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Terms

25.January.18

- What is good?
 - On what scope do we define good?
 - where "good" must be a propType of an entity
- Instrumental Virtue
 - *Good means* VS. *Good ends*
- Trade-off between *Reliable/reliability* and *application/applicability*
 - The more reliable a hypothesis the less reliable it becomes -> adjusting scope of definitions
- A hypothesis must be *falsifiable* to be proven correct!
- **Ödipus Complex** - a man's struggle
 - Not falsifiable?!
- **Sigmund Freud** in consideration with the Ödipus Complex, makes it falsifying unimportant
 - Freud: The result of an answer can't be falsified, as it can't be determined for correctness.

Thinking philosophically

- **The Idea of an argument**

| A reason or set of reasons given in support of an idea, action or theory.

Knowledge

- **Bishop Berkeley** and **epistemological skepticism**
 - Bored man -> experiments in self-made Lab -> Investigated Crude Oil (tar water) (used for dandruff shampoo)

- First person to have shown interest in tar-water/crude-oil

Dubito Ergo cogito. Cogito Ergo sum -**Descartes**

- Conflict of causation: Where everything that doubts has to be thinking and therefore is.
- Thought experiment of God's agenda:
 - *If any detail possible would be instantaneously available, the creation/alteration of any detail would/could cause a canvas re-paint; hence making the creation/alteration unnecessary in the first place.*
- Hard VS. Soft Scepticism —**The tainted sources of knowledge**, *heredity, experience, culture*. Knowledge comes mostly from one of the three sources.

Philosopher's conflict with **consistency, precision, rationality, caution and provisionality** is an underlying concept. For example, a philosophical concept could be too broad, threatening precision of such concept and consistency over areas of knowledge. There is a **trade-off between applicability & reliability**.

Abstract VS. Concrete —Human's ability to imagine;

Hard Scepticism — question nature itself, how do we know that we know, etc...

- Bishop Berkeley's refutation of Descartes

Soft scepticism — it is possible to know imperfectly. The truth is out there somewhere, but its yet to be found.

If knowledge can be acquired by **heredity, culture and experience**, the result of knowledge is the relationship between two variables. Two variables can be transferred easily, but is transferred knowledge true knowledge? —someone telling you fire = hot, you might still touch fire to make sure its hot. Hence, transferred knowledge is dependent whether or not one believes in the transfer of knowledge through e.g. culture. Genes, Evolution are the ultimate transfer of knowledge!

A new born baby knows how to breath, move — where did that knowledge come from?

Is some data immutable? — like the underlying concepts that provide life, including the beat of a heart or breathing. If some data is immutable, meaning it having a solely reactive state instead of any active, the data itself cannot be mutable, but the parameters of what this immutable data defines! e.g. oxygen provision, blood flow etc.

30.January.18

Innate knowledge and evolutionary psychology

Unconscious and unmodifiable, difficult to communicate, developed in and for different circumstances, Very, very slow to change

e.g. definition of personal space being hereditary —everywhere seen, a universal human constant — feature of human life present in any culture

(five aspects of evolutionary hereditary) (hereditary fear of strangers — a stranger could be a threat — imagine the subway, over hundred people in confined space, crowded — a great framework for a caveman, stupid for commuters). (**Robert Ardrey and Territoriality** [territorial imperative and ethology]) (Xenophobia)

1. February. 18

Story time — The swans and their territory

Interestingly, male swans do not have a problem with sharing a pond with some ducks, fish, pigeons etc., but as soon as another male swan enters the territory, the fight for the nesting site is on and the swan will protect the territory with his life. —Personal space exists throughout "life", but differs significantly from species to species, culture to culture etc. —*Territorial awareness seems to be hereditary!*

Interestingly, bird territorial awareness and through that flowing behaviourists are solely tied to the male gender, where as in the human species, the phenomenon of personal space is thoroughly present.

Ants enslave ants, humans do the same, no other species does. Does this fact state that human slavery might have natural roots?

Robert Ardrey's second order of magnitude discusses marriage and dating customs throughout the human species. E.G: No woman would seek for a man driving his father's car, living with his parents etc... —A woman wanting to get to know a man would not seek that man's mother to get an insight into that man's life, preferences, wishes etc. —Though, many people do so! -> *Robert Ardrey is wrong about how the human species chooses a male.* On the same note, the human species has a varying pattern/method for choosing mates/marrying, though when comparing other species, the pattern/method is consistent.

Personal space != bird territorial awareness —Ardrey got that correct.

Robert Arday, when talking about war and conflict, makes the misassumption, that it is territorial.

War is rather on a much larger scale of magnitude, in terms of parties participating, when comparing similar scenarios from how other animal species behave. A war between many animals normally just includes a relatively small count of participants (e.g. school of dolphins), where as in a war between humans, the magnitude is country-wide, on a national scale.

At the end of territorial imperative, Robert Arday says:

Why people say they are engaging, but the reason why, are genetically determined and unconscious.

- We seem to be born knowing things. On the other hand, we lack the tools to realise what is. Soft scepticism argues, that something exists out there somewhere, but the ability to reach anything is hindered. —The question arising is, how do we know something from the beginning of very life, but cannot expand our knowledge significantly.

Dustbin Post #1

Der Ausgangspunkt von Gehlen's Anthropologie (wie aller Ansätze der philosophischen Anthropologie) ist ein Vergleich von Mensch und Tier.⁷ Im gesamten Tierreich, "vom Regenwurm bis zum Schimpansen" (M 11), zeigt sich nach Gehlen dasselbe Prinzip. Tiere leben in ihrer jeweiligen spezifischen Umwelt, sie sind an ihre jeweiligen Umweltbedingungen optimal angepasst. Alle Funktionen, vom morphologischen Bau über die Sinnesorgane bis zum Instinktverhalten sind hochspezialisierte Anpassungen an den Lebensraum des Tieres. "Die Fortschritte der Natur bestehen in der organischen Spezialisierung ihrer Arten, also in der Ausbildung immer leistungsfähigerer natürlicher Anpassungen an bestimmte Umwelten" (A 46). Es besteht eine Harmonie von Organbau und Instinktausstattung einerseits und der zugehörigen Umwelt andererseits. Im Vergleich zu dieser tierischen Eingefügtheit und Umweltgebundenheit fällt sofort die Andersartigkeit des Menschen auf, die Gehlen als Mängelhaftigkeit beschreibt: Weder lässt sich im organischen Bau eine Angepasstheit an die Umwelt nachweisen, noch hat er irgendwelche das Überleben sichernde angeborene Instinkte. Beides ist nicht mehr vorhanden, er ist erstens organisch mittellos und zweitens instinktreduziert.

(...)

Die Sonderstellung, die der Mensch im Reich des Lebendigen hat, liegt in dieser Weltoffenheit und Umweltenthobenheit. Nicht in einzelnen körperlichen Merkmalen oder geistigen Leistungen unterscheidet der Mensch sich vom Tier, sondern im Menschen hat die Natur ein vollkommen anderes Prinzip der Lebensbewältigung erfunden. Tiere sind organisch und instinktmäßig an ihre Umwelt angepasst, sie verhalten sich entsprechend der aktuellen Situation mit sicheren, weil vorgegebenen Bewegungen. Der Mensch dagegen ist nicht mehr umweltgebunden, weder im Organischen noch in seinem Verhalten. Er ist vom unmittelbaren Bedürfnisdruck, von der gegenwärtigen Situation entlastet, er kann die Bedürfnisbefriedigung zurückstellen, sich von der Situation distanzieren. Nicht Anpassung, sondern Distanzierung ist für Gehlen das Grundprinzip des Menschen. Die Sonderstellung hat daher eine negative und eine positive Seite. Auf der negativen Seite ist der Mensch unangepasst, nicht mehr umweltgebunden und deswegen das gefährdete, das "riskierte Wesen" (M 32). Auf der positiven Seite aber erzwingen seine unfertigen Organe und sein unfertiges Verhalten eine ganz neue Lebensweise. "So zieht der Mensch aus den, vom Tier her gesehen, abnormen Bedingungen gerade die Mittel seiner menschlichen Lebensführung" (GA4 96). Der fehlende Automatismus zwischen Antrieb und ausführender Bewegung ermöglicht und erzwingt, Antrieb und Bewegung willentlich auszuführen. Der Hiatus, die Distanz zur Natur, macht den Menschen zu einem Handelnden. Seine Fähigkeit zum Handeln ist das Mittel, mit dem das Mängelwesen Mensch seine defizitäre Natur überwinden kann. Da er nicht mehr an die Natur angepasst ist, muss er die Natur sozusagen an sich anpassen, er muss sie nach seinen Vorstellungen verändern. Da die jeweils vorgefundene Situation nicht mit Sicherheit die benötigten Bedingungen des Überlebens enthält, sind diese vom Menschen durch geplante, voraussehbare Veränderung der Naturumstände herzustellen. "Die Glieder unserer Anschauung erläutern sich jetzt gegenseitig: ein organmangelhaftes Wesen steht vor uns, der sicheren Instinkte weitgehend entbehrend, ausgesetzt der unbestimmten Fülle der offenen Welt, die keine Einpassung ihm ausliest ... Eine voraussehbare, tätige Veränderung dieser Welt ins Lebensdienliche wird die bare Existenz dieses Wesens allein ermöglichen" (GA4 86). Der Mensch ist von Natur aus auf handelnde Umschaffung der Welt angewiesen. Handlung wird für Gehlen zum fundamentalen

Begriff, um das Wesen des Menschen zu beschreiben. Der Mensch kann nicht nicht handeln. Handeln ist der Inbegriff der menschlichen Natur. Er ist primär ein handelndes Wesen, kein denkendes, kein animal rationale. — **Edoc.ub.uni-muenchen.de. (2018).**

[online] Available at: https://edoc.ub.uni-muenchen.de/15913/1/Beller_Bernhard.pdf [Accessed 1 Feb. 2018].

The Idea of "The Other"

En.wikipedia.org. (2018). *Other (philosophy)*. [online] Available at:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Other_\(philosophy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Other_(philosophy)) [Accessed 1 Feb. 2018].

Someone distinctively and significantly altered in any aspects shall be regarded as an *Other*.

Story time — The romans invading England

Romans and christians/jews: romans feeding christians to lions, seem to argue that them getting eaten, is their own fault. (Roman gods may be inhibiting water, hence they made the bath [bath spa uni England] aqua sulus.) Romans commanded to have the god of water being called their way. -> if you have the same god, just named differently, why didn't your god protect you? (After romans invading England) -> why didn't god protect you? — "ahh thats god's decision to make" -> the lions. The romans did not use the idea of "The Other" in their ruling !

The romans hence were inclusive. *"If your god has a different name etc, but is basically the same as ours, your definition can deepen our understanding of our perspective of the god of water."*

Experience

How do you know, that what you learned through experience, will be true as it has been in the past.

Experience is finite and fragmentary.

6.February.18

Heinrich Hertz, the discoverer of radio waves, to whom we nowadays thank the word named "hertz" in the area of science of frequencies. Important to notice and remember here, is that Heinrich Hertz did not *Invent* radio waves, but rather *discovered* them. E.G: Imagine a human born with antennae, he would be able to perceive more than a "normal" human. Heinrich Hertz discovered radio waves, that are normally undetectable for a human, hence by discovering it, humanity made assumptions based on science on impacts of the new discovery. This can be applied to E.G: radioactive radiation, which, after discovered turned out to be harmful, hence by knowing about it, we can "dodge" it.

My own experience is not just shaped by who I am as a human being, but rather as well by who I am depending on the circumstances, situation I am in etc. The main argument here, is that experience can me *malfunctioning* and not being reliable 100% and that experience depends on a lot of variables.

All inductive reasoning, depending on experiences, expressing patterns and extrapolating patterns, all that kind of reasoning is circular reasoning (as defined by mathematicians).

How do we know that what was correct in the past may/is also true in the future.

Things change. People change their names or hair colour and we only realise as soon as we update our knowledge. The only reason why we think the future is going to be like the past, is because the past has been like the past.

The uncertainty principle and observational bait

The observation of a phenomenon changes the phenomenon. Finding out about something changes what you're finding something out about. The complete objective knowledge is unattainable, because whatever you're trying to learn about you're changing as soon as you try to learn about it. E.G: People behave differently when they're watched than if they're alone.

Retaining knowledge —memory and language

Knowledge has to be retained in order to identify changes between retained instances of knowledge. Memory enables learning from experience, as memory can detect changes. No matter how efficient the storage algorithm of our brains, the storage is finite and information needs filtering and disposal for prioritisation.

The selectivity of memory

The head is small the brain is big

Remembering information based on its importance or value can help facilitate a person's quality of life by having them selectively prioritize specific information at the cost of being less likely to remember other, less important, information. —

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4b98r6mw>

The corruptibility of memory

Your parents tell you many stories from when you were a baby, hence you remember it the way your parents tell you it was, where it shouldn't.

Memory apparently depends on language

It seems to be, but how. What if people don't know a language? A theory describes how memories might be translated into actual text in any language to store information in form of "strings".

Linguistic determinism

Orwell's Newspeak and hard linguistic determinism

Russian blues and soft determinism

Saussure and the idea of idiolect

The arbitrary sign

Saussure made clear how linguistic signals are not having any objective content, but being completely arbitrary. What do words really mean?

An "H" is an "N" in Russian, but an "H" in English.

The sign is arbitrary, does not have any natural content, and words mean what cultural systems decide them to mean. Context specifies what content is being talked about. L'academie Française is France's highest academic award to receive, they pursue to keep the French language up to date etc. E.G: they forbid the term "le blue jeans" instead of "pantalon denim". The British have an equivalent phenomenon. The Oxford English dictionary publishes a list of new words every year. Those words are not banned or anything, but rather recommend usage.

Correctness should be based on usage rather than institution.

Where does "Innit" come from? E.G: "He's going innit?" This particle changes an unquestionable statement into a question. It exists because people translated a particle from Indian directly to English. "He is going to the shop isn't he?" The "isn't he" was never seen before. *Who decides the new language is right/wrong and how?* How can "innit" be grammatically incorrect? Should we vote? — Around two billion people (Indian, Pakistani, etc.) all use "innit" in their language naturally, but most speak English as a second language -> By far more Indians etc. are speaking English, if we vote about "innit", what about the majority of English speakers, Indians etc. ?

How do you learn your first language? —you hear, understand and repeat whatever is said. Eventually, reading increases the process, by adding "seeing" into "hearing, understanding and repeating". What do you hear? —your own experience of language, which is different than everyone's else's experience of language. A first-born child experiences learning their first language is different than the learning experience of the first language for a second-born child in the same family. Hence, the experiences differ.

The idiolect

Your language. Private, special and unique to one. If language and how we experience language is unique to one. The tool we use for communication, exchange of information, storage of information, is arbitrary, unique for everyone and differ strongly in definitions and experiences of perceiving language.

At least seven types of ambiguity

8. February. 18

Learning something new is difficult! —Alan Herz

Confirmation Bias

The confirmation bias, also called **confirmatory bias** or **myside bias**, is the tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information in a way that confirms one's preexisting beliefs or hypotheses. —En.wikipedia.org. (2018). *Confirmation bias*. [online] Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation_bias [Accessed 8 Feb. 2018].

Confirmation bias is a phenomenon wherein decision makers have been shown to actively seek out and assign more weight to evidence that confirms their hypothesis, and ignore or underweigh evidence that could disconfirm their hypothesis. As such, it can be thought of as a form of selection bias in collecting evidence. — ScienceDaily. (2018). *Confirmation bias*. [online] Available at: https://www.sciencedaily.com/terms/confirmation_bias.htm [Accessed 8 Feb. 2018].

The way social media are constructed and the algorithms run, they tend to feed you stuff you want to hear, meaning they feed you stuff, reinforcing what you already think. That's why you should read a newspaper you don't like, because your pre-conception will be challenged. —Alan Herz

Observation Bias

Observer bias (also called experimenter **bias** or research **bias**) is the tendency to see what we expect to see, or what we want to see. When a researcher studies a certain group, they usually come to an experiment with prior knowledge and subjective feelings about the group being studied. —Statistics How To. (2016). *Observer Bias / Research or Experimenter Bias: Definition, Examples, How to Avoid*. [online] Available at: <http://www.statisticshowto.com/observer-bias/> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2018].

The observation bias talks about how people behave differently when they know they're being watched, compared to when they know they are unwatched. The simplest example, could be a speeding-camera. As soon as you know you're being watched through the camera, you'll slow down. Hence, the act of observation changes and interferes with the event itself. Originating from particle physics and Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, the observation bias is scalable.

Culture, or learning from others

Sources of cultural knowledge

A source for cultural knowledge can be your family, parents, siblings and even the extended family. Another source could be your local community, such as peers, neighbours or local institutions. The third source of cultural knowledge, includes organised religion, formal education or media.

Types of cultural knowledge

Types of cultural knowledge include language, the belief system used, the moral code applied, the customs and manners applying and the aesthetic responses.

Critiques of cultural knowledge

JK Galbraith's "conventional wisdom" or Michel Foucault's "pouvoir"

Conventional wisdom, still believing something even after realisation of fault is possible. Professors stick to their views, even after public humiliation? 2008 financial crisis and balancing the budget Hence, **JK Galbraith's** method includes A. Catastrophe and B. Learning from the catastrophes.

Pouvoir by Foucault is that everything you learned from other people, is shaped by the fact, that other people want to change how and what you think, in order to maintain control over one. Everyone talks bullshit to one, to make one more controllable. The only insanity that concerns us, is insanity that is difficult to control. Hence, a harmless lunatic shall pursue his business, as he does not interfere with the rest of society etc. where as a harmful lunatic would be lobotomised/thrown into prison. Categories of criminality are created by people who want to control you. E.G: walking past empty buildings and homeless people in front of the uni. Interestingly, the homeless person, making himself a home in the empty building makes him a criminal. That's because our legal system makes ones intrusion into another's property instead of making it necessary to maximise everyone's hedonism. Another example would be a man in the pharmacy not being able to afford the medicine that saves his son. —> People with power will perform power onto everyone else in order to control circumstances.

—>If your own hedonism is minimised by surroundings, other people etc. Then if you could maximise your own hedonism would make everybody unable to stop you maximising your own hedonism. E.G: Toilet training, makes children feel oppose to their bodies and alienates nature. Naturally, people are not used/intended to use a toilet, but we condition less powerful people (children) to do so.

Remember Bishop Berkeley? — Is the claim that he invent dandruff shampoo true? **History is significantly subjective**, may or may not be true, but in fact, is unfalsifiable and unverifiable. There does not seem to be a way to retrieve objective information from the past.

herbert marcuse — extreme marxist — research — he was working at the university of California, even though not liking the government. **repressive tolerance** societies like the U.S. are good allowing at the widest spectrum of opinions but loosing attention to the majority. "repressive" display of one's view of the world opposed to displaying ones own. E.G: learning about marxism doesn't make a marxist necessarily, but rather I learn marxism for an exam, rather for my own personal gain. Interest is there, objective is inherited by repressive regime of society.

Why would you not listen to and believe what your parents say, if cultural knowledge inheritance exists, it would make sense to believe elders.

Societies like the U.S. have citizens having the feeling of normality regarding necessities, creating big possible problems for society as a whole. If you want to minimise the results of an effect, spend a lot of government money, the government doesn't have. Tax receipts will be down, bc economic activity is down, to bring it back up again, the government needs to accelerate local economy, forcing them into spending money they don't have as the sole solution. — (Keynes view of things)

13. February. 18

One law for the lion and the lamb is tyranny

If we consider the events of the holocaust and "auschwitz", the people being responsible directly for the killing of many people, were simply following orders. The question is, whether the pursue of holocaust-related subjects, should or could be punished for their actions. Considering that most people do follow orders significantly more likely if the superior wears a uniform and betrays a dominant figure, hence nearly affecting all subordinate nazi soldiers. They did

however seem to have chosen that to do what they did. **Ted honderich** says there is no such thing as **free-will**. Who you are depends on genetics and culture and experience. Hence, you can only make decisions based upon your environment, culture etc.

Complex learning

We don't learn by instinct or culture or experience, but we learn by instinct and culture and experience. Most knowledge is acquired by multiple input paths rather than singular. E.G: French kids learn French, not Japanese, e.g. because their parents speak French, not Japanese. The importance of language in any kind of complex learning should not be neglected.

E.G: if there's no word for "freedom", there's no way of trying to enforce it. —1984 George Orwell. (You may be able to express the concept, but it will be significantly harder.)

The words used in learning are going to be dependent on the language and its features as well as ambiguity within connotation and even denotation. E.G: The idea of society being equal, is attractive, but what type. Equality of outcome means that everyone gets e.g. the same house and same car. Equality of chances and equality of starts. Consider: Max may need more assistance than Moritz. What would be equality in this situation, equality of outcome, starts or chance?

Meaning, has two aspects — Denotation and Connotation.

Gate-Theory

You're programmed to walk, talk, do a lot of things, but the program will not execute, until certain pre-requisite circumstances are reached/achieved. E.G: Children can't walk and won't attempt to walk, until their physical body is strong enough to support the weight. Also, children that see many people walk around them, will start walking earlier, as more stimuli are being triggered earlier. Obviously, the pre-requisites need to be given.

E.G: a child being raised by humans, but then put into isolation, will not be able to re-implement itself into society. The development is determined by social factors and independent variables like physical pre-requisites.

E.G: learning how to walk is a lot easier when you're so young, because the circumstances point toward the "learn how to walk" program. If knowing how to walk gets forgotten by e.g. a brain/head injury, the process of learning how to walk again, will be very hard, if not even impossible.

E.G: homo-sexuality, the natural tendency to procreate will be hindered, when having a homosexual partner, hence also the natural tendency to not embrace homosexuality easily, is that their population will die completely after the generation ends. Hence, survival is not sustainable.

Kind uncle-theory, says that, If a person is e.g. homosexual, their genes are not being passed on to the next generation. Supporting your cousin's children because you're homosexual, their support will be natural to you, as your cousin's genes are close to being the same as your own. Therefore, society's parameters to procreation affects you. E.G: a society without children but plenty resources etc will tend to make a person heterosexual. A person in a society with a lot of children, but not many resources etc, will tend to be homosexual (playing a supportive role) as it

fits the society's needs and balance of distribution.

15. February. 18

Equality

Inequality if treated equally, can be good. E.G: doctors that are paid significantly more -> ensure that the supply for doctors is enough for the demand. (Some people may not be able to afford a doctor)

En.wikipedia.org. (2018). *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*. [online] Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_ones_who_walk_away_from_Omelas [Accessed 15 Feb. 2018]. —reference

We get away from not thinking about that our happiness is based upon one's misery. The people of "**Omela**" are said to be better people, because they are aware of the fact. As soon as you take away that "one" from "Omela", their life and perception would become like ours.

20. February. 18

Review of "**Omela**"

The right thing to do is to follow rules: They shall not torture children

Or they shall torture children for the greater good

Consequentialist vs deontological ethics

e.g. Immanuel Kant was a true deontologist.

There is a deep and fundamental difference between lying and misleading. He thinks it's much better never having said "I'm keeping kosher", where not answering a question never asked is okay.

If a kretan says all kretans always lie, is he lying?

Consider Creed, where it is sometimes good to lie. Is a lying Creed citizen doing the right thing? No — Lying has an absolute value of being bad. They might do it and think it's good by times, but it is still bad.

Cultural relativism — a practice may be right in a culture but wrong in another. Also the practice may be bad but so deeply integrated to turn off. E.G: Widows burning themselves with the husband's cremation.

Principle of reciprocity in the categorical imperative. — Doing something I'd like me to do in their skin VS. Doing something based on what I'd like them to do to me.

E.G: All cultures have pornography, it's a cultural constant. Hence, is it good? Does it depend on the majority of people in a population?

Categorical Imperative

Decision must be made within a categorical framework of action. There should be a framework generalising entities and basing decision not upon them. E.G: favour own child for admission.

22. February. 18

An action that might be bad in a certain outcome may be good in a certain different outcome.

Utilitarianism and Jeremy Bentham

Utility is defined as the outcome which gives the greatest good to the most people. It is an essential concept for consequentialists. The core of the concept is happiness with the absence of pain, which should be maximised. It treats everyone's happiness the same, enabling a generalised definition. Bentham invents animal rights.

The animal can be made happy and can be given pain, hence we need to consider its happiness into our decision making process. —J Bentham NOT AN EXACT QUOTE

Who's happiness counts? — if you can feel happiness, your happiness counts.

Happiness and pain need to be balanced.

All consequentialism depends on the fact that the future is uncertain.

27. February. 18

1. Questions about
2. question about consequentialism utilitarianism

Utilitarianism is consequentialist. At its core the decision making process of what is right to do, depends on the outcome. Utilitarianism is not equal to hedonism as utilitarian with the desired outcome of one's happiness. utilitarianism defines the good of one as less equal if it differs from the good of the society, the greater good. utilitarianism also says that happiness is not really mathematically definable, hence maximising it would be hard. If the outcome *obviously* maximises happiness, that's good. **LD-50 Test for additives.**

Counterintuitive conclusion — if I'm thinking like a utilitarian, I don't want to do something that loses more than it gains. **Dr. Peter Singer** on **modern utilitarianism**. Utility can be defined rather loosely or rather specifically. *Animal liberation*, PETA and Body shop.

Peter Singer's analogical, deductive, utilitarian argument for animal welfare

People have interests because they can suffer. Animals are like people in that they can suffer. So animals must have interests as well. Democrats and utilitarians are obliged to respect all interests equally. We are democrats and utilitarians. Therefore, we are obliged to respect all interests equally. Animals have interests. We are obliged to respect all interest equally. So we are obliged to respect animal's interests as much as people's. *Put another way:* Speciesism is like sexism: it says some interests are more important like others. Sexism is wrong because it says that. Therefore speciesism is wrong.

Its the suffering that counts, not the reason why suffering is inferred (like in omelas for the greater good)

How good is Singer's argument?

Do people have Interests only because they can suffer? Do animals suffer the same way people do? People do have a greater magnitude of perception of suffering than animals or plants. Counterargument: The mourning process of elephants is very deep and emotional even for human standards. Are people really democrats and utilitarians? Are people merely democrats and utilitarians? E.G: Factory farming, animal suffering to create cheap meat. — The suffering of that chicken laying eggs is worth less than mine, thats how factory farming is argued. That of course may not be true.

1.March.2018

Singer says to not cause a lot of suffering for marginal benefit. Maximise overall happiness.

E.G: Hinduism until the modern iterations didn't implement any form of speciesism, but life as a whole and continuous spectrum.

Environmental thinking utilising the method of Gaia. Where the greatest good for the environmental system one is within should be the directive to follow.

Obligations for some living things are rightly greater than others. E.G: the treatment of strangers relative to a good friend, the two should not be treated the same, due to their relation with one.

E.G: we feed better and more food to our pets than to many people that are starving.

deontology

6.March.2018

Legalising Drugs

Why should any drug be illegal? Legalisation VS illegalisation... The reprehension of legalising drugs may cause a cost. Sometimes the integration of laws do not make sense...

Effective altruism goes back to an essay by Peter Singer as a teenager, which was called **famine affluence and morality**. And Marginal utility of money -> a pound is different value in different circumstances. e.g. Mark Zuckerberg would not pick up a ten pound bill, as the relative value to him is only marginal. If a pound would save a life in a famine condition, the question arises why that pound is not allocated to that famine area. So, where do you stop sending pounds two famine areas? Until you're poor yourself and in a Famine condition? This is obviously a extremist argument and not necessarily realistic.

One is not expected to be perfect, but as good as he can be. —Singer

[reference](#)

The rule is the greatest happiness principle, do what will bring the greatest happiness to the greatest number. This is consequentialist and utilitarian. Hence, anything can be good, if resulting in the greatest happiness for the greatest people.

Singer's essay sparked a significant movement. It enables one to maximise the good one does, whenever one decides to do good.

[Peter Singer's website](#)

Charitable contribution, given to someone, who benefits and how much? Comparing two kinds of benefits (objective of utilitarian). **High likelihood of doing good VS Low likelihood of doing good** Giving money VS. Giving time and care. What are the chances of success? What are the risks of failure? (Contribute against nuclear war VS. Helping a baby -> the contribution against nuclear war is less likely to affect the outcome!) Volunteering is almost always inefficient, in the sense that the output is not maximised as one may not be specialised in the volunteering work.

McAskill's Theory

The vegan problem: environmental issues. Some cost are good, but if implemented the entire population, it would make things worse for everybody. e.g. the production of cheese would diminish and eventually be forgotten.

E.g. the re-erection of Shakespear's globe. They've re-build the whole thing with the exact same tools and materials as the original. No power tools, excavators etc. Hence, there had to be training for how to use the tools that were used back then, because no one knows naturally.

The dying child situation. Suffering and misery experienced by a dying child. The parents do not want to switch off the machine, naturally the medical staff must have the kids welfare at stake. Utilitarian view and consequentialist view is to pull the plug and spend the resources on what provides the greatest happiness for the greatest number. In the real life case, the decision has been taken away from the parents.

20.March.18

Liberal ethics

A person should be free to do what he wants to do, unless and until his liberty interferes with the liberty of someone else. —Mill's principle of liberty

[Mill's Harm/Liberty Principle](#)

[Reference](#)

Taxation is violating Mill's principle in some extent. But, if that money is being given to the intention of creating more liberty of action than it would have created for myself, taxation complies to Mill's principle.

The ethics of Freedom and Nozick's Principle of self Ownership

[reference](#)

The concept itself is very similar to utilitarianism, where utility is interchanged with liberty (the capacity of doing what may be liked to do). Hence, it is again a form of consequentialism. e.g. The positive liberty of buying an expensive item exists, where the negative liberty may be the inability to accumulate the money required. The positive liberty seems to be crucial for evaluating liberty concepts.

People may not be made happy by the opportunity to choose! Too much choice may diminish liberty. The ability to choose itself, is good, but the complexity of choices may be seen as negative.

Mill's notion that there is a utilitarian aspect to liberty may not be completely applicable all the time.

Americans have the clear notion to choose their marriage partner themselves, but the divorce rate in the states is approaching fifty percent.

-> Does making the choice make you happy?

Situation ethics -> contingency of the circumstances

1. People are happier if they get what they want
2. Evolution through conflict, people and society are improved by challenge

Society progresses through conflict. e.g. the flat-earth movement. Conflict about the shape of the earth, could arise the sphere-earth movement. If we do not allow the freedom to discuss and disagree, there will never be challenge or proof.

1859 -> spring (Mill's publication of liberty) and autumn (Darwin's evolutionism)

We should enable the maximisation of liberty.

E.G: Free Trade, is positive liberty, in which the ability to choose between sources of resources is in fact un-hindered, but some sources are more expensive than others. Trump's tariffs on steel imports from Europe are not hindering the liberty, but inhibiting the trade. If they were removed, trade itself would not be more or less unhindered, but rather more "available" as prices would drop.

E.G: Free speech. Interfering with negative liberty, is the limit put on speech, in which one is not allowed to give their opinion, if that content will damage someone else. It interferes directly with the ability of expression.

Feminist ethics

Andrea Dworkin has been sexually and physically abused more than once in her life, despite she made it through college and published "*intercourse*".

■ All penetrative Sex is rape —Andrea Dworkin

(Chapter on pornography -> extremist views)

She said, that a truly free society should ban pornography, because pornography creates a cultural environment in which women feel threatened. In such, their liberty is limited more, than the liberty of the consumer gains. Henceforth, there is a NET-loss of liberty. Meaning, that porn actor's liberty being less enhanced than the consumers liberty. An aspect is, that women

are always ready to have sex, where as men are not. (Foreplay actually required by men, not women) The liberty of allowing the consumption of pornography, diminished the liberty of women indirectly.

The argument of other's liberty being less enhanced than others is the underlying principle.

E.G: Watching a sex scene with your parents when younger -> weird situation limiting liberty

E.G: A catholic priest burning the Koran, should he be permitted to do that?

22.march.18

Berlin's liberty: the community should maximise liberty for its members.

[isaiah berlin](#)

[parable of the flute](#)

Keeping the flute for the flute maker, Re-allocating it to where its needed, re-allocating it to where it maximises output

Mill claims that liberty leads to happiness, does it?

Dworkin's arguments against liberal societies are increasingly becoming popular.

[Robert Nozick](#)

The freedom not to be a slave -> the one thing we can never take away.

Partial slavery is evil to the extent of the fraction. $\frac{1}{3}$ of the time a slave -> 33% evil

Gov. No right to restrict child labour. As the restriction would impose limits on liberty and ultimately would result in slavery.

Liberalism doest help make individual decisions very often. How the society should treat its members. Maximising liberty may diminish happiness. Either utilitarian or liberalism. Maximising liberty may diminish fairness.

Positive liberty by Berlin being consequentialist view VS. Negative liberty by Mill being Deontological

[Michel Foucault](#) — pouvoir

29.march.18

Immanuel Kant thinks that protection of human dignity by setting a framework of rules that should be strictly followed. He sets very high standards, having the right intention and following the right actions.

Compliance is an essential piece of Immanuel Kant's mindset.

Freedom is not being able to do what one wants, but being free enough from one's wants in order to do what one is ought to do. Free yourself from desire and you're free to do what one should and want to do. Sophocles answers to how it is not having sexual desires anymore (due to high age) and responds with being free from fleshly desires.

The Categorical imperative is a rule against exceptions, where wanting to do something is un-frameable with the general law, which also has no exceptions, one is making a mistake. Parents want to do special things for their kids, but not for all kids. Hence, a generalised rule following the categorical imperative, could be that parents always favour their children. Where as e.g. a teacher giving grades cannot apply the above mentioned example, as his persona/virtue changed from parent to teacher.

If the purpose of marketing is to enhance the desires of one, there is nothing Kantian about that, nor can there be, as the desire itself is being created by marketing affiliated entities.

Changing the nature of entities is not complying with Kantian philosophy. (Changing a person into a consumer utilising marketing)

Rawl's Veil of ignorance

Ted Honderich -> One is who one is, because of a combo of influences. (Genetic, environmental, etc.) what one does is the result of who one is.

03.april.18

You are is completely out of one's control. Hence, by not being responsible for what you do, how can you responsible for what you do?

More people wanting to become doctors than places to study. -> if doctors are an aspect that always has good implications for society as a whole, why aren't there more doctors?

How to create a selection process? (For doctors) who becomes a doctor based on what? e.g. 1000 applicants 100 places, who gets the places?

Nobody deserves anything if they're not responsible for their actions.

Joe Mackey fallacy (black man from Manhattan, best education, good family) he was except of his skin-tan more privileged! (Worse grades)(gotten into Yale by affirmative action). He got into Yale because of his skin-tan. Jules (bad schools, bad family, amazing talent). He got in because of the colour of his skin, not his talent.

The logic for letting the two people in is fundamentally different and might be different enough to make one accept one decision while rejecting the other.

Jules has achieved because of racist historic reasons, but also because of her past and circumstances (poor and Lot of work for success).

Joe did well from perspective of enormous privilege, where Jules did not do relatively well from perspective of enormous poverty.

Affirmative action lead to illogical selection processes.

Joe and Jules were never enslaved or were directly affected by the racist past. e.g. "My parents were slaves, hence I deserve a place at Ivy League university."

The second kind of affirmative action shown in the example is much more of a challenge. (Accepting him because his achievements relative to his past and privilege is impressive) (but not nearly as well, in absolute terms, than other people that might come from more privilege.)

Joe went to Harvard law and did well afterwards while Jules became a dancer and died soon after because of aids (where aids wasn't even discovered back then).

If you come out of a background where tests are a normality, test results may be higher if you would not be. Tests measure the ability of taking tests (for sure) and *maybe* to certain extent somethings else.

Immigration at Ellis island and IQ tests as permission to enter the states. Many immigrants never undertook a test or have ever seen a pencil. Immigrants may have had significant disadvantages at performing. Most immigrants were stamped as retarded (obviously due to significant errors in the testing process). Hundredths of thousands of immigrants were sent back to their countries, just right before WWII started.

The States ultimately, after years, figured the testing was broken by stamping many jews as retarded (which seems unnatural. Jews are good at maths.).

Cultural disadvantaging Circumstances -> taking test lacking cultural knowledge (like Royal crown and not knowing its product, but needing to answer questions that require to know the product. Hence only Americans know RC is a cola company, germans not and hence have a cultural disadvantaging circumstance)

We don't need good students, but good doctors. It is important to differentiate, as both aspects can be excluding each other.

10.april.18

Last time: A consideration of affirmative action (members of "unprivileged" groups preferred in allocation of scarce goods)

The ethics of war

Extraordinary consensus on what constitutes to a *good* war.

The "just war" theory

[reference - Thomas Aquinas](#)

Theology, specifically Jesus claims to never act organised destruction (war).

The reason for war & The conduction of that war

Expansion of power, authority or territory are non-legitimate reasons for war.

War is to be seen as a final resort.

Its outcome should be explicitly beneficial.

Terrorism is in its essence dependent on who acts organised destruction, rather than the consequences on certain parties.

Parties in a war should be equally able to win, otherwise its not a war.y

e.g. Palestinian and israeli conflict -> Palestinian's should give up, as their chances of winning are nearly arbitrarily zero.

You must not make civilians part of war intentionally and should at all costs be avoided. The methods used have to be proportional to scale of cause fighting.

Tests for war

The psychological need for violence does not legitimate violence.

1861 -> blockade into submission -> sank stones to block ports of the south states -> outrage, as long-term effects were experienced even after the confusion of the war.