



CITIZENSHIP

1st term

Name: _____ Group: _____

1. "Our culture has some deeply entrenched values". Which ones? How do we learn them?

hostility to moralizing | rights vs. good (this one seems undemocratic, or elitist, moralistic) | rights vs. duty (a life devoted to duty is meaningless to us) | privacy (we want to enjoy our lives with a good conscience)

we are told stories that justify what we are and what we do: "The ethical climate will sustain a conviction that we are civilized, and they are not, or that we deserve better fortune than them, or that we are intelligent, sensitive, rational, or progressive, or scientific, or authoritative, or blessed, or alone to be trusted with freedoms and rights, while they are not."

education, then (not only formal education, but education by our parents and our peers too) is the way for us to introduce ourselves in this climate

2. "So, if we think the abortion issue does need moralizing and politicizing, nothing stops us from fixing a particular term of pregnancy beyond which abortion is generally prohibited." Explain it. Is it a solution for the issue?

the attitude in the USA about abortion is moralizing: who has the right, what our duty is, those are deontological questions; and politicizing: it's a question of the law, of whether it's a crime or not. And it's hard to decide on these questions, we won't all agree on any solution.

But even if we moralize or politicize the issue, and we don't lay too much weight on the question of whether a foetus is a person or not, a possible solution could establish only a certain term of pregnancy as a turning point in the issue of whether an abortion should be allowed or not, as a compromise: you are not to abort beyond a certain point in your pregnancy or not given certain circumstances, we will consider it a crime

3. What are the religious and ethical reasons to believe in an afterlife? What are the metaphysical issues connected with it? Why is it wrong, according to David Hume?

For many people, one of the attractions of the major religions is the promise of an afterlife, a changed status of being, for better or worse, because, among other things, life here is unjust or intolerable, so there must be a better world somewhere else, a better life, and that's the ethical argument too.

All that takes for granted the existence of a part of ourselves that would survive: the soul, as it is commonly thought of, as the core of our identity and the substratum for the

responsability claims; and of a real world beyond this. It triggers quite a lot of interesting questions about the reality, the nature of man, origins of life, relations mind body and so on.

David Hume thinks that these beliefs are “wishful thinking”. If we are to judge for what we have in front of us, then we have to think that god has no intention of justice, but on the opposite, he wants us to bear with a fair deal of suffering and injustice.

4. What issues arise if we try to think pleasure as the content of the good life?

Happiness is often thought of in terms of subjective pleasure:

- it would be possible then to calculate the action which eventually leads to a maximum amount of pleasure.

- “fit only for pigs”: that’s the reverse of that life, according to some people.

- but there are more dignified pleasures, such as those of friendship, art, music,...

- if so, can we accept subjective pleasure or should we ask for true happiness, based not only in appearance of pleasure but in real one?; this one requires reasoning and action within reality.

- is there a sense of purpose built into nature?: some say that natural law is a ferocious struggle; and much of our world (and of our happiness, then) is not natural: books, concerts, bicycles,...

- is it the life according with intelligence?: but our intelligence can lead us to the destruction of ourselves and the others.

“The gardens of human condition contain some pretty depressing areas”

5. What is indirect utilitarianism? What does it mean that rules are only meant to promote and protect the good of society?

Between the necessity of justice, on one hand, and the safety and satisfaction of the people, on the other, both of which look like antagonist and exclusive, indirect utilitarianism is a kind of compromise.

It is consequentialist overall, trying to maximise the amount of pleasure / utility / happiness that we can afford ourselves; but in the conduct of life rules and principles have the paramount authority that deontologists wish (but we all know that, when the occasion arrives, we will change them eventually, for the better good). Because we make the rules not considering what is good or bad in itself, but contrariwise we establish it by these rules.

6. What does it mean that the declaration of rights is nothing “but a prescription of an order that any society should uphold”?

Are human rights natural? It doesn’t seem so. They are dependent of the previous existence of a society, before which any preoccupation with rights just would seem ludicrous. In a society, we can understand rights as any other convention, that laws grant to every one.

Or that laws should grant, because so far it is clear that actual society is not like this, not in many parts of the world. So that we have to consider rights as an obligation, an ideal, that our society has to accomplish