**Final – Section 1 – Short Answer Questions**

1. ***“My Allegiance is to the Republic! To Democracy!”: Plato’s Political Theory***

*How does Plato’s theory of politics relate to his theory of the soul? How does the Jedi Order fit into Plato’s political theory (in order words, who are they like in Plato’s theory)? What would Plato think of the relationship between the Galactic Republic and the Jedi Order?*

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Plato’s theory of politics is exemplified in his analogy of the “Just City.” Plato’s Just City is found in the Republic, and is defined by separating the people of this city into three separate faculties, the philosopher kings, the Guardians, and the common people. Plato’s Just city is unique, however, because it has to do with his separation of the soul. Plato believes that the soul is broken up into three parts, two lesser parts at war with one another, appetite and spirit, in which spirit is meant to command appetite, and that the two parts of the soul are commanded by a third faculty, reason. So basically, the common man has a soul in which he uses reason to command his spirit and to command his appetite, that way he knows what to do at the right time, to avoid just doing whatever he wants (giving in to appetite) and also to avoid just working himself into the ground (giving in to will).

This relates to Plato’s theory of the soul in that The Philosopher Kings rule the land with reason, but live very meagerly and have no possessions, for philosophy is its own reward. The Guardians protect the land and the kings with Spirit, and live in a way that is necessary for their growth. The rest of the people, just live their lives, but have all the wealth and possessions they could desire as they work their regular jobs, since most people just want to have earthly possessions. Plato’s theory of politics heavily relies on the idea that different people are *designed* to do different things, and that someone who was made to be a guardian shouldn’t waste time trying to be a philosopher, as he was not meant to be a philosopher. In his Just City, those who are *meant* to rule be philosopher kings, and other people in the same manner.

This relates to star wars in that the Jedi Order is a mix of both the Philosopher Kings and the Guardians, they are people that use both wisdom and power to protect the land. They live meagerly, as they do not rule in order to be rich, but to keep peace and order, which is its own reward. Plato would hate the Jedi’s situation and think that the Galactic Republic should be taking orders from the Jedi, not the other way around. In Plato’s eyes, the Jedi are the ones who have wisdom and are *meant* to rule, whereas the Galactic Republic is just the common folk, and when people who are not meant to lead try to lead, nothing but destruction ensues. It is for this reason that Plato hates democracy, and it is for this reason the Galactic Republic eventually fell and became the Galactic Empire.

1. ***“Good is a point of view, Anakin” : Nietzsche and the Will to Power.***

*What is Nietzsche’s theory about the Will to Power? Why did he argue for our need to move beyond good and evil? What would Nietzsche say about Yoda’s advice to Anakin about Padme’s possible death in Episode III?*

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Nietzsche’s theory about the Will to Power is that we as people are made up of a bunch of different competing drives or “wills” that dictate our actions, such as the Will to Sex, the Will to survive, and greater than all, the will to power. The Will to Power is our will to control the things around us, and to live life in a way that we have control. Nietzsche’s theory is based around the idea that the way to live life is naturally, which involves never saying “no” to your wills. Now this does not mean that you should just do whatever you feel like, it means that you should do whatever your strongest will at the time is telling you to do. Nietzsche believes that saying no to life and to our desires is against the very nature of life, and that the idea in itself needs to be abolished. It is for this reason that he hates morality.

Nietzsche hates morality and the concepts of good and evil because they promote nothing but rigid and inflexible thinking, and at their core define life by saying that there are things that objectively are good and bad, things that everyone should say yes and no to. Nietzsche says we need to move beyond this because the idea that what I think is good or what my will to power says I should do is the same as everyone’s. This idea is absurd and needs to be discarded. Nietzsche would say that Yoda’s advice to Anakin to just accept Padme’s death is ridiculous, and that if Anakin feels lead that he should do everything in his power to conform reality to his ultimate will to power. It is this Nietzschian philosophy that Anakin adopts, which leads him to turn to the dark side and say things to Obi-Wan like “From my point of view the Jedi are Evil.” Thanks Fredrick Nietzsche, you created Darth Vader and doomed the Galaxy.

1. ***“Why are you helping me?” : Kantian Moral Theory***

*Recall the moment in Episode VII when Finn helps Poe escape from the Star Destroyer the Finalizer. According to Finn, why did he help Poe? How would Immanuel Kant evaluate Finn’s actions, assuming Finn was telling the truth? What did Poe say in response? What problem with Kant’s moral theory does Poe’s response demonstrate?*

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In Star Wars Episode VII, when Fin rescues Poe, Fin originally stated that his reason for helping Poe was that “It’s the right thing to do.” Assuming that Fin’s answer is honest, Immanuel Kant would say that Fin is doing exactly what he should be doing and living life the right way. Kant says that we must act in ways that if everyone acted that way, things would work out, and that if one knows what the right thing to do is, that he is obligated to do it, regardless of what may or may not happen to him. Bravo Fin, Kant approves of your actions. Poe, however responds to Fin’s original statement by realizing the truth “You need a pilot.” Fin then confirms “I need a pilot.”

The Problem with Kant’s moral theory is represented here, and it is that just because *you* are doing what you think is right regardless of the circumstances, many people do not do this. This creates problems for one that wants to live by Kant’s rules in a world where no one else does. An example of this would be in World War II. Kant’s moral theory says that one should never lie, because he knows it is morally wrong and if everyone lied, the world would fall into utter chaos. However, the problem with Kant’s idea of not lying arises in the following situation: I am a German shopkeeper in World War II hiding Jews in my basement so they won’t get sent to concentration camp. A Nazi Soldier knocks on my door and asks me if I know where any missing Jews are hiding. Kant’s moral theory dictates that I *must* tell the truth and literally hand over innocent people to die at the Nazi’s hands. If Fin had been under moral oath by Kant’s law, he would’ve had to tell someone that he was going to rescue the prisoner, in which case he would’ve been killed right away and never saved Poe. Kant’s idea is a nice one, but that’s all it is, a nice idea that has little to no practical application in a broken world like ours.

**Section 2 - Essays**

**Essay 1 – Freedom**

***Paragraph 1: What is freedom for a Stoic? How does one achieve it and who can be free? Offer an example from Star Wars to illustrate this theory.***

***Paragraph 2: What is freedom for Friedrich Nietzsche? How does one achieve freedom and who can be free? Offer a new example from Star Wars to illustrate this theory.***

***Paragraph 3: Offer your own comparative evaluation of these two theories. Which theory better describes freedom and why? Offer a third example from Star Wars to support your argument.***

Stoicism posits that almost all of the world is outside of our control, and that all we can control is our own actions and how we feel about things. If we try to control anything other than these two things, we are doomed to be trapped and unhappy. True freedom is acknowledging and taking advantage of the distinction between what we can and can’t control. Anyone can be a stoic and achieve freedom. In fact, the two of the most prominent stoics of all time were Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. Now Epictetus was a slave, and Marcus Aurelius was a Roman emperor, so it really is true that this freedom is attainable by all regardless of situation. The way one achieves freedom is by following the Serenity’s prayer. *God, Help me to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change what I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.* An example from Star Wars lies in Anakin and his Master Obi-Wan. Anakin is about the worst stoic of all time, refusing to acknowledge that even death itself from which *no one has ever escaped* is something that he cannot control. Obi-Wan, on the other hand, is a much better stoic, and this is seen in Episode III when he comes to realize that there is nothing he can do to try to save Anakin, so he doesn’t try to save him. Obi-Wan recognized when Anakin said that he thought the Jedi were evil that there was nothing he could do to convert Anakin; it was at this time that Obi-Wan drew his lightsaber, when he realized, as a stoic would, that Anakin’s heart was outside of his control.

Freedom for Friedrich Nietzsche is living in accordance with the nature of life, which at its core involves following the ultimate desire of our bodies, our “Will to Power” as he calls it, and basically never saying no to what your nature is telling you to do. Freedom by Friedrich Nietzsche is obtained by understanding that Morality is just a construct we use to confine ourselves and that we should listen to our desire to do what we want and do everything in our power to make those desires or “wills” into a reality. Theoretically, anyone can achieve freedom, but it is only those who are willing to forsake morality and do whatever is necessary to fulfill their own Will to Power that actually succeed. A perfect example of a free person in Nietzsche’s eyes would be Darth Sidious. The man overthrew the entire galaxy following his Will to Power, and when things such as morality and legality stood in his way, he did whatever he wanted anyways, listening only to himself and doing whatever was necessary to gain power. A perfect line from Star Wars Episode I shows this. When Nute Gunray is speaking to Darth Sidious about the unprovoked attack on Naboo, Nute asks the emperor “is that legal?” Darth Sidious simply replies, “I will make it legal.” Darth Sidious had obtained the power to do whatever he wanted, and it doesn’t matter what anyone else told him was right or wrong, his power and his will ensured what would happen – True Nietzschian Freedom.

When one observes the two theories on freedom, one might at first glance say that Darth Sidious’ ability to do whatever he wanted was freedom. I posit, however, that since Darth Sidious and every other person that has followed this philosophy, such as Anakin, Hitler, and other Tyrants all had their reign forcefully ripped from them and was killed, that it’s not as free as one might think. Yes Darth Sidious had everything he could ever want, but every waking moment of his life was spent trying to avoid losing his vast power. Every moment of his existence was spent in conflict. Yes, it was conflict in which he always succeeded due to his “UNLIMITED POWER” (as he so eloquently stated in Episode III), *but it was still conflict.* It doesn’t matter whether you win the fight or lose the fight, being in a fistfight with someone is no fun. Stoicism offers actual peace and tranquility, a solution to *reconciling* the problems of life by learning to accept them. Nietzschism just says that the solution to problems in life is just by crushing them when they arise. The main difference is that through stoicism, *problems eventually disappear.* A true stoic has no problems, for when they achieve freedom they have *complete* control over themselves and their emotions, whereas a Sith Lord has to spend his days stressing over a small rebel alliance led by a young Jedi named Luke. Even after *20+ years* of *complete control* over the galaxy, Darth Sidious still had more worries on his mind than the common stoic, so who’s really free?

**Essay 2 – Dying Everyday**

***Recall Anakin’s torment in Episode III caused by his recurring images of Padme’s death. Imagine that he is visited by two of the following philosophers: Buddha, Augustine, Kierkegaard, De Beauvoir and Epictetus. Write a three paragraph essay about these two encounters. In the first paragraph summarize the advice of the first philosopher. In the second paragraph summarize the advice of the second philosopher. In the third paragraph write an argument about which advice is better and why.***

If the Buddha were to visit Anakin as he is struggling with images of Padme’s Death. He would tell Anakin that all life is suffering, and that all existence is temporary. Buddha would tell Anakin to understand that no matter what, suffering and loss is a natural part of life, in a way it is what *defines* life. He would encourage Anakin, however, by providing a solution to dealing with the inevitable loss of his beloved, and it is by removing attachment to Padme. He would tell Anakin that since it is clear to see that at some point Padme will die no matter what you do since she is mortal, that he needs to prepare himself for her departure from him. He would tell Anakin to do this much in the same way that Yoda told Anakin, by learning to let go of all that he holds dear. If Anakin can learn to detach himself from Padme, then the more detached he is, the less her death will cause him pain and suffering. This is the key to dealing with the reality that all life is suffering. This is the Buddha’s advice; detach yourself from her.

If Epictetus were to approach Anakin, he would simply begin by reciting a passage from his Handbook. “Some things are up to us and some things are not up to us.” He would encourage Anakin to understand that his wife’s death is not up to him, but that he should take refuge for everything is happening the way it should. “Never say about anything, ‘I have lost it,’ but instead, ‘I have given it back.’ Did your child die? It was given back. Did your wife die? She was given back.” By learning to change his desires from wanting what is pleasant for him to happen to wanting what *should* happen to happen, Anakin would find refuge and even a sense of peace in the death of his wife and unborn child. If only Anakin could understand that he can’t control whether his wife dies, he could see that trying to control her departure does nothing but bring him pain and anguish, and he would be happier and even more honorable if he would just accept his wife’s death as something outside of his influence that was supposed to happen, and move forward with his life. Epictetus would say the same thing to Anakin as both Yoda and the Buddha said; you must learn to let go of all that you hold dear. Not in the same way as the Buddha, however, by just not caring about them, but by understanding that their existence is temporary and their departure is not up to you.

I believe that between Epictetus’s and Buddha’s advice, Epictetus’s is far better. This is because although I recognize the wisdom of Buddha’s advice, Buddha’s problem to losing someone you love is simply to not love them in the first place. In relation to my brother, whom I love most dearly, Buddha would say to not love or care about him in a way that I relied on him *at all*, for any attachment I have to him will simply translate to pain. The only way to avoid losing the game is to not play in the first place. To me, in a way, this is a cowardly approach to relationships, and it does not bring much happiness, only apathy.

On the other hand, Epictetus says that it’s okay to love someone and to be close to them, as long as you remind yourself of the truth. You can’t control the world, and you can’t control the fact that the ones you love *will die*. Epictetus says that you just need to understand the risks and learn to cope with loss, versus trying to avoid it all together. If you understand that you can’t control the outside world, but only how you react to situations and how you feel about things, then you can learn to love someone, and still be happy when they leave you. Anakin can learn to be wholesome without Padme, as long as he reminds himself that her death was just a part of life that was outside of his control and was *meant* to occur. I believe that Epictetus’s philosophy is much more wholesome than the Buddha’s, as it does not attempt to adopt a state of apathy in relationships, but rather it encourages one to understand the state that one and one’s relationships exist in. I can’t control when my friends will leave me. All I have control over is what I will do with the time I am given them.

**Section 3 – Extra Credit**

* **In Rogue One, what are the last words that Lyra Erso says to Jyn Erso?**
  + *“Trust in the Force”*
* **What was the name of Padme’s body-double and handmaiden who dies at the start of Episode II?** 
  + *Soba*
* **What was the name of the leader of the Techno-Union in Episodes II and III?**
  + *Wot Tambor*

**P.S. –** Thank you so much for another amazing class Terry. I *really* hope that in the near future you decide to teach your Nietzsche course. I, as so many, was extremely bummed to hear that you won’t be offering it again! *Especially* knowing how much work you put into creating that course. I know 6-10 people that would all take the class if it was offered. I assure you, you will be seeing me submit a formal petition shortly ;) Thank you Terry.