

Short Answers: You'll have to answer 10 out of 15 (3 points each)

1. Which King of England did Locke think illegitimate? Which king did Locke want to take his place? What were the respective religions of these two kings? What was Locke's religion?
2. Define "political power" (as it is defined in handout #1 on Locke).
3. Locke says that the "state of nature" still exists today in two different contexts. Describe them.
4. Locke thinks there is one main "inconvenience" that leads people to agree to the social contract that takes them out of the state of nature. Describe this inconvenience.
5. Locke argues that there is only one sort of case in which one person may justly enslave another person. Explain his reasoning on this issue.
6. Describe the "condition of abundance" that, according to Locke, limits property right in the state of nature.
7. Describe the "condition of thrift" that, according to Locke, limits property right in the state of nature.
8. Describe the theses of explanatory sufficiency, explanatory primacy and explanatory relevance as applied to the connection between Locke's theory of natural rights and the American Revolution.
9. Describe the two different routes to moral knowledge that Locke posited. Which of these two routes did he think was more reliable than the other?
10. Distinguish intuitive truths from indefensible knowledge.
11. Define "vener theory."
12. Define "radical coherentism."
13. Define "self-evidence" in the technical sense lent that expression by epistemologists.
14. List three principles that Locke thought of as self-evident.
15. State the instrumental principle (either its articulation as a normative claim or its articulation as a modal statement of psychological impossibility will do).
16. Explain the conditions for "moral appraisability" that Douglas uses to argue that white Southerners already thought of African slaves and their descendants as people despite their claims to the contrary.
17. What charge landed Martin Luther King Jr. in the Birmingham jail from which he wrote his famous letter in 1963?
18. Explain the difference between "immediatism" and "gradualism" with regard to the abolition of slavery. Which side did Lincoln take in this debate?
19. Define "individual selection."
20. Define "group selection."
21. Describe some of the results Frans De Waal uses to argue that veneer theory is false.
22. Describe Huxley's use of group selection to explain the European colonization of the Americas.
23. State Peirce's definition of an argument's validity.
24. Explain Peirce's characterization of belief.
25. Explain Peirce's characterization of doubt.
26. Explain James' conception of "ethical skepticism."
27. According to Peirce, what undermines the method of tenacity?
28. What leads Peirce to say that philosophers follow the method of authority?
29. Explain Peirce's characterization of the method of science.
30. Describe pragmatic analyses of moral beliefs in particular.
31. Describe the three varieties of moral philosophy James identifies.

Short Essay Questions: You'll have to answer 2 out of 4 (15 points each)

(1) Explain Filmer's theological argument for the legitimacy of King James II and three of Locke's criticisms of it.

(2) Locke says that before the formation of civil societies through contract, people live in a state of relatively equal political power resulting from their mutual appreciation of their relatively equal natural powers. "A state also of equality, wherein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another, there being nothing more evident than that creatures of the same species and rank, promiscuously born to all the same advantages of Nature, and the use of the same faculties, should also be equal one amongst another, without subordination or subjection, unless the lord and master of them all should, by any manifest declaration of his will, set one above another, and confer on him, by an evident and clear appointment, an undoubted right to dominion and sovereignty.... Age or virtue may give men a just precedency. Excellency of parts and merit may place others above the common level. Birth may subject some, and alliance or benefits others, to pay an observance to those to whom Nature, gratitude, or other respects, may have made it due; and yet all this consists with the equality which all men are in respect of jurisdiction or dominion one over another, which was the equality I there spoke of as proper to the business in hand, being that equal right that every man hath to his natural freedom, without being subjected to the will or authority of any other man" (§54).

Is it true that people are relatively equal "in nature" in the way Locke describes? Is there no one so obviously superior in virtue or wisdom or managerial skill that we see him or her as a "natural leader" who is owed political power on the basis of these merits? What does it take for a group to be egalitarian in thought and practice? What does it take for a group to be meritocratic in thought and practice? Can a group be both egalitarian and meritocratic? Why or why not?

(3) Locke says, "Though the earth and all inferior creatures be common to all men, yet every man has a 'property' in his own 'person.' This nobody has any right to but himself. The 'labour' of his body and the 'work of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever, then, he removes out of the state that Nature hath provided and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with it, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property. It being by him removed from the common state Nature placed it in, it hath by this labour something annexed to it that excludes the common right of other men. For this 'labour' being the unquestionable property of the labourer, no man but he can have a right to what that is once joined to, at least where there is enough, and as good left in common for others."

Explain and critically evaluate Locke's theory of property rights in the state of nature. What, according to Locke, are the conditions a person needs to meet if she is to justly acquire property? How might one use Locke's theory to argue that those Native Americans who lived off herds of buffalo in the American West didn't own the lands on which they lived? Does this use of Locke's theory of property rights show that there is something wrong with his theory? How might we amend Locke's theory of property right to solve this problem with it?

(4) According to Morton White, James Wilson argued that the moral sense theory of Hutcheson and Hume is superior to Locke's moral epistemology (where, recall, Locke grounds moral knowledge in creationist biology). Explain and assess Wilson's argument for this claim. Which moral epistemology is best suited to the defense of democracy?

Do you have a general view of biology and sociology and the evolution of life on Earth? How is this connected to your views about what is good for humans and what they should do? How are

these connected to your views about what is good for you and what you should do? Does this general philosophical outlook have “more weight” in your reasoning than your immediate sympathies, feelings of blame and contempt and the other morally laden emotions we might describe as the products of your moral sense? Do you trust your moral sense (so understood) more than your theoretical morality or does it go the other way? Does it depend on the conflict?

(5) King states, “In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.”

Assess King’s criterion for justified civil disobedience. Were the civil rights protestors justified in boycotting buses and disrupting businesses to bring an end to racial segregation? Are there any US laws today that you think are unjust? Would you be justified in breaking them “openly and lovingly”? Would you have to allow yourself to be imprisoned and “accept the penalty” for your disobedience to be justified? Would you have to aim at arousing the conscience of the nation to be so justified? Defend your answers with arguments.

(6) Explain Dewey’s prediction as to the effect of the Darwinian revolution in biology on philosophy. Which if any of Darwin’s predictions have been born out by subsequent history? Do today’s philosophers produce the kind of work Dewey predicted they would produce? What consequences, if any, does biological theory in general and our understanding of the origins of humanity in particular, have for the construction and evaluation of moral and political theories? Did Dewey overestimate the importance of biology for philosophy? Defend your answers with arguments.

(7) According to Peirce, “It is true that we do generally reason correctly by nature. But that is an accident; the true conclusion would remain true if we had no impulse to accept it; and the false one would remain false, though we could not resist the tendency to believe it.” Is Peirce right that it is an “accident” that “we do generally reason correctly by nature”? Is it possible for humans to discover that even our best methods of reasoning are unreliable? Defend your answers with (valid or reliable) arguments.

(8) According to Peirce, “The mere putting of a proposition into the interrogative form does not stimulate the mind to any struggle after belief. There must be a real and living doubt, and without this all discussion is idle.” Is global moral skepticism “idle” in Peirce’s sense? According to Peirce, “An inquiry to have that completely satisfactory result called demonstration, has only to start with propositions perfectly free from all actual doubt. If the premises are not in fact doubted at all, they cannot be more satisfactory than they are.” Which moral beliefs can’t you “shake” (i.e. replace with doubt)? What is the relevance of Peirce’s definitions of “belief” and “doubt” to these questions? Are these good definitions? Can we use them to effectively reject skeptical challenges aimed at those of your moral beliefs that you cannot shake? Can we use them to establish moral premises from which we can argue for (what we take to be) needed changes in our laws and institutions? Defend your responses with arguments.

Longer Essay Questions: You’ll have to answer 2 out of 4 (20 points each)

(1) Locke says, “Man had a right to an use of the creatures, by the will and grant of God: for the desire, strong desire, of preserving his life and being, having been planted in him as a principle of

action by God himself, reason, “which was the voice of God in him,” could not but teach him and assure him that pursuing that natural inclination he had to preserve his being, he followed the will of his Maker, and therefore had a right to make use of those creatures which by his rear son or senses he could discover would be serviceable thereunto. And thus man’s property in the creatures was founded upon the right he had to make use of those things that were necessary or useful to his being.”

Explain this argument for the rights of humans to use and own other animals. Make sure to explain the role played by our “strong desire” for self-preservation, the idea of reason as “God’s voice”: i.e. the cognitive abilities we use to discern God’s intent or design, and the relation of these concepts to Locke’s conclusion that we have a natural right to use and own other animals. Do humans have a “natural right” to use and own other animals? If you think so, explain how you might argue for that view on less theological grounds than those Locke provides. If you think not, describe your view of the kinds of relationships humans ought to bear to other animals and the (relatively non-theological) grounds for these obligations.

(2) According to what we’ve been calling The Optimistic Narrative, Locke elaborated basic rights to life, liberty and property justly acquired or received, where property right is limited by obligations to take care of those suffering from poverty. The “liberty” of which Locke wrote included religious freedom, freedom of movement, freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, etc. And Locke used the idea of a social contract to argue for the incorporation of democratic ideals into governmental structures by arguing from said contract to limitations on state power, a ban on taxation without representation, a division of powers within the government and so on. These Lockean political ideals were articulated in our founding documents—the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution—because they were an important part of the motives that drove the colonists to revolt against British rule. Though Lockean natural and political rights were initially limited to relatively wealthy European men, through the struggles of slaves, women, native peoples and their descendants, these rights were eventually expanded to realize the promise of “equality under the law” that Locke conceptualized.

According to what we’ve been calling The Pessimistic Narrative: The main function of Lockean ideas in early American history was a rationalizing one. The colonists revolted against British rule for reasons that had little to do with the idea of natural rights, the social contract and the normative political principles Locke derived from these philosophical constructs. Proclamations of the natural, pre-civil rights of men to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness were really a “moral veneer” in the sense defined by Frans de Wall. What really drove the revolution was a desire to retain slavery, dominate Native Americans, and advance other economic interests. These motives drove the founders to argue for revolution and then unification even if they used Locke’s theory of natural rights to “justify” their revolution to the world. The history of America is most accurately described as the use of Lockean rhetoric to help conceal capitalist, anti-Lockean, anti-Democratic practice. The early Americans were not united by a social contract in Locke’s sense, but a racial contract in Charles Mills’ sense: an application of Lockean ideals to a limited group of men united by a common racial and socioeconomic identity.

Describe the evidence in favor of each narrative. Which account is closer to the truth? Which played a greater role in the founding of the United States: (a) belief in the universal rights of men to life and liberty, (b) or an ideology of white nationalism? Has (a) or (b) played a greater role in the subsequent history of this nation? Explain the answers to these questions Frederick Douglas articulates in “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”

(3) Explain the role Malachuk assigns to Locke's theory of natural rights in the thinking of the abolitionists. Was natural rights ideology essential to the abolitionists' arguments against slavery? Explain Rawls' distinction between metaphysical (or substantive) liberalism and political (or procedural) liberalism. Is Sandel right that political liberals would have rejected the abolitionists' arguments against slavery? Does this raise a problem for political liberalism? Defend your answers with arguments.

(4) Analyze King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." How does King try to convince his audience that humanity is itself valuable in a way that demands mutual respect between all humans? Is this claim self-evident? Does it need argumentative support for us? Must we try to convert the segregationist to our way of thinking of things with things beyond or besides argument? Is this what King is doing in his letter? Is he appealing to a moral sense or affectively laden conscience? How is the moral sense or conscience awakened in a white segregationist whose racial animus has the backing of the segregationist's desire for the economic and political advantages he or she derives from segregation? How might King's arguments have affected the audience he more directly addresses: i.e. the more "moderate" white people who were not rabid segregationists but remained unconvinced that integration was an imperative whose time had come? What in general is the relationship between an argumentative defense of a moral principle and the grounds on which one believes or knows that principle to be true? Who must we be able to convince a principle's truth if we are to justifiably believe it or know it to be true?

(5) We support democratic ideals in public argumentation, but our acceptance of Darwin's account of our origins in the modification of ancestral primates through "natural" (non-divine) processes of selection leads us to reject Locke's account of humankind's creation. Do we need another argumentative basis for our belief in human rights? What about the other components of our morality? Do we need some account of how we know what we claim to know about right and wrong? Is the "moral sense" theory of Hutcheson and Hume up to the task?

(6) Describe James' account of moral or ethical philosophy. Explain the sense in which James thinks moral or ethical philosophers ought to be "neutral" to avoid "interesting themselves" in the "triumph" of some particular value. Is this sort of neutrality possible? Should philosophers aim at being neutral in way James recommends? When, if ever, is it ok for moral philosophers to argue for political reforms? Is political activism compatible with the kind of neutrality James attributes to moral philosophy (insofar as it is philosophy)? Was Martin Luther King Jr. a moral philosopher? Did he abandon philosophy in arguing for integration? Support your answer with arguments.