (I think that I am thinking about Mary) and the first-order thought (I am thinking about Mary) is secure, even though the connection between the first-order thought and the world is not secure. To use an analogy: I may not know with certainty that Smith has two cars, but *if* I know that that Smith has two cars, I know (or can know) with certainty that he has an even number of cars.

McKinsey rejects Burge's reasoning, for the reason that, if anti-individualism is correct, I simply can't tell on the basis of my own mental state whether I am Erica or Twin-Erica or, therefore, whether I am thinking about Mary or Twin-Mary.

6) Why care about knowledge? Give four arguments, from at least three different readings from the semester.

Having knowledge obviously has practical advantages that having false beliefs lacks. (Success comes easier to people with knowledge than it does to people who don't. The latter can get lucky, but luck of its very nature cannot be relied upon.) But

practical benefits aside, having knowledge is valuable that delusion isn't. Other things being equal, I would choose to live in the 'real world' than to live in a mere simulation. (Of course, if the real world is horribly unpleasant and the simulation thereof is highly pleasant, then I might opt for the latter. But other things equal, I will opt for the former.) This is what Nozick's discussion of the 'experience machine' shows: given a choice, people prefer to knowledge to delusion. In fact, people often prefer to confront ugly realities even when they have the option of turning a blind eye to them.

The readings for this class made it clear how hard knowledge can be to acquire. Smith knows that Jones has 10 coins in his pocket and is justified in believing that Jones will be promoted and therefore that someone with 10 coins in his pocket will get promoted. But if someone other than Jones get the promotion, Smith cannot be said to have known that someone with 10 coins in his pocket was going to get the promotion, showing that not all cases of justified true belief are knowledge. And it is unclear what x must be, besides being a justified true belief, if x is to be knowledge.

In fact, our commonsense beliefs about the external world, including the belief that it even exists, are surprisingly hard to validate. Moore tries to do so in his 'Proof of an External World', his argument being that there must be an eternal world since he knows himself to have hands. But of course the skeptic would deny that he knows himself to have hands, and Moore's argument therefore does nothing to undermine skepticism.

This would not be a problem if there were no basis for skepticism. But there is. I don't know that my lottery ticket will lose, even though it has only a one in a million chance of winning. It would seem that, by parity of reasoning, no belief is knowledge if there is any chance that it could be false, a consequence being that few if any of our empirical beliefs are false. This argument is not airtight, but it is not easy to refute.

Skepticism sometimes assumes unexpected forms. For example, Bostrom makes a case that it is more likely that we are living in a simulation of reality than in reality, his argument being that if knowledge continues to grow at its current rate, along its current trajectory, our descendants will create innumerable simulations of human existence. (I don't accept this argument, since virtual people don't think. But Bostrom's argument is ingenious nonetheless.)

So knowledge is precious, for the simple reason that without it we are for all we know living in a dream world, and it is also hard to attain, or at least hard to prove that can be attained.

Plato's Theory of Forms

The essence of Plato's Theory of Forms is this. Anything that exists in space-time is but an instance of something that does not itself so exist. Consider some spherical object---a ball of some kind. (For expository reasons, suppose that this object is perfectly spherical.) This object, being spherical, is an 'instance' of the property--or, as Plato would say, the 'form'--of roundness. Of course, this object is also an instance of innumerably many other properties (or 'forms'). Supposing that it's mass is n , it is an instance of the property of having that mass; supposing that it's molecular/atomic structure is xyz , it is an instance of the property of that having xyz .

Plato's theory of forms is correct. The supposition that properties exist (not property-instances, but properties *per se*) is necessary to validate even the most rudimentary inferences. For example 'if John and Bill are both tall, then there is something they have in common'. This inference obviously goes through, and it presupposes the existence of a property (tallness), as its meaning is: 'If John and Bill are both tall, there is some property of which they are both instances.'

Attempts have been made to replace statements about properties with statements about their instances, but such attempts inevitably fail. The statement 'one can have most of the properties of a great businessman without being a great businessman' cannot be 'translated' into a statement that does not presuppose the existence of properties.

As for the idea that properties are identical with (or in some way or other constituted by) their instances, that too is a non-starter. For example, some have tried to identify the property of being a rock with a 'scattered object' consisting of all rocks. But this move fails, since even though that 'scattered object' is always undergoing changes (in the locations of its various constituents as well the location of its outer boundary), the property of being a rock does not undergo any changes (or, in any case, does not undergo corresponding changes), which, given Leibniz's Law (x and y have the very same properties if $x=y$) means that the property of being a rock is not identical with that 'scattered object.' Analogous reasoning refutes any attempt to identify any property with any spatiotemporal entity.

Plato himself mischaracterized his own theory of forms, by assuming that forms (properties) must in some way or other 'resemble' their own instances. And, of course, if it is assumed that instances of forms must resemble forms (or otherwise be related to them in the way that spatiotemporal objects are related to other spatiotemporal objects)--in other words, if it is assumed that the instantiation-relation is similar to a relation that holds among form-instances---then, yes, various paradoxes will arise (of the kind discussed by Plato himself, notably in the *Parmenides*, and also of the kind discussed by Aristotle, the main such paradox being the 'third man' paradox, this paradox that if instantiation involves resemblance, then there must be a third term to ground the resemblance, and a fourth term to ground the resemblance-relation

involving the third term, and so on ad infinitum). But the very essence of Plato's Theory of Forms is that forms, being non-spatiotemporal, do not relate to their instances in the way in which spatiotemporal entities relate to other spatiotemporal entities: they do not resemble them, are not composed by them, and do not causally interact.

To say that properties (or 'forms') exist is simply to say that there are 'ways' things can be: being round is a way that a thing can be, and so is being green or red or male or female. Ways things can be are not spatiotemporal, even though instances of such ways are (in some cases) spatiotemporal. (Properties are themselves instances of other properties, e.g. the property of being green is an instance of the property of being a color-property--- hence the parenthetical hedge.) So Plato's Theory of Forms is not only a theory but a demonstrably correct one.

Can we trust our senses? Yes we can

I think it is quite clear that we *do* have knowledge of the external world and that we *can* in general trust our senses. Our senses may deceive us, but those rare lapses are easily seen and dismissed as such, as they are internal to a coherent and predictively robust narrative. Suppose that the skeptic is right. In that case, each perception's very existence is *ex nihilo* and therefore a miracle. Moreover, any given perception's *coherence* with its predecessor is a double miracle; its coherence with its successor is a

triple miracle; and the coherence of the totality of those perceptions with *additional* perceptions is a *quadruple* miracle.

But if the non-skeptic is right, each perception is a reflection of its external cause; and neither that perception's existence, nor the coherence of its content with those of other perceptions, is a miracle.

So the skeptic is asking us to accept, absurdly, that his non-explanation of the data is as much of an explanation as the non-skeptic's explanation of the data. By contrast, the non-skeptic is asking us only to accept the truism that, when given a choice, we should prefer explanations to non-explanations—we should prefer hypotheses that account for the data to 'hypotheses' that make a miracle out of that data.

Berkeley tries to undermine our confidence in our senses by pointing out that how an object appears varies with change's in the subject's physical relation to that object. (If I am near the house, it looks one way; if I am far from it, it looks another way.) But that is precisely what we would expect to be the case *if our senses accurately represented the external world*. Our senses don't merely give us information about external objects; they give us information about our physical relations to those objects. If, as I drew further away from an object (e.g. a house), its appearance *didn't* change, then my perception would be failing to give me a lot of information that, assuming that our senses are *accurate*, they *do* give us.

Berkeley obscures this by saying that a big house ‘looks small’ when looked at from far away, and that square looks ‘like a diamond’ when looked at from an oblique angle; and so on. But a big house that is looked at from far away does *not* look like a small house. It looks the same way that a small object would look *if looked at from up close*; and it looks the way that a large object looks *if looked at from far away*. Similarly, a square surface looked at from an oblique angle does not *look like a diamond-shaped surface*; it presents the same appearance that a diamond-shaped surface would give off *if looked at from a non-oblique angle*, which is the same appearance that a square-shaped surface gives off if looked at from a *non-oblique angle*. So Berkeley’s arguments are not exactly probative.

Descartes’ analysis is more compelling. Descartes says that there is ‘nothing in the effect that isn’t the cause’, which, though obviously not strictly true, seems to embody the important truth that effects are reflections of their causes, this being a corollary of the more general principle (denied by Hume but still reasonable) that *nothing comes from nothing*. Does nothing come from nothing? In other words, does something always come from something? That is unclear. But what *is* clear is that, given two otherwise comparable hypotheses, the one that does not posit cases of something coming from nothing is less explanatorily potent than the one that does not posit cases of something from nothing. The skeptic is asking us to accept a ‘hypothesis’, for lack of a better word, that posits nothing but cases of something from nothing,

whereas the non-skeptic is asking to accept a hypothesis that minimizes the cases of something coming from nothing. And we have no choice, it seems, but to prefer the latter to the former.

Descartes on What He Believes Himself to Be

Descartes previously thought that he was an embodied mind; in other words, that he was a mind that animated a body. This, of course, is the commonsense conception of what a human being is: people tend to regard themselves not as minds without bodies, nor as bodies without minds, but as embodied minds or, what may be different, as beings that have both physical and psychological dimensions. Descartes writes that:

The first thought, of course, was that I had a face, hands, arms, and this entire mechanism of limbs, the kind one sees on a corpse, and this I designated by the name *body*. Then it occurred to me that I was nourished and that I walked, felt, and thought. These actions I assigned to the soul. But I did not reflect on what this soul might be, or else I imagined it as some kind of attenuated substance, like wind, or fire, or aether, spread all through my denser parts. However, I had no doubts at all about my body—I thought I had a clear knowledge of its nature. Perhaps if I had attempted to describe it

using the mental conception I used to hold, I would have explained it as follows: By a body I understand everything that is appropriately bound together in a certain form and confined to a place; it fills a certain space in such a way as to exclude from that space every other body; it can be perceived by touch, sight, hearing, taste, or smell, and can also be moved in various ways, not, indeed, by itself, but by something else which makes contact with it. For I judged that possessing the power of self-movement, like the ability to perceive things or to think, did not pertain at all to the nature of body.

Here what Descartes is saying is that he previously believed himself to be an embodied mind. By virtue of being body, Descartes is saying that he used to believe, he was able to be affected by physical objects, and by virtue of mind, he had sense-perceptions of external objects in consequence of some of those disturbances. (A rock is physical and can therefore be affected by other physical objects; but because a rock lacks a mental dimension, the resulting changes in its physical condition don't lead to sense-perceptions.) Moreover, because he is an embodied mind, as opposed to pure body, he has the 'power of self-movement', i.e. he can move himself. (A rock is physical and can therefore move, in the sense that it can *be* moved; but because it lacks a mind, it cannot move itself.)

Descartes then claims that, in his current view, he is just a mind. His reasoning is that, for all he knows, all of his 'perceptions' could really be hallucinations and he

therefore might not sense-perceive the world as it is. In particular, he might not even have a body. All that he knows with certainty, Descartes says, is that he knows that thinks; for he cannot even coherently doubt that he is a thinker, since such doubt is itself thought. Therefore, so he claims, he doesn't know that he even has sense-perceptions, since sense-perception is a psychological function that is precipitated by disturbances of one's body (due to sound-waves, light-waves, and the like). Nor, so he claims, does Descartes know that he has the 'power of self-movement', since he doesn't know that he has a body to move.

Does Descartes know with certainty that he is *not* an embodied mind? No. Nor is he claiming that he knows this. What he is claiming that is he is not *essentially* an embodied mind. His position is that what belongs to him *essentially* is mind, since he cannot even coherently conceive of himself as existing without a mind, not body, which he can coherently (though not necessarily correctly) conceive of himself as existing without.

The Role of Values in Science

In this paper, it will be established that moral values are integral to the scientific process. There is no such thing, even in principle, as science that is value-free. At the

time—so it will also be established---this does not entail that science presupposes a pragmatic or otherwise non-objectivist conception of truth. In fact, it entails the opposite. Nor does it entail that moral values corrupt the scientific process or warp our 'scientific objectivity.' In fact, it entails the opposite.

Let us start with preliminaries.

A deductive argument is one in which the premises are supposed to give a probability of 100% to the conclusion. Here is an example of a good deductive argument:

Socrates is a man

All men are mortal

Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

There is no way that the conclusion of this argument can be false given that the premises are true.

An *inductive* argument is one in which the premises are supposed to *raise the probability* of the conclusion. Here is an example:

Jim showed up late and drunk to his job interview.

Therefore, Jim, if hired, would not be a good employee.

In this case, the premise certainly raises the likelihood of the conclusion, and perhaps even gives the conclusion a probability of more than 50%. But the premise still does not *entail* the conclusion; in other words, the conclusion can be false even if the premise is true.

An inductive argument is by definition one whose premises merely give weight to the conclusion, without definitively establishing it. Therefore, it is inherent in what induction is that it be *risky*---that even if the premises are true the reasoning legitimate, the conclusion may still be false: there is always *inductive risk*, this being the possibility of arriving at a false conclusion, even if one's reasoning is good and one's premises true.

The empirical sciences are fundamentally inductive in nature. (An empirical science is one that is observation-based as opposed to strictly reason-based. Thus, physics, biology, and psychology are empirical, whereas mathematics, logic, and philosophy are not.) They certainly use deduction at certain junctures. (Physicists and economists certainly use mathematics.) But their attempt is to construe accurate theories on the basis of observational data, and theories are not analytically entailed by the data-sets of which they are interpretations.

Consequently, hypothesis-formation is inherently risky; there is no guarantee that a hypothesis that one is putting forth is correct.

Even though inductive inference is inherently risky, an extra dimension of risk is added to it when the inferences in question concern theories that bear on human welfare. Suppose for example that the inference in question concerns some arthritis medication—that what is being inferred is that it will not cause stroke, heart-attack, brain-damage, and so on. Of course, that inference, being inductive, could be wrong: the medication in question *might* have all of these terrible side-effects. So in this context, the phenomenon of inductive risk is not a purely epistemic affair, as it is also a moral affair.

The question thus arises: Where is the line to be drawn between science and morality? The traditionally, held by Hempel and McMullen, is that values (in the sense of moral values) have no place *within* scientific methodology. It is (tautologously) *good* if scientists comply with ethical norms in their scientific work. But, so Hempel and McMullen hold, it is not *scientifically* good.

Consider the following hypothetical. Scientist Smith vivisects a number of innocent people in order to conduct his biological researches. (Moreover, although this was one way of obtaining the needed data, it is not the only way or even the easiest way. It just happened to be *a* way, and Smith, being evil, opted for it.) On the basis of

these vivisection-based researches, Smith puts forth a number of hypotheses that turn out to be true and profound.

Is Smith a bad *person*? Yes. Question: Is Smith a bad *scientist*? No. Conclusion (drawn by Hempel and McMullen): Moral goodness and scientific goodness do not coalesce (or do so only accidentally): moral values are not epistemic/scientific values.

Douglass contests this and, so I will now try to show, does so cogently. Douglass starts by making three very important points.

First, our values affect what we choose to study. Why do we study cancer? Because we value human life and know that curing cancer will help save lives?

Second, our values affect how we study what we study—not just in the trivial sense that, because of them, we try not needlessly torture people or otherwise violate their rights, but in the non-trivial sense that we modify standards of proof and evidence so as to compatibilize them with ethical norms. Suppose that, for some purely theoretical reason, Jones is studying the coefficient of expansion of some metal. Let H be Jones' hypothesis as to what the coefficient is. If the data that Jones' disposal is 85% consistent with H and 15% ambiguous with respect to H, we would probably say that H was not yet sufficiently confirmed to regard it, exception in the most provisional way, as a truth. Now suppose that Brown is trying to find a cure for a disease that spreading like

wildfire and killing everyone in its path. Under those circumstances, an 85% degree of consistent with a given hypothesis might be more than enough.

Alternatively, in some purely theoretical context, a 52% degree of data-friendliness might be enough to warrant acceptance of a given hypothesis, while in some practical context—e.g. one that could affect the welfare of the whole human race—a 99% degree of data-friendliness might be insufficient.

In general, our values insinuate themselves into our standards of proof and, consequently, into our investigate methods.

Third, our values affect what we do with the results of scientific work. If we discover a new power source, our values determine whether we use it to grow crops or to kill people. If we discover a way to custom-grow brains, our values determine whether we use it to grow saint-brains or psychopath-brains.

There is a fourth point that Douglas doesn't make but that immediately follows from the third point. What we do with the fruits of scientific labor affects what new data-sets there are to investigate. Suppose we come up with a new cure for some disease. It is likely that this cure will have side-effects, and we will probably study those side-effects. And those studies in their turn will likewise generate new data-sets of their own.

So our values determine what we study, how we study it, what we do with the results of those investigations, and what there subsequently is to study. And this *prima facie* suggests that moral values are in at least some contexts internal to scientific methodology, rather than being extraneous to it, as Hempel and McMullen hold.

This does not mean that moral values warp our scientific objectivity. They do not do so, at least not categorically. Moral values affect what inferences we regard as worth making, but they do not necessarily affect *how* we make those inferences. In other words, our values do not necessarily (or even probably) warp our judgements as to whether a given inference *goes through*, even though they *do* influence our judgement—and indeed constitute the basis of on which we make judgements—as to whether the legitimacy of a given inference is worth investigating. Our values would ‘warp our scientific objectivity’ only if they warped our judgements as to the legitimacy of inferences. Since they don’t (at least not categorically), they don’t (same qualification).

Hempel and McMullen might respond by saying that, even though in practice our moral values may insinuate themselves into our scientific investigations, this is a kind of accident and doesn’t reflect anything inherent in what science is. The Hempel-McMullen view would seem to be that if science were purged of human shortcomings and sensitivities, then it would indeed be value-free.

But it is inherent in what science is that it be practical. Science began with practical questions. (How to get to the other side of the river? How to cure this disease? How to keep warm during the winter?) And at the end of the day it is answerable to practical questions. To be sure, if a science is at all mature, it contains a massive theoretical component. But there is no limit to the number of possible theoretical questions that can be asked, and when we regard a given question as being ‘theoretically interesting’, it is often because it seen as being of practical significance.

Why did Lister study microbes? Because he wanted to prevent infection? Why did Freud posit conversion reactions? Because he was trying to justify a therapeutic method that would alleviate psychological impairments? Why do we study electricity and heat and forces in general? Because we want to optimize our methods of managing energy.

What it is worthwhile for a given person or species to know depends on its practical concerns. *Given* those practical concerns, it can do science rightly or wrongly; it can model data-sets properly or improperly. But absent those concerns, there are no data-sets for its to model and nothing for it to do. And the idea that values are incidental to the scientific process and could in principle be purged from it ignores the fundamentally pragmatic character of science. It also seems to embody the false view that if science is fundamentally pragmatic, then its pronouncements are to be judged as either practical or impractical, not as true or false (or, what is practically equivalent, that truth is practicality and falsity impracticality). But that isn’t the case: what it is worth

studying, and how it is worth it to study it, are determined by values; but whether the positions arrived at thereby are true or false is determined by objective fact. Thus, a conception of science that gives due weight to the role therein of values does not presuppose the truth of a pragmatist or otherwise non-objectivist conception of truth.

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Modern Science

We saw that in the 17th century, physical theories developed by Descartes, Newton, and others included universal principles: universal, exceptionless laws that govern motions and events everywhere. What is the significance of this difference from previous sciences of motion? Are discoveries of universal laws something we should expect from science? How did the cosmology associated with the unified theories of motion influence culture outside of science? (Notice that today in different sciences, physics and biology for example, there is disagreement about the importance of universal laws. Some would say that they are important in physics, less so in biology and in the social sciences.)

Pre-Galilean physics was Aristotelian physics. Aristotelian physics was basically animistic. In other words, it explained the behavior of bodies less in terms of laws, as we would currently understand the term, than in terms of ‘proclivities’ and ‘appetites’ and other, similarly ‘teleological’ (goal- or purpose-related) concepts that we now see to have literally no relevance to physics at all.

For example, Aristotle's 'explanation' of the fact that unsupported bodies near the Earth fall was that such bodies are 'drawn' towards the Earth, having as they do a 'natural proclivity' for the Earth.

This is a quintessential non-explanation—in the same category as the infamous 'dormitive virtue' pseudo-explanation ('opium induces sleep because it has a *dormitive virtue*').

Aristotle put forth other explanations that, although not quite as vacuous, were still utterly false, as well as lacking in independent support, as well as failing to be suggestive of anything at all similar to the truth. For example, Aristotle's 'explanation' of why projectiles move through the air is that the air 'squeezes' them along. This completely fails to explain why bodies move in a vacuum; it also fails to explain the relative rates of projectiles; and it is also discrepant with the fact that the more viscous the medium, the more slowly bodies tend to move in that medium (this being why a given impetus generates less motion in water than in air).

And even this last 'explanation' or Aristotle's is ultimately anthropomorphic. For if considered as a purely mechanical explanation, it is, as we have just seen, totally lacking in support, it being only if it is understood as an explanation in terms of motivation—as an explanation in terms of the air actually 'palpating' bodies within it—that it has even a shred of integrity.

Galileo and Newton replaced anthropomorphic pseudo-explanations with genuinely impersonal explanations. A by-product of this is that they put forth explanations in terms of *laws*. Where psychological explanations are possible, laws aren't really necessary. To know why Jim ate the pudding, I just need to know that Jim had the means, motive, and opportunity. I don't know need to know of some 'law' of which his behavior is an instance. (Of course, *given* an understanding of Jim's behavior, I dummy up some corresponding 'psychological law'---one to the effect that whenever somebody has the mean/motive/opportunity to do X, he does X. But such a 'law' is a reflection of an antecedent explanation, not *vice versa*, and it has no explanatory force of its own.) And since Aristotle's explanations were really crypto-psychological explanations, they were not 'nomothetic' in nature, i.e. they were not explanations in terms of law.

And this---that Galileo/Newton explained events in terms of covering laws, whereas Aristotle explained in terms of desires (thinly veiled as mechanical causes)---is the real difference between pre-Galilean (Aristotelian) and Galilean (post-Aristotelian) explanations in physics.

2 The theory of Newton's Principia was seen by its advocates as a synthesis that both preserved and superseded past achievements in astronomy and studies of motion. Critics regarded it as a moderately interesting effort that avoided the most important concerns of physical science. Explain that disagreement. What did Newton owe to theories that preceded his, and how did his theory depart from Cartesian mechanical philosophy? Why was he reluctant to 'frame hypotheses' about the natures of things that appeared in his theory? Should he have been?

Newtonian mechanics managed to give incredibly precise explanations of an extremely wide range of phenomena in terms of three very simple principles:

A given body's state of motion does not change unless it is acted upon.

Force=mass x acceleration. In other words, the vector sum of the forces acting on a given object is equal to the mass of that object times its acceleration.

For each action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

Given only these principles, along with a few derived principles (notably, the inverse square law: *the gravitational attraction between two bodies is directly*

proportional to their masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them) Newton was able to explain the tides, the motions of the planets, and the behaviors of projectiles generally.

Newton was loathe to ‘frame hypotheses’, for the simple reason that he didn’t really need to. He did not need to posit ‘occult forces’, since his laws, by themselves, without the addition of Aristotelian essences and other such extraneous nonsense, explained the behaviors these being changes in motion) that it was his concern to explain. It could be said that Newton ‘posited’ the force of gravity, this being an ‘occult’ force. But Newton didn’t really posit it. He mathematically described how the masses, states of motion and relative positions of bodies affect one on another’s states of motion. Everything he had to say about ‘gravity’ was absorbed into these formulations.

Obviously people in Newton’s time, and perhaps in ours, feel that Newton’s analysis, by failing to identify ‘forces’ and the like, focusing instead on functional dependencies, ‘left something out.’ But this feeling merely represents a wish for an anthropomorphic, Aristotelian pseudo-explanations (in terms of ‘natural proclivities’ and other such irrelevancies).

As for Descartes’ system—the only virtue that it had is that it attempted to provide mechanical, as opposed to crypto-psychological, explanations of mechanical phenomena. But it contained no definite laws, its only content being that, for some reason or other and in some way or other, bodies that collide alter each other’s states of

motion. Which, in addition to its total lack of specificity (not to mention its failure to rise above common sense), fails to account for the influences of remote physical bodies on each other, and also fails to account for the motions of bodies that are not impacted by other bodies.

So while there is much that Newton's system doesn't explain, its failings have nothing to do with its not being sufficiently Aristotelian or Cartesian.

R#3 4. Bacon advocated a new scientific method for drawing inductive conclusions from individual empirical investigations; what was it? Some philosophers/scientists during the scientific revolution followed Bacon's methods closely, and some others were at least strongly influenced by his views. Yet still others preferred to rely on mathematical demonstrations, thought experiments, and deductions of universal laws from first principles. Choose two from among Kepler, Galileo, Descartes, Harvey, Boyle, and Newton and contrast their approaches to pursuing science and understanding the world.

Bacon advocated the strict use of induction---basically, extrapolating universal laws from a handful of specific cases. The idea would be that, if one sees 10 cats die

immediately upon eating arsenic, then one can infer—not deductively, but *inductively*--- that, as a general rule, cats (or possibly some larger category of creatures) die if they consume arsenic (or possibly consume or otherwise ingest some arsenic-similar agent).

There are several fatal problems with this ‘model’—if one can even call it that—of arriving at knowledge. The main problem is that, unless one is positing some mechanisms that explains the concomitance in question, one is guilty of the gambler’s fallacy. Suppose that I roll a dye 10 times in a row, and each time it comes up six. There are two ‘explanations.’ One is that it was just coincidence. The other is that the dye is weighted (or is otherwise physically disposed to come up six). If I go with the ‘coincidence’ explanation (or non-explanation, rather), then I am not entitled to believe that the dye is disposed to come up six *next* time I roll. After all, if I believe that the dye is so *disposed*, then I am rejecting the ‘coincidence explanation’ and opting for the ‘non-coincidence explanation.’ But if I go with the non-coincidence explanation—if I hold that the dye was weighted, or some such---then my explanation is not really strictly inductive in nature. It is a case of hypothesis-formation, not of induction-proper.

And there we see the problem with ‘induction’: cases of induction are only legitimate when they are parasitic on cases of inference to the best explanation. But so far as inferences involve positing best explanations, they are not inductive in nature. So the operation of induction, at least in the narrow sense in which Bacon conceived it, doesn’t exist.

And this answers the question: How did Bacon's theory of scientific explanation affect Descartes, Harvey, etc.? The answer to which is: it didn't—at least not to the extent that they ever succeeded in explaining anything. (Maybe they misread Bacon, imputing some legitimate insight to him, which insight did inform their work. But that fact, if it is a fact, is obviously irrelevant.)

Enumerating specific cases goes nowhere, unless it suggests some kind of causal or otherwise explanatory hypothesis. But Bacon insisted that one must not go beyond the raw data. Which means that one cannot do science in a Bacon-friendly manner without simply failing to do it.

Kant's Moral Philosophy

1. Kant's moral philosophy is based on an idea he calls the "categorical imperative, and he offers three formulations of this principle (basically three ways to say the same thing). Below are questions about two of these three formulations. (200 words each question)

Using O'Neill's article, "A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics," explain the Formula of the Ends in Itself.

The Formula of the Ends in Itself is simply the idea that we should treat people as ends unto themselves, and not as means. We should treat people as subjects, not as objects. If I abduct someone and put him to work as a slave, I am not allowing him to decide for himself how to live. I am using him as an instrument—an object---and thus as a mere means for my own purposes. I am not treating him as a subject; for to treat him as a subject would be to let him decide for himself how to live, and this is precisely what I am not doing.

Here is another example. using somebody as a means. There are subtler examples. Imagine the following. Jeff is a decent person and he is also extremely wealthy. Sally hates Jeff. But she wants his money. So she pretends to love him, so that she can marry him, kill him, and make off with his money. And this is just what Sally does.

In this scenario, there are two respects in which Sally treats Jeff as an object, rather than as a subject. First, she manipulates Jeff, which puts Jeff in a position where, without his initially knowing it, his will is being misdeployed (he is being manipulated into marrying Sally and thus into using his will in a way that undermine him and also itself). Second, she kills Jeff, which extinguishes his will and which therefore extinguishes his very subjecthood and turns him, in the most literal way, into an object.

2. The Universal Formulation is offered, by Kant, on page 108: "Act only on that Maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." Kant then gives four examples. Compare the first two examples (1. on page 108 and 2. on page 109). How do these examples illustrate the Universal formulation?

The first example concerns a man who, having suffered a series of misfortunes, is deeply unhappy and, as a result, seriously contemplates suicide. Supposing *arguendo* that he does commit suicide, what is the 'maxim'—the principle—embodied in his act? It is: *Out of self-regard, I will end my life if my life is likely to be excessively adverse.* But the very purpose of self-regard is to preserve the existence of oneself. And in killing oneself out of self-regard, one is turning one's self-regard against itself and is therefore rendering it self-contradictory and incoherent. So the maxim embodied in an act of suicide is self-contradictory and therefore could not coherently be willed to be a universal law of conduct.

The second example concerns someone who, having gotten himself in serious debt, considers borrowing money without repaying it. Suppose that this person does just that. What is the maxim embodied in his act? It is: Claim that you will keep your promises when you have no intention of doing so (for example, borrow money, promising—but not actually intending—to pay it back). Suppose that this maxim became a universal law. In that case, nobody would ever lend money, since they would

know that they had no assurance of ever getting it back. So if the maxim embodied in this person's act (of borrowing money without repaying it) were universalized, then that same act could not be carried out. Therefore, the maxim embodied in that act could not coherently be willed to be a universal law, and that is why that act violates the Categorical Imperative.

Plato's Republic as Pol Potist Bureaucracy

For Plato, justice is identical with people staying in their 'rightful place.' ("[T]o do one's own business, in some shape or other, is justice." [433 b]) Plato has a very narrow and hierarchical conception of what a person's 'rightful place' is. He believes that a person's social position should be determined by his 'nature.' He further believes that one's 'nature' cannot in any relevant respects change. ("You are, all of you in this community, brothers. But when god fashioned you, he added gold in the composition of those of you who are qualified to be Rulers (which is why your prestige is greatest); he put silver in the Auxiliaries, and iron and bronze in the farmers and other workers." [412 e])

A corollary is that, for Plato, social strata should be rigidly defined, it being necessary that the barriers between them be virtually impenetrable. ("If they [the non-ruling classes] follow these rules, they will be safe themselves and the saviors of the city;

but whenever they come to possess lands, and houses, and money of their own, they will be householders and cultivators instead of guardians, and will become hostile masters of their fellow-citizens rather than their allies." [416 b])

Further, Plato doesn't acknowledge the legitimacy of a person's private life. For him, the entirety of a person's life should be subordinate to the interests of the state. Marriages should be arranged. ("We must arrange for marriage, and make it as sacred an affair as we can. And a sacred marriage is one that produces the most beneficial results." [458 e]) And people must never marry or reproduce with people outside of their social classes. ("Guardians must 'mate the best of our men with the best of our women as often as possible, and the inferior men with the inferior women as seldom as possible, and bring up only the offspring of the best.'" [459 e])

In Plato's 'ideal republic', life is so micromanaged by the state that there is practically no such thing as private life. Every aspect of each citizen's life must be in alignment with the interests of the state, and existence is completely collectivized. ("Our men and women Guardians should be forbidden by law to live together in separate households, and all the women should be common to all the men; similarly, children should be held in common, and no parent should know its child, or child its parent." See also: "They shall have no private property beyond the barest essentials. Second, none of them shall possess a dwelling-house or storehouse to which all have not the right of

entry. Next, their food shall be provided by the other citizens as an agreed wage for the duties they perform..." [416 d])

Plato correctly states that such a rigidly hierarchical social arrangement cannot be

sustained unless the masses are kept ignorant and constantly lied to. ("And no one but the rulers must know what is happening, if we are to avoid dissension in our Guardian herd." [459 a])

So with respect to the question "To what extent does justice (for Plato) depend upon the state propagation of falsehoods?", the answer is: Completely. For Plato, justice depends on the state's constantly lying to its own citizenry. Not only that. It depends on its keeping them ignorant and also in the resulting gaps in its citizens' knowledge with carefully constructed propaganda. Plato himself says this. Plato clearly states that the state must constantly subject its own citizenry to propaganda (pro-state lies) if the state is to remain intact and unified, it being Plato's contention that nothing is more important than unity and intactness of the state. ("Is there anything worse for a state to be split and fragmented, or anything better than cohesion and unity?" [462 b])

As for the question "Insofar as deception is necessary to maintain justice, can Plato's distinction between benign or beneficial lies and improper or dangerous ones be sustained?", the answer is: No--not at all. Of course, the answer to this question is

tautologously 'yes' *if* one accepts Plato's conception of 'justice.' But according to Plato's conception of justice, nobody is entitled to any freedoms of any kind. Since there is no independent reason to accept such a conception of justice, and every reason to reject, the *actual* answer to the above question is indeed: No. The lies that, in Plato's view, the state should require its citizens to accept are ones that the state must tell if it is to continue to enforce Plato's conception of justice. According to that conception of justice, people do not have the right to listen to the kind of music they enjoy or marry the people they love or indeed do much of anything that they personally would like to do. Since such a restrictive conception of justice is false and evil, any lies that are told to uphold it are *ipso facto* evil, and there is therefore no principled distinction between good and evil lies in relation to such a conception.

Schopenhauer on Human Suffering

Schopenhauer believes that life is suffering. Camus believes that life is absurd.

They thus both seem to have a fundamentally negative conception of life. To this extent, their conceptions of life are similar or at least seem to be. But scrutiny of their respective positions proves them to be very different.

First of all, one can hold that life is fundamentally an exercise in suffering *without* holding that life is meaningless or 'absurd'. Steve Jobs spent most of his life struggling to achieve success. And the amount of time that he spent struggling to achieve success may well have exceeded the amount of time that he actually enjoyed it. But was his life meaningless? No.

Second, one can hold that life is fundamentally *not* about suffering without holding that it is absurd. In fact, people who have a hedonistic approach to life seem to be of the view that life is absurd. Also, if life is fundamentally an exercise in suffering, then it would seem that life *does* have meaning, its meaning being given to it by one's need to minimize or eliminate suffering. And life is *drained* of meaning to the extent that it is free of adversity.

This actually seems to be Schopenhauer's own view. "Life without pain has no meaning", Schopenhauer writes. Schopenhauer's position is that pleasure and happiness are low-probability conditions, since they are unstable and hard to achieve,

and that pain and unhappiness are high-probability conditions, since they are stable and easy to achieve. From this, Schopenhauer deduces that life is more about pain than pleasure, more about unhappiness than happiness.

But Schopenhauer does *not* hold that life is meaningless. As already indicated, he holds that at least some strife is necessary for meaning. Second, he holds that pain and unhappiness can be minimized. In Schopenhauer's view, people tend to have a preconception to the effect that life is supposed to make them happy; and if one lets go of that preconception, one is allowing life to be happy in its own way.

Camus does not hold that life is necessarily painful. At the same time, Camus *does* hold that life is 'absurd.' By this Camus means that only that life does not *supply* Man with a meaning: ¹ But Camus also holds that, if life did have some pre-existing meaning, that fact would hem us in. And the fact that it doesn't, so Camus holds, allows us to be free."²

Although Camus' views about the meaning(fulness) of life differ from Schopenhauer's, both views coincide in one respect. According to both, it is by *accepting* that which is negative in life that one stands to gain what is *positive* in it. Says Camus: "You will never be happy if you continue to search for what happiness consists

¹ “Man stands face to face with the irrational. He feels within him his longing for happiness and for reason. The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world.” *Albert Camus (2012). “The Myth of Sisyphus: And Other Essays”, p.28, Vintage*

² “I draw from the Absurd three consequences: my revolt, my liberty, my passion Albert Camus, 1945 interview.”

of. You will never live if you are looking for the meaning of life.”³ Says Schopenhauer: “If you accustom yourself to this view of life you will regulate your expectations accordingly, and cease to look upon all its disagreeable incidents ... as anything unusual or irregular; nay, you will find everything is as it should be, in a world where each of us pays the penalty of existence in [their] own particular way.”⁴

Bertrand Russell on the Value of Philosophy

According to Bertrand Russell, the very value of philosophy lies in its uncertainty. At first this seems paradoxical. Surely the value of mathematics and physics and even of chemistry lie in the fact that they give us unassailable, certain knowledge of the world. Indeed, if a given branch of science fails to provide us with certainties, we tend for that reason to think ill of it. (Consider psychiatry, which, of all of the branches of medicine, is the most speculative and for that very reason the most contemned.) So why is philosophy different?

³ [Albert Camus](#), in "Intuitions" (October 1932), published in *Youthful Writings* (1976)

⁴ [Arthur Schopenhauer](#), [On the Suffering of the World](#)

The reason philosophy is different is that it is the study not of the world, but of the categories in terms of which we understand the world. The physicist wants to know what causes what; the philosopher wants to know what causation is. The psychologist wants to know what causes a person to be psychologically unhealthy; the philosopher wants to know what a person is.

We have certainty when we can put things into categories, and we lack it when we can't. That is why we feel anxiety when we don't know how to categorize something and feel less anxious when we do know how to categorize it. So certainty represents agreement with the categories of human understanding, and uncertainty represents disagreement with them.

Consequently, when we are studying those categories themselves---when we are philosophizing, in other words---we are questioning the source of all of our certainty and are therefore depriving ourselves of certainty. At the same time, what makes philosophical inquiry so profound is precisely that it questions these categories. So philosophy's informativeness lies in its ability to disrupt our certainties, and therein lies the truth of Russell's view.

According to Douglas, our values affect which problems we choose to study and how we choose to 'model' (interpret) those data sets. Moreover, says Douglas, our values affect the theories that we put forward as a result of our examination of those data sets. But our values do not, at least not necessarily, affect the inferences that we make

from those data sets. Our values affect which inferences we regard as *worth* making, but not which inferences we regard as *legitimate*. Our values would compromise our scientific objectivity only if they affected which inferences we regarded as legitimate. Since they don't, they don't.

The Philosophical Value of Uncertainty

Bertrand Russell famously said that “the value of philosophy lies in its uncertainty.” At first glance, this is a very curious remark. Suppose that a medical doctor said that “the value of medicine lies in its uncertainty.” That is not a physician I would go to! Or suppose that a civil engineer said “the value of engineering lies in its uncertainty.” That is not someone we would hire to build a bridge.

The value of most sciences lies in the *certainties* they give us—the certainty of a cure, the certainty of a stable bridge. And this holds not only of applied sciences, such as medicine and engineering, but of all sciences. We do not want physics to give us uncertainties. It may well be that it *does* give us uncertainties; but so far as it does, it is deficient. The same is true of biology: it obviously doesn't always give us certainties; but so far as it doesn't, it falls short.

So is Russell simply wrong? No. Philosophy is not a science. Nor is it a non-science. It is more of a *meta*-science: a science that studies science itself; an investigation into the logical conditions that beliefs must meet if they are to pass scientific muster. The physicist identifies laws of physics; the philosopher wants to know what a law of nature *is*. (Is it a mere regularity? Is it a structure that guarantees the existence of regularities? Is it something that is inherent in the things that are subject to it? Or does it govern them from 'outside', the way the train-tracks guide the motion of the train?)

This being what philosophy is, it is no wonder that it does not, even when done properly, always lead to certainties. We have certainties when we can fit experiences into our mental pigeonholes. We have certainties when we know how to categorize the things we experience. (As a physician, I have certainty when I know how to categorize a patient—when I know what diagnostic category he falls into.) But suppose that we are questioning those pigeonholes themselves; suppose, for example, that we are examining the concept of 'personal identity' and possibly even trying to replace it with a concept that we judge to be a more coherent one (much as Hume and Buddha both did). In that case, what litmus test do we have for determining whether our analysis is correct? Not by its degree of fit with our pre-existing categories. Not, therefore, by its 'clicking', in a satisfyingly certainty-generating way, with our existing pre-conceptions.

For it is those very preconceptions that, in scrutinizing that concept, we have parted with.

The very point of philosophy is to break down the certainties that we regard as knowledge but are merely deep-seated prejudices posing as knowledge. And when philosophical analyses are viable, that is known, not on the basis of some immediate sense of certainty that they create, but over the long term, on the basis of their doing a better job than the predecessors of coherently organizing our experiences and sharpening our vision.

Logic Homework: Theorems and Models

1. $(P \rightarrow P) \rightarrow (P \rightarrow P)$

This statement is true.

It has the form $w \rightarrow w$ and is therefore true no matter what truth-value of the statement(s) flanking the arrow.

2. $(P \rightarrow Q) \rightarrow (P \rightarrow Q)$

This statement is true.

It has the form $w \rightarrow w$ and is therefore true no matter what truth-value of the statement(s) flanking the arrow.

3. $(A \vee X) \rightarrow (X \vee Y)$

This statement is false.

We know that A is true.

Therefore $A \vee X$ is true.

We know that both X and Y are false.

Therefore $(X \vee Y)$ is false.

Therefore, 3 has the form $T \rightarrow F$ and is therefore false.

Searle vs. Turing on the Imitation Game

Turing's Position:

How do we know what another person is thinking? Through their deeds—their statements and their behaviors. How do we know whether another person is thinking at all? In the same way. If a given person's body is producing speech or otherwise behaving in ways suggestive of mental activity, then we assume that there is indeed mental activity in that body—that it is not a *mere* body, but an *embodied* person.

So our test for determining the presence of mental activity is always behavior: If X behaves (speaks, moves, writes, sings..) like a thinker, then X *is* a thinker; otherwise, it isn't.

The question therefore arises: What if X is a machine? What if X is a machine that, when asked a question, gives a reasonable answer? More generally, what if X, in terms of its overt (detectable to others) movements and behaviors (including the production of noises, ink-deposits, images on a monitor, and the like) acts like a thinker?

In that case, says Alan Turing, we have no reason to deny that X is a thinker.

Searle's Position

John Searle disagrees with Turing. According to Searle, a non-thinker could *act* like a thinker without *being* a thinker. To this end, Searle puts forth his *Chinese Room Argument*. Imagine a machine that cannot think but inside of which there is a person

that so directs the machine as to make it *seem* that it thinks. So if someone says to the 'machine', 'indicate by clapping your hands what the square of two is', then the person inside the machine directs the machine to clap its hands four times.

Searle says that, since the machine does not think but *acts* as though it does, it follows that, indeed, X's behaving *like* a thinker is not definitive proof that X *is* a thinker.

Analysis

First of all, ultimately, Searle is right. Anything can in principle behave in any way at all. A lifeless corpse could be electrically stimulated to produce any sounds at all. A coffee machine could accidentally produce noises that sounded just like a poem—even though that machine, being inanimate, is not really producing poetry.

Turing is failing to distinguish thought *per se* from mere *evidence* of thought. It is one thing to think; it is quite another to produce behavioral evidence of thought. And while it is true that our basis for imputing thoughts to others consists in their overt behaviors, it obviously doesn't follow, and is not the case, that their behaviors *are* their thoughts.

But Searle's argument for this position is pathetically weak. True—the machine *per se* doesn't think. But the machine *by itself* isn't behaving intelligently. What *is*

behaving intelligently is the ensemble consisting of the machine *and* the man inside it. And that *ensemble*, consisting as it does of a machine *plus* a thinking person, *is* a thinker.

WE can turn Searle's argument against itself. We ask machine X to answer questions. X always answered those questions intelligently. Then, we later find out that there was a little person inside X that was making it produce intelligent responses. We would not conclude that the behavior on X's part that we previously regarded as intelligence-driven was *not* intelligence-driven. That is that exact opposite of what we would conclude. We would conclude that it *was* intelligence-driven—but that we were wrong about the nature of the mechanisms mediating that intelligence.

So Searle is right that behavioral evidence of intelligence is not always definitive proof of intelligence. But his argument for that position does little to support that position, and it actually tends to support Turing's position more than it supports his own.

Hume, Frankfurt, and Holbach on Personal Freedom

D'Holbach is a *determinist*. Determinism is the doctrine that whatever happens has to happen. So D'Holbach believes that, the laws of nature being what they are and

the state of the universe being what it is, there is only way the future of the universe could be.

Moreover, believes determinism to be incompatible with human freedom. So D'Holbach is an *incompatibilist* or *hard-determinist*.

D'Holbach's argument for determinism is straightforward. The universe is governed by deterministic laws; therefore, whatever happens has to happen---given the state of the universe a given time, the laws of nature *determine* what the state of the universe at any given later time will be.

D'Holbach's argument for incompatibilism is also straightforward. People are free to the extent that they do not have to do what they do. But given that human beings are material entities and that, since material entities are governed by deterministic laws, people are forced by the laws of nature to do whatever they do and therefore are no free.

David Hume is a *compatibilist*, meaning that, in his view, freedom is compatible with determinism. According to Hume, a person is free to the extent that he is able to do what he wants to do. Since people are able to do what they want to do (to varying degrees) people are free (to varying degrees). Hume's position is that one is free to the extent that one's choices determine one's situation. It is irrelevant, in Hume's view, how those choices in their turn came about: what matters is the extent to which, once they

exist, they determine one's situation. And since, to varying degrees, people's choices do have a hand in their life-situations, people are, to varying degrees, free.

I agree with Hume. For someone to be free is for them to be able to choose how they live. This is just a definitional truth. For someone to be free is *not* for them to choose how their choices come into existence. The very idea of being able to make such a choice is absurd. To be free is for one's choices to make a difference; it is not for one's choices not to be caused to come into existence. Obviously, choices are caused to come into existence. They didn't, they wouldn't come out of nowhere, which is absurd and, even if not absurd, wouldn't exactly redound to human freedom: a being whose choices came out of nowhere would not be freer than one whose choices were rooted in its personality.

In any case, freedom is not about being outside the web of causal law; it is about one's choices making a difference within that causal law. I must therefore agree with Hume and disagree with D'Holbach.

[Manifesto of the University of Wisconsin, Madison Secular Society](#)

Esteemed colleagues,

Today you will hear a debate concerning God and morality between two groups of people, one religious, the other secular. I am with secular group.

I would like to start with a question. Can God's *non-existence* be proven? No. But that doesn't mean that God exists. I cannot prove the non-existence of a talking penguin, but that doesn't mean that talking penguins exist.

So I'm not going to try to prove that God doesn't exist. So what *will* I do?

First, I will prove that *if* a being that is great enough to be considered God exists, that being wouldn't care about us. In fact, it wouldn't have any of the attributes that believers in God want God to have. In other words, supposing that it can be proved some intelligence created the universe and currently governs the universe, then even though that being is *a* God, it is not *our* God.

I will also prove that the existence of moral norms does not require God's existence. Maybe God exists, maybe he doesn't. But God's existence is irrelevant to what the requirements of morality are. If rape is wrong, it is wrong if God exists and wrong if he doesn't.

Time permitting, I will also briefly discuss some of the standard arguments for God's existence. Some of these arguments have merit, especially the so-called 'Argument from Design', also known as the 'Teleological Argument.' But every plausible

argument for God's existence has one major flaw: the being whose existence it supposedly proves doesn't correspond even remotely to what actual people of faith believe God to be.

Here I would like to make a quick point. Real religion is the religion of the ordinary man and woman. Here in our Ivory Tower, we speak ill of born-again Christians and Fundamentalist Muslims. But that is the face of religion. Such people truly believe. They believe so much, in fact, they are willing to die for their religious beliefs. Are those beliefs good ones or accurate ones? I don't know. But that is religion is.

There are intellectuals for whom religion can be adopted and cast away like a pair of socks, and when such people are asked to say what sort of being God is, they tend to give vague answers. 'God is love', they may say, or 'God is truth.'

No. If God exists, God is not some principle or truth or theorem. If God exists, in the sense in which genuinely religious people believe God to exist, he must be at least somewhat person-like. He cannot be some intangible principle.

That said, let's discuss the coherence of the God-concept. God, by definition, is something that has the intelligence and power to create and govern the universe. Could something powerful enough to do that experience pain? Could it experience emotional loss? Would such a thing have emotions have any kind at all?

Let me formalize this argument a bit. God, we are told, is omnipotent (all-powerful) and omniscience (all-knowing). Very well. But let me ask you: Can an omnipotent being be *harmed*? No. An omnipotent being is invincible. Nothing can damage it. So such cannot know what it is like to be vulnerable. Therefore, it cannot have *needs*. Need is about imperfection; it is about dependence on something external for one's welfare. God, being all-powerful, doesn't need anything. Or anyone.

A being that does not need, does not care. Need is the basis of the love that people have for one another, and also for the mutual hate that people have. God has insecurities, no vulnerabilities. He is just intelligence, pure power. So even if he exists, he does not care about us.

You care about other people---your parents, your children, your friends. Why? Because you need them, and they need you. You care about your dog and your cat. Why? Because you need them. You don't care about cockroaches and worms. Why not? Because you don't need them. Where there is no need, there is no concern. God, if he exists, cares about us even less than a scientist cares about the worms he is dissecting.

But let's set that aside. If God is all-powerful, then he cannot know what it is like to *not* be powerful. In which case, he is not all-knowing. For being all-knowing involves knowing what it is like to be damaged, vulnerable, fearful, and the like. And God won't know that. In any case, he cannot have experiential knowledge of it. Maybe he can compute his way to some surrogate for that knowledge, the way you and I can deduce

what it is like live on the South Pole. But he can't truly know it, since he can't have the corresponding experiences.

This brings us to the Argument from Design, according to which organized and seemingly purposive nature of existence, especially the biological part, indicates that God exists, in the way that a clock indicates the existence of clock-maker.

This is a good argument, but it is not a good argument for a God that has feelings or is otherwise psychologically human. Suppose that some kind of intelligence is responsible for, and embodied in, the workings of our organs and motions of the planets, and so on. Does that higher being have emotions? Does it care about us? There is no particular reason to believe so.

Much the same holds of the so-called 'Cosmological Argument', according to which nothing could be the cause of anything unless something was its own cause and, for that very reason, violates natural law and is therefore supernatural. Even if some being is its own cause, it doesn't follow that it cares about us, or knows about us, or has feelings. The connection between 'x is its own cause' and 'x wrote the 10 commandments' is unclear, to put it mildly.

Let's talk about God in relation to morality. Some people say that without God, there is no morality. But that's not true. Why do I think it wrong to bludgeon infants? Is it because God told me? No it isn't. And what makes it wrong to bludgeon infants? Is

that it God doesn't like it? No. Whatever it is that makes it wrong is something intrinsic to the situation. Suppose that God showed up and told us how much he liked it when infants were bludgeoned. Would that make it right? No. It would mean that God had some very deranged moral views.

Morality seems to be about biology. Putting a cigarette in somebody's eye is wrong, because doing so damages that person. What is immoral is what weakens, and what is moral is what strengthens. There's probably more to it than that, but that's the gist of the matter.

You'll hear some interesting arguments from my esteemed Catholic colleagues. According to one of them, the fact that explanations are possible means that there exists something that is self-explanatory—self-justifying principle, or some such. I agree. But that proves that there exist unconditional or self-evident truths. It doesn't prove that God exists. God, after all, is not a truth. If he exists, he is sentient being, like you and me, but better.

Another argument you'll here concerns morality. It will be said that whenever something has a purpose, it has that purpose in relation to a higher being. A hammer has a purpose in relation to the carpenter who uses it. It does not have a purpose on its own. Similarly, given that we have purposes and objectives, it follows, so we are told, that there is a higher being---a God, a carpenter in the sky, as it were, but for whose existence, you and I would be like hammers and nails and in an occupied workshop.

Here's the problem. A hammer's purposiveness is indeed derivative; when we speak of a hammer's purpose, we are really referring to the purposes of the carpenter who uses it. But I have purposes all by myself. When we talk about what Amol is trying to do, we are not talking about what some other being who is using me as a tool is trying to do. So the existence of purposes on our part does not imply the existence of a great carpenter in the sky the way that a hammer's purpose implies the existence of a carpenter.

So no, I can't disprove God's existence. But as we've just seen, it's not hard to show that anything that has the power to do God-like things, such as running the universe, is quite literally unable to have any emotional attachments to us. We've also seen that moral laws have to do with health and illness and the like, and don't bear either way on God's existence.

Michael's Analysis of the Limits of Civil Protections

I believe (with some heavy reservations to be stated below) that Michael is heading in the right direction, but he still has a ways to go. The main problem with Michael's analysis is that it is incomplete, as in, he doesn't discuss slides 5-10. And some of the material on these slides is particularly pregnant. This is especially true of slide 5,

which concerns how the hiring manager *should* behave, which is an interesting question and Michael's thoughts on which I look forward to hearing.

Michael's discussion of slides 2-4 are reasonably compelling. (That said, his analysis of slide 2 involves an undue amount of sheer repetition of the slide itself.) The broad strokes of what he is saying are perfectly correct. The hiring manager's behavior is discriminatory and inappropriate.

That said, Michael does not clearly distinguish legal from ethical questions, and he does not distinguish either from questions of protocol or regulatory procedure. And this is probably related to the fact Michael does not cite any actual laws or codes. Indeed, Michael only has four references, which of course falls short of the required 10.

Michael certainly implicitly addresses the relevant parameters of the ADDRESSING framework (age, developmental and acquired disabilities, religion and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, indigenous heritage, national origin and gender).

There is an important fact that Michael does not address at all and that, I believe, is easily overlooked. Devin overhears the hiring manager saying that he does not 'agree with the homosexual lifestyle.' On this basis, Devin becomes irate and comes to the conclusion that it is because he is gay that the hiring manager passed him for the position.

There are several holes in this reasoning. First of all, we don't know if the hiring manager knew that Devin is gay. It nowhere says that Devin was openly gay. For all we know, Devin may act like a stereotypically straight person—Devin himself may even tell anti-gay jokes to appear more straight. So even if the hiring manager has a personal policy of not hiring homosexuals, we have zero evidence to the effect that this is what is going on in this particular case.

Second, the hiring manager is overheard talking about how he doesn't like the 'homosexual lifestyle.' This doesn't mean that he doesn't like homosexuals. The term 'homosexual lifestyle' refers to a way of living in which some homosexuals engage but in which others don't. There are gays who, in terms of their lifestyle, are extremely button-down and conservative, and the hiring manager doesn't disapprove of *their* lifestyle—even though (though we have no evidence of this) he may not approve of their being homosexual.

Third, even if the boss has some general aversion to homosexuals or homosexuality, there is zero evidence that this actually played a role in his hiring decision. True—Devin seems to be qualified for the job. But for all we know, there were 1,500 applicants. And for all we know, the person the hiring manager hired was himself (or herself) gay. In any case, people have their personal sentiments about other individuals and other groups, but if a given person is professional, he won't let this impact his hiring decisions. Is it really true that everyone who has any feelings of a

politically incorrect kind about a given group is *ipso facto* a bigot and makes discriminatory hiring decisions? No. Also, in private businesses, people have strong incentives to hire competent workers, regardless of their own prejudices, since doing so is profitable and failing to do is not profitable.

The truth is—we have scant information about what actually happened. We don't know who actually got the job—it may have been an openly gay person, for all we know. We don't know who else applied. We don't know if Devin would have been the best fit for the job—it might have involved Devin's working with someone with whom Devin had previously had a conflict. It may be that Devin's prospective co-worker was a black person and that Devin had had a history of overt racism towards blacks, this being why the hiring manager did not hire Devin.

We don't really know much of anything about the hiring decision. All we have is one remark, which Devin heard by eavesdropping, which, though might be probative if taken in conjunction with other data, is not accompanied by such data. And we are, to put it euphemistically, 'jumping the gun' (or, put non-euphemistically, being prejudicial) if we automatically brand the hiring manager a 'bigot' on the basis of the fact that he didn't hire Devin. That may well be what the hiring manager is, and that may well be why he didn't hire Devin. But we don't know that, and Michael assumes otherwise, and this is an issue of which he should perhaps be mindful when preparing his final draft.

Bentham and Mill on Different Types of Pleasure

Explain the difference between Bentham and Mill regarding types of pleasures. Start by explaining the greatest happiness principle and principle of utility, then what the hedonistic calculus is, then how Bentham and Mill value competing pleasures differently from each other (like the example in class of \$20 - should it go to the transformers movie that makes someone really happy, or the museum which leads to a higher quality of pleasure?) Which (Bentham or Mill) do you agree with and why? Use quotes from the reading to help illustrate the theories. (minimum 400 words for this entire answer)

Bentham's utilitarianism is given by the principle that an act is good to the extent that it maximizes pleasure (or minimizes pain) and wrong to the extent that it diminishes pleasure (or maximizes pain). Mill's utilitarianism is given by the principle that an act is good to the extent that it maximizes *happiness* (or minimizes unhappiness) and bad to the extent that it minimizes unhappiness (or maximizes unhappiness).

So for Bentham the central concepts are pleasure and pain: ("Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and

effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think...”) By contrast, for Mill, the central concepts are happiness and unhappiness.

The distinction is important: pain and pleasure do not involve one’s agency; they are properties not of *actions* but of *experiences* or *undergoings*. One experiences pleasure when having a massage or being intoxicated. By contrast, happiness *does* involve one’s agency; indeed, it seems to be a property of the way in which one engages the world. To be happy is to be *fulfilled*, and to be fulfilled is to act in such a way as to maximize one’s potential. And this is why one is happy to the extent that one acts in ways that express and develop one’s agency. One is happy when (and to the extent that) one is building a house, or improving one’s mind, or working on one’s tennis game, or solving a math problem, or writing a great philosophy paper.

Consequently, Bentham’s utilitarianism is radically different from Mill’s utilitarianism. A related point is that, for reasons now to be stated, Bentham’s doctrine, though false, is not viciously circular, whereas Mill’s doctrine, though true, *is* viciously circular.

Somebody who shoots heroin all day experiences a lot of pleasure but probably isn’t happy. And somebody who does difficulty but fulfilling work all day is probably happy but doesn’t necessary experience very much pleasure. So Bentham’s doctrine—that the moral goodness=pleasure-conduciveness is simply false.

But Mill's doctrine---that moral-goodness=happiness-conduciveness---though correct, is viciously circular, for the reason that the concept of happiness is to be understood in terms of the concept of moral value. More specifically, we are happy to the extent that our lives comply with our values. The reason the hardworking man is happy, despite not experiencing much pleasure, is that he is living up to his values. And the reason the sluggard is unhappy, despite experiencing a lot of pleasure, is that his life is not living up to his values. So Mill's utilitarianism, though *correct* (or seemingly so, at any rate), is viciously circular if taken as an analysis of morality, since it presupposes some independent conception of moral value and, therefore, of morality.

Set Theory Homework

1.

a. $\mathbb{N} \cup \{n \in \mathbb{N} \mid n \text{ is even}\}$?

Answer: \mathbb{N}

b. $\{a, b, \{1, 2\}\} \cap \{a, 1, \{2\}\}$

Answer: a

c. $\{n \in \mathbb{N} \mid n > 0\}$

Answer: \emptyset (empty set)

2.

- a. Bijective, surjective, injective
- b. Not injective, not surjective, not bijective
- c. Injective, not surjective, not bijective

3. Two sets are equinumerous iff there is a one-one correspondence

between them. Let R be the relation that sets bear to each other when there is a one-one correspondence between them; in other words, let R be the relation of equinumerosity. R is reflexive, since any given set can be placed in a one-one correspondence with itself. R is symmetrical, since, whenever S_1 can be placed in one-one correspondence with S_2 , S_2 can be placed in one-one correspondence with S_1 . And R is transitive, since, whenever S_1 can be placed in one-one correspondence with S_2 and S_2 can be placed in one-one correspondence with S_3 , S_1 can be placed in one-one correspondence with S_3 .

4. Proposition: $(A \cap B) \cup C = A \cap (B \cup C)$, whenever $C \subseteq A$. Proof: Assume that $C \subseteq A$. In that case, $(A \cap B) \cup C = A \cap B$, and $A \cap (B \cup C) = A \cap B$. Therefore, if $C \subseteq A$, then $(A \cap B) \cup C = A \cap B = A \cap (B \cup C)$.

5. Let $f: X \rightarrow Y$, with $A \in X$ and $B \in Y$. Show that:

a. If f is injective, $f^{-1}(f(A)) = A$. Proof: Assume that f is injective and $f(A) = B$. In that case, $f^{-1}(B) = A$. Given that $f(A) = B$, it follows that $f^{-1}(f(A)) = f^{-1}(B) = A$.

b. If f is surjective, $f(f^{-1}(B)) = B$. Proof: Assume that f is surjective. In that case, for each element A of Y , there is an element B of X such that $f(B) = A$. Given that $f(B) = A$, it follows that $f^{-1}(A) = B$ and therefore follows that $f(f^{-1}(A)) = A$.

c. If f is not injective, there exists $A \in X$ such that (a) fails. Proof: Assume that f is not injective. In that case, there exist elements A and C of X such that $f(A) = B$ and $f(C) = B$. It follows that for f^{-1} to exist, it would have to map B onto both A and C . Since a function cannot map a given element onto distinct elements, it follows that f^{-1} doesn't exist.

d. If f is not surjective, there exists $B \in Y$ such that (b) fails. Proof: Assume that f is not surjective. In that case, there exists a $B \in Y$ such that there exists no $A \in X$ such that $f(A) = B$ or therefore such that $f^{-1}(B) = A$ or therefore such that $f(f^{-1}(B)) = B$.

6. Show that when $A \sim B$ (i.e. when A and B are equinumerous/bijectionable):

a. $A \times B \sim B \times A$. Proof: Since $A \sim B$, it follows that $A \times A \sim A \times B \sim B \times B \sim B \times A$. Given that \sim is transitive, it follows that $A \times B \sim B \times A$.

b. $A - B \sim B - A$, then $A \sim B$.

Intuitive idea behind proof: When $A=B$, $A \sim B$ and $A-B \sim B-A$. So when each of $A-B$ and $B-A$ is empty (has a cardinality of 0), then $A-B \sim B-A$ and $A \sim B$. If $A \sim B$ when each of $A-B$ and $B-A$ has exactly n -many members, then adding a single member x to A that doesn't belong to B and a single member y to B that doesn't belong to A will increase the cardinality of each of $A-B$ and $B-A$ by one, so that $A-B \sim B-A$, and will increase the cardinality of each of A and B by one, so that $A \sim B$.

Formal Proof (by induction): First show that $A \sim B$ when each of $A-B$ and $B-A$ has a cardinality of 0 (i.e. when each set is empty). Next show that if $A \sim B$ when each of $A-B$ and $B-A$ has a cardinality of n , then $A \sim B$ when each of $A-B$ and $B-A$ has a cardinality of $n+1$. First step: When each of $A-B$ and $B-A$ has a cardinality of 0, $A=B$ and therefore $A \sim B$. Next step: Assume that $A \sim B$ when each of $A-B$ and $B-A$ has a cardinality of n . In that case, adding exactly one element to each set that doesn't belong to the other will increase the cardinality of each of $A-B$ and $B-A$ to $n+1$ and will also increase the cardinality of each of A and B by one integer. Therefore, if $A \sim B$ when each of $A-B$ and $B-A$ has a cardinality of n , then $A \sim B$ when each of $A-B$ and $B-A$ has a cardinality of $n+1$.

1. On page 140, Aristotle describes how "moral virtue comes about as a result of habit." Explain this quote by using quotes from the rest of page 140.

If act with self-discipline on only a single occasion, I am not a self-disciplined person and therefore do not have the virtue of being self-disciplined. If I am a generally an indolent sluggard and act with discipline only one occasion, my acting in that way embodies desperation, not self-control: that act is about *lacking* the virtue of self-discipline, not having it. But if I am self-disciplined *in general*—if, on each and every occasion that it behooves me to act with discipline I do so—then, if I act with discipline on a given occasion, my act *does* embody genuine self-discipline. It is a desperation-motivated act that has the same external form as a discipline-motivated act; it is a *bona fide* act of self-discipline. And so it is that Aristotle says: "[O]ne swallow does not make a summer; nor does one day; and so too, one day, or a short time, does not make a man blessed [virtuous] and happy."

2. On page 144, Aristotle says, "virtue is therefore a kind of mean." What is Aristotle trying to say about morality here?

For Aristotle, virtue is about rationality and self-control. A virtuous person is one who governs himself in a rational manner, a rational manner being one that allows for the greatest possible degree of flourishing and that therefore presupposes a condition of health. Extreme action is about a lack of self-control. People do not have self-control if they are 'either-or' people: people who *either* binge *or* starve themselves; people who *either* drink until they black-out *or* live like monks; people who *either* never exercise *or* do nothing but exercise. Any given such form of extremism embodies a lack of self-control, which in turn embodies a failure to govern oneself in a rational manner; for which reason, each of these 'extremisms' involves failing to flourish in some important respect. The person who binge eats is unable to do the things that a healthy person can do, as is the person who starves himself. The person who never exercises cannot fulfill his athletic gifts, and the person who does nothing but exercise cannot develop his intellectual gifts. In general, extremism embodies a certain laziness and, therewith, a certain irrationality and smallness of character. Contrariwise, the middle-road—the path of moderation---embodies self-control, rationality, and largeness of character and, therewith, a high degree of virtue.

Nagel On the Hard Problem

I have to write a paper (250 word minimum). Here's the assignment post :

Thomas Nagel's bat argument. How is it a problem for materialism? Do you think that this argument shows that materialism is false, or is there a good way for the materialist to respond to the argument? Explain and discuss, supporting your answer with reasons.

Thomas Nagel puts for the following argument against materialism. (Materialism is the doctrine that the mental is physical—that mental events and structures are identical with or at least mediated by physiological events and structures.) Suppose that Sam is a super-scientist who knows everything there is to know about bat-physiology and neurology. Will Sam for that reason know everything (or even anything) about bat-*psychology*? More specifically, will Sam on that basis know *what it is like to be a bat*? No he won't. (If he knows what it is like to be a bat, it is because he himself is a bat, or at least a bat-like creature, and therefore has, as it were, direct, first-hand knowledge of what it is like to be a bat. No such knowledge that he has will have for its sole or primary basis his knowledge of bat-physiology.) In general, no amount of knowledge of the physical by itself gives one knowledge of the psychological.

The obvious response to this is to say: "That argument involves an intensional fallacy—the same sort of fallacy that is embodied in the argument from *since I can know*

that x is water without knowing that x is H2O, it follows that water is not H2O.” But this counter-response is flawed. It is only if I don’t know everything there is to know about water—only if, in particular, I don’t know its chemical composition---that I can know that x is water without also knowing that x is H2O. But even if I know *everything* there is to know about a given bat’s physiology, I do not on that basis have the slightest idea what it is like to *be* that bat.

“But you are begging the question”, it will be said. “For if that bat’s psychology *is* its physiology, or at least some aspect thereof, then you *cannot* know everything there is to know about that bat’s physiology without *ipso facto* knowing about its psychology.” But this argument clearly over-extends the scope of what is included in the term “physiology” and therefore has no scope.

In conclusion, Nagel’s argument does seem to show that materialism is false.

Wittgenstein on Language and Thought

It is obvious that linguistic competence (the ability to use and understand language) enhances the ability to think. But does it *constitute* that ability? In other words, is it *identical* with that ability?

Ludwig Wittgenstein says 'yes'. And he supports his position with two famous arguments of his: the 'Private Language' argument and the 'Rule-following argument'.

According to the 'Private Language', one cannot invent a 'private language', except by translating some pre-existing public language into private terms.

Wittgenstein's argument is that semantic rules (rules that assign meanings to expressions) are, like all rules, null and void—and therefore as good as non-existence—unless enforced. And, so Wittgenstein also holds, the semantic rules of a private language would be unenforced—and therefore null and void. Therefore, so Wittgenstein concludes, a private language (that isn't just a re-boot of a pre-existing public language) is impossible.

According to the Rule Following argument, there can be no such thing as a 'private rule'; in other words, one cannot impose a rule on oneself: all genuine rules are social rules, meaning that they involve pluralities of people. Wittgenstein's argument for this is similar to the Private Language Argument: unenforced rules are non-rules and private rules are unenforced.

Wittgenstein also holds that thinking involves following rules—his argument, so far as he has one, being that, unless mental activity is rule-governed, it isn't principled and, unless it is principled, it isn't thought so much as it is mere free association or mere sensation, or some such.

Wittgenstein thus holds that thinking involves the following rules. He also holds that rules are inherently public. So he is forced by these starting points to find some set of public rules the following of which can reasonably be identified with the act of thinking. And he understandably believes that linguistic rules are the only rules that meet this requirement. And it follows from these assumptions that, indeed, thought is inherently linguistic, i.e. that linguistic competence is constitutive of cognitive competence.

But Wittgenstein is wrong, and his argument is bad. First of all, thought is needed *in order* to understand or operate with semantic rules. Without thought, a creature can make noises, but it cannot speak. The difference between a coffee-maker that makes noise and a person that speaks is that the latter, but not the former, understands the rules that link meaning to sounds. So Wittgenstein is simply false.

Plus, not all thought is linguistic. There is visual thought, musical thought, etc. And there is no plausible way to identify these with the manipulating of linguistic symbols.

Given that Wittgenstein's position is false, there must be a flaw in his reasoning. And indeed there is: Wittgenstein is wrong to assume that non-public rules can be violated with impunity. Suppose that I invent a private code in which I tell myself that X means 'poisonous berries' and Y means 'non-poisonous berries.' If I misinterpret my

own language, I won't be penalized by other people—the 'language police' won't get on my case—but I will indeed be penalized, as I will eat the poisonous berries and die.

So the situation here is simply. Wittgenstein gave a bad argument for a wrong and implausible idea, and that's the end of it.

Camus and Schopenhauer on the Meaning of Life

Instructions:

Please, answer the following essay question. Read the question closely and make sure to address all of its parts. The recommended length for your answer is: min. 500 words – max. 600 words.

Q. How does Schopenhauer arrive at the basic insight that life is suffering? Under these apparently frustrating conditions, what is the best (or "least bad") way to live, according to him? Next, what does Camus mean by "the absurd" and how shall we cope with it? What do Schopenhauer's take on life and Camus's take on life have in common,

and in what ways are they different? Whose view of life do you find more convincing, and why?

Schopenhauer believes that life is suffering. Camus believes that life is absurd.

They thus both seem to have a fundamentally negative conception of life. To this extent, their conceptions of life are similar or at least seem to be. But scrutiny of their respective positions proves them to be very different.

First of all, one can hold that life is fundamentally an exercise in suffering *without* holding that life is meaningless or 'absurd'. Steve Jobs spent most of his life struggling to achieve success. And the amount of time that he spent struggling to achieve success may well have exceeded the amount of time that he actually enjoyed it. But was his life meaningless? No.

Second, one can hold that life is fundamentally *not* about suffering without holding that it is absurd. In fact, people who have a hedonistic approach to life seem to

be of the view that life is absurd. Also, if life is fundamentally an exercise in suffering, then it would seem that life *does* have meaning, its meaning being given to it by one's need to minimize or eliminate suffering. And life is *drained* of meaning to the extent that it is free of adversity.

This actually seems to be Schopenhauer's own view. "Life without pain has no meaning", Schopenhauer writes. Schopenhauer's position is that pleasure and happiness are low-probability conditions, since they are unstable and hard to achieve, and that pain and unhappiness are high-probability conditions, since they are stable and easy to achieve. From this, Schopenhauer deduces that life is more about pain than pleasure, more about unhappiness than happiness.

But Schopenhauer does *not* hold that life is meaningless. As already indicated, he holds that at least some strife is necessary for meaning. Second, he holds that pain and unhappiness can be minimized. In Schopenhauer's view, people tend to have a preconception to the effect that life is supposed to make them happy; and if one lets go of that preconception, one is allowing life to be happy in its own way.

Camus does not hold that life is necessarily painful. At the same time, Camus *does* hold that life is 'absurd.' By this Camus means that only that life does not *supply* Man with a meaning:⁵ But Camus also holds that, if life did have some pre-existing meaning, that fact would hem us in. And the fact that it doesn't, so Camus holds, allows

⁵ “Man stands face to face with the irrational. He feels within him his longing for happiness and for reason. The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world.” *Albert Camus (2012). “The Myth of Sisyphus: And Other Essays”, p.28, Vintage*

us to be free.”⁶

Although Camus’ views about the meaning(fulness) of life differ from Schopenhauer’s, both views coincide in one respect. According to both, it is by *accepting* that which is negative in life that one stands to gain what is *positive* in it. Says Camus: “You will never be happy if you continue to search for what happiness consists of. You will never live if you are looking for the meaning of life.”⁷ Says Schopenhauer: “If you accustom yourself to this view of life you will regulate your expectations accordingly, and cease to look upon all its disagreeable incidents ... as anything unusual or irregular; nay, you will find everything is as it should be, in a world where each of us pays the penalty of existence in [their] own particular way.”⁸

Camus’ Hero as Rebel without a Cause

For Camus, Sisyphus is the ultimate hero. Sisyphus pushes a boulder up a hill; the boulder falls down; and Sisyphus does it all over again---over and over again.

⁶ “I draw from the Absurd three consequences: my revolt, my liberty, my passion” Albert Camus, 1945 interview.”

⁷ [Albert Camus](#), in "Intuitions" (October 1932), published in *Youthful Writings* (1976)

8 Arthur Schopenhauer, On the Suffering of the World

Sisyphus is about striving for the sake of striving—living for the sake of living. He acts; he does not retreat into reflection. It might behoove him to reflect more on what he does; but in making such a concession to cool-headed rationality, Sisyphus would be draining himself of precisely that element of spontaneity and *irrationality* that gives him his distinctive vitality and heroism.

For Camus, the hero is the same person as the rebel. And for Camus, the rebel is the rebel without a cause: he is not someone who fights to live; he is someone who lives to fight. Unlike Shakespeare's weak and indecisive Hamlet, Camus' hero-rebel is not "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought"; and being thus *not* "sicklied o'er", he lives life in a red-blooded and, for that reason, destructive and, more often, *self*-destructive way.

But self-destructive though he sometimes is, he is not *deliberately* so; he is not neurotically self-undermining. Quite the opposite: he is non-neurotic and bold and brave. He is just what Camus says he is: a hero.

And what is a hero? Someone who doesn't shrink from action. Someone who doesn't hide behind rationalizations. Someone who doesn't ask himself the proverbial 'one question too many' before doing what has to be done. He 'just does it', to paraphrase the Nike slogan. And even though waste and loss are a consequence of his non-cowardice and recklessness, he is, while he is alive, truly alive and so only dies once, unlike the coward "who dies a thousand times."

My Little Finger: Camus' Absurdism Illustrated

I am an extremely talented pianist, and for many years I dedicated myself entirely to the cultivation of musical abilities. I was about to enter prestigious competition that I was likely to win.

Then, one day, I was helping my nephew with a book report, and I got a paper cut on my pinky. It didn't seem like a big deal, but it was actually a rather deep cut. I put alcohol on it, which I thought would prevent infection.

Anyway, I had to practice, and because the competition was imminent, I didn't let the cut heal. As a result, it became infected. The doctor told me that unless I took a week-long break from piano, the infection would get worse and could possibly lead to nerve damage and even amputation.

I did not take a week off, but I took days off. This enabled the wound to heal enough, but it had a marginal but distinctively negative affect on my performance on the competition. I did not even make it into the final round, let alone win.

As a result, record-deals that were in the works dried up, and my fan-base turned its back on me. And I don't even much like the nephew whose homework I was helping with and didn't much want to help him. I did so on a whim. And the result of that feeble

whim was a complete skewing of my life-path. I tried pleading with God, asking Him why this had happened.

Not that I was religious—I wasn't and still am not---but I wanted answers, and I knew that other people would give me self-serving or otherwise deficient answers ('well, that's just the way the cookie crumbles') and would probably be secretly glad of my misfortune.

But what struck me about all of this was not that I lost the competition—that sort of things. It was that I lost it for such a meaningless reason, and in such a dramatically empty way.

My losing it was so *meaningless*—and yet so impactful. And this, it seems, is precisely what Camus had in mind when he talked about how absurdity lay in the discrepancy between our (often very grand) expectations of the world and the (often deflationary and anti-climactic, but in a bad way) responses we get from it.

Are Late-term Abortions Ethical?

A late-term abortion is one that is performed in the third trimester of pregnancy. Are such abortions ethical? In this paper, I consider the work of four reputable scholars,

two of whom argue that late-term abortions are ethical and two of whom argue that they are unethical. I arrive at the position that late-term abortions are unethical.

Before we consider what these scholars say, let us make some general points of a philosophical nature.

When an abortion is performed, two parties are involved: the mother and the fetus. The mother clearly has ethical rights, since she is indisputably a person. But does the fetus have rights? This is not clear, because it is not clear whether the fetus is a person. If the fetus is a person, then the fetus has rights. If the fetus is not a person--if it is a subhuman or a pre-person--then it either has no rights or has fewer rights than a person.

A newborn infant is considered a person. A newborn infant does not have particularly well-developed reasoning capabilities, but it has consciousness, it can experience sensations and perceptions, and it can experience emotion. A one day old fetus is probably not a person since it has none of these attributes.

Should it turn out that a fetus in the third trimester has all of the psychological attributes of a one-day old infant, then it would have rights. In particular, it would have the right to live. In any case, the question whether the fetus is psychologically comparable to a newborn is a medical question and can be answered only on the basis of knowledge of its nervous system and the like.

According to Kenneth E. Himma, a professor of philosophy, late term abortions are perfectly ethical. His argument is that fetuses are not conscious, do not feel pain, do not make moral judgments and for these reasons fail to be people.

According to Sara Miller, a journalist, late-term fetuses don't feel pain and, indeed, don't feel anything and are not therefore not people.

According to Don Berkich, a professor of philosophy, fetuses will become people, even if they are not currently people, and in having an abortion, one is, as it were, killing the person that the fetus is going to be: one is robbing it of 'a future like ours,' as Berkich puts it.

According to Maureen Condic, a professor of neurobiology, there is strong medical evidence to suggest that late-term fetuses can feel pain and have other psychological traits specific to human beings; and for this reason, Condic alleges, late-term abortions are ethically wrong.

The medical evidence strongly suggests that Condic is right. Late-term fetuses are neurologically sufficiently similar to newborn infants that the former may reasonably be presumed to have the same psychological characteristics as the latter, a corollary being that the former have whatever ethical rights the latter have. The arguments put forth by Himma and Miller are therefore null and void, as they are based on false medical claims concerning the biological condition of late-term fetuses. As for Berkich's claim that

abortion robs the fetus of its future, this claim is consistent with the fact that, judging by the relevant neurobiological benchmarks, the fetus is indeed a person.

Does Mathematics Assume the Truth of Platonism?

A mathematician is *ipso facto* a Platonist. There is no way to replace references to numbers, mathematical operations, or other mathematical structures with references to spatiotemporal entities.

First of all, there are no observable instances of infinite quantities. One can see two hands, three apples, and so on, but not infinitely many.

Second, although one can observe instances of operations that are analogous to addition, division, multiplication, and so on, one does not observe any actual such instances. You can put one rock on top of another, but that is not the operation of arithmetical addition. When you say that “ $1+1=2$ ”, you are saying that the union of two non-overlapping unit sets is a dual set; you are not saying anything about any physical operation. Proof is that any physical alteration alters the operands, whereas no

arithmetical operation does so. (Rocks are altered when moved; numbers are not altered when added.)

Similar points hold of garden-variety logical operations, such as negation ('not'), disjunction ('or'), and conjunction ('and'). One can observe analogues of negation—one can witness acts of destruction, for example—but not negation *per se*, since the latter, unlike the former, takes truths and falsehoods for its operands. One cannot even observe veritable instances of conjunction, since conjunction operates on truths and falsehoods, whereas its physical proxies operate on rocks and eggs and other non-truths and non-falsehoods.

As for the idea that infinite quantities and arithmetical operations and other distinctively mathematical structures can be 'abstracted' from observable phenomena—that is irrelevant, since it speaks only to our knowledge of those operations, not to their existence and therefore doesn't eliminate the corresponding need for a Platonic metaphysics. It may well be that awareness of the operation of addition was triggered by people seeing rocks placed on top of rocks; but there is no way to abstract away all the mathematically irrelevant facts about such an operation except in terms of some antecedently recognized, and therefore antecedently existent, standard of relevance, this being the arithmetical operation *per se*. In general, abstraction is the process not of creating, but of recognizing the existence of the abstract entity in question and therefore presupposes said entity's existence.

Further, even outside of mathematics, there is no way to eliminate the need for non-spatiotemporal entities. There is no way to translate the statement “one can have most of the properties of a good general without being a general’ into a statement that doesn’t presuppose the existence of properties *per se*; nor indeed is there any way to validate even so rudimentary an inference as “John and Tom are both smart; therefore, there is something that they have in common”, since “something” in this context means “some property.”

The resistance that people have to Platonism is misconceived and derives from their assuming that Platonic entities, if they exist, are giant copies in the sky of their Earthly instances. They assume that the property of being a cat is a cat-in-the-sky, the same *mutatis mutandis* being true of the property of being a square, and so on. This is not the right way to think of properties. A property is simply a way that things can be. Equivalently, a property is a possibility. If you are jogging, as opposed to watching TV., that simply means that there two possibilities only one of which was actualized; two paths or ‘ways of being’, only one of which was taken; two properties, only one of which was instantiated.

[The Self-defeating Nature of Utilitarianism and Consequentialism Generally](#)

Consider the following scenario by a contemporary philosopher: "Your good friend Erskin rests on his death bed---more accurately, the bed soon to be such. Alone with him, you have just promised that, when he passes on, you too will pass on, will pass on his stash of cash to Laetitia, a young lady friend of his. She knows nothing about the money. Erskin duly dies and in your search for Laetitia, you discover that she is a rich courtesan, as Erskin well knew. You also find---to your amazement---that Erskin has daughters and a former wife, who speak fondly of him, clearly distressed by his death. They live in poverty. Indeed, you could do with some money yourself. What ought you to do?" Argue as a utilitarian or a Kantian, and don't forget to consider possible objections to your view.

On his death bed, my friend Erskin asked me to make sure that his fortune be passed on to a lady friend of his. I agreed to honor that wish, but it turns out that there are others who would be more deserving of that money. What am I to do? According to the utilitarian, I should do whatever maximizes human welfare; and if that includes lying, breaking promises, or otherwise 'using' people, then so be it. According to the Kantian, I have but one moral obligation, namely, to treat people as ends unto

themselves, and I must therefore keep my promise; for if I break it, then, by virtue of making it, I was simply manipulating Erskin out of his money and therefore treating him as a means, as opposed to an end-unto-himself.

In this paper, I will defend the Kantian position. The basic conceit underlying my argument is that the alternative view is self-undermining: if we regard people as having so little value that they can permissibly be defrauded for a 'greater good', then there is no 'greater good', since it cannot coherently be supposed that there can be a 'greater good' in a world in which people lack moral worth. I will start by showing that the utilitarian position fails on its own terms, the reason being that it presupposes the existence of moral verities that it itself undermines. Then I will show that, precisely because it is thus self-undermining, utilitarianism lacks the one virtue that it is commonly thought to have and Kantianism lacks the one *defect* that that it is thought to have. Utilitarianism is assumed to make allowances for the welfare for the welfare of the many, and we will find this to be false; and Kantianism is thought to *fail* to make such allowances, and this too we will find to be false.

Let us begin by identifying the incoherence internal to utilitarianism. When we're told that Erskin has a wife and children who need the money, we are expected to regard their interests as having more moral weight than my promise. But there are many people on the planet who could benefit from that money: there are sick children on the other side of the planet who need money for life-saving medical procedures and brilliant

entrepreneurs who need start-up capital to launch their projects. So why should be particularly concerned about Erskin's wife and children?

The reason is that marriage and parenthood are moral commitments. Married people have responsibilities that single people don't, and marriage is a commitment to fulfill those responsibilities. Parents (meaning people who raise children, instead of merely having them) have responsibilities that non-parents don't, and parenthood is a commitment to fulfill those responsibilities. Erskin did not have any such commitments to the aforementioned sick children and brilliant entrepreneurs, and that is why we don't feel that he has any obligation to help them. Erskin *did* have such commitments to his wife and children, and that is why we do tend to feel that he has some obligation to help them.

Here is the rub. I have a similar commitment to Erskin. *and if it is morally permissible for me to violate my bond with Erskin, then it is equally morally permissible for Erskin to violate his bonds with his wife and children.* The bonds of trust and responsibility that made Erskin responsible for taking care of his wife and children are the same as those that obligate me to keep my promise to him. It is therefore self-defeating to suppose that I should give the money to Erskin's wife and children, instead of keeping my promise to him. For the very bonds of trust that obliged Erskin to take care of his wife and children, and that would have made it good for me to give them the

money, also oblige me to keep my promise to Erskin, and therefore *not* to give them the money.

The utilitarian's position is that we should do the greatest good for the greatest number: and if this means lying, defrauding, manipulating, and the like, then so be it. But what do we mean by 'the greatest good'? We mean a situation in which the greatest possible number of people can exercise their autonomy, depend on parents, have truthful relations with friends and colleagues, and the like. In other words, we mean a situation in which people are not defrauding and undermining one another. But whatever it is that makes such a situation worth fighting for also makes it morally to fight for by defrauding people.

The utilitarian position is that the needs of the many outweigh those of the few, with the consequence that it is indeed morally permissible, if not obligatory, to treat the few as nothing more than means to serving the interests of the many. At first, this seems very reasonable. The problem is that the interests of the many cannot possibly be served in a world in which any given person's interests can be undermined for the sake of some other person's interests. A world in which the interests of the many are protected is a world in which the many can rely on others not to defraud them, and a world in which it is permissible to defraud the few for the sake of the many is not such a world.

In conclusion, even though Kantianism initially seems to deprive people of what they deserve, it actually does the opposite, since a Kantian conception of morality is inherent in the very concept of 'what one deserves'; and even though utilitarianism seems to give people what they deserve, it actually does the opposite, since it is only if anti-utilitarian ethical system, such as Kantianism, is correct that anyone deserves anything. Erskin's wife and children do seem to deserve the money---and maybe they really do. But so far as they deserve, it is only because we live in a world in which people are not to be manipulated or otherwise treated as mere means and in which, in particular, promises must be kept; and because we live in such a world, my moral obligation is not to give the money to Erskin's wife and children but is rather to keep my promise to him.

What is The Good Life?

A life that nobody would want to have cannot possibly be considered a 'good life.' Nobody wants the life of somebody who is in constant torment, and that is surely because such a life is not worth having and—what may be equivalent—is not a good life. By the same token, a life of success, happiness, and sheer enjoyment *is* a life that people

would want to have; and such a life would also qualify as a good life, at least by the standards that are salient in people's minds. So there seems to be at least an 'operational equivalence' between 'that is the kind of life people would envy and want to have' and 'that is a good life.' And there is also an 'operational equivalence' between 'that is the kind of life people would *fear* having' and 'that is a bad life.'

We will see later that these 'equivalences' are indeed only approximate---that there are kinds of lives that people would want to have that would in some respects be bad and that there are kinds of lives that people would not want to have that would in some respects be good. But these 'equivalences' certainly help point us in the general direction of an answer to the question 'what kind of life is a good life, and what kind of life is a bad life?' Let us now turn to this question.

Is a life of constant pain a good life? Surely not. There is not much to say here: People who are in extreme pain do everything they can to stop being in extreme pain. Pain is not desired, and it seems axiomatic that there could not possibly be a coherent reason to endure it, except as a means to achieving some condition that was not itself one of sheer pain.

What about a life of constant pleasure? Would *that* be a good life? Here the answer is ambiguous. First of all, a life of constant pleasure would not be completely *bad*. And the reason is that pleasure is indeed a good thing.

But a life that consisted of nothing but pleasure would not be completely good. And the reason is that, although pleasure is *a* good thing, it is not the *only* good thing. Intelligence is a good thing; alertness is a good thing; athletic prowess is a good thing; strength (whether of character or of body) is a good thing. In general, *potency* is a good thing. The ability to grasp truths and change the world to suit one's vision of it is a supremely good thing.

And the having of a given form of potency is surely not *identical* with the experiencing of pleasure. To be sure, any given form of potency certainly conduces to pleasure at certain junctures. Having intelligence has its distinctive pleasures, as does any other form of potency. But there is more to being intelligent or otherwise potent than experiencing pleasure or even being disposed to experience pleasure. In fact, any given form of potency seems to involve distinctive forms of pain or displeasure. There is much that displeases an intelligent person that an unintelligent person simply isn't aware of and that consequently doesn't displease such a person.

In fact, if one has a given form of potency, one for that reason experiences forms of adversity that one would not otherwise experience: the strong person knows the pleasure of bench-pressing 300 lbs., but he also knows the pain and strife involved in doing so; and his weak counterpart doesn't know either.

In fact, the very concept of *adversity* is to be understood in terms of the concept of potency: one experiences adversity when one has some potency but not an infinite

amount. If one had infinite strength, one could lift a 300 lbs. barbell with infinite ease and would experience no adversity in doing so. If one had zero strength, one couldn't even initiate the task of lifting a barbell and wouldn't experience any adversity in doing so. (I cannot fly---in fact, I am so incapable of flying that I cannot even *try* to do so. So for me, flying, or even trying to fly, is a non-affair and therefore a zero-adversity affair.)

Thus, in order for a life to be a good life, it is not enough that it be full of pleasure. In order for a life to be a good one, it has to involve the having, and possibly also the acquiring, of potency. And while this involves a certain amount of gratification, it also seems to involve a certain amount of adversity and therefore of *displeasure*.

There is also a subtler reason why a life of sheer pleasure would not be a maximally good life. Many forms of pleasure presuppose some kind of potency. Unless I had an aptitude for composing, I could not experience the pleasure of composing. Unless I had an aptitude for philosophy, I could not experience the pleasure of engaging in philosophical discourse.

In fact, with few exceptions, if any, the ability to experience pleasure seems to involve at least some kind of ability. We have seen that ability, though conducive to pleasure, cannot be identified with the experiencing of pleasure or even with a predisposition to have such experiences. And we have also seen that exercising any given form of potency involves at least a certain amount of adversity. So the idea that a good life is *just* about experiencing pleasure and not experiencing displeasure is false.

True—a life of sheer *displeasure* is bad. But a life of sheer pleasure is not possible; indeed, the very concept of such a life is not even coherent.

This brings us to one last point about the nature of pleasure. It seems that a certain degree of *displeasure* is actually *built into* any given pleasure. Unless one experienced thirst, one could not experience the pleasure of drinking cool water. Unless one experienced sexual frustration, one could not experience sexual pleasure. So granting that a good life necessarily *involves* experiencing pleasure, the very nature of pleasure—specifically, its dependence on the existence of displeasure—shows that a good life is not *merely* about experiencing pleasure and avoiding pain.

What about the idea that a good life is about *gratifying one's desires*? The merits and demerits of this thesis parallel the merits and demerits of the thesis that a good life is about experiencing pleasure.

First of all, a life in which one's desires were *never* gratified would not be a good life. Second, a life in which one's desires were always gratified would not be a *bad* life. So desire-gratification is clearly *necessary* for a good life.

But it is not sufficient. First of all, without a certain amount of frustration—of desire-*non*-fulfillment, in other words—one won't have desires in the first place. I can have a desire to gratify only if I have one that is not yet gratified. I can enjoy the gratification of drinking cool ice-water only if I first have a desire to drink that is not being sated.

So it seems that *built in* to any case of desire-gratification is a certain degree of desire-*non*-gratification. And for this reason, the concept of a life of sheer desire-gratification is not even a coherent one, and the having of a good life therefore cannot be identified with the having of a life of sheer desire-gratification.

But there is another reason why the good life is not one of sheer desire-gratification. Suppose that a given creature had just one desire, e.g. a desire to drink water, which it routinely sated in the most completely gratifying way possible. Such a creature's life would be good in its way. But surely there are better lives that a creature could have.

As previously stated, an essential component of a good life is *potency*. A life of desire-gratification that involved no potency—no intelligence, no strength, no creativity--would not be an optimal life. And no potency can be *identified* with desire-gratification or even with a predisposition to experience desire-gratification.

To be sure, if one has a certain kind of potency, one is likely to experience certain forms of gratification. If one is a good tennis player, one will have certain desires that corresponding to that ability and one will also have a tendency to gratify them. But that ability is more basic than, as it is the root and cause of, those desires and also of the gratification thereof. And that ability is also surely a good thing, as is any given ability. Therefore, since the having of abilities is necessary for having a genuinely good life, such a life is not just about desire-gratification.

Also, having desires tends to involve having some antecedent ability. Somebody who has no musical ability at all may *wish* to compose a symphony, and he may even be said to desire it. But he cannot desire it in the same way that Mozart can desire it. Somebody who has no philosophical ability may wish, and possibly even desire, to write a philosophical dialogue. But he cannot desire it in the same way that Plato can desire it.

Before proceeding, let us organize our findings.

A life of sheer pain or displeasure is bad. But there is more to a good life than pleasure; moreover, a certain amount of displeasure is necessary for pleasure. Also, at least some forms of pleasure presuppose certain forms of potency; and potency, though conducive to pleasure, cannot be identified with the experiencing of pleasure or even with a predisposition to experience pleasure. Given that potency is essential for a good life, it follows that there is more to life than experiencing pleasure.

A life of sheer desire-frustration is bad. But there is more to life than desire-gratification; and a certain amount of desire-frustration is inherent in the experiencing of desire-gratification. Moreover, at least some forms of desire-gratification presuppose some form of potency; and potency, though conducive to desire-gratification, is not identical with desire-gratification or even with a predisposition to experience desire-gratification. Given that potency is essential for a good life, it follows that there is more to life than experiencing desire-gratification.

What we are seeing is that a good life is about *fulfillment*. It is about having abilities and developing them and, on that basis, acquiring *more* abilities. The good life is about having, developing, and acquiring new forms of *potency*. The good life is about *growth*.

Having potency, as well as acquiring it, *involves* experiencing certain pleasures; but it is not identical with having pleasures and even involves experiencing a certain amount of displeasure. At the same time, a life of sheer pain would be a life of impotence. And that—though surely not the only reason, or even the primary reason, why a life of sheer pain would be bad, is at least *a* reason for it.

Similarly, having potency, as well as acquiring it, *involves* experiencing certain forms of desire-gratification; but it is not identical with desire-gratification or even with a tendency to have desire-gratification and even involves the experiencing of a certain amount of desire-frustration. At the same time, a life of sheer desire-frustration would be a life of impotence. And that---though surely not the only reason, or even the primary reason, why a life of sheer desire-frustration would be bad, is at least *a* reason for it.

What we are seeing is that the good life is about acquiring and developing ability. Having and developing ability necessarily involves pleasure and desire-gratification; and it also necessarily involves one's tendency to experience pleasure and desire-gratification having a certain dominance over one's tendency to experience displeasure

and desire-frustration. But ultimately the good is primarily about fulfillment—about ability-acquisition and -maximization—and only secondarily about either pleasure or desire-gratification.

Bentham and Mill regarding types of pleasures

Explain the difference between Bentham and Mill regarding types of pleasures.

Start by explaining the greatest happiness principle and principle of utility, then what the hedonistic calculus is, then how Bentham and Mill value competing pleasures differently from each other (like the example in class of \$20 - should it go to the transformers movie that makes someone really happy, or the museum which leads to a higher quality of pleasure?) Which (Bentham or Mill) do you agree with and why? Use quotes from the reading to help illustrate the theories. (minimum 400 words for this entire answer)

Bentham's utilitarianism is given by the principle that an act is good to the extent that it maximizes pleasure (or minimizes pain) and wrong to the extent that it diminishes pleasure (or maximizes pain). Mill's utilitarianism is given by the principle that an act is good to the extent that it maximizes *happiness* (or minimizes unhappiness) and bad to the extent that it minimizes unhappiness (or maximizes unhappiness).

So for Bentham the central concepts are pleasure and pain: (“Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think...”)

By contrast, for Mill, the central concepts are happiness and unhappiness.

The distinction is important: pain and pleasure do not involve one’s agency; they are properties not of *actions* but of *experiences* or *undergoings*. One experiences pleasure when having a massage or being intoxicated. By contrast, happiness *does* involve one’s agency; indeed, it seems to be a property of the way in which one engages the world. To be happy is to be *fulfilled*, and to be fulfilled is to act in such a way as to maximize one’s potential. And this is why one is happy to the extent that one acts in ways that express and develop one’s agency. One is happy when (and to the extent that) one is building a house, or improving one’s mind, or working on one’s tennis game, or solving a math problem, or writing a great philosophy paper.

Consequently, Bentham’s utilitarianism is radically different from Mill’s utilitarianism. A related point is that, for reasons now to be stated, Bentham’s doctrine, though false, is not viciously circular, whereas Mill’s doctrine, though true, *is* viciously circular.

Somebody who shoots heroin all day experiences a lot of pleasure but probably isn't happy. And somebody who does difficult but fulfilling work all day is probably happy but doesn't necessarily experience very much pleasure. So Bentham's doctrine—that the moral goodness=pleasure-conduciveness is simply false.

But Mill's doctrine---that moral-goodness=happiness-conduciveness—though correct, is viciously circular, for the reason that the concept of happiness is to be understood in terms of the concept of moral value. More specifically, we are happy to the extent that our lives comply with our values. The reason the hardworking man is happy, despite not experiencing much pleasure, is that he is living up to his values. And the reason the sluggard is unhappy, despite experiencing a lot of pleasure, is that his life is not living up to his values. So Mill's utilitarianism, though *correct* (or seemingly so, at any rate), is viciously circular if taken as an analysis of morality, since it presupposes some independent conception of moral value and, therefore, of morality.

Kant's Moral Philosophy

1. Kant's moral philosophy is based on an idea he calls the "categorical imperative, and he offers three formulations of this principle (basically three ways to say the same thing). Below are questions about two of these three formulations. (200 words each question)

Using O'Neill's article, "A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics," explain the Formula of the Ends in Itself.

The Formula of the Ends in Itself is simply the idea that we should treat people as ends unto themselves, and not as means. We should treat people as subjects, not as objects. If I abduct someone and put him to work as a slave, I am not allowing him to decide for himself how to live. I am using him as an instrument—an object---and thus as a mere means for my own purposes. I am not treating him as a subject; for to treat him as a subject would be to let him decide for himself how to live, and this is precisely what I am not doing.

Here is another example. using somebody as a means. There are subtler examples. Imagine the following. Jeff is a decent person and he is also extremely wealthy. Sally hates Jeff. But she wants his money. So she pretends to love him, so that she can marry him, kill him, and make off with his money. And this is just what Sally does.

In this scenario, there are two respects in which Sally treats Jeff as an object, rather than as a subject. First, she manipulates Jeff, which puts Jeff in a position where, without his initially knowing it, his will is being misdeployed (he is being manipulated into marrying Sally and thus into using his will in a way that undermine him and also itself). Second, she kills Jeff, which extinguishes his will and which therefore extinguishes

his very subjecthood and turns him, in the most literal way, into an object.

2. *The Universal Formulation is offered, by Kant, on page 108: "Act only on that Maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." Kant then gives four examples. Compare the first two examples (1. on page 108 and 2. on page 109). How do these examples illustrate the Universal formulation?*

The first example concerns a man who, having suffered a series of misfortunes, is deeply unhappy and, as a result, seriously contemplates suicide. Supposing *arguendo* that he does commit suicide, what is the 'maxim'—the principle—embodied in his act? It is: *Out of self-regard, I will end my life if my life is likely to be excessively adverse.* But the very purpose of self-regard is to preserve the existence of oneself. And in killing oneself out of self-regard, one is turning one's self-regard against itself and is therefore rendering it self-contradictory and incoherent. So the maxim embodied in an act of suicide is self-contradictory and therefore could not coherently be willed to be a universal law of conduct.

The second example concerns someone who, having gotten himself in serious debt, considers borrowing money without repaying it. Suppose that this person does just that. What is the maxim embodied in his act? It is: *Claim that you will keep your promises when you have no intention of doing so (for example, borrow money,*

promising—but not actually intending—to pay it back). Suppose that this maxim became a universal law. In that case, nobody would ever lend money, since they would know that they had no assurance of ever getting it back. So if the maxim embodied in this person's act (of borrowing money without repaying it) were universalized, then that same act could not be carried out. Therefore, the maxim embodied in that act could not coherently be willed to be a universal law, and that is why that act violates the Categorical Imperative.

Five Short Papers on Mind-body Dualism

1) What is Thomas Nagel's Refutation of Materialism

We know that the world is largely physical, and we also know that it has a psychological or mental component. There are rocks, trees, stars, and brains---and these are all physical entities. They are to be understood through the methods of physical science (through sensory-observation, experimentation) and they fall within the scope of physical law (of laws such as the inverse-square law and the Boyle-Charles law). And

there are also mental or psychological entities---thoughts, feelings, perceptions, sensations, intentions, and the like.

When we say that an entity is 'physical', we are saying or at least suggesting that it exists *objectively*---that in order to exist it does not have to be *experienced* or *undergone*, in the way that a thought or feeling must be experienced or undergone in order to exist. And when we say that an entity is 'mental', we are saying or suggesting that it *does* have to be undergone or experienced in order to exist---that it cannot exist without *a subject to have it* and that it is in that sense 'subject.'

In any case, the question arises: what is the relationship between the mental and the physical? Are they distinct or is the mental itself physical? They seem to be *responsive* to each other: mental events have physical causes and *vice versa*. (I touch a hot stove; I feel pain as a result. I intent to turn on the water-faucet; my arm moves as a result.) The 'scientific' answer to this question is that minds are identical with brains (or components or aspects thereof) and that thoughts and feelings and other mental entities are identical with brain-events or brain-structures.

Thomas Nagel exposes a problem with this view. No matter how thoroughly one studies a bat-brain, one cannot possibly know *what it is like to be a bat*. Even if one knows everything there is to know about the events and structures a bat's body without having the slightest understanding of what it is like to be a bat. In other words, we can know everything there is to know about the *objective* (bodily) aspect of a bat's being

without knowing anything about the *subjective* (psychological, mental) aspect of a bat's being. But if a bat's mind just *were* a part or aspect of a bat's body, then this would not be the case.

And we cannot chalk this up to an 'intensional' fallacy: we are not committing the fallacy involved in concluding 'water is not H₂O' from 'I can know that x is water without knowing that x is H₂O.' The reason one can know that x is water without knowing that x is H₂O is that one's knowledge of what water is, is limited. But even if one's knowledge of a bat's physiology is *perfect*, one will, at least not on the basis of that knowledge—not, indeed, unless is oneself a bat!---know what it is like to be a bat: one will not know anything about the bat's *subjectivity*, its mind, in other words. And this proves that the subjective is not the objective—that the mental is not physical.

2) Ryle describe an "official doctrine", that he says hails chiefly from Descartes.

What is the official doctrine - what features does Ryle think it has? How is it related to the arguments from Descartes that we discussed?

The 'official' doctrine is that mind and body are separate---that within a given body, there is, separate from it, a human mind, which directs the body in the way that a

captain directs his ship: 'inside it', as it were, but separate from it. Ryle's position is that mind is inherently 'embodied'—that it is necessarily incorporated and also that it not only shows itself through, but is inherent in, the bodily actions that are ordinarily thought to be mere expressions of it.

3) Ryle argues that Descartes commits a kind of mistake in arguing for substance dualism. What is this mistake? Explain and give an example (bonus if you can come up with your own example). In what way does Ryle argue that Descartes has committed this kind of mistake? Do you agree or disagree? Explain why.

Ryle argues that Descartes' argument for dualism is based on a 'category-mistake' (or plurality thereof) on Descartes' part. Ryle holds that mentalistic statements (e.g. 'Smith is in pain') and physicalistic statements (e.g. 'Smith's body is making writhing-motions') are just different ways of describing the same facts—that it is like describe a given stick as being either 'one yard long' or 'three feet long.' And, so Ryle also holds, Descartes is inferring from these allegedly strictly linguistic differences between statements about 'mind' and statements about 'body' that mind and body are actually different *substances*, when, in actuality, we are dealing, not with different ontological categories, in Ryle's view, but only with different *grammatical* ones.

Is Ryle right? No. There is nothing correct about what he is saying, which is facile and contrived. The differences between mentalistic and physicalistic statements obviously are not strictly 'grammatical' or 'linguistic in nature'. Statements about pain are not equivalent or meaning-identical or even meaning-relatable to statements about overt-bodily motions or even about neural firings. And that suggests that there are substantive differences between mind-facts and body-facts, contrary to what Ryle holds and in keeping with what Descartes holds.

4) Explain the "Mary the Neuroscientist" thought experiment. What is this argument supposed to show? Discuss one objection to it. Do you think the argument is successful? Why or why not?

Let X be some sentient creature. Mary the Neuroscientist is somebody who knows everything there is to know about X's body—specifically its neurology. But surely Mary does not, at least not for that reason alone, have even the slightest knowledge of X's psychology. And this, according to Frank Jackson, supposedly shows that X's psychology is not identical with its physiology.

The standard objection to this argument is that it involves an 'intensional fallacy', along the lines of 'H₂O isn't water since I can know that X is water without knowing that X is H₂O.' But Jackson's argument involves no such fallacy. Intensional fallacies involve

ignorance: I can't know that x is H₂O without knowing that X is water if I know everything there is to know about X—including its microstructure. But Mary *can* know everything there is to know about X's nervous system (unless that term is artificially extended to include the mental events that it mediates) without knowing anything about the corresponding mental states.

5) What is the problem of mental causation - why is it a big problem for logical behaviorism and substance dualism? How does type identity theory solve the problem? Explain and discuss.

Mind affects body (e.g. intentions cause body-movements) and body affects mind (e.g. cuts cause pain). So the mental and the physical interact. What is unclear is *how* they can interact. If they are distinct, then mind cannot affect physical without creating exceptions to physical law---which laws are inviolable. Nor could body affect mind without the physical dissipating some of its energy on something non-physical—which would violate the Conservation of Energy principles, which principle is inviolable. So substance dualism is incompatible with the fact that mind and body interact.

As for logical behaviorism—the doctrine that statements about mind are logically equivalent with statements about overt bodily motions—if this doctrine is correct, then

mental states *are* bodily motions, in which case such motions don't *cause* anything that is 'mental' in the ordinary sense.

Type-type materialism solves the problem by *identifying* mental types with physical types. Thus, a type of mental entity (e.g. pain) is identical with a type of physical entity (e.g. c-fiber stimulation). And so it is readily explained why the mental and physical interact: they interact for the same reason, and in the same, that the physical interacts with itself. It can be explained how brain-states interact with other brain-states and with other bodily states in general. So if mental states *are* brain-states, then all of the aforementioned problems with mind-body interaction vanish.

Tracy Latimer's Father had the Right to Kill Her: Towards a doctrine of generalized self-defense

The facts of the case: Tracy Latimer, a 12-year-old victim of cerebral palsy, was killed by her father in 1993. Tracy lived with her family on a prairie farm in Saskatchewan, Canada. On a Sunday morning while his wife and other children were at church, Robert Latimer put Tracy in the cab of his pickup truck and piped in exhaust fumes until she died. At the time of her death, Tracy weighed less than 40 pounds; she

was described as "functioning at the mental level of a three-month-old-baby." Mrs. Latimer said that she was relieved to find Tracy dead when she arrived home and added that she "didn't have the courage" to do it herself.

Mr. Latimer was tried for murder; but the judge and the jury did not want to treat harshly. The jury found him guilty of only second-degree murder and recommended that the judge ignore the mandatory 25-year sentence. The judge agreed and sentenced him to one year in prison, to be followed by a year of confinement to his farm. However, the Supreme Court of Canada stepped in and ruled that the mandatory sentence must be imposed. Robert Latimer is now in prison, serving the 25-year term.

Analysis: We have to distinguish law from ethics. We must distinguish the question 'what is it legal to do?' from the question 'what is it moral to do?' In fact, we must distinguish the question 'what *should* it be legal to do (as in, what *should* the law be)?' from the question 'what is it ethical to do?'

Ethically, I feel that Mr. Latimer was in the right. This may seem cold, but ultimately it is the most humane possible view of the situation. First of all, Tracy Latimer was a veritable vegetable—a human being in terms of her legal status, but not otherwise. And she was an inordinate drain on her father's coffers (which, judging by the fact that he was self-employed farmer, were probably very limited). In fact, given

how much of a financial (and personal) drain Tracy was on her father, coupled with the distinct possibility that Mr. Latimer's only options were probably either 'let Tracy live and lose my life's savings' or 'kill Tracy and hold onto to what is left of my wealth and shattered life', Mr. Latimer's making the decision that he did was practically an act of self-defense.

As for the supposed immorality of killing his veritable vegetable of a daughter, the operative term here is 'supposed.' Suppose that the state had stepped in and decided to assume the financial burden of raising Tracy. In that case, this burden would have been distributed evenly over the tax-payers of Canada. This would create the illusion that *no one* was being indisposed by the burden of raising Tracy. But that is an illusion; for it wouldn't just be Tracy Latimer that the tax-payers were paying for—it would be all of the various state-dependent Tracy Latimer's in Canada. And *that* burden is very visible to each and every tax-payer in Canada, as it takes a decidedly visible chunk out of their income every year in the form of taxes. (Of course, the Canadian government doesn't explicitly *tell* the tax-payers that they are paying for the clothing and feeding of people who are barely sentient and who, in any case, will never do anything positive for the welfare of Canada. So the Canadian tax-payers, being unaware of how much they are paying on behalf of such people, may not be as quick to sympathize with Tracy's father as they would be if they were thus aware. But if they *were* clearly aware of the burden they were shouldering, they surely would have some

sympathy for Mr. Latimer and they might even go so far as to support a change in the laws under which he was convicted.

This brings us to the next question: Should those laws be changed? Should Canadian homicide law be rewritten so as to be: “It is wrong to kill, except in self-defense and except when the alternative is paying enormous amounts of child-support for a near-vegetable child?” It would be probably be inadvisable to change the law in that way. The laws relating to murder should be as well-defined and restrictive as possible. It is obviously unreasonable to prohibit people from killing people who are right then and there going to kill them. But it is at least arguably reasonable to prohibit people from killing people who are a threat in some possibly real but ill-defined way, such as being a drain on one’s coffers. If people were allowed to kill everyone who was a drain on their coffers, the homicide rate would be unacceptable.

That said, the Canadian Supreme Court was, in my view, quite wrong to penalize Mr. Latimer so harshly. True—he broke the law. But he did not have a lot of options. He was in an untenable situation. And sometimes the best way to deal with imperfect laws is to tolerate verdicts that, although not strictly in keeping with the letter of the law, do uphold the interest of justice. And in this case, the initial verdict , was a reasonable and humane compromise between law and justice. And the Supreme Court’s reversal of that verdict comes off as cold and inhumane—and also as unwise, in that, by being so inhumane, it is likely to promote a certain contempt for the law.

Arguments Concerning God and Morality

Introduction

In this short paper, I am going to discuss

- (a) Whether God exists,
- (b) What God's nature is, supposing that He does exist,
- (c) Whether God's nature, if He exists, is consistent with the tenets of the Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, Islam),
- (d) What relevance, if any, God's existence has to morality,
- (e) What the basis of morality is.

By way of anticipation, here is what we will find.

(a*) It cannot be definitively ruled out that some kind of intelligence is embodied in the structure of the universe and is possibly responsible for much, if not all, of its very existence,

(b*) Supposing that some such intelligence does exist and had a hand in our creation, if not that of the entire universe, it is unclear what its nature is, the only qualification being,

(c*) That it bears little resemblance to the God of most religious faiths and doesn't do much to give them legitimacy,

(d*) Morality doesn't depend on God's existence or nature: if moral laws are in any way binding, they are binding whether or not God exists, and

(e*) Moral injunctions tend to have a pragmatic basis: people tend to regard as moral what conduces to health and happiness and to regard as immoral what conduces to their opposite. This is consistent with the fact that there individuals and cultures sometimes disagree as to what is moral, since those disagreements tend to track disagreements as to what is conducive to health and happiness. (Democrats want happiness; Republicans want happiness; but they have different views about how to attain it: and they have correspondingly different views as to what is 'moral.')

Note: When I refer to God, I personally happen to use the pronoun 'He', but this mainly out of habit. I personally think that if there exists a God, that being is genderless, this being one of the reasons that God, if such a being exists, fails to validate many existing religious systems.

Two preliminary points

Point #1: It's one thing to prove that there exists a God. It's a very different thing to prove that there exists a God that validates the tenets of a given religion. Supposing for argument's sake that an intelligent being created the universe and still governs it, that being is God. But what if that being is amoral? What if that being has no gender? What if that being isn't aware of us or is aware of us but doesn't care about us? What if that being is only intermittently aware of us and, on those rare occasions, is ill-willed towards us? In that case, God does exist, but not in a way that corresponds to the tenets of most religions.

Point #2: 'God' defined: Different people have different views as to what God is—supposing that such a being exists---but we can all agree that *if* God exists, God has the following two properties: (1) God is intelligent or, at the very least, animate, and (2) God is responsible for the existence of the Universe or, at the very least, of humankind.

Explanation of (1): Suppose that inanimate forces were responsible for the creation of the universe and, in particular, of biological life, including human life: in that case, we would all agree that God does not exist.

Explanation of (1) (continued): Spinoza famously argued that God *does* exist *but* cannot think and cannot act. But that's really the same as saying that God doesn't exist. If a being is as dumb as a rock, it isn't God. Also, if a being created the universe, but did not do so knowingly, then it is not God.

Explanation of (2): If a supernaturally powerful and intelligent being came into existence today, that being would be not God, however God-like that being might be. No matter how God-like a being is, it is not God unless it is responsible for the existence either of the universe or, at the very least, of our existence.

Explanation of (2) (continued): Does a being have to be responsible for the existence of the entire universe in order to qualify as God? That is unclear, but I am inclined to think not. Suppose that a giant Dr. Frankenstein created us, and we are living a Petri dish in his laboratory, with him constantly examining us, and sometimes altering our living conditions, without our knowing it. It seems to me that this Dr. Frankenstein character is a God *relative to us*, if not in absolute terms. Suppose that the stories about Moses and Abraham speaking to 'God' were true, with the qualification that the entity that was speaking to them was this super-scientist who created us and who was constantly monitoring us through a microscope. In that case, the appropriate response

would be that God *does* exist, at least as far as we are concerned. Of course, that Dr. Frankenstein character would not be a God in an absolute sense. He would not be a God relative to other members of his own species, but he would a God to us, for all intents and purposes. And although this super-scientist would not be responsible for the existence of the entire universe, he would be responsible for our existence, suggesting that for a being to be a God *to us*, it is necessary only that He be responsible for our existence, not for everything's existence.

Is the idea of a God that is responsible for everything's existence a coherent one?

No, it is not. See below.

The Standard Arguments for God's Existence

1. The Unmoved Mover Argument: The universe could not just have popped into existence. At the same time, it could not have been created by an event *within* the universe, since the universe did not yet exist to host such an event. So the universe had to have been created by something outside of itself, and since anything that exists outside of the universe is for that very reason supernatural, it follows that the universe was brought into existence by a

supernatural being and, therefore, by God. This argument was put forth by Aristotle and also by Aquinas.

Analysis: There are two problems with this argument. First, it's not clear that the universe had to have been brought into existence. The 'Law of Causality'---this being the principle that whatever happens has a cause---hold only of events within the universe. It does not hold of the universe itself. If the lights suddenly turn on in my room, I am entitled to hold that this event was caused, even though I do not yet know what that cause is. And it may be that the same is true of any given event *within* the universe. But even if this is true, it does not warrant the conclusion that the existence of the universe itself must have had a cause. In fact, it makes no sense to say that the universe as a whole had a cause, since events can be related as cause and effect only where is already a space-time manifold and only, consequently, where there is already a universe.

Second, and more importantly, supposing that there was a first cause, what right have we to infer that it was an intelligent being, as opposed to an impersonal agent? If the Big Bang Theory is correct, then there was an 'unmoved mover', but that unmoved mover wasn't God, since it consisted of impersonal forces and blind events.

2. The Ontological Argument (due to St. Anselm, also put forth by Descartes and Kurt Gödel): God is by definition a maximally perfect being. Failing

to exist is an imperfection, and God therefore exists, His existence being entailed by the mere concept of what He is.

Analysis: This argument only proves that *if* a perfect being exists, then it exists. In other words, it proves nothing.

3. The Teleological Argument (or Argument from Design): Heaps of dirt come into existence by themselves, but not cars or computers, since the latter clearly represent the handiwork of intelligent designers. The same is true of the world, albeit in an incomparably more extreme way. The more we learn about the world, especially the biological part of it, the more perfectly adapted to one another its various parts prove to be and the less likely it is that the world assumed its current configuration without being guided in that direction by a higher intelligence (Plato, Aristotle, David Hume).

Standard Response: Given enough time, anything can happen, and the universe has been around long enough that there is nothing in it that we cannot attribute to chance (Christopher Hitchens).

Counter-response: Does anyone really believe this? A certain purposiveness and intelligence seem to be embodied in the various biological structures that exist, and it's a little hard to attribute their existence to mere chance. Also, it is suggestive, as Carl Sagan pointed out, that as life-forms evolve, they become increasingly self-aware. If the state of the universe were merely about where atoms were deposited, then the Standard Response might have some force, but chance does not such a good of job explaining the appearance of purposiveness that a creature's organs and organelles have, and it does an even worse job of explaining the actuality of purposiveness that higher life forms actually do have.

Exactly what is going on here is not known---maybe it is all chance. But in this particular context, unlike in others, the atheist is on the defensive. And when atheists say that it 'could' just be chance, they are making a point that is technically true but rings hollow.

A stronger response to the teleological argument is to ask exactly what it entitles us to believe. Supposing for argument's sake that some latent intelligence underlies biological processes, that intelligence doesn't necessarily bear any resemblance to God, as members of Abrahamic faiths understand the term.

When people think of God, they think of a being that is like a person. They think of a being that has thoughts, feelings, intentions, memories, and the like. They also think of a being that is *separate* from what happens in the world. The intelligence that seems

to be embodied in biological structures doesn't seem to exist separately from those structures; it seems to be built into them and inseparable from them.

A related fact that is that biological structures are constantly changing, and the intelligence that, according to our hypothesis, is embodied in them is also changing. But when we think of God, we think of something with a fixed nature; we don't think of something that is evolving.

Finally, whatever kind of intelligence is expressed in the various plants and animals that exist, there is no reason to believe that it has a gender or that it is otherwise particularly person-like.

In conclusion, granting that the teleological argument cannot be dismissed out of hand, it doesn't appear to prove the existence of a *person-like* God.

4. The Argument from the Existence of Mind: Not only is the universe, especially the biological part of it, organized in a way that bespeaks intelligence; some parts of it actually *are* intelligent, and it's a little hard to see how mind can arise out of matter. We can understand how particles can displace one another; it's not quite as apparent how unthinking particles can give rise to thought. The existence of thought is therefore a 'miracle' of sorts and thus warrants belief in a supernatural being—a God, in other words (John Locke).

Response: This argument cannot be dismissed out of hand. But supposing for argument's sake that some kind of intelligence is needed to extract mind from matter, it doesn't follow that *God* exists. God is not 'some kind of intelligence'; he is not some impersonal force. People don't worship impersonal forces, but they do worship God.

Paradoxes Relating to God

According to most faiths, God is supposed to be all-good, all-knowing, and all-powerful. This existence of illness, natural disasters, and the like is hard to reconcile with the existence of such a being, though many philosophers have indeed tried to effect such a reconciliation (with little success). But there are other, more substantial problems with the concept of an all-knowing, all-powerful, all-good God.

Could such a being think? Thinking is about figuring out what one does not yet know, and an all-knowing being wouldn't ever have to do that. An all-knowing being would know that it knew everything and therefore would not waste its time trying to figure anything out. Therefore such a being would never engage in thought. So God, if He exists, does not think.

Could such a being be altered by anything outside itself? Presumably not. Anything that can be changed by an external force is vulnerable and therefore not all-powerful. But receiving information involves being changed, and an all-powerful being

therefore could not receive information; it would be sealed off from everything and therefore blind to everything, and therefore not all-knowing.

Could an all-powerful being know what it is like to experience pain? Experiencing pain involves being vulnerable, and it is therefore hard to see how an all-powerful being could have such knowledge. So if there is an all-powerful being, it does not know what it is like to suffer and it therefore isn't all-knowing. More importantly, such a being would be devoid of sympathy, since sympathy is about knowing what it is like to be vulnerable and not wanting others to be in that position. Also, an all-powerful being couldn't really *feel* anything, since feelings, whether physical or emotional, are about being *affected*, and an all-powerful being couldn't be affected by anything and therefore wouldn't feel anything. Therefore, an all-powerful being couldn't have feelings for others and therefore wouldn't be good (or bad, for that matter); its psychological condition would be one of complete indifference.

Would an all-powerful being ever know what it was like to be frustrated, sad, elated, pleasantly surprised? No. All of these conditions presuppose vulnerability. So if there is an all-powerful being, it has no emotions and no knowledge of emotions, and it therefore hasn't a shred of concern for anything or anyone.

Arguments similar to these were put forth by Maimonides and Spinoza, and they show that the concept of an all-powerful, all-good, all-knowing being is incoherent many times over.

Is God Necessary for Morality?

Dostoevsky famously said that “if God doesn’t exist, everything is permitted.” In other words: No God, no morality.

Is this really true? No. What makes it wrong to mutilate infants is that it causes needless suffering and thwarts human development. What makes it wrong to poison water-supplies is that it destroys health. Whenever we examine an act that is clearly moral, it improves health and happiness, and whenever we look at one that is clearly immoral, it does the opposite. When we look at acts and practices that are morally debatable----e.g. abortion, euthanasia, income redistribution, the death penalty---there is disagreement as to what the consequences for human welfare of those practices are. If it turns out that income redistribution makes human beings healthy and happy, then it’s right; if it turns out that it does the opposite, then it’s wrong—and that’s the end of it. We don’t know what God thinks about the matter, and God’s opinion, if He exists and has one, is at best a reflection of a pre-existing moral reality.

[Goldman, Rousseau and von Hayek on the Ideal State](#)

What kind of state would exist in a free and just society, and why? Goldman and Rousseau give similar answers to this question; Hayek gives a very different answer.

Goldman's answer is---none. A free and just society is one in which there is no government and therefore no state. Goldman's position is that government is inherently unjust--a bully that exploits and coerces and does no good: "Just as religion has fettered the human mind, and as property, or the monopoly of things, has subdued and stifled man's needs, so has the State enslaved his spirit, dictating every phase of conduct."

(Anarchism: What it Really Stands For, p. 4)

Of course, the question arises: If there is no government (no state), then what will keep order? Goldman's answer is that the very crime that it is supposedly the state's purpose to prevent is itself a product of the state: "The most absurd apology for authority and law is that they serve to diminish crime...So long as every institution of today, economic, political, social, and moral, conspires to misdirect human energy into wrong channels; so long as most people are out of place doing the things they hate to do, living a life they loathe to live, crime will be inevitable, and all the laws on the statutes can only increase, but never do away with, crime." (Anarchism: What it Really Stands For, p. 4)

The idea here seems to be that human beings are inherently cooperative and, left to their own devices, engage in constructive rather than mutually antagonistic activity.

Rousseau's views are similar to Goldman's. According to Rousseau, people are not naturally antagonistic towards one another: "So long as men remained content with their rustic huts.....they lived free, healthy, honest and happy lives, so long as their nature allowed, and as they continued to enjoy the pleasures of mutual and independent intercourse." (Discourse on Inequality, p. 9)

People *became* antagonistic, according to Rousseau, with the advent of civilization. Civilization made it possible for people to have more than they needed. When this happened, people became status-driven and, in order to maximize their wealth and status, took to mutual exploitation: "[F]rom the moment it appeared advantageous to any one man to have enough provisions for two, equality disappeared, property was introduced, work became indispensable, and vast forests became smiling fields, which man had to water with the sweat of his brow, and where slavery and misery were soon seen to germinate and grow up with the crops." (Discourse on Inequality, p. 8) In other words, human beings are best off living in tribes, tribalism being intermediate between anarchy and civilization.

There is a serious problem with Rousseau's position. While there may be some advantages to a tribal (or pre-civilizational) mode of existence, there are some serious disadvantages: lack of choices in regards to profession and lifestyle, lack of medical care, lack of education, confinement to a small geographical area, lack of technology, and the need to work for every single meal that one consumes. Also, it is unlikely that tribal life

is as placid and carefree as Rousseau suggests. Tribes attacked one another and were certainly capable of behaving cruelly towards their own members. In any case, if tribal life is so idyllic, why don't people opt for it today?

Goldman's thinking is similarly flawed. Goldman may be right that the state is responsible for some of the crime that it claims exist to prevent, and she is surely right that states often behave very unjustly. But without the state, contracts wouldn't be enforced and there would be no economies of scale, and the state is therefore necessary for all of the consequent improvements to life.

Taking it for granted that the state is necessary for crime-prevention and contract enforcement, Hayek advocates what he refers to as 'liberalism', this being the view that the state should protect people and give people freedom but should otherwise not interfere with people's lives: "Liberalism is opposed, however, to supplanting competition by inferior methods of guiding economic activity. And it regards competition as superior not only because in most circumstances it is the most efficient method known but because it is the only method which does not require the coercive or arbitrary intervention of authority. It dispenses with the need for 'conscious social control' and gives individuals a chance to decide whether the prospects of a particular occupation are sufficient to compensate for the disadvantages connected with it." (Road to Serfdom, pp. 45-46)

Is Hayek right that good government is minimal government? There is certainly considerable evidence for that claim: over-regulated economies (e.g. the Soviet Union) tend to fail and minimally regulated ones (e.g. the US in its early days) tend to flourish. More importantly, people should within reason be allowed to live the way they want to live, and overly invasive governments prevent that. This does not mean that Hayek is right, but it suggests that his position is likely to be at least approximately correct.

By contrast, the views of Goldman and Rousseau are not realistic, since, as previously explained, anarchy and tribalism fail to avail people of the freedoms and amenities that they want.

J.S Mill on Liberty and Personal Freedom

The question: *Assess the validity of the following claim: “For J.S. Mill, the protection of liberty through the harm principle prioritizes the development of individuality over social progress.”*

This claim is false (and it is also false in J.S. Mill’s opinion). The development of the individual is consistent with the development of society. Indeed, it is by letting the individuals within it develop that a given society is able to develop. According to the

claim in question, this is not the case, and the claim in question is therefore false, for reasons now to be stated.

Let us start by making it clear what this claim means, starting by making it clear what the 'harm principle' is. The 'harm principle' is the principle, advocated by Mill, that it is legitimate to limit a person's freedom only when doing so is necessary to prevent someone else from being harmed. If (for reasons having nothing to do with self-defense) Smith wants to punch Brown, it is morally right to prevent Smith from doing and to that extent it is therefore morally legitimate to limit Smith's freedom. If Smith wants to exchange sexual services for money, it is not morally permissible to prevent him from doing so. We may object to Smith's decision to prostitute himself. We may believe Smith's behavior to be self-destructive (and we may be right). But that does not entitle us to restrain Smith.

According to the harm principle, people are to have *maximal* liberty. They are to have as much liberty as it is possible for them to have without limiting the liberty of others. Obviously if people are given too much liberty, they will limit the liberty of others by attacking them, enslaving them, robbing them and the like. Too much liberty leads to loss of liberty, and the question arises: what is the maximal amount of liberty that people can have without their losing their liberty at each other's hands? And a very plausible answer to this question is: 'if they are prevented from physically hurting and stealing from each other, but are not otherwise restrained, people will have the

maximal possible amount of liberty', this being the answer suggested by the harm principle.

According to the claim in question ("the protection of liberty through the harm principle prioritizes the development of individuality over social progress"), the harm principle gives the individual's development over society's development. Here is the reasoning that is implicit in this claim ('SP' is short for social progress):

(SP) There is more to living well than not abridging other people's freedoms. A society of sluggards and wantons who do not limit each other's freedoms is not by any reasonable standard a developed society, even though its members are in compliance with the harm principle, and in order to fix such a society, it would be necessary to force its members to do more than not actively harm one another. The harm principle denies that such coercion can ever be legitimate. The harm principle subordinates social progress to individual liberties.

Considered in a vacuum, SP seems like good reasoning. But it breaks down in practice. There is no denying that people shouldn't be allowed to attack each other, rape each other, etc. But beyond that who is to say what people should do?

Government regulators and bureaucrats? Elected officials? Religious authorities? And even if these people mean well, do they know enough about individuals and society to

know exactly how to coerce people into behaving? Surely not. When SP is put into practice, the result tends to be a hyper-authoritarian state (e.g. Stalin's Russia, Pol Pot's Cambodia) in which neither the individual nor society develops much at all. To be sure, people who are allowed to do as they please (short of hurting others) often waste their lives, but often they don't. And when society develops, it is usually because of the contributions to it made by those who don't. SP tends to limit free enterprise. (It doesn't necessarily do so, but it certainly tends to.) And when there are advances, they are typically the handiwork of people who are not being micromanaged by government policy. These are just empirical facts, and it is therefore an empirical fact that the claim in question is false.

A Kantian Analysis of a Borderline Date-rape Situation

Question: Brad has a date with Sara. He hopes to encourage her to drink enough to get drunk so that he can either seduce her or have her pass out so that he can have sex with her while she is unconscious. He knows that he will get pleasure from having sex with Sara, and he thinks that there will not be any harm to Sara, because if she is conscious and consents while drunk, she will experience pleasure and will not feel bad about it later, and if she is unconscious from having passed out she will not even know what has happened.

What do you think of Brad's reasoning?

will use Kant's Categorical Imperative to justify your answer.

Answer: Kant's Categorical Imperative is this: treat people as ends unto themselves, not as means to an end; treat people as subjects, not as objects. In a word, don't use people. Somebody who rapes another person is simply using that person; he is simply treating that other person as an object. That other person is being denied the power to use their own autonomy and are these being completely de-subjectified--- completely objectified.

Brad's conduct is not as extreme or as immoral (whether by Kantian or by ordinary lights) as a rapist's conduct, but it is still to be understood in terms of a straightforward rape-case. First of all, in encouraging Sara to get drunk, Brad is trying to get her to surrender her autonomy. Second, even though Brad is not coercing Sara, he is manipulating her; he is trying to diminish the strength of her autonomy and also to turn it against itself. So he is not behaving in a manner that encourages her autonomy, and his behavior therefore violates Kant's categorical imperative.

That said, there are some relevant moral nuances here. Brad is not forcing Sara to drink. She may want to have a few drinks; she may like Brad and want to loosen her own inhibitions. And while Brad may want Sara to get drunk and even encourage it, there is a

wide gap between encouraging it and demanding it. And for all we know, Brad might stop wishing her to get drunk should he find that she is resistant to doing so. Brad might want Sara to drink not because he wishes to have sex with her despite her not really wanting to do so, but rather because he detects that she does want to—but is also, while sober, a bit uptight and defensive.

Plus, there is a very big difference between getting somebody so drunk that they can't even really have sex and getting them just tipsy enough so that they give into desires that they might not otherwise give into. And it's unclear which category this situation falls into. Given what we know about Brad, it seems that he has certain degree of empathy for Sara and probably wants to have an actual shared romantic experience--as opposed to a full-on rape experience, in which he has sex with an unconscious woman.

I understand these are not entirely politically correct things to say, but the situation is ambiguous, at least in the absence of further psychological data about Brad. Suppose that Sara were the 'aggressor' in the situation. In other words, consider a situation exactly like the one above but in which Sara was trying to get Brad drunk, so that she could have her way with him. And suppose that after a few beers, Brad, who is ordinarily uptight, gives into his desire to have sex with her. Would Sara's behavior really be so bad? And would Brad's behavior really be so non-autonomous?

So in conclusion, Brad is not entirely in the clear, but the situation is ambiguous enough that we can't quite brand him a violator of the Moral Law.

Living Well as Flourishing: Aristotle's Conception of the Good Life

What is it flourish? It is to fulfill one's potential; it is to be what one is capable of being. Thus, one is flourishing to the extent that one is actualizing one's potential. And, so Aristotle plausibly holds, one is living well to the extent that one is flourishing.

But Aristotle doesn't just assert this: he deduces it from first principles. Let us articulate Aristotle's reasoning.

To the extent that somebody is a soccer player, he is fulfilling himself by being a good soccer player. There might be some abstract sense in which it would *good* if he were a medical doctor or a patron of the arts, instead of a mere soccer player. But to the extent that this person's identity is that of a soccer player, and not that of a physician or patron of the arts, this form of goodness is not available to him, and any conception of goodness relative to which this person *ought* to be a physician or patron of the arts is without operational meaning to him.

When we ask of a given creature X how X *ought* to live, we must take into account what X is? Suppose that X has the potential to be a great composer but has no real potential in any other area. In that case, the answer to the question 'how *ought* X to

live?’ cannot possibly be: “X *ought* to be a patron of the arts” or “X *ought* to try to be a saint.” So far as those answers are correct, it is only in a purely formal and non-operational sense---only in a sense that has no significance for X.

In general, when we ask how a given creature X *ought* to be, we are really asking: How can X best maximize its potential? In other words, how can X *most* be the thing that its nature demands that it be?

What is it about us that separates us from other creatures? What is that makes us human? What is that makes us *us*? Many non-human creatures can feel; many non-human creatures can perceive; many non-human creatures can act. But only we are capable of being rational. When a given creature is a human being, as opposed to a mere ‘brute’, it is in virtue of the fact that it can *think*. So in order for a person to maximize what he is—in order for him to actualize his potential to the fullest possible extent and thus maximally fulfill his nature---he must develop his ability to reason to the fullest possible extent. So far as he does that, he is actualizing his nature and thus flourishing, and so far as he isn’t, he isn’t. Thus, in order for a person to live as he *ought* to live---in the sense that if he doesn’t live that way, then he is failing to be all that he can and is therefore not flourishing---he must to the greatest possible extent develop his intellect and live the life of the mind.

Three Essays on Medical Ethics: Answers to Exam Questions on Elective
Amputation, Vaccination, and Informed Consent

Question 1. Elective amputation and conscientious refusal. Briefly (in just 3 or so sentences) explain BIID and the reasons why some believe that elective amputation may in some cases be an appropriate intervention, drawing as needed on Bayne and Levy's article. Imagine a surgeon who has a serious moral objection to performing an elective amputation on a person with BIID. What would the surgeon need to do to meet the conditions that Brock thinks are necessary (though not necessarily sufficient) for it to be morally permissible for a medical professional to refuse to treat the patient? Explain the referring the patient to another professional, on the grounds that this would make her complicit in the amputation, would you find this persuasive? Offer 2-3 points in defense

BIID (short for 'Body Integrity Identity Disorder') is a condition whereby want body parts of theirs to be amputated even though there is no medical reason for it. Oftentimes with BIID go so far as to ask physicians to perform such amputations, and when they cannot find physicians willing to do so they sometimes try to undertake them themselves. People with BIID who do manage to find physicians to perform the amputations often report feeling better and not regretting having the procedure done.

People with BIID are not in generally otherwise mentally ill and they are therefore not on the face of it in the same category as schizophrenics who would be asking for an unnecessary medical procedure.

If asked to perform an unnecessary amputation, most physicians would balk, since perform such an operation would be a heinous violation of a physician's professional ethics. Some physicians might change their mind if they found out that the person requesting the procedure had BIID. The argument for performing the procedure under that circumstance would be that the patient was in the same category as somebody requesting breast-enhancement (or some other medically unnecessary procedure) and that his autonomy therefore ought to be respected.

According to Brock, physicians and other medical professionals have a "right of conscience" to refuse to provide certain medical services. Thus, a physician might for example refuse to provide a woman with a medically unnecessary abortion on the grounds that he believed abortion to be murder. At the same time Brock, argues that this 'right of conscience' is extremely restricted and can only be exercised when doing so doesn't undermine the integrity of the medical profession. Thus, a physician cannot use his 'right of conscience' to deny medical services to people who belong to a different political party, but he could conceivably use his right of conscience to refuse to administer a medically unnecessary abortion.

Brock says that when a physician can legitimately refuse to perform some service that for reasons of conscience he doesn't want to perform, he should (i) refuse to provide that service and (ii) point the patient in the direction of a physician who will provide it. The problem with this proposal, as Brock points out, is that if the patient goes to the second physician and has the procedure done, the first physician is arguably 'complicit.' Suppose that Dr. X refuses for reasons of conscience to perform a medically unnecessary amputation on BIID-sufferer Y, and Dr. X therefore tells Y to go to Dr. Z, who ends up performing the amputation. Supposing that Dr. Z was wrong to perform the amputation, Dr. X is indeed complicit in that wrong-doing, though he obviously isn't as guilty as he would be if he performed it himself.

Supposing that it was wrong of Dr. Z to perform the operation, Brock is right that Dr. X would to some degree be 'complicit' in that wrongdoing. There is a simple proof of this. Suppose it turns out that BIID is simply a form of mental illness—that people afflicted by it are psychotic in the extreme and that, if given antipsychotic medication, they deeply regret any amputations that they had done. In that case, if Dr. X sent Y to Dr. Z, then Dr. X would most certainly be a party to the wrongdoing that took place, this being why Y, after emerging from his psychosis, would almost certainly resent Dr. X for not saving Y from himself and for 'aiding and abetting' in Y's act of self-harm. And if Dr. X *did* refuse both to perform the procedure *and* to pass the buck to another physician, then Dr. X would be in the clear and would most certainly not be the object of Y's wrath.

Question 2. Vaccination and libertarianism Explain Navin and Largent's "Inconvenience" model, and the points they offer in favor of it. Explain the points Giubilini and colleagues' raise against Inconvenience, their own "Contribution" model, and the points they offer in favor of Contribution. What do you think a libertarian, as described by Narveson and Buchanan, would say about Inconvenience and Contribution? Explain.

Answer: Vaccinations are necessary for personal and public safety, but many people refuse to have their children vaccinated. One solution is for the state to force people to let their children be vaccinated, but it's unclear whether the health-related gains (for the both the children and the public in general) would be worth the losses in civil liberties. At the same time, it is hard to deny that vaccinations should be at least semi-mandatory, as it were, since in addition to benefiting the people vaccinated, they also protect the public from the threat of disease and also from the losses involved in dealing with public health crises.

Navin and Largent propose a compromise: allow people to be exempt from having their children vaccinated but make it inconvenient for them to exercise this option, by forcing them to jump through a number of bureaucratic hoops, including attending time-consuming 'educational' programs. Giubilini et al. argue that, although

the 'inconvenience' model put forth by Navin and Largent does a decent job of balancing public and health and civil liberties, it is not a particularly fair solution, since it allows some people shirk obligations that others are forced to shoulder. Giublini et al. argue that, instead of having to jump through bureaucratic hoops, parents seeking exemptions from mandatory vaccinations for their children should have to perform public services (e.g. cleaning up trash off the side of the road) in a quantity equal to the likely cost to the public of their refusal to have their children vaccinated. So if Mr. and Mrs. Smith refuse to have their son Jimmy vaccinated, then, assuming that Jimmy's not being vaccinated is likely to cost the public \$1,500, Mr. and Mrs. Smith should have to do \$1,500 worth of public service.

I prefer Giublini's 'Contribution Model' to Navin and Largent's 'Inconvenience Model', though not exactly for the reasons that Giublini's gives. It is never appropriate to waste somebody's time by forcing them to attend seminars and the like that are meant to be meaningless. Although bureaucratic redundancy is inevitable, it should never be consciously promoted, and the Inconvenience Model wastes the public's time (by spending it useless bureaucracy) and also wastes people's time. By contrast, Giublini's model doesn't waste the public's time and doesn't even completely waste the time of the parents in question, since public service, though not always the best use of one's time, is usually not a complete waste of time. Also, whereas the inconvenience

model would waste public moneys necessary for dealing with the public health problems that might arise from people refusing to have their children vaccinated.

Question 3. Moral relativism and positive thinking Take the following scenario as background for your essay. (You don't need to describe it—you may just refer to Doctor A, Patient A, Doctor B, and Patient B in your essay.) Imagine two doctors, Doctor A and Doctor B, who has each discovered a large cancerous mass in her patient (Patient A and Patient B, respectively). It is the medical opinion of each doctor that surgery should be attempted to remove the mass, but the surgery carries risks such as bleeding, infection, and damage to nearby tissues or other organs, and there is no guarantee that the cancer would be completely removed. The doctors are now considering whether, and how, to communicate to the patient her diagnosis and prognosis, her proposed intervention and its burdens, risks and expected benefits, and any alternative responses and their burdens, risks and expected benefits. Doctor A is practicing within the Navajo Nation, and Patient A is a Navajo (Diné) who, along with her close family members, believes it is important to avoid speaking and thinking in a negative way. Doctor B is practicing in a midwestern urban hospital, and Patient B does not believe it is important to avoid speaking and thinking in a negative way (or have any other beliefs that would potentially come in tension with an informed consent discussion).

Explain moral relativism, illustrating with an example. Explain universalism and give an example or two of a universalist theory. Briefly explain the idea of avoiding negative thinking and speaking, as described in Carrese and Rhodes' paper, the idea of obtaining a patient's informed consent, and how the two appear to be in tension. What would Moral relativism say that Doctor A and Doctor B, respectively, should do, and why? What could a universalist say that Doctor A and Doctor B, respectively, should do, and why? (You can choose any plausible universalist position you wish to apply.) Which position do you find most plausible? Give one or two reasons in support of the position you think is stronger (or against the position you think is weaker).

Answer: According to ethical relativism, morality varies from cultures. So if gang rape is considered an acceptable way for people to 'blow off steam' in culture X, then gang rape is morally correct in X; and if gang rape is considered unconditionally unacceptable on Culture Y, then it is morally incorrect in Y. According to ethical universalism, there is some single moral code that holds of all cultures. So if gang rape is wrong, then it is wrong in both X and Y, even though people in X may feel otherwise; and if gang rape is morally correct, then it is correct in both X and Y, even though people in Y may feel otherwise.

According the ethical relativism, Dr. A should do whatever he has to do to avoid violating the Navajo injunction against 'negative' thinking and speaking, and if this

involves not disclosing the medical facts to Patient A, then so be it. And according to ethical relativism, Dr. B should do whatever he has to do to comply with his culture's injunction that medical professionals disclose all the relevant facts to their patients, and if this involves alarming or otherwise upsetting his patient, then so be it.

The doctrine of informed consent requires medical professionals to have their patient's consent before performing medical procedures on them and it also requires that their patients have all of the relevant information, so that their consent can be informed. Obviously it is difficult to make patients informed if one is prohibited from upsetting them, and it is therefore difficult to obtain informed consent from them without sometimes upsetting them. Given what we are told about the Navajo injunction against upsetting others, it would certainly seem to be more or less impossible not to violate the doctrine of informed consent in Navajo culture, and if it is possible, that is only because Carrese and Rhodes misdescribed or underdescribed this injunction.

A universalist would say that the one doctor must do what the other doctor does, other things being equal. So if Dr. B has an actual obligation to make Patient B aware of the relevant medical facts, then Dr. A has that same obligation, Navajo injunctions notwithstanding; and if Dr. A has an actual obligation not to upset Patient A, then Dr. B has an obligation not to upset Patient B, Western injunctions to the contrary notwithstanding.

Whatever other obligations Dr. A may have to Patient A, his medical obligation to her is to maximize her health and minimize her suffering, and the way to do to is quite clearly to apprise her of the facts relating to her condition. It was mentioned in the article that Navajo injunction against negative thought and speech is rooted in the belief that positive thoughts can make negative situations go away or at least be tractable. And while this may be true within limits, Patient A's situation falls far outside these limits, and the Navajo injunction against negative thought seems to be embody an empirically false belief as to how to actualize an even deeper value, common to both Navajo's and non-Navajos, that life and health are deeply important. So by withholding relevant medical information from Patient A, Dr. A would be violating one Navajo value (protect life and health) by cleaving to another, less deeply held Navajo value (protect and life and health). This is not to mention that whatever Dr. A's obligations as a Navajo are, his obligations as a medical doctor are to help patient A. (If Navajo culture imposes contrary obligations on Dr. A, that is not because Dr. A's medical obligations are different from those of his Western counterpart, but is rather because Navajo culture imposes obligations on Dr. A as a person that contravene his obligations as a medical doctor.)

Also, we can be fairly sure that Patient A would appreciate having her health back, even if Dr. A has to violate Navajo protocols to secure that objective, showing that although cultures may differ in values up to a point, some values are

indeed universally (though not necessarily universally complied with), the main one's being to not to harm. The idea that, because of her culture, the Patient A is less entitled to proper medical care than Patient B is at odds with the fact that Patient is no less likely to want to live, or to deserve to live, than her Western Counterpart.

A medical doctor in any culture who withholds health-critical information from his patient is not a good medical doctor. If Carrese has accurately describe the import and scope of this alleged Navajo injunction against full-disclosure to patients, then what follows is not that in Navajo culture being a good physician involves letting one's patient suffer and die unnecessarily but is rather than in Navajo culture there are some injunctions that override the obligations that a physician's trade imposes on him.

[Hobbes, Marx, Rousseau, Nietzsche: Their Central Themes](#)

Hobbes, Marx, Rousseau, Nietzsche: Each of these thinkers had very definite views as to how society actually functions and as to how it should function. Hobbes believed human beings to be inherently barbaric and therefore that the central purpose of society should be to prevent people from being barbaric towards one another.

Nietzsche believed human beings to be driven exclusively by a lust for power and that a society's purpose should to some extent be to provide people with outlets for this power-lust. Rousseau believed society to be inherently unjust and exploitative and that its purpose should be to provide people with the equality of opportunity that people

supposedly had prior to society's existence while also giving them the protections that they lacked. Marx believed society to be a way of allocating resources and that its purpose should be to allocate them fairly.

In the case of each of these thinkers, there are a number of secondary themes. For example, Hobbes is extremely concerned with language, since he believes it to be integral to the formation of the 'social contract' that creates society and thereby saves human beings from one another's innate savagery. For this very reason, Hobbes is also concerned with use of deceptive or misleading language, since, given the significance that he ascribes to language in the formation of society, he believes deception and obfuscation to be threatening to the social contract. So even though Hobbes' main point in *Leviathan* is that autocracy is needed to save people from themselves, a secondary point is that the use of language must be carefully regulated, lest language become a way for man's savagery to insinuate itself into society. Similarly, even though Marx's main theme is capitalist exploitation, a secondary theme is what he calls 'alienation', this being the condition of someone whose labor belongs to someone else and whose has therefore been drained of meaning.

Each of the papers below will discuss a principal theme from the work of each of these thinkers, and in each case it will be shown on the basis of textual evidence what the thinker in question believes the political significance of that theme to be.

Nietzsche: According to Nietzsche: We forget because we want to forget; in other words, to forget is to repress:

Forgetting is no mere *vis inertiae* as the superficial imagine; it is rather an active and in the strictest sense positive faculty of repression, that is responsible for the fact that what we experience and absorb enters our consciousness as little while we are digesting it (one might call the process “inpsychation”) as does the thousandfold process, involved in physical nourishment—so-called “incorporation.” To close the doors and windows of consciousness for a time; to remain undisturbed by the noise and struggle of our underworld of utility organs working with and against one another; a little quietness, a little *tabula rasa* of the consciousness, to make room for new things, above all for the nobler functions and functionaries, for regulation, foresight, premeditation (for our organism is an oligarchy)—that is the purpose of active forgetfulness, which is like a doorkeeper, a preserver of psychic order, repose, and etiquette: so that it will be immediately obvious how there could be no happiness, no cheerfulness, no hope, no pride, no present, without forgetfulness. The

Why do we want to forget? Because when we remember how we used to be, before we developed pretenses, we see how we still are, beneath all of our pretenses:

The worse man's memory has been, the more fearful has been the appearance of his customs

Nietzsche then goes to illustrate this point:

[T]he severity of the penal code provides an especially significant measure of the degree of effort needed to overcome forgetfulness and to impose a few primitive demands of social existence as present realities upon these slaves of momentary affect and desire...one has only to look at our former codes of punishments to understand what effort it costs on this earth to breed a "nation of thinkers"...Consider the old German punishments; for example, stoning (the sagas already have millstones drop on the head of the guilty), breaking on the wheel (the most characteristic invention and speciality of the German genius in the realm of punishment!), piercing with stakes, tearing apart or trampling by horses ("quartering")...Ah, reason, seriousness, mastery over the affects, the whole somber thing called reflection, all these prerogatives and showpieces of

man: how dearly they have been bought! how much blood and cruelty lie at the bottom of all “good things”!

In a word, how we used to be is how we still are, beneath our pretenses, and the genealogy (origin) of a society makes it clear what the forces are that are still driving it.

Instances of this theme pervade Nietzsche’s writing. For example, we now regard contractual relations as being ‘strictly business’, in other words, as being unemotional ways of serving strictly pragmatic objectives. But Nietzsche says that when we trace the genealogy of the such relations, we find them to be replete with emotions of the most savage kind, the implication being that this is what they continue to be:

When we contemplate these contractual relationships, to be sure, we feel considerable suspicion and repugnance toward those men of the past who created or permitted them. This was to be expected from what we have previously noted. It was here that promises were made; it was here that a memory had to be made for those who promised; it is here, one suspects, that we shall find a great deal of severity, cruelty, and pain. To inspire trust in his promise to repay, to provide a guarantee of the seriousness and sanctity of his promise, to impress repayment as a duty, an obligation upon his own conscience, the debtor made a contract with the creditor and pledged

that if he should fail to repay he would substitute something else that he “possessed,” something he had control over; for example, his body, his wife, his freedom, or even his life (or, given certain religious presuppositions, even his bliss after death, the salvation of his soul, ultimately his peace in the grave: thus it was in Egypt, where the debtor’s corpse found no peace from the creditor even in the grave—and among the Egyptians such peace meant a great deal). Above all, however, the creditor could inflict every kind of indignity and torture upon the body of the debtor...Let us be clear as to the logic of this form of compensation: it is strange enough. An equivalence is provided by the creditor’s receiving, in place of a literal compensation for an injury (thus in place of money, land, possessions of any kind), a recompense in the form of a kind of pleasure—the pleasure of being allowed to vent his power freely upon one who is powerless, the voluptuous pleasure “de faire le mal pour le plaisir de le faire,”² the enjoyment of violation.

We now regard politics as having the purpose ensuring that people live cooperatively and rationally. But Nietzsche would say our contemporary ‘liberal’ and ‘democratic’ political values are merely disguised forms of the lust for power brazenly exemplified by primitive, autocratic political systems.

Marx: According to Marx, the bourgeoisie (this being the class that “owns the means of production” and engages in trade) “has resolved personal worth into exchange value”---in other words, it has stripped people any value that they have other than their economic value---with the result that he is “alienated” from his work (meaning that he no longer identifies with it and it has no meaning for him):

What, then, constitutes the alienation of labor? First, in the fact that labor is external to the worker, that is, that it does not belong to his essential being; that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel well but unhappy, does not freely develop his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker, therefore, feels himself only outside his work, and feels beside himself in his work. He is at home when he is not working, and when he is working he is not at home. His work therefore is not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labor. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need, but only a means for satisfying needs external to it. Its alien character emerges clearly in the fact that labor is shunned like the plague as soon as there is no physical or other compulsion. (Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts)

According to Marx, profiting from others involves getting them to do what you want them to do, not they want to do, and it therefore involves their engaging in work from which they are 'alienated.' Since capitalism is about profiting from others, alienated labor is the very foundation of capitalism. For this reason, Marx's position is not that everybody deserves *wealth*; for one's level of wealth, according to Marx, really only reflects how much one has benefited from the exploitation of others. Rather it is that wealth (how much property one has) itself shouldn't exist people should not alienated from their labor and that private property must be abolished.

Marx regards capitalist society as doing overtly and systematically what previous societies did covertly and unsystematically. All societies thus far have been based on exploitation ("The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles"). The difference is that capitalism doesn't even try to hide the fact that it is exploitation-based and for this reason exploits that much more efficiently. Consequently, capitalism

has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless and indefeasible

chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

Since all societies that have existed thus far are exploitation-based, Marx does not want a return to some older form of society. He wants an entirely new kind of society, which, because it is so different from what has existed thus far, will be attained only through revolution, this being why Marx ends the *Communist Manifesto* by saying that “communists” (which, in this context, means those agree with Marx) “openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions.”

Rousseau: According to Rousseau, people are “free, healthy, honest and happy” when each person has enough to satisfy his own needs but when nobody has enough for more than one person:

So long as men remained content with their rustic huts, so long as they were satisfied with clothes made of the skins of animals and sewn together with thorns and fish-bones...in a word, so long as they undertook only what a single

person could accomplish, and confined themselves to such arts as did not require the joint labour of several hands, they lived free, healthy, honest and happy lives.

But when it became possible for the individual to have *more* than he needed, people began to coerce and enslave one another, and human existence came to be largely about either exploiting or being exploited:

But from the moment one man began to stand in need of the help of another; from the moment it appeared advantageous to any one man to have enough provisions for two, equality disappeared, property was introduced, work became indispensable, and vast forests became smiling fields, which man had to water with the sweat of his brow, and where slavery and misery were soon seen to germinate and grow up with the crops.

On this basis, Rousseau makes the striking point that much of the mutual antagonism that political theorists regard civil society as being necessary to prevent is actually *caused* by the state, his argument being in civil society, the individual can have more than what he needs, leading to an inflated sense of self-importance and thus to hatred of those who do not defer to his inflated self-image:

Thus, as every man punished the contempt shown him by others, in proportion to his opinion of himself, revenge became terrible, and men bloody and cruel. This is precisely the state reached by most of the savage nations known to us: and it is for want of having made a proper distinction in our ideas, and see how very far they already are from the state of nature, that so many writers have hastily concluded that man is naturally cruel, and requires civil institutions to make him more mild; whereas nothing is more gentle than man in his primitive state, as he is placed by nature at an equal distance from the stupidity of brutes, and the fatal ingenuity of civilised man.

So in Rousseau's view, people are best off when nobody has too much more than anybody else, and people are worst off when some people have much more than others. Rousseau's view is that they are best off when they are "placed by nature at an equal distance from the stupidity of brutes, and the fatal ingenuity of civilised man", meaning that the optimal form of existence is tribal. For Rousseau, people are fundamentally decent to one another until they become unequal, and the only purpose of civil society is not so much to protect people from one another as it is to liberate them from the stupidity of a completely animalistic, survival-oriented existence.

Hobbes: According to Hobbes language has four purposes, these being:

First, to Register, what by cogitation, we find to be the cause of any thing, present or past; and what we find things present or past may produce, or effect: which in summe, is acquiring of Arts. Secondly,

Secondly, to shew to others that knowledge which we have attained; which is, to Counsell, and Teach one another. Thirdly, to make known to others our wills, and purposes, that we may have the mutuall help of one another. Fourthly, to please and delight our selves, and others, by playing with our words, for pleasure or ornament, innocently.”

In other words, we use speech to record, communicate, instruct, and amuse.

Hobbes then goes on to say that for each of these uses of language, there is a corresponding abuse of it, to wit:

First, when men register their thoughts wrong, by the inconstancy of the signification of their words; by which they register for their conceptions, that which they never conceived; and so deceive themselves. Secondly, when they use words metaphorically; that is, in other sense than that they are ordained for; and thereby deceive others. Thirdly, when by words they declare that to be their will, which is not. Fourthly, when they use them to grieve one another: for seeing nature hath armed living creatures, some with teeth, some with horns, and some with hands, to grieve an enemy, it is but an abuse of Speech, to grieve him with the tongue, unlesse it be one whom wee are obliged to govern; and then it is not to grieve, but to correct and amend.

In other words, misuses of language involve people either using it inconsistently (e.g. using “billion” to refer to different numbers), using it to lie or mislead, using it to misrepresent their intentions, or using it to hurt. (Incidentally, the third misuse seems to be a special case of the second.)

According to Hobbes, unless people are compelled to keep their word, they will fail to do so:

If a Covenant be made, wherein neither of the parties performe presently, but trust one another; in the condition of meer Nature, (which is a condition of Warre of every man against every man,) upon any reasonable suspition, it is Voyd; But if there be a common Power set over them bothe, with right and force sufficient to compell performance; it is not Voyd. For he that performeth first, has no assurance the other will performe after.

In other words, contracts are null and void unless there is government, and governments are therefore needed to enforce contracts. This helps make it clear why Hobbes discusses language in a treatise on political theory. People can be trust one another only if they are under the authority of a common government, one manifestation of this mutual trust being that they can make credible promises to each other, another being they will not harm each other.

Of course, even though governments can enforce contracts, they cannot miscommunication or deception (deliberate miscommunication). At the same time, miscommunication and deception have much the same effect as breach of contract: they undermine the mutual trust needed for civil society. And this is presumably why Hobbes focuses so much on language, and its abuses, in a treatise whose purpose is to argue that authoritarian system of the government is the right kind.

De Tocqueville on Egoism

Alexis de Tocqueville wrote of Americans that individualism is just egotism in a new form. How might the philosophers and architects of the Enlightenment's famous political documents have responded to this charge? Does Tocqueville have a point?

All enlightenment philosophers would agree with what de Tocqueville is saying, but they would disagree sharply as to whether egotism/individualism was a bad thing. According to and J.J. Rousseau it would be a bad thing. According to John Locke, Adam Smith, and David Hume, it would be a good thing

The reason Smith, Locke, and Hume would disagree with de Tocqueville is that they are all *free-marketeers*. (Another term for 'free-marketeer' is 'classical liberal.')

A free-marketeer is someone who believes that society benefits if people are free to pursue their own economics interests. The idea is that if people who have medical skill are allowed to profit from their trade, and people who have engineering skill are allowed to profit from *their* trade, and so on, then naturally occurring market-pressures will tend to make the best products and services available at the lowest price. Free-marketeers regard 'ego' as the driving-force of a healthy economy, and they also regard

a healthy economy as the backbone of a healthy culture. So while they might well agree with de Tocqueville that 'individualism' was just egoism, they would not have regarded that as being to the discredit of American society.

For free-marketeers, freedom, including economic freedom, is the most natural condition possible; and provided that freedoms are reigned in just enough to allow everyone maximal economic freedom, there should, in the free-marketeer's view, be no *additional* restrictions on freedom.

So the *classical liberal* would agree with the factual component of de Tocqueville's statement but disagree with the value-judgment implicit in it.

The opponent of the free-market regards the free-market as being the basis of an *unnatural* social order. He regards it as being the basis of horrible inequalities of wealth and correspondingly intolerable deprivations. And the anti-free-marketeer regards the solution to these inequalities to be tight government controls on wealth and its acquisition. For Marxists and proto-Marxists, such as J.J. Rousseau, what Smith and Locke regard as healthy individualism is psychopathic egoism and greed. And what we need to do, according to Rousseau and his successors, notably Marx, is return to the moral purity of the *pre-capitalist* person, this being Rousseau's 'noble savage', who knows nothing of property or of the, in Rousseau's eyes, immoral exclusiveness inherent in what property is.

To sum up, those who are liberal in the classical sense would disagree with the value-judgment implicit in de Tocqueville's statement; those who are classical in the *contemporary* sense would agree with that value-judgment; and all parties would agree with the non-valuative part of that remark.

Mill vs. Hobbes on Liberty

Question: Does Mill afford citizens a more expansive set of liberties than does Hobbes? Explain why a Hobbesian might be concerned that Mill's scheme is potentially unstable.

Yes---Mill affords a more expansive set of liberties than Hobbes. In fact, Mill affords a maximally expansive set of liberties and Hobbes affords a severely constricted set of liberties.

Hobbes believes that when people are given too much freedom, they abuse it and the result is anarchy. Hobbes sees people as little better than animals and has no confidence that left to their own devices they will behave decently. Hobbes lived during a blood Civil War and thus had occasion to see what people are like when not held in check by the iron hand of law. And for Hobbes, it was necessary not only that there be

laws, but that there be an autocratic to enforce them and to make speedy decisions in times of crisis.

Hobbes lived before Adam Smith. According to Adam Smith, if people are allowed to transact freely, then the economy flourishes. In Smith's view, if people are left to their own devices and are allowed to transact freely, an 'invisible hand' guides activity the activity, with the result that those who need give (and pay) and those have give (and are paid). Obviously Adam Smith's free market requires people to be subject to laws prohibiting assault and theft and enforcing contracts, but as Smith knew, when there are laws that do more than that, the result is a sluggish economy and a bloated government.

Mill, having studied Smith closely, knew that when laws require people to do more than not harm one another, the resulting abridgements of freedom sap the strength of the economy. Further, Mill knew political freedom was necessary for economic freedom: business tends to grind to a halt when the people lack political rights. Finally, Mill knew that (relatively) minimal government does not lead to anarchy. Obviously people do have to be restrained by laws---but not as much as Hobbes thought. And if they are restricted as much as Hobbes wanted them to be, the result is a weak economy and a depressed populace.

Mill granted that people must be preventing from hurting and stealing from each other, but beyond that, he believed, the government was not entitled to restrict people

in any way. So Mill believed that people must have: freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, freedom to transact, and freedoms in matters relating to personal life. Hobbes, by contrast, believed that freedom of assembly would lead to riots; that freedom of speech would lead to sedition and factionalism; that freedom of religion would lead to civil war. So Hobbes believed that laws should not only prevent violence and theft but should also prevent the differences of viewpoint that could potentially lead to violence and theft. Mill said that the law should only prevent 'clear and present dangers' and should concern itself with mere anticipations thereof. Hobbes: Freedom is anarchy. Mill: Freedom is prosperity.

Exam-Essays on the Moral Systems of Mill, Bentham, and Kant

Question: What is the Principle of Utility, according to Bentham? and what does he mean by the word 'utility'?

Answer: By "utility", Bentham means the property of conducing to pleasure or happiness or of conducing to the avoidance of pain or unhappiness. The principle of utility is the principle that an act is morally right to the extent that it conduces to happiness/pleasure or to the avoidance of pain/unhappiness and that an act is morally

wrong to the extent that it conduces to pain/unhappiness or to the avoidance of pleasure/happiness.

The justification for this view is obvious: If break somebody's legs, I cause them pain and suffering; and my action is wrong; and it is clearly for *because* it causes them pain and inconvenience. If I provide medicine and supplies to a village of people who are diseased-ravaged and starving, I am behaving rightly, since my action alleviates pain and suffering and since, in addition, it bring pleasure and joy.

Is Bentham's analysis correct? It is certainly *correct up to a point*. But there are counterexamples to it. Suppose that I make someone happy by lobotomizing them. In that case, surely, my act is thoroughly wrong, even though it conforms to the "Principle of Utility." Why is my action wrong? Because I am thwarting someone's autonomy; I am depriving them of the ability to decide for themselves how to live.

So what we are seeing is that autonomy-enhancement is morally right and autonomy-diminution is morally wrong. And this suggests that the Principle of Utility is not the supreme moral principle---that the *actual* Supreme Moral Principle is that an act is morally right that it promotes autonomy. It also suggest that so far as the Principle of Utility is correct, it is because, in those contexts where it is correct, it is a logical consequence of the actual Supreme Moral Principle.

Question: Mill argues for the "greatest happiness principle," that actions are morally

right in proportion to the the way they promote happiness or pleasure. Does Mill make a distinction between types of pleasure? If so, what is that distinction?

Answer: John Stuart Mill does in fact distinguish between “higher” and “lower” pleasure. By a “higher” pleasure, Mill means one that involves the use either of one’s cognitive faculties or one’s agency to a high degree. Thus, examples of Mill’s “higher pleasures” would be reading Darwin, composing a fugue, and listening (with understanding and appreciation) to fine music. By a “lower pleasure”, Mill means one that does *not* involve the use either of one’s cognitive faculties or of one’s agency to a high degree. Thus, examples of Mill’s “lower pleasures” are those involved in getting drunk, having sex, listening to pop music, or impulsively punching an annoying person.

Mill seems entirely right to make this distinction. But is this distinction compatible with utilitarianism? It seems not. According to Utilitarianism, an act is right to the extent that it brings joy/happiness. But this principles seems wrong, given that base acts may bring a great deal of joy. So suppose that utilitarianism were duly amended, so that it became: An act is morally right to the extent that it became “an act is morally right to the extent that it conduces to happiness/pleasure of a *non-base kind*.” So amended, utilitarianism presupposes some *independent* conception of rightness and is *ipso facto* either false or correct only so far as it as derivative of some other deeper moral principle.

Question: Explain the difference between Bentham and Mill regarding types of pleasures. Start by explaining the greatest happiness principle and principle of utility, then what the hedonistic calculus is, then how Bentham and Mill value competing pleasures differently from each other (like the example in class of \$20 - should it go to the transformers movie that makes someone really happy, or the museum which leads to a higher quality of pleasure?) Which (Bentham or Mill) do you agree with and why? Use quotes from the reading to help illustrate the theories. (minimum 400 words for this entire answer)

Answer: Bentham's utilitarianism is given by the principle that an act is good to the extent that it maximizes pleasure (or minimizes pain) and wrong to the extent that it diminishes pleasure (or maximizes pain). Mill's utilitarianism is given by the principle that an act is good to the extent that it maximizes *happiness* (or minimizes unhappiness) and bad to the extent that it minimizes unhappiness (or maximizes unhappiness).

So for Bentham the central concepts are pleasure and pain: ("Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and

effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think...”) By contrast, for Mill, the central concepts are happiness and unhappiness.

The distinction is important: pain and pleasure do not involve one’s agency; they are properties not of *actions* but of *experiences* or *undergoings*. One experiences pleasure when having a massage or being intoxicated. By contrast, happiness *does* involve one’s agency; indeed, it seems to be a property of the way in which one engages the world. To be happy is to be *fulfilled*, and to be fulfilled is to act in such a way as to maximize one’s potential. And this is why one is happy to the extent that one acts in ways that express and develop one’s agency. One is happy when (and to the extent that) one is building a house, or improving one’s mind, or working on one’s tennis game, or solving a math problem, or writing a great philosophy paper.

Consequently, Bentham’s utilitarianism is radically different from Mill’s utilitarianism. A related point is that, for reasons now to be stated, Bentham’s doctrine, though false, is not viciously circular, whereas Mill’s doctrine, though true, *is* viciously circular.

Somebody who shoots heroin all day experiences a lot of pleasure but probably isn’t happy. And somebody who does difficulty but fulfilling work all day is probably happy but doesn’t necessary experience very much pleasure. So Bentham’s doctrine—that the moral goodness=pleasure-conduciveness is simply false.

But Mill's doctrine---that moral-goodness=happiness-conduciveness--- though correct, is viciously circular, for the reason that the concept of happiness is to be understood in terms of the concept of moral value. More specifically, we are happy to the extent that our lives comply with our values. The reason the hardworking man is happy, despite not experiencing much pleasure, is that he is living up to his values. And the reason the sluggard is unhappy, despite experiencing a lot of pleasure, is that his life is not living up to his values. So Mill's utilitarianism, though *correct* (or seemingly so, at any rate), is viciously circular if taken as an analysis of morality, since it presupposes some independent conception of moral value and, therefore, of morality.

Kant's Moral System

Question: Part 1. How does Kant define a "good will," and why is it so important to his moral philosophy?

Part 2. Give an example from your own life, the news, movies/t.v. or simply create a fictional example, which illustrates a person acting "in conformity with duty but not [acting] from duty." Hint: First you will need to give an example of a duty, then explain how the subject is acting in conformity with that duty but not from that duty. Example: {Duty} Killing is wrong. {Example} I didn't kill that guy who cut me off on the freeway because I would go to jail, not because killing is wrong.

Answer: First of all, for Kant, there are two kinds of goodness: hypothetical and categorical. Something is *hypothetically* good if it is good as a means. Thus, a car is good *as a means* to an end, that end being driving, and a car is thus hypothetically good. Hypothetical goodness is the same thing as *conditional* goodness. A car is good *on the condition* that one needs to drive somewhere; otherwise not good. Thus, hypothetical goodness is the same thing as *instrumental* goodness.

Something is *categorically* good if it is good in and of itself. Thus, something is categorically good if it is *intrinsically* good, i.e. if it is non-instrumentally or unconditionally good, as opposed to good as a means to some end.

According to Kant, the only thing that is categorically (non-hypothetically, unconditionally) good is a *good will*. Kant's argument is simply that anything besides a good will embody immorality. Thus, the happiness of a villain is not a good thing, says Kant, and neither is a villain's intelligence, as each embodies viciousness, not virtue.

Obviously, moral goodness is a kind of *intrinsic* goodness, not a kind of instrumental or conditional goodness.

From these premises, Kant deduces that the only thing that is categorically (unconditionally) good is a good will. Kant's argument is simply that any other 'good' thing is only conditionally good and for that reason fails to be good (except instrumentally) in at least some circumstances. So, for example, the happiness of a villain, though good *for him*, is not intrinsically good, since it embodied moral turpitude;

and the intelligence of a villain, though good *for him* (vis-à-vis certain objectives of his), is not intrinsically good, since it can be used in furtherance of evil.

Answer to Part 2. There are many examples of this. Suppose that I save a drowning toddler, but that I do so to impress my boss, who is witnessing the situation. In that case, my act is “in conformity with” the requirements of morality, even though, being done for reasons of self-interest and personal gain, it does not itself embody any morality. To take another example: Suppose that a wealthy woman writes a book and asks me to tell her what I think of it. In actuality, the book is extremely good, and I therefore have an obligation to tell her as much. And that is what I do. But I do it solely to curry favor with me, so that she will marry me and bestow her riches upon me. I have absolutely no desire to do the right thing, being driven entirely by a desire for gain, for which I am totally willing to lie but which in this particular context involves me telling the truth. To give an example from my own life: My housemate is very clean and respectful; he never leaves a mess and never makes noise. I myself am the same way towards him, and indeed it is my moral obligation to be this way. But my reasons for so behaving are purely pragmatic, not ethical in nature: I simply don’t want to have to get another housemate, since, if I did, that person would almost certainly be more difficult to live with than my current housemate. But if I could get away with it, I would leave my clothes all over the place, be noisy, and so on. So my behavior in this context, though in conformity with my moral duties, do not *embody* any genuine morality.

Question: Using O'Neill's article, "A Simplified Account of Kant's Ethics," explain the Formula of the Ends in Itself.

Answer: The Formula of the Ends in Itself is simply the idea that we should treat people as ends unto themselves, and not as means. We should treat people as subjects, not as objects. If I abduct someone and put him to work as a slave, I am not allowing him to decide for himself how to live. I am using him as an instrument—an object—and thus as a mere means for my own purposes. I am not treating him as a subject; for to treat him as a subject would be to let him decide for himself how to live, and this is precisely what I am not doing.

Here is another example. using somebody as a means. There are subtler examples. Imagine the following. Jeff is a decent person and he is also extremely wealthy. Sally hates Jeff. But she wants his money. So she pretends to love him, so that she can marry him, kill him, and make off with his money. And this is just what Sally does.

In this scenario, there are two respects in which Sally treats Jeff as an object, rather than as a subject. First, she manipulates Jeff, which puts Jeff in a position where, without his initially knowing it, his will is being misdeployed (he is being manipulated into marrying Sally and thus into using his will in a way that undermine him and also itself). Second, she kills Jeff, which extinguishes his will and which therefore extinguishes

his very subjecthood and turns him, in the most literal way, into an object.

Question: The Universal Formulation is offered, by Kant, on page 108: "Act only on that Maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." Kant then gives four examples. Compare the first two examples (1. on page 108 and 2. on page 109). How do these examples illustrate the Universal formulation?

The first example concerns a man who, having suffered a series of misfortunes, is deeply unhappy and, as a result, seriously contemplates suicide. Supposing *arguendo* that he does commit suicide, what is the 'maxim'—the principle—embodied in his act? It is: *Out of self-regard, I will end my life if my life is likely to be excessively adverse.* But the very purpose of self-regard is to preserve the existence of oneself. And in killing oneself out of self-regard, one is turning one's self-regard against itself and is therefore rendering it self-contradictory and incoherent. So the maxim embodied in an act of suicide is self-contradictory and therefore could not coherently be willed to be a universal law of conduct.

The second example concerns someone who, having gotten himself in serious debt, considers borrowing money without repaying it. Suppose that this person does just that. What is the maxim embodied in his act? It is: *Claim that you will keep your promises when you have no intention of doing so (for example, borrow money,*

promising—but not actually intending—to pay it back). Suppose that this maxim became a universal law. In that case, nobody would ever lend money, since they would know that they had no assurance of ever getting it back. So if the maxim embodied in this person's act (of borrowing money without repaying it) were universalized, then that same act could not be carried out. Therefore, the maxim embodied in that act could not coherently be willed to be a universal law, and that is why that act violates the Categorical Imperative.

Aristotle on Virtue

Question: On page 140, Aristotle describes how "moral virtue comes about as a result of habit." Explain this quote by using quotes from the rest of page 140.

Answer: If act with self-discipline on only a single occasion, I am not a self-disciplined person and therefore do not have the virtue of being self-disciplined. If I am a generally an indolent sluggard and act with discipline only one occasion, my acting in that way embodies desperation, not self-control: that act is about *lacking* the virtue of self-discipline, not having it. But if I am self-disciplined *in general*—if, on each and every occasion that it behooves me to act with discipline I do so—then, if I act with discipline on a given occasion, my act *does* embody genuine self-discipline.

It is a desperation-motivated act that has the same external form as a discipline-motivated act; it is a *bona fide* act of self-discipline. And so it is that Aristotle says: “[O]ne swallow does not make a summer; nor does one day; and so too, one day, or a short time, does not make a man blessed [virtuous] and happy.”

Question: On page 144, Aristotle says, "virtue is therefore a kind of mean." What is Aristotle trying to say about morality here?

Answer: For Aristotle, virtue is about rationality and self-control. A virtuous person is one who governs himself in a rational manner, a rational manner being one that allows for the greatest possible degree of flourishing and that therefore presupposes a condition of health. Extreme action is about a lack of self-control. People do not have self-control if they are ‘either-or’ people: people who *either* binge *or* starve themselves; people who *either* drink until they black-out *or* live like monks; people who *either* never exercise *or* do nothing but exercise. Any given such form of extremism embodies a lack of self-control, which in turn embodies a failure to govern oneself in a rational manner; for which reason, each of these ‘extremisms’ involves failing to flourish in some important respect. The person who binge eats is unable to do the things that a healthy person can do, as is the person who starves himself. The person who never exercises cannot fulfill his athletic gifts, and the

person who does nothing but exercise cannot develop his intellectual gifts. In general, extremism embodies a certain laziness and, therewith, a certain irrationality and smallness of character. Contrariwise, the middle-road—the path of moderation---embodies self-control, rationality, and largeness of character and, therewith, a high degree of virtue.

Plato's Cave Allegory

There are two ways to understand the Allegory of the Cave. On the one hand, it can be seen as putting forth a hypothesis concerning the structure of reality. On the other hand, it can be interpreted as an attempt to 'red pill' people about the structure of society.

Taken the first way, the Allegory of the Cave is saying that, although our senses give us raw data, intellect is needed to model this data appropriately and therefore to see the true structure of reality. Thus taken, this allegory has no political or social overtones and is merely a point about how the world is structured (*it consist of visible phenomena governed by underlying and therefore invisible laws*), along with an epistemological corollary (*in order to understand the world, it is not enough to observe it: we must also interpret those observations, and the intellect is therefore at least as much a source of knowledge as our senses*).

Taken the second way, this allegory seems to be saying that members of society live propaganda-based lies. In this particular context, Plato does not tell us much about the nature of those lies. Indeed, it is not entirely clear that he is in fact discussing society. But his repeated use of terms like 'prisoner', 'shackles', and 'blinded' suggests as much. Also, having read the rest of *The Republic* as well as large parts of his dialogue *The Laws*, I do know that Plato was deeply distrustful of every stratum of society. He distrusted non-rulers, thinking them little more than animals; and he also distrusted rulers, mainly because, it seems, he himself wanted to be one (or was one) and therefore knew firsthand how untrustworthy they could be.

The second interpretation is, I admit, highly speculative, and there is little direct textual evidence for it in the video (which was taken from *The Republic*, which, of course, contains a number of passages that are overtly political, as well as overtly cynical, both about politics and human nature). The first interpretation is less speculative, since, in the passage in question, Plato is explicitly saying that how reality seems is not how it is and, consequently, that it is only by analyzing appearances that one acquires actual understanding.

The one interpretation puts this passage in line with the readings we have done from Heraclitus and Thales, the other with the excerpt that we watched from the *Matrix*.

An Ethical Quandary

7.04 Student Disclosure of Personal Information *Psychologists do not require students or supervisees to disclose personal information in course- or program-related activities, either orally or in writing, regarding sexual history, history of abuse and neglect, psychological treatment, and relationships with parents, peers, and spouses or significant others except if (1) the program or training facility has clearly identified this requirement in its admissions and program materials or (2) the information is necessary to evaluate or obtain assistance for students whose personal problems could reasonably be judged to be preventing them from performing their training- or professionally related activities in a competent manner or posing a threat to the students or others.*

Section 7.04 answers the question “Does Karen have a responsibility to disclose the relevant facts about her situation to the faculty?” And that is the *only* question answered by 7.04. And this question is moot, since Karen has disclosed everything to them. The issue is not whether Karen should disclose the relevant facts—she already has. The issue is whether the psychology department can conditionalize her continued stay in the department on her receiving psychological help. 7.04 does not speak to that question. 7.04 *does* imply that the department *may* in some contexts “seek assistance” for students. But first of all, it does not make it clear what those circumstances are—in particular, it does not make it clear whether the student must grant them permission to

do so. Further, it does not make it clear what kind of assistance the department may seek. The assistance in question could consist solely of tutorial services, physical rehabilitation, alcohol rehabilitation---or any or none of the above: 7.04 does not specify. So given that 7.04 is not on point, I must respectfully disagree with Ms. Alexandra's position.

Response to James

These are all good points, James. I would only add a couple of minor things. First of all, the primary reason for Jim not to violate therapist-patient confidentiality is not the prospect of lawsuits. The primary reason is simply that the bond between client and therapist is sacred. Also, the fact that Jim is cheating on his partner is, it seems to me, a red herring: For all we know, Jim and his partner have an open relationship. As for your point that Standard 4.07 prohibits Jim from disclosing patient-information with their express-consent, it seems to me that even if he got their consent, he would still be barred from discussing it exception professional contexts, which this context clearly is not. Also, Jim was in effect letting his secretary have a hand in the way in which Jim treated his patients. (Cf. her rather cavalierly saying to Jim: "From what you have told me about her, the test really should not be that big of a deal. But I could see where this anxiety piece would present a problem for her.") And from what it sounds like, Jim is

actually giving credence to these unprofessional and (on many levels) inappropriate statements, which is likely to undermine his relationship to his patients.

Superorganisms

Using one of Murchie's examples of a super-organism, answer both of the following:

[i] how do super-organisms exemplify transcendence?

[ii] how is a super-organism like a Type-1 Entity [in McKenna's sense]?

*[iii] Explain the following passage from *The Exegesis*, connecting it to Dick's broader theophany: "The trouble is, sitting here for instance, I do know what each object is. I know its name. I know its purpose, what it does, etc. I can't unknow that this is a typewriter, this here my light, this over here the air conditioner."*

[i] A superorganism is an organism consisting of other organisms. Usually, when the term “superorganism” is defined, it is said that within such an organism there is highly differentiated division of labor, with practically given one of the component organisms doing a highly specialized job. But in way, this qualification is redundant, since there is such division of labor and hyper-specialization within any given organism, whether “super” or not. Also, all multicellular organisms are superorganisms, in the sense that organisms consist of countless living cells, each of which is itself an organism. Thus, it is not just (to use Murchie’s example) an ant-colony that is a living organism; it is *any* multicellular organism. Any superorganism ‘exhibits transcendence’ in the sense that what the whole knows and can do transcends (goes beyond) what any given one of the parts can do.

[ii] The conventional view (at least for people in the Eurosphere over the last few hundred years) is that individuals are what is ‘real’ and that collectives are artificial and second—that people are basically self-contained units who in some contexts form artificial collectives for reasons of convenience. McKenna’s view is that, in their aboriginal or ‘natural’ condition, people are connected both to each other and to nature. McKenna’s view is that there is really one giant ‘superorganisms’, this being nature, and that human beings are in some way reducing themselves or contradicting their true nature in breaking themselves off of that superorganism to become self-

contained units. What McKenna means a by Type-1 entity is one that is real and doesn't involve any of the artificial separations by which modern alienated, hyper-individualist man came into existence. So in McKenna's view a Type-1 organism is a kind of superorganism, and non-superorganisms, in McKenna's view, are derivative of superorganisms and therefore artificial.

[iii] the passage above, the narrator is bemoaning the superficiality of the various objects in his vicinity. Note that each of these objects is an artifact: typewriter, electric light, air-conditioner. And each is the product of a vast division of labor, and the narrator is merely registering the fact that, as a small part of this vast division of labor, his knowledge of the workings, or even the exact purpose, of any given one of these artifacts is limited. Thus, great, almost God-like intelligence is embodied in these seemingly pedestrian items. And there we have Dick's theophany (a theophany being the appearance that a god has to a human being): God is making himself known to human beings through their own intelligence—but not their own individual intelligence, but their own *collective* intelligence.

Let us start by describing the basic facts of the Tuskegee experiment. The purpose of this experiment was to observe the progression of *untreated* syphilis. 600 African-American were told that they were going to receive free medical treatment. 399 of these already had syphilis, and 201 did not. The 399 who had syphilis did not know it, though many were already symptomatic and knew they needed medical treatment of some kind. None of those infected were told that they had syphilis, and none were treated for it. All of the 600 were given general medical care, but none were given medical care that would inhibit the progress of syphilis. In fact, even after 1947, when penicillin was officially recognized as a cure for syphilis, none of those infected were told that they had syphilis; nor were they ever given treatment for it. Rather, they were simply allowed to get more and more sick. Be it noted that syphilis, if left untreated, tends to be fatal and also may cause brain-damage, blindness, mental illness, joint-problems, and liver problems.

Morally speaking, the major problem with the Tuskegee Experiment was the heavy-duty element of deception involved. The subjects were led to believe that they were receiving medical treatment, but they were in fact being *deprived* of it and, under the pretext of being helped, were being ushered into a condition of irreversible mental and physical disrepair and eventual death. Thus, the root of the immorality of this situation lay in the fact that one group of people had all of the information and simply withheld it, despite having a duty to disclose it.

The philosopher whose work is most concerned with the ethics of situations involving such 'information asymmetries' is John Rawls. Rawls introduced the concept of "the veil of ignorance." Here is the idea: suppose that you had no idea whether you were rich or poor, black or white, male or female, doctor or patient, healthy or sick, lawyer or defendant, etc. Under those circumstances, what kind of social structure would you choose for yourself? In other words, under those circumstances, how would you want knowledge, wealth, power, and other assets to be distributed in society? You would want them to be distributed as equitably as possible, since, if they were unevenly distributed, you would likely end up not being given enough of those assets.

To relate this to the Tuskegee experiment: If you did not know whether you were going to be a doctor or a patient, whether you were going to have or not have syphilis, would you choose to live in a society in which anything like the Tuskegee experiment were possible? No, you would not.

Rawls' theory of justice is succinctly expressed by the slogan: "I cut; you choose." I decide

what kind of society to live; you (meaning chance) decide what position I will have in that society. And it is clear that no one who did not have the power to choose their position in society would choose to live in a society in which the likes of the Tuskegee Experiment could occur.

Therefore, in this context, Rawls' analysis of morality is consistent with our

intuitions.

Why Moore's Proof of an External World Fails

G.E. Moore attempts to prove the existence of an external world. His 'proof' is extremely simple. He raises one hand says "here is one hand"; then he raises his other hand and says "here is another." He then says that *given* the existence of his two hands, it follows that there exists an external world. Moore then tries to show that his argument is cogent and is also neither question-begging nor viciously circular. To this end he puts forth the following three-part argument.

First Moore says that the premises are 'different' from the conclusion. The proposition that *there exist hands at such and such places and times* is non-trivially different from the proposition *there exists an external world*. The implication here is that the argument does not beg the question. If his argument were: *there exists an external world; therefore, there exists an external world (or here is a hand; therefore, here is a hand)*, then, even though the conclusion would follow from the premises, the argument would be question-begging and therefore have no force since the conclusion was *identical* with (one or more of) the premises.

Second, Moore says that he does indeed know the premises to be true. He knows (at the relevant times) that his hands are in front of him. The idea here is that an

argument whose premises are not known to be true does not establish its conclusion, even if the argument doesn't beg the question and even if the conclusion follows from the premises.

Third, Moore says that the conclusion follows from the premises. *If* Moore's hands exist, then it follows that there exists an external world.

Let us evaluate each component of Moore's argument, starting with the first. Yes -- the conclusion is 'different' from the premise. But contrary to what Moore seems to believe, the argument still begs the question. Someone who denies the existence of the external world *ipso facto* denies (or is logic-bound to deny) the existence of objects, such as Moore's hands, that are in the external world. Moore has a very narrow conception of what it is for an argument to beg the question. The most obvious way an argument can do so is if the conclusion is *identical* with one of the premises, but that is not the only way. When trying to determine whether an argument is question-begging, the relevant question is: Are the premises *independently* plausible? In other words, are there reasons *besides* acceptance of the conclusion of that argument for accepting the premises? And in this case the answer is 'no.' Even though the proposition that there exists a hand in a certain place and time is different from the proposition that there exists an external world, acceptance of the former is *a way of accepting the latter*. If someone denies the existence of an external world, he *ipso facto* denies that there is a

cactus here and a car there, since these latter propositions are, as it were, specific ways of affirming the existence of an external world.

Here is a comparison. The proposition that x is a right triangle is different from the proposition that x is a planar closed figure. But imagine the following. Smith denies that x is a triangle, and Brown puts forth the following 'refutation' of Smith's position: x is a right triangle; all right triangles are triangles; therefore, x is a triangle. Given that Smith is denying that x is triangle, he is in effect (though he may not be conscious of doing so) denying that it is a right triangle, and Brown's argument therefore begs the question against Smith. For similar reasons, Moore's argument begs the question against the skeptic.

Let us now consider the second part of Moore's argument: his assertion that he knows the premise to be true, the premise being that there exist hands at certain places and times. First of all, does Moore know this to be true? Yes he does---or so a non-skeptic will say. But the skeptic will deny that Moore knows this, since he will deny that it is true. So in saying that he knows the premise to be true, Moore is begging the question against the skeptic.

Let us now consider the third part of Moore's argument, this being his assertion that the conclusion follows from the premise. First of all, does it follow? Yes. If there exist objects, such as hands that can exist only in an external world, it follows there

exists an external world. The skeptic will not deny that this follows, but for the reasons just discussed he also won't grant the premise.

How might Moore respond to these points? His best bet is to say that the premise (*there exist hands at such and such places and times*) is plausible independently of the conclusion. A three year old believes that he has hands, but does any three year old believe that there exists an external world? Could any three year old even *grasp* the proposition that there exists an external world? So, Moore might well argue, given that a three year old believes that he has hands but does not even grasp, let alone accept, that there exists an external, the proposition that there exist hands at such and such places and times is plausible independently of the proposition that there exists an external world. In fact, even though Moore doesn't explicitly say this, his argument clearly embodies acceptance of it.

But is it a viable maneuver? No. The belief that there exists an external world, though different from the belief that there exist hands and rocks and so on, is a 'sophistication' of the latter. The simpleton believes that there exist squares and circles and triangles, but he does not even grasp the proposition that there exist closed figures. Nonetheless, the belief that there exist closed planar figures is a distillation of these other lower-level beliefs. Similarly, the belief that there exists an external world is a distillation of one's beliefs that there exists a rock here and a hand there, and so on.

Notice that Moore is really putting forth two arguments: one for the existence of an external world and one for the legitimacy of that argument. The second argument involves Moore's saying that the first goes through. But it doesn't go through, since it begs the question against the skeptic, and it is only because it so obviously does so that Moore even needs to supply his argument on behalf of that argument. And whereas the former argument fails because it has a true but question-begging premise (*there exist hands at such and such places and times*), the latter argument fails because it contains a false premise (*the proposition that there exists an independent world is not just different, but relevantly different, from the proposition that there exist hands at such and such places and times*).

A Defense of Nagel's Argument Against Materialism

Thomas Nagel puts for the following argument against materialism. (Materialism is the doctrine that the mental is physical—that mental events and structures are identical with or at least mediated by physiological events and structures.) Suppose that Sam is a super-scientist who knows everything there is to know about bat-physiology and neurology. Will Sam for that reason know everything (or even anything) about bat-*psychology*? More specifically, will Sam on that basis know *what it is like to be a bat*? No he won't. (If he knows what it is like to be a bat, it is because he himself is a bat, or at

least a bat-like creature, and therefore has, as it were, direct, first-hand knowledge of what it is like to be a bat. No such knowledge that he has will have for its sole or primary basis his knowledge of bat-physiology.) In general, no amount of knowledge of the physical by itself gives one knowledge of the psychological.

The obvious response to this is to say: "That argument involves an intensional fallacy—the same sort of fallacy that is embodied in the argument from *since I can know that x is water without knowing that x is H₂O, it follows that water is not H₂O.*" But this counter-response is flawed. It is only if I don't know everything there is to know about water—only if, in particular, I don't know its chemical composition---that I can know that x is water without also knowing that x is H₂O. But even if I know *everything* there is to know about a given bat's physiology, I do not on that basis have the slightest idea what it is like to *be* that bat.

"But you are begging the question", it will be said. "For if that bat's physiology *is* its physiology, or at least some aspect thereof, then you *cannot* know everything there is to know about that bat's physiology without *ipso facto* knowing about its psychology." But this argument clearly over-extends the scope of what is included in the term "physiology" and therefore has no scope.

In conclusion, Nagel's argument does seem to show that materialism is false.

A Utilitarian Analysis of a Case of Theft

Utilitarianism is the doctrine that an act is morally right if it maximizes welfare. According to Jeremy Bentham's version of utilitarianism, an act is morally right if it maximizes pleasure, morally wrong if it maximizes pain; and one act x is more morally right than another act y if x causes more pleasure and causes less pain than y. The motivation for this theory is straightforward. Suppose that I have the power to make everyone either extremely happy or extremely miserable. If I choose to make everyone extremely happy, I am surely behaving rightly (or at least *more* rightly than I would be if I were to make everyone extremely miserable); and I make everyone extremely miserable, I am behaving wrongly (or at least *more* wrongly than I would be if I were to make everyone extremely happy).

To quote Bentham:

Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do... By the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever according to the tendency it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question: or, what is the same thing in other words to promote or to oppose that

happiness. I say of every action whatsoever, and therefore not only of every action of a private individual, but of every measure of government.

The idea here is simple. Pleasure and happiness are obviously desirable; they are sought and there is a clear sense in which they are to be sought. And pain and miserable are obviously the very opposite of desirable; and there is a clear sense in which they are avoided and are to be avoided. Therefore, it stands to reason that if one maximizes pleasure, not just for oneself but for everyone, then one is doing good, and if one maximizes pain (same qualification) then one is doing wrong.

These considerations do not definitively establish the truth of utilitarianism, but they do make it clear at an intuitive level what the motivation for it is.

Let us now turn to the case of Mr. Carcelleta. Mr. Carcelleta was an unemployed and mentally man who, at night, would take coins from a local fountain. In doing this, he did not disturb the peace. At the same time, he was indeed taking coins that were not his to donate to the needy.

These being the facts, let us ask: From a utilitarian viewpoint, is Mr. Carcelleta behaving morally correctly? First of all, when the utilitarian asks 'is action x morally correct?', he is really just asking 'does x maximize pleasure/happiness?' So when the

utilitarian asks 'were Mr. Carcelleta's actions morally correct?', he is really just asking 'do Mr. Carcelleta's actions maximize pleasure (not just his own, but everyone's)?'

The answer to this question is: Mr. Carcelleta's actions *might* maximize pleasure and, consequently, might from a utilitarian viewpoint be morally correct. Presumably the City of Rome regularly collects the coins that are tossed into the fountain. Suppose that it then melts these coins down and turns them into guns, which it then uses to kill innocent people. In that case, by depriving the City of Rome of these coins, Mr. Carcelleta's actions are saving innocent lives and preventing an enormous amount of pain; and from a utilitarian viewpoint, Mr. Carcelleta's actions are therefore morally correct. (We must also remember that for the utilitarian, Mr. Carcelleta's own happiness has moral weight. So if his taking the coins increases his level of happiness, as it presumably does, then from a utilitarian perspective that very fact adds to the moral rightness of his action.)

At the same time, if the circumstances just described are not the actual circumstances (and, realistically speaking, they are probably not), then from a utilitarian viewpoint Mr. Carcelleta's actions might be morally wrong. Suppose that the City of Rome uses the coins from the fountain to subsidize cancer-treatment for children. In that case, by taking those coins, Mr. Carcelleta is depriving those children of much needed cancer-treatment and is therefore depriving them of happiness and is also depriving their loved ones of happiness. And in that case, Mr. Carcelleta's actions are

wrong from a utilitarian viewpoint (and probably from many other viewpoints). Of course, Mr. Carcelleta's probably make increase *his* level of happiness, but (under the just-described circumstance) they surely do not increase his level of happiness as much as they decrease the happiness of the various children and family members thereof in question. For this reason, Mr. Carcelleta's actions would cause more unhappiness than happiness and would therefore be wrong from a utilitarian viewpoint.

In general, the answer to the question 'is act x morally correct from a utilitarian viewpoint?' is 'it depends.' If x causes more misery than happiness, then x is wrong (according to the utilitarian); and if x causes more happiness than misery, then x is right; if it causes happiness and misery in equal measure, it is morally neutral. And it does not matter what x is. If x is an act of murder that happens to cause more pleasure than pain, then x is right for the utilitarian. And if x is an act of saving a drowning infant that happens to cause more misery than happiness, then x is wrong from a utilitarian viewpoint.

Realistically speaking, Mr. Carcelleta's actions were probably morally wrong from a utilitarian viewpoint. The City of Rome probably put the money from the fountain to some kind of constructive use. It probably used it to fund some valuable civic project (fixing potholes, funding homeless shelters, or fountain the fountain itself). If this is the case, then Mr. Carcelleta's actions forced the City of Rome either to forego those projects or to get the money needed from them from somewhere else, in either of

which cases Mr. Carcelleta's actions almost certainly caused more unhappiness than happiness.

We must also bear in mind that, however paradoxical it might seem at first, Mr. Carcelleta might himself have been happier in the long run if he hadn't taken that money. Not having access to that easy money might have forced him or his loved ones to find him legitimate employment and to undergo much needed psychiatric treatment, in which case he might well have ended up far happier, having as he would a secure sense of income, along with mental health and self-respect.

[The Paradox of the Self-aware Wretch: An Analysis of Pascal's Moral Philosophy](#)

According to Blaise Pascal, "Man's greatness lies in his capacity to recognize his wretchedness So it is wretched to know one is wretched, but there is greatness in the knowledge of one's wretchedness."

A wretched being that knows that it is wretched is not as wretched as it would be if it lacked self-knowledge. But if a self-aware creature tries to turn a blind eye to its own self-knowledge, then it is doubly-wretched.

What does this mean? Let us go about this indirectly. Consider some creature that we would naturally think of as 'wretched', a rat for instance. Suppose that this hypothetical rat became aware of its wretchedness. In other words, suppose that it

became self-aware. In that case, it would be more than what it previously was. In other words, it would be greater than it was when it was not self-aware or, therefore, aware of its own wretchedness. A creature that is self-aware is obviously greater than an otherwise similar creature that is not self-aware.

But this creature would pay a heavy price for this self-awareness. When this rat was just a rat, it did not see itself as wretched. To be sure, it was wretched, but it didn't know that and it was therefore living in a state of 'ignorant bliss.' But when this rat becomes aware of itself, it sees itself for what it is, and it is no longer in a state of ignorant bliss. Once it is aware of itself and sees itself for the wretch that it is, its emotions follow suit, and it experiences self-loathing, insecurity, and self-doubt. In other words, it has the emotions that a human being has.

This by itself is suggestive. If we imagine a creature that lacks self-awareness, it is not psychologically human. But if we give self-awareness to that same creature, then it suddenly becomes psychologically human. No creature is perfect, a consequence being that if a given creature were endowed with self-awareness, it would have flaws of its own to be conscious of. And it therefore seems that a certain self-loathing is inherent in self-consciousness.

In any case, once this rat becomes self-aware, and duly self-loathing, it is at an impasse. There is no doubt that objectively it is better off for being self-aware. First of all, its sphere of awareness is larger, and that by itself makes it better in some significant

sense than it used to be. Also, because it is self-aware and sees itself for what it is, it can start to improve itself. Self-knowledge is the first step on the road to self-improvement.

But even though, for the reasons just stated, this hypothetical rat is objectively better off now that it has self-awareness, it is not subjectively better off. In other words, its emotional condition is not better. In fact, its emotional condition is probably considerably worse. Creatures that lack self-awareness are not depressed or insecure. They do not think in terms of how they should be, since, lacking self-awareness, they do not think about themselves at all. So this rat's new-found self-awareness is both a blessing and a curse. Existentially, it is a blessing. Emotionally, it is a curse.

This rat has a choice to make. On the one hand, it can 'own' its self-awareness and attempt to make the necessary changes to itself. On the other hand, it can go into denial-mode: it can choose to turn a blind eye to the knowledge of itself that it now has. It can pretend that it doesn't know what it does know.

If the rat makes the first choice, it will experience self-doubt and anxiety. But its life will be real; it will not be a lie. If the rat makes the second choice, it will have at least some relief from the anxiety and self-doubt that would otherwise be hounding it. But if it takes the second path, its life will be a lie, and it will make itself more wretched than it was previously.

In the above discussion, replace the term 'rat' with 'human.' The resulting statements describe the human condition. Human beings are wretched animals that

have self-consciousness and therefore know how wretched they--and for that very reason that much less wretched. However wretched one is, self-knowledge makes one that much less wretched.

And that is the meaning of Pascal's statement: "Man's greatness lies in his capacity to recognize his wretchedness.So it is wretched to know one is wretched, but there is greatness in the knowledge of one's wretchedness." What makes us better than rats and monkeys? Our self-awareness. What makes us better than rats, monkeys and other 'wretches' is that we see ourselves for what we are and they don't. Socrates said that what made him knowledgeable was his knowledge that he had no knowledge. (He was knowledgeable because he knew that he was not knowledgeable.) According to Pascal, what makes us non-wretched (for lack of a better term) is our knowledge that we are wretches. (We are non-wretched because we know that we are wretched.)

This means that we are non-wretched only as long as we do not regress into a condition of delusion. If we try to tell ourselves that we are not wretched, we lose the margin knowledge that separates us from the rats, monkeys, and the like. But if we don't lie to ourselves, then we are in pain.

But it isn't really an option to unlearn what one has learned. People can run from self-knowledge, but they cannot entirely escape it. And when they try to escape it, they don't live in a state of ignorant bliss, even though that is what they would like. The life of a rat or monkey may be 'wretched', but it is real: it isn't a sham. Similarly, even

though the life of somebody who cops to his self-knowledge may be painful, it too is real. But the life of someone who has self-consciousness but turns a blind eye to what he knows is not real. That person's life is about anesthetizing himself with fairy tales and distractions. That person's life is about avoiding reality, and that person has to replace the reality he is fleeing from with narratives--with distractions and amusements and other ways of warding off his knowledge of his actual condition. But those distractions, precisely because they aren't rooted in reality, only work for so long. And when their magic wears off, one ends up bored and looking for a new thrill, a new way to pass the time.

And so it is that Pascal cryptically says: "man's condition. Inconstancy, boredom, anxiety." In this quotation, "anxiety" refers to the anxiety of knowing that one is a wretched and not repressing that knowledge. "Boredom" refers to the boredom and emptiness resulting from the just-discussed escapism. Fantasy is fine for a while, but inevitably becomes boring, precisely because it isn't real and the illusion is inevitably seen through. "Inconstancy" refers to the tendency that human beings have to vacillate between 'owning' their knowledge of their own condition and fleeing from that knowledge.

Similar points hold of the following fragment: "Man does not know on which level to put himself. He is obviously lost and has fallen from his true place without being able to find it again. He looks for it everywhere restlessly and unsuccessfully in

impenetrable darkness." Man's condition is inherently ambiguous. When he looks in the mirror, he sees a wretch. But the very fact that he can look in the mirror (be self-aware) means that he is more than a wretch. He can't simply identify with the creature in the mirror. Nor can he completely dissociate himself from the wretch in the mirror. So he is both wretch and God and therefore "does not know on which level to put himself."

Finally, these points help us understand what Pascal means when he says: "I blame equally those who decide to praise man, those who blame him, and those who want to be diverted. I can only approve of those who search in anguish." Those who praise men are in denial; they deny that man is a wretch (an animal). Those who blame man are also in denial. When people are blamed, it is for their imperfections. But people are not responsible for their imperfections; they are not sufficiently God-like to be responsible for all of their own shortcomings. The only people who can be approved of are those who, while accepting their own shortcomings, strive to be better and don't flee from the 'anguish' of these self-induced growing pains.

The following quotation (from Fragment 33) is to be understood along similar lines. "Wretchedness. The only thing that consoles us for our miseries is distraction, yet that is the greatest of our wretchedness." Analysis: Knowledge of our wretchedness makes us miserable but it also makes us great, and we become doubly wretched if we try to sweep that knowledge under the rug.

In light of these points, the meaning of the following quotation (from Fragment 106) is fairly clear: "We must know ourselves. Even if that did not help in discovering truth, it would at least help in putting order into our life. Nothing is more proper." In saying that we must 'know' ourselves, Pascal is saying that we must not bury our knowledge of what we are. (He is saying that we should *continue* to know ourselves and should not repress this knowledge.) And the reason is simply that if don't 'know' ourselves (retain a certain level of self-awareness) ourselves, we are living a lie. Contrariwise, if we *do* retain the requisite level of self-awareness, we are not living a lie and our lives are therefore coherent and 'in order.' And it is not necessary our self-awareness "help in discovering truth", i.e. it is not necessary that our self-awareness rise to the level of psychoanalytic insight. It is necessary only that we see ourselves with enough clarity that our lives cannot becoming mere exercises in self-deception.

Jean-Paul Sartre: Decline and Fall of a Marxist Sell-out

The video-series ("Human all too human: Sartre") made a number of striking facts about Sartre's life clear. First, he initially very much seemed to try to live in accordance with his own existentialism. He very much tried to live freely and not to surrender his identity to cultural norms or to other people's expectations of him. I have read *Being and Nothingness* many times, and the purity and simplicity of its message is striking: *Be*

free or be fake. That is its message. And it's not just asserting it; it is providing a credible metaphysical defense of it.

The idea is that mind, being representational, must be a kind of cavity---or 'nothingness'---into which the rest of the world is able to reflect itself. Were the mind as much a 'fullness' as other beings, so it is argued, then it wouldn't have the reflectiveness (or 'intentionality', to use Brentano's term, which Sartre also uses) characteristic of mind. Being a kind of non-being, so to speak, mind is not subject to the usual determinisms that govern the rest of reality and is therefore inherently free, attempts on our part to believe otherwise being so much 'bad faith', as Sartre puts it.

This reasoning, though obviously questionable, is impressive; and even if it does not itself go through, the proposition that Sartre is attempting to establish---namely, that if we don't live freely, then we aren't really living at all---can and should be accepted.

The video seemed to suggest that, for a while, Sartre himself *did* accept this, his acceptance of it being manifested in the creativity and originality of his brilliant early works, such as *Nausea* (1938) and *Being and Nothingness* (1943). But then, it seems to me, he ceased to accept it. This happened in two phases. First, his acceptance of it assumed degraded forms: instead of continuing to be an iconoclastic thinker, he became a rather garden-variety debauched party-boy, drinking to excess and carrying on with, and therefore presumably manipulating, multiple women at the same time.

Many philosophers, including very ancient ones such as Confucius, have been quick to distinguish between genuine freedom, on the one hand, and mere self-indulgence, on the other. At some point, Sartre's behavior down-shifted from the one to the other. The cause, I suspect, was the extreme success of his early work, which turned him into an icon, which in turn made him self-important and soft. Note that all of the works of his that are still read were published at the very beginning of his career: *Nausea* (1938), *The Imagination* (1940), *Being and Nothingness* (1943), and *No Exit* (1940). In addition to being his best works and to being the ones for which he is *still* famous, they are also the ones that catapulted him to fame.

But after he became famous, his work deteriorated. Although he published quite a lot during the 50s, the only work of his from that period that is at all widely read is *Existentialism is a Humanism*, which, though it makes some good points, is just a 20 page, watered down version of *Being and Nothingness*. To its credit, it does contain the famous phrase: *existence precedes essence*, which, as Star Trek fans know, was paraphrased as "existence precedes programming" by a robot that became self-aware and consequently became free. In any case, Sartre's 1950s work simply didn't have the same 'zip' as his earlier work.

The second phase of Sartre's degeneration was his descent into Marxism. First of all, Marxism seems to be the opposite of Sartre's existentialism. The basic precept of existentialism is: you are free to choose your own fate—indeed, you have no choice but

to do so. The basic precept of Marxism is: You are *not* free to choose your own fate, since your socioeconomic status has already decided it for you. (Later versions of Marxism would say that your gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity, as well as your socioeconomic status, co-determine your life-situation.) So it is deeply unclear how an existentialist can also be a Marxist.

Sartre spent the 1960s and 1970s trying to reconcile existentialism and Marxism, his main effort in this direction being a giant work called *Critique of Dialectical Reasoning*. I personally don't know whether this work has merit. I have made several attempts to read it, but simply found it boring and unintelligible; and I was struck by the contrast with his fast-paced and highly readable early works.

The video does a good job of discussing this part of Sartre's career. The one interviewee really nailed it when he said that Sartre's Marxism was really about his ceasing to be the upstart that he once was and becoming a member of a tired old establishment. In other words, Sartre's Marxism, though superficially about him being a rebel, was about him selling out. And it was this loss of his old existentialism-based identity that made his later work so boring. His early work had one focus: existentialism. His later work had two foci: existentialism *and* Marxism—which meant it had *no* focus, which made it incoherent and therefore boring.

[A One Page Proof of Plato's Theory of Forms](#)

The essence of Plato's Theory of Forms is this. Anything that exists in space-time is but an instance of something that does not itself so exist. Consider some spherical object---a ball of some kind. (For expository reasons, suppose that this object is perfectly spherical.) This object, being spherical, is an 'instance' of the property--or, as Plato would say, the 'form'--of roundness. Of course, this object is also an instance of innumerably many other properties (or 'forms'). Supposing that it's mass is n , it is an instance of the property of having that mass; supposing that it's molecular/atomic structure is xyz , it is an instance of the property of that having xyz .

Plato's theory of forms is correct. The supposition that properties exist (not property-instances, but properties *per se*) is necessary to validate even the most rudimentary inferences. For example 'if John and Bill are both tall, then there is something they have in common'. This inference obviously goes through, and it presupposes the existence of a property (tallness), as its meaning is: 'If John and Bill are both tall, there is some property of which they are both instances.'

Attempts have been made to replace statements about properties with statements about their instances, but such attempts inevitably fail. The statement 'one can have most of the properties of a great businessman without being a great businessman' cannot be 'translated' into a statement that does not presuppose the existence of properties.

As for the idea that properties are identical with (or in some way or other constituted by) their instances, that too is a non-starter. For example, some have tried to identify the property of being a rock with a 'scattered object' consisting of all rocks. But this move fails, since even though that 'scattered object' is always undergoing changes (in the locations of its various constituents as well the location of its outer boundary), the property of being a rock does not undergo any changes (or, in any case, does not undergo corresponding changes), which, given Leibniz's Law (x and y have the very same properties if $x=y$) means that the property of being a rock is not identical with that 'scattered object.' Analogous reasoning refutes any attempt to identify any property with any spatiotemporal entity.

Plato himself mischaracterized his own theory of forms, by assuming that forms (properties) must in some way or other 'resemble' their own instances. And, of course, if it is assumed that instances of forms must resemble forms (or otherwise be related to them in the way that spatiotemporal objects are related to other spatiotemporal objects)--in other words, if it is assumed that the instantiation-relation is similar to a relation that holds among form-instances---then, yes, various paradoxes will arise (of the kind discussed by Plato himself, notably in the *Parmenides*, and also of the kind discussed by Aristotle, the main such paradox being the 'third man' paradox, this paradox that if instantiation involves resemblance, then there must be a third term to ground the resemblance, and a fourth term to ground the resemblance-relation

involving the third term, and so on ad infinitum). But the very essence of Plato's Theory of Forms is that forms, being non-spatiotemporal, do not relate to their instances in the way in which spatiotemporal entities relate to other spatiotemporal entities: they do not resemble them, are not composed by them, and do not causally interact.

To say that properties (or 'forms') exist is simply to say that there are 'ways' things can be: being round is a way that a thing can be, and so is being green or red or male or female. Ways things can be are not spatiotemporal, even though instances of such ways are (in some cases) spatiotemporal. (Properties are themselves instances of other properties, e.g. the property of being green is an instance of the property of being a color-property--- hence the parenthetical hedge.) So Plato's Theory of Forms is not only a theory but a demonstrably correct one.

Plato's Republic as Pol Potist Bureaucracy

For Plato, justice is identical with people staying in their 'rightful place.' ("[T]o do one's own business, in some shape or other, is justice." [433 b]) Plato has a very narrow and hierarchical conception of what a person's 'rightful place' is. He believes that a person's social position should be determined by his 'nature.' He further believes that one's 'nature' cannot in any relevant respects change. ("You are, all of you in this community, brothers. But when god fashioned you, he added gold in the composition of

those of you who are qualified to be Rulers (which is why your prestige is greatest); he put silver in the Auxiliaries, and iron and bronze in the farmers and other workers." [412 e])

A corollary is that, for Plato, social strata should be rigidly defined, it being necessary that the barriers between them be virtually impenetrable. ("If they [the non-ruling classes] follow these rules, they will be safe themselves and the saviors of the city; but whenever they come to possess lands, and houses, and money of their own, they will be householders and cultivators instead of guardians, and will become hostile masters of their fellow-citizens rather than their allies." [416 b])

Further, Plato doesn't acknowledge the legitimacy of a person's private life. For him, the entirety of a person's life should be subordinate to the interests of the state. Marriages should be arranged. ("We must arrange for marriage, and make it as sacred an affair as we can. And a sacred marriage is one that produces the most beneficial results." [458 e]) And people must never marry or reproduce with people outside of their social classes. ("Guardians must 'mate the best of our men with the best of our women as often as possible, and the inferior men with the inferior women as seldom as possible, and bring up only the offspring of the best.'" [459 e])

In Plato's 'ideal republic', life is so micromanaged by the state that there is practically no such thing as private life. Every aspect of each citizen's life must be in alignment with the interests of the state, and existence is completely collectivized. ("Our

men and women Guardians should be forbidden by law to live together in separate households, and all the women should be common to all the men; similarly, children should be held in common, and no parent should know its child, or child its parent." See also: "They shall have no private property beyond the barest essentials. Second, none of them shall possess a dwelling-house or storehouse to which all have not the right of entry. Next, their food shall be provided by the other citizens as an agreed wage for the duties they perform..." [416 d])

Plato correctly states that such a rigidly hierarchical social arrangement cannot be sustained unless the masses are kept ignorant and constantly lied to. ("And no one but the rulers must know what is happening, if we are to avoid dissension in our Guardian herd." [459 a])

So with respect to the question "To what extent does justice (for Plato) depend upon the state propagation of falsehoods?", the answer is: Completely. For Plato, justice depends on the state's constantly lying to its own citizenry. Not only that. It depends on its keeping them ignorant and also in the resulting gaps in its citizens' knowledge with carefully constructed propaganda. Plato himself says this. Plato clearly states that the state must constantly subject its own citizenry to propaganda (pro-state lies) if the state is to remain intact and unified, it being Plato's contention that nothing is more important than unity and intactness of the state. ("Is there anything worse for a state to be split and fragmented, or anything better than cohesion and unity?" [462 b])

As for the question “Insofar as deception is necessary to maintain justice, can Plato’s distinction between benign or beneficial lies and improper or dangerous ones be sustained?”, the answer is: No--not at all. Of course, the answer to this question is tautologously ‘yes’ *if* one accepts Plato’s conception of ‘justice.’ But according to Plato’s conception of justice, nobody is entitled to any freedoms of any kind. Since there is no independent reason to accept such a conception of justice, and every reason to reject, the *actual* answer to the above question is indeed: No. The lies that, in Plato’s view, the state should require its citizens to accept are ones that the state must tell if it is to continue to enforce Plato’s conception of justice, According to that conception of justice, people do not have the right to listen to the kind of music they enjoy or marry the people they love or indeed do much of anything that they personally would like to do. Since such a restrictive conception of justice is false and evil, any lies that are told to uphold it are *ipso facto* evil, and there is therefore to principled distinction between good and evil lies in relation to such a conception.

Post for Week 3

The problem of the one and the many

It seems to me that there are many different versions of the so-called “problem of the one and the many.” From what I can gather, the original version of this problem is

given by the question: “What is it that unifies the various different parts of the universe? In other words, in virtue of what fact are the various different objects in the universe—the various animals and particles and planets and so on—components of a single universe, as opposed to multiple different universes?”

Physics has already answered this question. Any two events are causally connected. (Any two events either have common causal origins or one is part of a causal chain that is responsible for the other.) If there is absolutely no conceivable causal connection between two events---if there is no possible causal process either directly linking them or linking them by way of some third event---then it simply makes no sense to say that they belong to the same universe.

Relativity Theory made this position popular, at least among physicists, the reason being that, in Relativity Theory, chronological relations are *defined* in terms of causal relations. (e1 is said to pre-date e2 if and only if e1 can have a causal influence on e2; and e1 and e2 are said to be simultaneous if neither can have a causal influence on the other.) But it seems to me that, at some level, all people must accept it, since it seems incoherent to suppose that two events could be totally causally divorced from each other but belong to the same universe.

In any case, when I was watching the videos about Parmenides and Thales, it occurred to me that, when people refer to “the problem of the one and many” there is a second problem that they sometimes have in mind. Thales said that everything is water,

and Parmenides said that, despite appearances, nothing changes. The first view is false, and the second is not only false but absurd. But it seems to me that both of these hypotheses embody the insight that a few immutable natural laws are responsible for the various changes that occur in the universe; and when people refer to “the problem of the one and the many”, they are sometimes referring to the question: What are these laws? In other words, what are the unchanging principles underneath and responsible for the various changes that occur?” Once again, this question, though presented in this context as a philosophical question, is one that can only be answered on scientific grounds, through observation and experimentation and the like, and that has been answered to a considerable extent.

Schopenhauer and Camus on the meaning of life:

Four Short Essays on Truth and Knowledge

Question: What is truth? How did you come up with this answer?

Answer: Truth is a property of beliefs and, more generally, of representations. A representation is true (or 'accurate') if the world is as it represents the world as being, and otherwise false (or 'inaccurate'). Thus, truth is the property of 'fitting' the world. Truth is not exactly a characteristic of the world; it is a characteristic of the relation between representations and the world, and those relations have that property when the world is as those representations depict it as being.

This analysis of truth seems pretty commonsensical to me. Let us say that I draw person X. If my drawing represents X as being fat, when he is in fact skinny, then my drawing is not 'true to who X is'; and if my drawing represents X as being skinny, when he in fact is skinny, then my drawing is true to who X is. In general, truth is fidelity to the facts.

Answer: Is there such a thing as objective/absolute truth? Explain your answer

As previously discussed, truth is not a property of the world; it is rather a relationship between representations and the world. It is a relation of conformity or correspondence. If there were no representations of the world—no thoughts, no statements, no pictures, no ideas of any kind—then there would be no truth. (There

would be states of affairs in virtue of which if there were representations, some of them would be true or accurate while others would be false or inaccurate.

So if the statement 'truth is objective' is taken to mean that truth exists 'all by itself', regardless of how any one's ideas represent the world as being, then no, there is no such thing as 'objective truth'; for truth, being a property of relations between representations and reality, wouldn't even exist if there were no representations.

But truth is 'objective' if the statement 'truth is objective' is taken to mean that, if there are representations of the world, then it is up to the world, not us, whether those representations are accurate. It is up to me to believe that tree X is taller than tree Y, but it is not up to me whether that thought it is true. It may well be that people have different opinions on the relative heights of those trees, but that is irrelevant to their actual heights. X is either taller than Y, the same height as Y, or shorter than Y. It is up to human beings (or other sentient creatures) to have ideas on the matter, and thus to generate true or false representations of that state of affairs. And to that extent, truth is subject-dependent and thus 'subjective.' But once those representations have been generated, it is not up to those people, or any other people, whether those representations are accurate.

Question: How do you know if something is likely to be true or not? Explain your

answer

Answer: When deciding whether a given representation (belief or statement) R is true, the relevant question is: Supposing that R is true, would the world be more anomalous than it would otherwise be? In other words, would the world contain more discontinuities, more sheer coincidences, more cases of things randomly popping into existence than it would otherwise contain? If the answer is yes: if R were true, then the world would contain more anomalies (or a great net level of anomalousness) than it would contain if R were false—then R is false. If the answer is—no: if R were false, then the world would contain more anomalies (or a great net level of anomalousness) than it would contain if R were true—then R is true. If the answer is—neither: if R is true, then the world is exactly as anomalous as it would be if R is false—then the answer is: We have no principled way of deciding the matter.

We can't compare beliefs directly with the realities they are supposed to represent; for we only know reality through our beliefs. Our only litmus test for determining whether a belief is true or not is whether it does a good of explaining the data at our disposal. If it does a good of accounting for that data and its negation does a bad job, then that belief is probably true. If its negation does a better job of accounting for that data, then that belief is probably false. If that belief is neither better nor worse at accounting for that data than its negation, then there is no way of deciding between them.

Question: Presumably, you are currently in front of your computer or phone reading this question right now. How certain are you that you are indeed, conscious and reading this? Can you prove to me that you are not actually dreaming or in some sort of simulation machine (think of the "Matrix" if you have seen the movie)?

Answer: Right now, I believe that I am typing on a real computer (not a dream-computer or hallucination-internal computer) and, in general, that I am really engaging with the real world. How do I know this? First of all, I know that I am conscious (not awake, necessarily, but conscious). And I know how it is that my mental states represent the world as being. I also know that my mental states cohere with another. (When I am dreaming, they are disjointed and mutually incoherent.) Of course, given only these pieces of information, I could be dreaming—or so a skeptic would say. So how do I know that I am not?

Let's suppose that I am dreaming. In that case, my mind is not merely organizing various disturbances of my body's sensory surfaces. Rather, my mind is completely and totally responsible for everything that I am experiencing; it is writing fiction, as it were. And not just any fiction, but impeccably, utterly coherent fiction—fiction that omits no detail and is never inconsistent with itself. And where is my mind getting all of this information, all of the information needed to produce this complete

and perfect work of multi-sensory art? If we say that it is getting it from the outside world, then we are conceding the mind at least sometimes represents the world as it is, in which case, I am not in general hallucinating and it would be arbitrary to suppose that in this particular case I was hallucinating. On the other hand, suppose that my mind is simply manufacturing all of these ideas, without the support of anything external. In that case, these ideas simply arise ex nihilo in mind and are therefore so many unexplained miracles. Obviously a hypothesis that posits fewer miracles is to be preferred, at least if such a hypothesis is available. And such a hypothesis is available, namely, my mind is not simply 'making up' all of these experiences. Rather, these experiences are the fall-out of external realities of which they are representations and whose mutual relations the mutual relations of my experiences shadow, this being why my experiences are as a general rule both internally coherent as well as of practical use in guiding my conduct.

What is 'the Good Life?'

A life that nobody would want to have cannot possibly be considered a 'good life.' Nobody wants the life of somebody who is in constant torment, and that is surely because such a life is not worth having and—what may be equivalent—is not a good life. By the same token, a life of success, happiness, and sheer enjoyment *is* a life that people would want to have; and such a life would also qualify as a good life, at least by the

standards that are salient in people's minds. So there seems to be at least an 'operational equivalence' between 'that is the kind of life people would envy and want to have' and 'that is a good life.' And there is also an 'operational equivalence' between 'that is the kind of life people would *fear* having' and 'that is a bad life.'

We will see later that these 'equivalences' are indeed only approximate---that there are kinds of lives that people would want to have that would in some respects be bad and that there are kinds of lives that people would not want to have that would in some respects be good. But these 'equivalences' certainly help point us in the general direction of an answer to the question 'what kind of life is a good life, and what kind of life is a bad life?' Let us now turn to this question.

Is a life of constant pain a good life? Surely not. There is not much to say here: People who are in extreme pain do everything they can to stop being in extreme pain. Pain is not desired, and it seems axiomatic that there could not possibly be a coherent reason to endure it, except as a means to achieving some condition that was not itself one of sheer pain.

What about a life of constant pleasure? Would *that* be a good life? Here the answer is ambiguous. First of all, a life of constant pleasure would not be completely *bad*. And the reason is that pleasure is indeed a good thing.

But a life that consisted of nothing but pleasure would not be completely good. And the reason is that, although pleasure is *a* good thing, it is not the *only* good thing.

Intelligence is a good thing; alertness is a good thing; athletic prowess is a good thing; strength (whether of character or of body) is a good thing. In general, *potency* is a good thing. The ability to grasp truths and change the world to suit one's vision of it is a supremely good thing.

And the having of a given form of potency is surely not *identical* with the experiencing of pleasure. To be sure, any given form of potency certainly conduces to pleasure at certain junctures. Having intelligence has its distinctive pleasures, as does any other form of potency. But there is more to being intelligent or otherwise potent than experiencing pleasure or even being disposed to experience pleasure. In fact, any given form of potency seems to involve distinctive forms of pain or displeasure. There is much that displeases an intelligent person that an unintelligent person simply isn't aware of and that consequently doesn't displease such a person.

In fact, if one has a given form of potency, one for that reason experiences forms of adversity that one would not otherwise experience: the strong person knows the pleasure of bench-pressing 300 lbs., but he also knows the pain and strife involved in doing so; and his weak counterpart doesn't know either.

In fact, the very concept of *adversity* is to be understood in terms of the concept of potency: one experiences adversity when one has some potency but not an infinite amount. If one had infinite strength, one could lift a 300 lbs. barbell with infinite ease and would experience no adversity in doing so. If one had zero strength, one couldn't

even initiate the task of lifting a barbell and wouldn't experience any adversity in doing so. (I cannot fly---in fact, I am so incapable of flying that I cannot even *try* to do so. So for me, flying, or even trying to fly, is a non-affair and therefore a zero-adversity affair.)

Thus, in order for a life to be a good life, it is not enough that it be full of pleasure. In order for a life to be a good one, it has to involve the having, and possibly also the acquiring, of potency. And while this involves a certain amount of gratification, it also seems to involve a certain amount of adversity and therefore of *displeasure*.

There is also a subtler reason why a life of sheer pleasure would not be a maximally good life. Many forms of pleasure presuppose some kind of potency. Unless I had an aptitude for composing, I could not experience the pleasure of composing. Unless I had an aptitude for philosophy, I could not experience the pleasure of engaging in philosophical discourse.

In fact, with few exceptions, if any, the ability to experience pleasure seems to involve at least some kind of ability. We have seen that ability, though conducive to pleasure, cannot be identified with the experiencing of pleasure or even with a predisposition to have such experiences. And we have also seen that exercising any given form of potency involves at least a certain amount of adversity. So the idea that a good life is *just* about experiencing pleasure and not experiencing displeasure is false. True—a life of sheer *displeasure* is bad. But a life of sheer pleasure is not possible; indeed, the very concept of such a life is not even coherent.

This brings us to one last point about the nature of pleasure. It seems that a certain degree of *displeasure* is actually *built into* any given pleasure. Unless one experienced thirst, one could not experience the pleasure of drinking cool water. Unless one experienced sexual frustration, one could not experience sexual pleasure. So granting that a good life necessarily *involves* experiencing pleasure, the very nature of pleasure—specifically, its dependence on the existence of displeasure—shows that a good life is not *merely* about experiencing pleasure and avoiding pain.

What about the idea that a good life is about *gratifying one's desires*? The merits and demerits of this thesis parallel the merits and demerits of the thesis that a good life is about experiencing pleasure.

First of all, a life in which one's desires were *never* gratified would not be a good life. Second, a life in which one's desires were always gratified would not be a *bad* life. So desire-gratification is clearly *necessary* for a good life.

But it is not sufficient. First of all, without a certain amount of frustration—of desire-*non*-fulfillment, in other words—one won't have desires in the first place. I can have a desire to gratify only if I have one that is not yet gratified. I can enjoy the gratification of drinking cool ice-water only if I first have a desire to drink that is not being sated.

So it seems that *built in* to any case of desire-gratification is a certain degree of desire-*non*-gratification. And for this reason, the concept of a life of sheer desire-

gratification is not even a coherent one, and the having of a good life therefore cannot be identified with the having of a life of sheer desire-gratification.

But there is another reason why the good life is not one of sheer desire-gratification. Suppose that a given creature had just one desire, e.g. a desire to drink water, which it routinely sated in the most completely gratifying way possible. Such a creature's life would be good in its way. But surely there are better lives that a creature could have.

As previously stated, an essential component of a good life is *potency*. A life of desire-gratification that involved no potency—no intelligence, no strength, no creativity--would not be an optimal life. And no potency can be *identified* with desire-gratification or even with a predisposition to experience desire-gratification.

To be sure, if one has a certain kind of potency, one is likely to experience certain forms of gratification. If one is a good tennis player, one will have certain desires that corresponding to that ability and one will also have a tendency to gratify them. But that ability is more basic than, as it is the root and cause of, those desires and also of the gratification thereof. And that ability is also surely a good thing, as is any given ability. Therefore, since the having of abilities is necessary for having a genuinely good life, such a life is not just about desire-gratification.

Also, having desires tends to involve having some antecedent ability. Somebody who has no musical ability at all may *wish* to compose a symphony, and he may even be

said to desire it. But he cannot desire it in the same way that Mozart can desire it. Somebody who has no philosophical ability may wish, and possibly even desire, to write a philosophical dialogue. But he cannot desire it in the same way that Plato can desire it.

Before proceeding, let us organize our findings.

A life of sheer pain or displeasure is bad. But there is more to a good life than pleasure; moreover, a certain amount of displeasure is necessary for pleasure. Also, at least some forms of pleasure presuppose certain forms of potency; and potency, though conducive to pleasure, cannot be identified with the experiencing of pleasure or even with a predisposition to experience pleasure. Given that potency is essential for a good life, it follows that there is more to life than experiencing pleasure.

A life of sheer desire-frustration is bad. But there is more to life than desire-gratification; and a certain amount of desire-frustration is inherent in the experiencing of desire-gratification. Moreover, at least some forms of desire-gratification presuppose some form of potency; and potency, though conducive to desire-gratification, is not identical with desire-gratification or even with a predisposition to experience desire-gratification. Given that potency is essential for a good life, it follows that there is more to life than experiencing desire-gratification.

What we are seeing is that a good life is about *fulfillment*. It is about having abilities and developing them and, on that basis, acquiring *more* abilities. The good life is

about having, developing, and acquiring new forms of *potency*. The good life is about *growth*.

Having potency, as well as acquiring it, *involves* experiencing certain pleasures; but it is not identical with having pleasures and even involves experiencing a certain amount of displeasure. At the same time, a life of sheer pain would be a life of impotence. And that—though surely not the only reason, or even the primary reason, why a life of sheer pain would be bad, is at least *a* reason for it.

Similarly, having potency, as well as acquiring it, *involves* experiencing certain forms of desire-gratification; but it is not identical with desire-gratification or even with a tendency to have desire-gratification and even involves the experiencing of a certain amount of desire-frustration. At the same time, a life of sheer desire-frustration would be a life of impotence. And that---though surely not the only reason, or even the primary reason, why a life of sheer desire-frustration would be bad, is at least *a* reason for it.

What we are seeing is that the good life is about acquiring and developing ability. Having and developing ability necessarily involves pleasure and desire-gratification; and it also necessarily involves one's tendency to experience pleasure and desire-gratification having a certain dominance over one's tendency to experience displeasure and desire-frustration. But ultimately the good is primarily about fulfillment—about

ability-acquisition and -maximization—and only secondarily about either pleasure or desire-gratification.

The Ontological Argument

The Ontological Argument in a nutshell

God is a maximally excellent being (a being such that nothing greater than it can be conceived). Premise

A maximally excellent being exists in my mind. Premise

Suppose that a maximally excellent being exists in my mind but not in reality. In that case, that being is not maximally excellent, since an otherwise identical being that existed in reality would be superior to that being.

Therefore it is self-contradictory to suppose that a maximally great being exists in my mind but not in reality.

Therefore, since such a being exists in my mind, it also exists in reality.

Therefore, God exists.

Gaunilo's Lost Island Objection

If the Ontological Argument goes through, then so does the following argument:

A maximally perfect island exists in my mind.

Suppose that a maximally perfect island exists in my mind but not in reality. In that case, that island is *not* maximally perfect since an otherwise identical island that exists in reality is better than that island.

Therefore, it is self-contradictory to suppose that a maximally excellent island exists in my mind but not in reality.

Therefore, a maximally excellent island exists in reality.

No maximally excellent island exists. But if the just-stated argument were cogent, it would exist. And if the just-stated argument went through, the Ontological Argument would also go through. So the Ontological Argument does not go through.

Analysis of Gaunilo's Lost Island Objection

This objection establishes that the Ontological Argument Fails. But it does not establish *how* exactly it fails. As for *how* it fails, that is clear. To say that a house made of gold 'exists in my mind' is not to say that such a house actually exists, but only that I know conditions a being would have to meet to be a house made of gold. Therefore, the

Ontological Argument is based on an equivocal use of the term “exists”, this being why it fails.

Different Political Philosophies: Plato, Locke, Madison, Rousseau, Hayek, and Mill on the State

Question: Power corrupts. How have authors read for the course aimed to ensure that government promotes the interests of the governed? In your answer, discuss three or more of the following authors: Plato, Locke, Madison, Rousseau, Thoreau, Hayek, and Mill

Answer: I will focus on Madison, Mill and von Hayek. All three have the more or less the same view (government should restrict as little as only possible, only curtailing freedom to prevent violence), but they have it for slightly different reasons and have different recommendations as to how to actualize this conception of gov't.

According to Madison, there are two threats to liberty: the government and other people (the majority ganging up on the minority). Freedom from government tyranny is accomplished by dividing the government into mutually independent branches (e.g. executive/legislative/judiciary), allowing someone who is being oppressed by one such branch to seek relief from the others. As for protection from the majority, Madison's solution is to divide the government into Federal and local/state,

which divides the people up into a lot of little groups (different states, different counties, different cities), which makes it hard for them to form blocks that gang up on others. Madison says that pure democracy provides no protection to the minority against the majority, but that a 'republic' does do so, a 'republic' being indirect democracy (the people vote for representatives, and the representatives decide specific issues: the people themselves do not decide how to deal with specific issues). In this way, gov't protects people from itself and others and does the people the maximum amount of good.

According to Mill, people should be allowed as much freedom as possible (short of being violent to each other). A major threat to this is the tyranny of the majority. The way to protect against this is to have 'proportionate representation', meaning that if n% of the people vote for party x, then n% of elected officials should belong to party x. So if 3% of the people support the green party, 10% the black panther party, 23 % the libertarian party, etc., then 3% of the members of congress should be green party members, 10% black panther party members, etc. In this way, there is majority rule and minority rights.

According to Hayek, the sole purpose of government should be to allow the economy to run its course, and government's role should therefore be limited to enforcing contracts and preventing crimes and otherwise allowing the economy to flourish. If the government interferes with the economy, through planning or through

the outright confiscation of property, then the economy will fail and the people will be the worse for it.

Each of these authors wants the people to be protect from gov't and from others, but have different views as to how to accomplish this. Hayek's view is that the economy will give people what they need, the role of gov't being just to keep the economy alive. Madison and Mill want to protect people from each other, but have different views as to how to do this, with Mill believing the solution to be proportional representation and Madison believing the solution to be a Republican form of gov't.

Question: How does private property either promote or inhibit liberty in the works of three or more of the following authors: Plato, Locke, Rousseau, Mill, Goldman, and Marx & Engels?

Answer: According to Rousseau and Marx/Engels, the institution of private property leads people to exploit one another and to turn one another into commodities. According to Locke, property allows people to develop resources and provide for one another, thereby enhancing freedom.

Rousseau: when people have just enough, there are no problems; they are nice to each other. When some people begin to have more than they need (surpluses), there are problems. When people start to want more than they personally need, they need to

exploit others. And this means that they need strict laws in place to keep people compliant. So property (i.e. surplus property: enough property to exchange with others) leads to mutual exploitation, enslavement, injustice.

Marx/Engels: Private property leads people to turn each other into property. Under capitalism, people have only as much worth as they have economic value. And under capitalism, people want to make production efficient, leading to division of labor, leading in turn to meaningless tasks for workers and 'alienated' labor.

Locke: Labor is the basis of ownership. I come to own the land by tilling it. Without property, therefore, there would be no labor: nobody would work metal into machines or land into produce, etc. So property involves production and its absence involves its absence. As for the idea, that one is stealing from others by acquiring property, that is misconceived. In order to cultivate the land, somebody has to own it; but if he owns, he creates corns, etc. for everybody to consume that weren't there previously. So property leads to economic growth, which leads to a greater bounty for everyone. And when people have excessive surpluses of property, they have an incentive to exchange it, so the property tends to keep itself relatively evenly distributed. Property leads to development of resources and all the advantages and freedoms resulting therefrom. Absence of property means lack of incentive to work. Property equals freedom to tend to one's own needs and needs of others.

What do I know with certainty?

What do I know with certainty? I know much about my conscious states. I know that I am having perceptions that, *if accurate*, represent a computer-screen, and a pair of hands typing on a keyboard. Of course, as Descartes and other skeptics point out, it is a theoretical possibility that these 'perceptions' of mine are hallucinations; so I cannot know that they are accurate, at least not with complete certainty. But I can know with complete certainty that I am having those perceptions, and I can also know with such certainty what must be true of the world *if* those perceptual states of mine are to be accurate. The general rule seems to be that I cannot be wrong as to what my conscious states are telling me, even though I can be wrong as to the *truth* of what they are telling me.

Also, I believe that, within limits, I can know what it is that I believe. For example, I believe that I know with complete certainty that $1+1=2$. At the same time, I don't think I can know exactly what I believe; I think that each of us has many unconscious beliefs, and I think that even a given conscious belief is likely to have an unconscious side to it. For example, although I know with complete certainty that I believe that $1+1=2$, I do not know with the same degree of certainty, or even with any certainty, what other beliefs are embodied in that belief. For example, I know that my having that belief involves my

having various beliefs about addition and number and the like, but I'm not quite sure what those beliefs are. Nonetheless, I cannot coherently deny that I believe myself to believe that $1+1=2$ or that I sometimes daydream about going sailing.

Skepticism about skepticism

Skeptics, Descartes included, often motivate their skepticism by pointing out that we have inaccurate perceptions. Sometimes our perceptions are blurry (as when I'm not wearing glasses); sometimes they are simply inaccurate (as when a color-blind person sees green as blue and *vice versa*); and sometimes they are outright hallucinations. Skeptics, Descartes included, then go on to say that *all* of our so-called perceptions might be hallucinations. The idea seems to be that if this or that specific perception is inaccurate or simply hallucinatory, then it is possible that all of them are.

The first thing to point out is that this argument is invalid, as it is a case of inferring 'everything can have phi' from 'something has phi', this being the so-called "Fallacy of Compositionality." Given only that some cells of a living creature can be cancerous, it doesn't follow—for it is not the case--that all the cells of a living creature can be cancerous. Similarly, given only that some of our perceptions are inaccurate or hallucinatory, it doesn't follow that the same can be true of *all* of them.

Suppose that you have a working car. Every now and then, a given part will malfunction, and the engine will make a strange noise or you'll have trouble breaking, or some such. So it is obviously possible that one of the parts of a working car can malfunction. But can *all* of the parts of a working car malfunction? No.

Our perceptions are part of a coherent narrative. This is a datum, and we therefore cannot deny it, even if we assume for argument's sake that our perceptions might all be inaccurate. But if all our perceptions are inaccurate, then where do they come from? What is responsible for their existence?

We *could* say that they come from nothing. But even if that is a logical possibility, it is not an explanation; and if we take this position, we are really just saying that reality happens to be fragmented and lawless in a way that gives rise to coherent internal narratives---which is the very height of absurdity.

We could also take the position, or so we are told, that some 'evil demon' or 'mad scientist' is tinkering with our nerve endings and inducing coherent hallucinations. But if that is so, then these supposed hallucinations of ours would not really be hallucinations, since they would track *an* external reality, albeit not quite the one we thought. So the skeptic's position is, I think, more fragile than is generally admitted, since it either collapses into the position of the non-skeptic or amounts to saying that something can from nothing. And this very point seems to be the essence of Descartes' attempt to refute skepticism, granting that he took a long and not very helpful detour

through the concept of God—which, I supposed, we can chalk up to his living when he did.

Neuroscience and Freewill

Question: On YouTube, watch the video titled “Reading Your Mind”: give your thoughts below

Answer: The obvious response to have to the first video (“Reading Your Mind”) is to ask alarmist questions about the police using this technology to read our minds and destroy any last vestiges of freedom and privacy that we have. But in my view, the really relevant questions concern the educational (and, to a lesser extent, diagnostic) possibilities of this technology. If we knew exactly what kinds of thoughts people had in response to a given quantum of information, we could streamline education, and also customize it to fit a given person’s cognitive profile; and it looks as though this technology, when developed, will make this possible.

As for the concerns about the state using this technology to raid our psyches—that’s certainly possible, but it’s also extremely unlikely. The reasons for this have nothing to do with human nature: human beings obviously can and will do whatever they can to control people and would gladly use this technology. The reasons have to do entirely with the enormous costs involved in doing so, coupled with the latest

projections about the world's oil supply. The relevant question, I stress, is: how can we use this technology to optimize teaching?

As for the video about free will (“Neuroscience and Free Will”), that too was illuminating, with the qualification that it wasn't the topic of free will that was illuminated. The question ‘do we have free will?’ is very vague, and the short answer seems to be ‘no.’ The long answer seems to be something along the lines of: ‘no...but if your various psychological faculties are working with one another, instead of grinding up against one another, then you can have something that, although not quite what we mean when we talk about “free will”, has many of the same virtues.’ All of that said, the video made it clear just how much of our mental activity is unconscious or semi-conscious, and that is the respect in which it was illuminating.

Operant Conditioning

Question: On YouTube, watch “Operant Conditioning” and then watch “Consciousness and Free Will”: give your thoughts below

Answer: For me, the take-home from the B.F. Skinner video (“Operant Condition”) was how shallow a thinker Skinner was. True: gambling is compulsive, addiction-mediated behavior, and such behavior is indeed reflexive. That is why we

regard it as animalistic, and that is also why B.F. Skinner was discussing it. Skinner's theory is that all behavior is reflexive: no intelligence or rationality is involved. And compulsive, addiction-driven behavior is certainly more consistent with that theory than is non-addiction-driven, non-compulsive behavior. But the very fact that Skinner had to use a degenerate and reflexive form of behavior, such as gambling, in order to substantiate his theory shows how bankrupt that theory is.

As for the other video---"Consciousness and Free Will"---I was underwhelmed. Dennett goes on and on about how 'people' think that 'consciousness is just so wonderful', and he repeatedly says how stunted and misguided such people are. And maybe he's right. But he doesn't ever explain how to explain consciousness—at least not in that video and also not in his book *consciousness Explained*—which, though an extremely intelligent and informative book, does not so much explain consciousness as attempt to deny it. Which, of course, is implausible as well as self-refuting, given that, without consciousness, there are no denials or hallucinations or mistakes.

Dennett made one point that struck me as totally false. He says that it is because people believe in free will that they believe consciousness to be unexplainable. That's not accurate, at least categorically. If decisions are the result of causal mechanisms, then either we don't have free will, whatever that means, or we have it only in some attenuated sense. And if decisions are not the result of causal mechanisms, then those decisions have no roots in who we are and would seem to be disruptions of

freedom, like an epileptic, rather than expressions of it. One can believe all of that, as I do, while also believing that it is difficult if not impossible to psychological truths in terms of strictly physical truths. It may be that a desire to believe that we are free contributes a certain degree of emotional resistance to attempts a-la-Dennett to explain away consciousness. But I think the real resistance has to do with the fact that Dennett hasn't yet actually given us an explanation of consciousness—he has just berated people who hold onto the idea that it is unexplainable or, at least, unusually resistant to explanation.

What makes us special?

Question: On YouTube, watch "Ape Genius": give your thoughts below

The purpose of the video was supposedly to explain exactly how human beings were superior to chimpanzees. As it itself put it, it was to answer the question: Why do human study chimps, not the other way around?

The video didn't really answer this question, though it did hazard a guess, albeit 45 minutes into it. The mike-dropper of an answer that it gave was:

(TA) "Humans teach each other, but chimps don't, and chimps therefore have to learn everything they know on their own."

“TA” is short for ‘their answer.’

TA is not plausible. Chimps don’t teach each other because they can’t. Human beings do we because we can. So TA takes a mere consequence of the relevant difference between people and chimps to be the very the essence of that difference.

If TA were correct then, *if* chimps started teaching one another, they would come to be human-like in their intellectual proportions and configuration---even if everything else about them were held constant. But, of course, such a counterfactual is either trivial or absurd, depending on how it is looked at. It’s trivial if it is supposed that chimps magically acquired the ability to teach one another, and it is absurd if it is supposed that they could have this ability without acquiring the various abilities—had by us and lacked by them--underlying it.

So yes—chimps are smarter than most people are inclined to believe. The video proved this much. But no---it isn’t because people do, whereas chimps don’t, teach one another that we are able to study them but they are not able to study us. It’s the other way around: it is because we are able to study them, whereas they cannot study us, that we can teach one another, whereas chimps cannot.

So what *is* the difference between us and them? One point the video made that was important is that the difference is not strictly quantitative. It isn’t *just* that we have more brain-cells. There is some kind of existential divide that we are on one side of and that chimps are on the other side of.

That divide, I would suggest, is the ability to interact with reality through symbolism. Consider what we are doing in this very class and indeed in the context of this very assignment. We are exchanging symbols with one another. Most of us don't even know what most of the rest of us even look like. But that doesn't matter, because, unlike chimps, we don't need to look at one another's facial expressions and bodily behavior to communicate, since we, unlike chimps, have language at our disposal. And not just language, but a plurality of representational media: different kinds of visual art, different kinds of non-visual art, specialized mathematical and technical notations, not to mention *ad hoc* codes---none of which chimps have.

The video obscured this point when it showed the chimp supposedly 'adding one', which, supposing that it did in fact do so, it did by tapping on a now blank part of the screen that previously had a numeral one. The problem with this supposed proof is that the ability to 'add one' is one of the only forms of mathematical competence that can be mimicked by pretty much any creature. Could the chimp have multiplied by three? Or divided by four? What about exponentiation? No. Of course, not. Unless a creature can interact through symbols, as opposed to mere gestures, it doesn't even make sense to suppose that it is computing square roots or multiplying by fractions. Contrariwise, if one wants to prove that one's St. Bernard is a mathematician, the best one can do is prove that it can 'add one.'

Chimps have plenty of intelligence, as do cats and dogs and squirrels. Anyone who has had a cat knows how incredibly intuitive they are, not to mention how surgically precise their movements are. And the same can be said of chimps and terriers and pretty much all mammals, as well as many non-mammals. But there is some line that separates us from them, and that line is not the ability to teach one another; it is the ability to grasp meanings, as opposed to objects, which is a concomitant of the ability to understand symbols. A consequence of this ability is the ability to engage in certain forms of mutual instructions, but it is not mutual instruction that separates us from them.

In conclusion, the video, though informative, did not answer the question that it set out to answer, and, despite its attempt to show-case the intellectual abilities of chimpanzees, failed to give them credit for one of their most astonishing intellectual powers.

[Are Late-term Abortions Ethical? No](#)

A late-term abortion is one that is performed in the third trimester of pregnancy. Are such abortions ethical? In this paper, I consider the work of four reputable scholars,

two of whom argue that late-term abortions are ethical and two of whom argue that they are unethical. I arrive at the position that late-term abortions are unethical.

Before we consider what these scholars say, let us make some general points of a philosophical nature.

When an abortion is performed, two parties are involved: the mother and the fetus. The mother clearly has ethical rights, since she is indisputably a person. But does the fetus have rights? This is not clear, because it is not clear whether the fetus is a person. If the fetus is a person, then the fetus has rights. If the fetus is not a person--if it is a subhuman or a pre-person--then it either has no rights or has fewer rights than a person.

A newborn infant is considered a person. A newborn infant does not have particularly well-developed reasoning capabilities, but it has consciousness, it can experience sensations and perceptions, and it can experience emotion. A one day old fetus is probably not a person since it has none of these attributes.

Should it turn out that a fetus in the third trimester has all of the psychological attributes of a one-day old infant, then it would have rights. In particular, it would have the right to live. In any case, the question whether the fetus is psychologically comparable to a newborn is a medical question and can be answered only on the basis of knowledge of its nervous system and the like.

According to Kenneth E. Himma, a professor of philosophy, late term abortions are perfectly ethical. His argument is that fetuses are not conscious, do not feel pain, do not make moral judgments and for these reasons fail to be people.

According to Sara Miller, a journalist, late-term fetuses don't feel pain and, indeed, don't feel anything and are not therefore not people.

According to Don Berkich, a professor of philosophy, fetuses will become people, even if they are not currently people, and in having an abortion, one is, as it were, killing the person that the fetus is going to be: one is robbing it of 'a future like ours,' as Berkich puts it.

According to Maureen Condic, a professor of neurobiology, there is strong medical evidence to suggest that late-term fetuses can feel pain and have other psychological traits specific to human beings; and for this reason, Condic alleges, late-term abortions are ethically wrong.

The medical evidence strongly suggests that Condic is right. Late-term fetuses are neurologically sufficiently similar to newborn infants that the former may reasonably be presumed to have the same psychological characteristics as the latter, a corollary being that the former have whatever ethical rights the latter have. The arguments put forth by Himma and Miller are therefore null and void, as they are based on false medical claims concerning the biological condition of late-term fetuses. As for Berkich's claim that

abortion robs the fetus of its future, this claim is consistent with the fact that, judging by the relevant neurobiological benchmarks, the fetus is indeed a person.

Two Papers on Epistemology: Gettier and Bostrom Examination

Question 1 (Analysis of knowledge). Explain the claim that Gettier is arguing against in his paper. Explain his argument, using the Smith/Jones example.

Answer: Edmund Gettier is arguing (cogently) against the claim that knowledge is justified true belief (JTB). In other words, he is arguing against the claim that x 's being justified true belief is necessary *and* sufficient for x 's having knowledge. Gettier produces several counterexamples to the thesis that knowledge is JTB (henceforth just 'JTB'), one of them being as follows.

Smith believes, and is justified in believing, that Jones will get the promotion. Smith knows that Jones has ten coins in his pocket and on this basis (justifiably) believes that someone with ten coins in his pocket will get the promotion. Brown ends up getting the promotion, and as it happens Brown has ten coins in his pocket. So Smith had a justified true belief to the effect that someone with ten coins in his pocket would get the promotion, but it clearly isn't a case of knowledge.

The obvious amendment suggested by this example of Gettier's is that if one's justification for believing such and such involves acceptance of a false belief, then that justification is not knowledge-conducive. But Goldman showed this amendment to be

false (or at least limited in scope) with his famous barn-façade example. Jerry is driving through a county in the USA in which there are a million barn facades but only one actual barn. He is looking at the one barn façade in that county that is attached to an actual barn and on that basis forms the belief that he is looking at a barn. That belief is justified and true but (arguably) not a case of knowledge. At the same time, there is no obvious sense in which it is based on a false belief (all of Jerry's premises are

true, after all).

Williamson argues that the concept of knowledge cannot be analyzed and is therefore a primitive concept. His argument is simply that attempts to analyze the concept of knowledge fail. Williamson also seems to assume (or at least must assume) that some concepts are indeed primitive. (This assumption is almost certainly false.)

Radford holds that Jean knew but did not believe that James I died in 1625 and also did not know that he knew this. Radford's argument derives heavily from analysis of ordinary language. A given person who does know the answer on a test may be unsure of the answer. (Oftentimes, people have to let go of their self-doubts to perform a task well or to know exactly what it is that they know. A good pianist or tennis player may have to deactivate his self-critical conscious self and just let his abilities take the helm, as it were, and the same may be true of someone taking a history test.) Radford's argument seems quite spurious. Jean *does* both know and

believe that James I died in 1625, but he doesn't know what it is that he knows/believes. Not all knowledge is matched by self-knowledge. One cannot know that such and such without knowing that such and such. The latter is meta-knowledge and involves having and deploying concepts not involved in having the corresponding bit of first-order knowledge. (Compare: My knowing that there is a bee over there does not involve my having the concept of knowledge, but my knowing that I know there to a bee over there does involve my having that concept.)

Whereas Radford holds that Jean knows but does not believe that James I died in 1625, Williamson holds that Jean does in fact believe it, his argument being as follows. Suppose that Kerry is taking a history test and 'guesses' one of the answers correctly, his 'guess' being based upon subconscious memory/knowledge. In that case, his guess embodies knowledge, and therefore belief, albeit of the subconscious variety.

Question 2: Explain and evaluate Bostrom's attempt to prove that we are living in a simulation

Answer: Bostrom's argument is as follows. If people make it to the next evolutionary phase---the 'post-human' phase---then these post-human superhumans will have both the technological wherewithal, as well as the inclination, to run simulations of their human ancestors, the characters in which

will be

conscious subjects. Moreover, these superhumans will run more than one such simulation—they will run them frequently, routinely, unendingly.

Therefore, if human beings do survive long enough to evolve into these superhuman ‘post-humans’, then the number of simulation-internal human ‘characters’, each of which has the same subjectivity as an actual person, will vastly number the number of actual human beings present during the pre- post-human era. So assuming (for illustrative reasons) that a trillion such simulations are run, then it is a trillion times more likely that I am a character in such a simulation than it is that I am an ‘actual’ person living in the pre- post-human era. Therefore, we are more justified in believing that we are characters in a simulation than we are in believing that we are ‘real people’, for lack of a better term.

For this argument to go through, the numbers have to be chosen very carefully. If there are many simulations of the just-described kind, but the average number of human characters in those simulations is low, then (even if Bostrom’s other premises are granted) it may not be unreasonable for us to believe that we are ‘real’ (as opposed to simulation-internal characters, albeit of the conscious variety). And one way of guaranteeing that the numbers support Bostrom’s argument is to suppose (i) that many such simulations are run and (ii) that the average number of human characters in such a simulation equals the actual pre-post-human population.

Bostrom assumes (i) and also duly assumes (ii), (ii) being embodied in his assumption that $H = H_{sim}$.

Bostrom's argument only goes through if it is assumed that these post- humans are able to run simulations that contain actual conscious beings (in which case, these simulations, it would seem, are not really simulations so much as they are recreations—duplications---of the human era and therefore not merely simulations at all---a point that Bostrom overlooks). In other words, Bostrom assumes that, given sufficiently sophisticated technology (such as these post-humans will have, according to Bostrom), saidtechnology can pack its own models with beings that are conscious. In other words, he assumes that: (COMP) "Provided a system implements the right sort of computational structures and processes, it can be associated with conscious experiences." Be it noted that this even this assumption, strong as it is, is not strong enough, since it must be assumed not only that these simulation- internal creatures are conscious but conscious in extremely specific ways--- conscious not in the ways that a giraffe is conscious but conscious in the exact ways that human beings have been/are/will be conscious. In any case, if

COMP is false, then these simulations are packed with inanimate beings, in which case, given that we are animate, we have absolutely no reason to regard ourselves as characters in a simulation. So if COMP is false, Bostrom's argument immediately fails.

At the same time, if COMP is true, Bostrom's argument doesn't necessarily go through, since, as just stated, it is necessary not just that these simulation-characters be conscious but also conscious in specific ways and also since, even if this alleged post-human technology can run simulations that are loaded with characters that have the right kinds of mental activity, there is no guarantee that these post-humans would have either the inclination or the economic resources needed to run any of these simulations, let alone enough of them to validate Bostrom's argument.

To be sure, Bergstrom does acknowledge the need to assume that these post-humans would have both the means to easily run these simulations.

Hence his making the following assumption:

“Posthuman civilizations would have enough computing power to run hugely many ancestor-simulations even while using only a tiny fraction of their resources for that purpose.”

Unless this assumption is granted, then, just stated, there is no guarantee that these post-humans would be economically capable (would have the resources) to run these simulations ever, let alone in large enough numbers to support Bergstrom's claim that we are probably characters in such a simulation. But, of course, it is unclear what the justification for this assumption is. Bostrom's justification for it seems to be: Given how quickly computing technology is advancing, we will not only be able to run such simulations but run them for negligible costs. (It is also assumed

that post- humans would desire to run them and, therefore, that they would spend the energy necessary to make it cost-effective to run them *en masse*.)

Also, Bostrom's argument goes through only if there is no specific reason why future technology would be unlikely or unable to pack simulations with characters having our specific psychological traits. In other words, Bostrom's argument goes through only if: NO INFO "we don't have any information that indicate that our own . . . experiences are any more or less likely than other human-type experiences to have been implemented [biologically] rather than [being simulated]." Be it noted, that the occurrence of "any more" should be purged from this quotation, since if future technology were in fact "any more" likely to produce simulation-characters with our psychologies, that would help Bostrom's argument.

In any case, there is no justification for NO INFO; nor could there be, relative to our current state of knowledge, which doesn't allow us to make such precise predictions about technology with such a high degree of confidence.

One problem with NO INFO, and with Bostrom's argument generally, is that it assumes the irrefutability of skepticism. Bostrom is assuming that, given only what our senses tell us, we are no more likely to be perceiving reality as it is than we are to be characters in a simulation (brains in a vat, dupes of an evil demon). In other words, Bostrom is assuming that we have no principled way of deciding between different hypotheses that all model our perceptual data, this being the content of

Byrne's principle that:

P1: If you know that the sitting hypothesis is true, you know this solely on the basis of your evidence about your sensory experiences.

To be sure, skeptics would hold that Bostrom is not making a mistake in making this assumption. But it is still worth noting, since, should it turn out that skepticism is contraindicated, Bostrom's argument fails. And there are reasons to hold that it is in fact contraindicated. It is one thing to hold that, given only what our sensory experiences are, we 'could' be in a computer- simulation. But, as Daniel Dennett shows in *Consciousness Explained*, it is another matter altogether to produce a model of such a simulation that is even close to what is either computationally feasible or to what (post)humans or (post)human technology could generate.

Nozick's 'Experience Machine' thought-experiment is supposed to show (and does show) that, other things being equal, people prefer reality to illusion. People would rather have a good experience that is veridical than a good experience that is non-veridical. (People probably do *not* categorically prefer veridical *bad* experiences to non-veridical good ones. Hence the "others things being equal" in the second to last sentence.) Nozick analyzes this preference of people's by saying that (i) we value what is real, (ii) we want control (which, arguably, we don't if we're characters in a

simulation) and (iii) since we believe that we live in the 'real' world, we are reluctant to devalue our existences by entering a fake one. (The third principle is more or less a repetition of the first.)

For these three reasons, Nozick would hold that our lives would be less meaningful than (supposedly) they in fact are if in fact we were simulation-internal beings.

Nietzsche on Punishment

In his work *The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche argues that when we examine the genealogy (origins) of many practices of ours that we regard as having purely rational, non-emotional basis, we find that they are in fact replete with emotion of the most bestial kind. Drawing on Darwin and anticipating Freud, Nietzsche argues that when a practice first comes into existence, it appears as what it is and that, even though it comes to seem more wholesome over the years and also may have been put to legitimate uses, it remains at its core what it originally was. In his attempt to establish this thesis, Nietzsche examines a number of social institutions, including religion, debt, and punishment. In this paper, we will focus on Nietzsche's analysis of punishment.

Today, when it is asked why people are punished, the answer that is given is

along the lines of: 'because people who break the law must be punished, lest the continue to break the law and thereby undermine the integrity of society.' In other words, the accepted conception of punishment is *utilitarian* in nature. Nietzsche disagrees:

Yet a word on the origin and the purpose of punishment—two problems that are separate, or ought to be separate: unfortunately, they are usually confounded. How have previous genealogists of morals set about solving these problems? Naïvely, as has always been their way: they seek out some “purpose” in punishment, for example, revenge or deterrence, then guilelessly place this purpose at the beginning as *causa fiendi* of punishment, and—have done. The “purpose of law,” however, is absolutely the last thing to employ in the history of the origin of law: on the contrary, there is for historiography of any kind no more important proposition than the one it took such effort to establish but which really ought to be established now: the cause of the origin of a thing and its eventual utility, its actual employment and place in a system of purposes, lie worlds apart.

Here Nietzsche is saying that although punishment has *acquired* social utility, that is not what it was originally about and that is *still* not what it is at its core about. Nietzsche believes this to hold not just of punishment of social institutions in general:

[W]hatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed, and redirected by some

power superior to it; all events in the organic world are a subduing, a becoming master, and all subduing and becoming master involves a fresh interpretation, an adaptation through which any previous “meaning” and “purpose” are necessarily obscured or even obliterated. However well one has understood the utility of any physiological organ (or of a legal institution, a social custom, a political usage, a form in art or in a religious cult), this means nothing regarding its origin: however uncomfortable and disagreeable this may sound to older ears—for one had always believed that to understand the demonstrable purpose, the utility of a thing, a form, or an institution, was also to understand the reason why it originated—the eye being made for seeing, the hand being made for grasping.

The idea here seems to be that social institutions, such as punishment, are initial about *power*, their current sheen of utility and rationality being alien to what they originally were and merely incidental to what they now are. Nietzsche then maps this point about onto the topic of punishment specifically:

Thus one also imagined that punishment was devised for punishing. But purposes and utilities are only signs that a will to power has become master of something less powerful and imposed upon it the character of a function; and

the entire history of a “thing,” an organ, a custom can in this way be a continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations and adaptations whose causes do not even have to be related to one another but, on the contrary, in some cases succeed and alternate with one another in a purely chance fashion.

Nietzsche’s point is that punishment is primarily about *power*--about exercising it over others *not* for utilitarian reasons, for its own sake. To prove this, Nietzsche discusses the many different functions that punishment has served:

To give at least an idea of how uncertain, how supplemental, how accidental “the meaning” of punishment is, and how one and the same procedure can be employed, interpreted, adapted to ends that differ fundamentally, I set down here the pattern that has emerged from consideration of relatively few chance instances I have noted.

Punishment as a means of rendering harmless, of preventing further harm.

Punishment as recompense to the injured party for the harm done, rendered in any form (even in that of a compensating affect). Punishment as the isolation of a disturbance of equilibrium, so as to guard against any further spread of the disturbance. Punishment as a means of inspiring fear of those who determine and execute the punishment. Punishment as a kind of repayment for the advantages the criminal has enjoyed hitherto (for example, when he is

employed as a slave in the mines). Punishment as the expulsion of a degenerate element (in some cases, of an entire branch, as in Chinese law: thus as a means of preserving the purity of a race or maintaining a social type).

Punishment as a festival, namely as the rape and mockery of a finally defeated enemy. Punishment as the making of a memory, whether for him who suffers the punishment—so-called “improvement”—or for those who witness its execution. Punishment as payment of a fee stipulated by the power that protects the wrongdoer from the excesses of revenge.

Punishment as a compromise with revenge in its natural state when the latter is still maintained and claimed as a privilege by powerful clans. Punishment as a declaration of war and a war measure against an enemy of peace, of the law, of order, of the authorities, whom, as a danger to the community, as one who has broken the contract that defines the conditions under which it exists, as a rebel, a traitor, and breaker of the peace, one opposes with the means of war.

Nietzsche’s point is that if punishment were simply or even primarily about preserving the social contract, it would not have such varied uses.

Punishment is really about will to dominate others, and punishment assumes so many different forms because this will is, as it were, looking for any excuse to exert

itself:

Thus the essence of life, its will to power, is ignored; one overlooks the essential priority of the spontaneous, aggressive, expansive, form-giving forces that give new interpretations and directions, although “adaptation” follows only after this; the dominant role of the highest functionaries within the organism itself in which the will to life appears active and form-giving is denied. One should recall what Huxley reproached Spencer with—his “administrative nihilism”: but it is a question of rather more than mere “administration.”

Nietzsche’s analysis of punishment is meant to illustrate a larger point of his: that if we look at social institutions without looking at their genealogies, we are likely to take transient and superficial facts about them as constituting their very essences. If we look at punishment as it is practiced and discussed today, we are apt to think that it exists to satisfy some rational need (the need to keep order or some such). And while it *does* serve that need, its doing so is only a form that it currently bears. And when we look at how many different forms punishment has assumed over the millennia, many of them of little or no social utility, and also at how imperfectly it discharges its current utilitarian function, it makes more sense to see punishment as an expression of a will to dominate that may in certain contexts serve utilitarian ends.

God's Foreknowledge and Moral Responsibility

If God (or some super computer) can predict my actions with complete certainty, am I morally responsible for my actions? The answer is a highly qualified 'yes.'

First of all, if my actions can be predicted with complete certainty, it follows that my actions result from deterministic mechanisms. I can predict that when I flip the switch, the light will turn on. Why can I predict this? Because there is a deterministic mechanism that links the first event (the flipping of the switch) with the second (the turning of the light). If there were no such mechanism—if, for example, the wiring was faulty, so that my flipping the switch didn't make it necessary that the light come on—then I could not predict that the first event would lead to the second.

The very same principle holds in the sphere of human action. If indeed my actions can be predicted, that is because there are deterministic mechanisms that, given my condition at a given time, guarantee that I will behave in certain ways at later times. If there were no such mechanisms—if, for example, the mechanism that converted my intentions into actions were faulty or functioned only intermittently--- then my actions could not be predicted. Contrariwise, so far as my actions can be

predicted, it is only because the mechanisms in question function perfectly, being deterministic in nature.

If indeed my actions are the result of deterministic mechanisms, then it would seem I am not free. We don't regard clocks as free, and the reason we regard them as lacking freedom would seem to be that they are deterministic mechanisms.

But I submit that even if our actions do result from deterministic mechanisms, they are free *as long as they are appropriately caused by mental states that appropriately rooted in our minds*. If somebody has an epileptic fit, he is not acting freely. Why not? Because his bodily spasms do not appropriately result from mental states that are appropriately rooted in his psychological structure. If anxiety causes a person's heart to race, that person's tachycardia does not constitute a free action on that person's part, because, even though a mental state (anxiety)

was responsible for it, it was not *appropriately* responsible for it: the mechanisms involved in voluntary action were not deployed in this context. By contrast, if I angrily honk my horn at another motorist, that action *is* free, because it resulted by way of the appropriate mechanisms from a mental state (anger) that was appropriately rooted in my personality. It may well be that the mental state in question was the inevitable result of the prior state of the universe; and it may well be, consequently, that God (or some other omniscient being) could have predicted the occurrence of that mental state, along with the acts to which it gave rise. But to say

that an action is free is not to say that the mental state responsible for it was not inevitable; it is to say that, whatever that mental state was, it was rooted in a certain way in the agent's psychological structure and gave rise to the act in question by way of certain mechanisms. This being what free action is, God's being able to predict our actions is compatible with our being able to act freely and, therefore, with our being morally responsible for our choices.