examples supplement

If you are teaching a course in critical thinking or informal logic, you know that one of the peskiest tasks is finding material for use on assignments, tests, etc. It is our hope that the Examples Supplement to the *Informal Logic Newsletter* will help take some of that pressure off by providing you with a number of passages for analysis. In many cases, we have included not only the passage but also the analysis provided by the person who submitted it, not, of course, as "the answer" but as a point of departure for your own analysis, or those of your students.

Most of the material in this year's supplement was provided by Ralph H. Johnson under the rubric of the Altadena *Close Reasoner* (a project which we have no doubt was inspired by Robert Binkley's earlier submissions from the London *Close Reasoner*). It bears the title "Altadena" because that is where Johnson was living last year while on sabbatical leave from the University of Windsor.

We would like to encourage our readers to open up their local editions of the *Close Reasoner*, and indeed take it as something of an obligation to do so. Then, when you've accumulated enough stuff, you can send it along to us so that we can publish it and share it with our readers.

1

BACKGROUND: In an article titled "Metaphysical Purdah," by Grey Morah (Philosophy, July, 1980), the author speculates about what she considers to be the fact that there have been no great female thinkers. She suggests that women are narcissistic, and tend to see the world in terms of its relation to their own presence; and that in doing so, they lack the strong sense of external reality which men have, and are inclined to uncritically project upon the world emotional responses of their own. She further speculates that women who are active in philosophy have chosen idealistic metaphysics and ethics, in disproportionate numbers, and that their choice of such areas reflects their inherently idealistic (in the metaphysical sense) way of approaching the world. Toward the end of her article, the author seems to me to commit the ad hominem fallacy in a rather interesting way. She says:

> For the solipsist, the world serves merely as a mirror for himself, a projection of his own existence: the world reflects and testifies to his existence without his having to lift a finger--it is his spontaneous and untutored and effortless creation. Solipsism is delusion on a grand scale, a daringly uncompromising short-cut to absolute power. It is a doctrine to which the losers of this world would naturally cleave, seeing in it an opportunity to compensate, at a transcendental level, for their inadequacies as agents vis à vis an intransigent and hostile world.

ANALYSIS: In this passage, it would appear that Morah is trying to discredit the philosophical doctrine of solipsism by suggesting that "the losers of this world" would naturally cleave to the doctrine. There is no evidence given that people who have in fact held solipsistic doctrines have been "losers" (whatever this is supposed to mean); and in any case, even if they had been, that fact would not count, even slightly, towards the falsity of solipsism as a metaphyiscal or epistemological doctrine.

(Submitted by Prof. Trudy Govier, Trent University, who adds: "I am grateful to Lorraine Landry for bringing this article to my attention. As readers may infer from my attempt at a synposis, it is a rich source if one is in quest of examples of sloppy reasoning.")

2

BACKGROUND: Michael Cassidy, the leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party, had been criticizing the government of Ontario for not doing enough to keep auto workers on the job in Ontario. One day, Cassidy stood up in the Legislature to blast the government for what he said was its failure to obtain small car production in Ontario. Here is a newspaper report of what happened after:

> Someone said that Cassidy drives a Volkswagen. William Davis, the premier, said that he was certain that Cassidy did not. When another MPP shouted that it was a Peugeot and Cassidy nodded in agreement, Davis and other Conservatives and Liberals mocked Cassidy unmercifully.
>
> A sheepish Cassidy admitted later to reporters that he did not have as high a consciousness about the importance of buying Canadian-made cars when he bought the Peugeot in 1974. He said he would sell the Peugeot as soon as his bank manager lets him.

ANALYSIS: This seems to me the very sort of reasoning that Govier attempted to sort out in her article, "Worries About Tu Quoque," (ILN, iii.3). However, the argument here (if there is one) does not seem to me to fit into either of the patterns she mentions there. Worth noting, too, is that neither Davis nor Cassidy's other critics appears to imply that the policy which Cassidy is advocating (more jobs for Ontario auto workers) is mistaken. What they are doing is pointing out a moral failure in Cassidy. Cassidy's defense seems to acknowledge that failure, though I have to chuckle when he says that he will sell his Peugeot as soon as his bank manager lets him. (R.J.)

3

BACKGROUND: This passage is excerpted from an article "Do Bacteria Think?" by Harold J. Morowitz which appeared in Psychology Today (February, 1981):

> From the point of view of the biochemical determinist, bacteria do not think. Rather, they respond to stimuli in the environment, using known chemical principles.... Following this line of reasoning, fungi do not think, protozoans do not think, and mimosa do not think. But if this is true, where does thought as a distinguishable feature arise in evolution?
>
> The most consistent materialists say that it never arises. Annelids do not think, planaria do not think, and invertebrates do not think. They respond to signals with a response/output whose usefulness is tested by evolution. [This line of reasoning leads inexorably to the conclusion that Supreme Court justices also do not think, but simply respond to stimuli in a manner that has passed the evolutionary filter for survival.
>
> Mentalists--believers in the existence of mind--would argue from the continuity of behavior to the opposite conclusion. Since we are able to move step by step from the Supreme Court justices, who we know can think, down the evolutionary ladder to successively simpler forms, then some sort of psychic activity must be ascribed even to the lowliest organism, bacteria.
>
> We are left with the dilemma of having to accept one of two conclusions: either bacteria think or Supreme Court justices do not. The only way out is to assume that at some level of organization between microbe and man, thought arose as a new phenomenon.]

(Submitted by Prof. Trudy Govier, who says that the portion in brackets contains "the clearest example of a conceptual slippery slope I have ever seen.")

4

BACKGROUND: Here is an argument on the subject of animal rights from Lewis Carroll's "Some Popular Fallacies About Vivisection" (in The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll, New York: Random House, pp. 1190-91):

> In discussing the "rights of animals," I think I may pass by, as needing no remark, the so-called right of a race of animals to be perpetuated, and the still more shadowy right of a non-existent animal to come into existence. The only question worth consideration is whether the killing of an animal is a real infringement of a right. Once grant this, and a reductio ad absurdum is imminent, unless we are illogical enough to assign rights to animals in proportion to their size. Never may we destroy, for our convenience, some of a litter of puppies--or open a score of oysters when nineteen would have sufficed--or light a candle in a summer evening for mere pleasure, lest some hapless moth should rush to an untimely end! Nay, we must not even take a walk, with the certainty of crushing many an insect in our path, unless for really important business! Surely all this is childish. In the absolute hopelessness of drawing a line anywhere, I conclude (and I believe that many, on considering the point, will agree with me) that man has an absolute right to inflict death on animals, without assigning any reason, provided that it be a painless death, but that any infliction of pain needs its special justification.

ANALYSIS: Carroll first argues that it would be a gross violation of common moral belief to think that all animals including even the insects had a right which was infringed when one killed them. He then asserts that it would be illogical to allot a right to life to animals on the basis of their size. He asserts, with no justification, that it is absolutely hopeless to "draw a line" anywhere to distinguish, on some basis, between those animals which do and those which do not have a right to life. And he concludes that man has an absolute right to inflict death on any animal, provided that the death is a painless one.

There are several problems with this line of argument. First of all, Carroll seems to base his case on a false trichotomy: either no animals have a right to life, or all do, or an arbitrary line--based on size or something else equally unsatisfactory--is used to distinguish those which do from those which do not. He never argues that any line drawn would be arbitrary, but merely assumes this. The false trichotomy then amounts to a problematic assumption. The next problem is that even if we were to grant Carroll his claim that it is hopeless to draw a non-arbitrary line, it would not follow that no animals have a right to life. For, from the fact that a precise delineation cannot be given, it does not follow that all items are within one of the two classes one wished to delineate. This is what I would call a fallacy of assimilation.

(Thanks to Prof. Trudy Govier, Trent University, for submitting this example and the analysis.)

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5

L.A. TIMES

Clark Criticism

The criticism of Justice William P. Clark Jr.'s nomination to be deputy secretary of state ("Clark Unqualified for State Dept. Post, Democrats Say," Times, Feb. 3) emanates from those who worship at the Shrine of Rote Recall—as though life's problems were like a big crossword puzzle, instead of analytical.

That a big collection of miscellaneous facts on every subject under the sun available at the tip of the tongue is not sufficient for success has been well illustrated by a recent occupant of the White House.

By the same token, it is not a *necessary* element of success: a fact also well illustrated by two men, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., and Albert Einstein. Holmes said he did not know facts—he knew the *meaning* of facts. Einstein, when asked what was the speed of sound, answered he did not know, but that he did know where to look that information up, should he need it.

ROBERT E. BURKE
Pasadena

Feb. 10, 1984

This first paragraph distorts the criticisms made of Clark. The critics on the Senate foreign relations committee were dismayed by Clark's lack of knowledge about world affairs (he didn't know the leader of South Africa by name, I believe) and U.S. commitments. The question was not, therefore, his inability to recall; it was that he did not know these basic things, yet was nominated for the second highest post in the State Department. Hence, straw man here.

The reference here is a bit vague, probably to Nixon. But it's irrelevant, since Clark's critics surely weren't arguing that a big collection of facts was a sufficient condition for success. Straw man, again.

They were arguing that a working knowledge of the area of foreign affairs ought to be a criterion that any candidate for high level State Department jobs should satisfy. (Percy, the chairman, said after the confirmation of Clark, that this must never be allowed to happen again--or words to that effect.) The argument here is closer to the issue. But does it succeed? It relies on comparing Einstein's success as a physicist and Holmes's success as a jurist to Clark's potential for success as a State Department official. The argument is: These men did not have important basic facts (about their areas) at the tip of their tongue and yet they succeeded. But can the role of factual knowledge in law and science be compared with its role in the affairs of the State Department? (A side issue here is this: If Holmes knew the meaning of facts, he apparently must also have known the facts, too.) I think the analogy is faulty, but to show this would take a lot of work. We would need to know just what Clark's position in the State Department would actually require of him; and of course, criteria of success in such a position are by no means as clearcut as they are in jurisprudence and science.

6

What's the Fuss?

Handgun control doesn't necessarily mean taking the guns away from everybody. It can mean simply to license these weapons, making it unlawful to own one without proper registration.

After all, what's the big deal? You need a license to get married. You need a license for your dog. You need one for your vehicle and your business. You need permits for nearly everything. Nobody seems to suffer too much.

Drivers must meet certain standards in order to obtain a permit to drive. As a result, thousands of lives are saved every year.

So why not similarly license handguns? It'll cost a little, be a little inconvenient, and maybe it'll save a few lives. It really is the least we can do.

T. R. CASSEL
Los Angeles

L.A. Times, Jan. 23, 1981

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This argument for the licensing of handguns attempts to appeal to our sense of consistency by showing that licensing of handguns is a practice which would not differ substantially from many already accepted. It goes this way: You accept the licensing of people who wish to get married, of dogs, of businesses, and of drivers. Why not then also accept the licensing of handguns.

This is a good example of an argument which tries to lead the audience from premises which they (presumably) accept to a conclusion which (presumably) many of them would like to oppose.

Here the arguer lapses, committing the fallacy Kahane would call "unknown fact." How do we count deaths that did not occur? But perhaps the point can be saved, for if reworded, most would (presumably) accept it: If we did not require drivers to obtain a license, there would be more deaths and injuries than there are now. I believe this is true, but am not sure how one would go about demonstrating it, other than by appealing to people's basic intuitions and common sense.

Is the argument successful? Are we being inconsistent if we concede the state's legitimate right to ask us to obtain licenses for marriages, businesses, dogs, and driving cars and yet deny its legitimacy to require that handguns, too, be licensed? The answer revolves, I believe, around the question of why we have conceded the state the right to require licenses in these other areas. Generally speaking, the answer would be that the state has the right and the duty to enact laws which maintain and preserve the welfare ot its citizens. Taking this angle, one would have to concede the similarity; for if the state could control the use of handguns by licensing, that would seem to be a step which would enhance the welfare of its citizens.

However, here the objection will be made that requiring handguns to be licensed would not result in such control, because of the difficulties in enforcing such a law. One might argue that it would be about as effective as requiring licenses for dogs. There are immense difficulties in enforcing such a law. (By the way, why is there a requirement that dogs be licensed? How is the welfare of the populace preserved by such a law? It seems rather designed to allow the state to make a few extra bucks.)

There are, I think, too many complexities that are not dealt with by this argument for it to be deemed successful.

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7

February 18, 1981
Los Angeles Times

ers to The T

Predicting Quakes

Around the turn of the century Mother Nature was touring the country and landed in San Francisco. She was horrified when she saw

so many dirty ramshackle buildings. She then decided to shake up the town real good and hope the people would rebuild better looking buildings. So, in 1906 she really shook up the town. When she saw how nice the new town looked she decided to do the same to other towns that need a "dressing up."

She couldn't decide how often to do this so she put numbers 1 to 25 into a hat and drew one out. It happened to be number 19, so that was how often she would hit some town and let the folks rebuild into something better.

She added 19 to 1906 and came up with 1925, and that is when she hit Santa Barbara. She was real pleased with her system and to find out when to hit the next town, she put down 1925 and then she got mixed up with the 19. Instead of just adding it to 1925 she put the one under the 9 and subtracted—coming up with 8, which she added to 1925. That came to 1933, and that is when she hit Long Beach. Right away she noticed how soon that came after the Santa Barbara hit so she knew she had to be more careful with her figures in the future.

Next she carefully added 19 to 1933 and came up with 1952 and that is when she hit Bakersfield. Now she knew she was on the right track. Next she added 19 to 1952 and came up with 1971, and that is when she hit San Fernando-Sylmar. So, unless Mother Nature screws up her figures again the next big quake should come in 19 plus 1971 or 1990.

OTTO C. HANSEN
Sunland

This sounds like the author is playing the "tongue in cheek" game--the anthropomorphism is so blatant. Yet one suspects that the author is rather proud of his calculations, and very well may believe that the next quake will come in 1990.

I don't know what to do with a passage like this.

There is an attempted correlation using a 19-year basis for major quakes in California. The one exception (the Long Beach quake coming only 8 years, instead of 19, after the 1925 Santa Barbara quake) is explained away--Mother Nature added incorrectly!

The whole thing is rather ludicrous and pseudo-scientific, and probably charity demands that we treat this as not-an-argument.

Part II / Monday, March 23, 1981 ★

Dear Abby

War Experience More Than Semantics

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: You were right the first time and need not have apologized for using the term "concentration camps" in connection with the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

I was one of 110,000 Americans of Japanese descent who were interned in what was euphemistically referred to as a "war relocation center" for the duration of the war. It *was* a concentration camp. What else would you call row after row of tar-papered barracks (one room per family) surrounded by barbed-wire fences and guard towers with armed soldiers on duty night and day?

This in no way belittles the experience of the Nazi Holocaust victims. That their concentration camps were also death camps and ours were not is hardly cause for patriotic pride. Sen. Hayakawa may be a recognized authority on semantics, but he can hardly be considered a spokesman for Japanese-Americans. He was born in Canada and spent the war comfortably in Chicago.

HISAKO TAKAMI, CHICAGO

DEAR MR. TAKAMI: Thank you (and the many others) who wrote to set the record straight. My Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines "concentration camp" as follows: A camp where persons (as prisoners of war, political prisoners or refugees) are detained or confined."

Score: Takami, 1; Hayakawa, 0.

Background: I don't know what Hayakawa said or wrote, but he apparently stated or implied that the camps used to detain Japanese-Americans during WWII were not concentration camps. The writer here defends the assertion that the so-called "war relocation centers" were indeed concentration camps. I think his argument is strong.

Ad Hominem?

One might think this is ad hominem, but whether it is or not depends on the context of Hayakawa's remarks. If he claimed to be or posed as a spokesman for Japanese-Americans, then the writer is attacking his credentials and credibility --which is entirely legitimate. Then the question becomes: how do the facts mentioned by the writer bear on Hayakawa's credibility? Does the fact that he was born in Canada and spent the war in Chicago detract from his credibility as a spokesman (if indeed he put himself in that posture). I think not. The fact that he was born in Canada is not relevant here. A great many Japanese-Americans were born elsewhere; the point is that Hayakawa is an American of Japanese descent--and a rather well-known one to boot. What about the fact that he spent the war in Chicago? This means that he had no personal experience of the concentration camps; but is such an experience a requirement or necessary condition of his knowing the meaning of the term? Hardly. So the attack on Hayakawa's credibility fails, it seems to me. But that does not, of course, mean that Hayakawa is right here; for the argument produced by the writer and seconded by Abby settles the issue.

This exchange is interesting for two reasons. First, it is an instance where a definition does play a central role in an argument; and such instances are far from commonplace. Second, the connotation of the term "concentration camp" has become so closely identified with those used by the Third Reich that the meaning of the term (as this exchange illustrates) has almost been lost.

Finally, one might note that Abby makes a perfectly legitimate appeal to authority in seconding the writer's argument.

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9

***To the Editors*:**

Thomas Sheehan's otherwise illuminating discussion of editorial problems in Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe* suffers from at least two lapses which bear correcting.

In the first place, *Ereignis* means "event" through much of Heidegger's writing, as it does in normal German. To cite it as an example of arcane terminology on the basis of Heidegger's speculations about its etymology (*eignen*) is to over-confuse a supposedly non-technical presentation. Heidegger should not be made more difficult than he is.

Secondly, in the effort to sound disabused about Heidegger's merits as a philosopher, an intelligible inclination given the absurdity of many Heideggerians and the ignorance of Heidegger's opponents (e.g. Ayer and Edwards), Sheehan ends up distorting Heidegger's real contribution to philosophical debate. Surely, if Heidegger's "best" were limited to being a "brilliant reader of the history of philosophy" or a "revolutionary interpreter" of "man's relation to the presence of things," then one would be hard pressed to see what all the fuss surrounding Heidegger is about. He would be no different from any other brilliant scholar or revolutionary psychologist.

In fact, Heidegger's true philosophical merits are only emerging now that he is being read by those who use a vocabulary different

BEING TRUE TO HEIDEGGER

***To the Editors*:**

As teachers of philosophy who have been reading and assigning Heidegger for some years, we were grateful for the publication [*NYR*, December 4] of Professor Thomas Sheehan's informed and valuable criticism of the Heidegger *Gesamtausgabe*. We demur, however, at Professor Sheehan's concluding paragraph concerning the Harper & Row series of translations of Heidegger. This series has been enormously valuable. Scholarship in the English-speaking world owes a great debt to the various translators, and to Harper & Row for its support of their efforts. All of us have, like Professor Sheehan, one quarrel or another with one or more of these translations. But such quarrels over details should not obscure the fact that Heidegger has been very well served. Without the selfless efforts of the late Professor Glenn Gray and his collaborators, this immensely important and difficult philosopher would simply not have been available to the English-speaking world.

Stanley Cavell, Harvard University; **Hubert Dreyfus**, University of California, Berkeley; **Karsten Harries**, Yale University; **John Haugeland**, University of Pittsburgh; **David Hoy**, Barnard College; **Richard Rorty**, Princeton University

This paraphrase of Sheehan's position is substantially accurate. Sheehan's actual words were: "At his worst Heidegger tended to disappear into clouds of verbal incense stoked with etymologies of Old High German words. At his best he was a brilliant reader of the history of philosophy and a creative and revolutionary interpreter of man's relation to what he called 'the presence of things.'" (New York Review of Books, December 4, 1980, p. 39; emphasis added.)

Prof. Domingo's claim is clear: that Sheehan's view "ends up distorting Heidegger's real contribution to philosophy."

continued...

Altadena Close Reasoner

from that canonized by Heideggerians. Among other things: He questioned the foundationalist goal of post-Cartesian philosophy. He undermined phenomenology. He constructed the first viable model of human behavior which does not rely on the concepts of mind, soul or mental representations. He wrested philosophy away from an exclusive concentration on cognition to an investigation of emotive being. He revived Aristotelian category theory as an issue. He pierced through the sham of philosophical logic as a replacement for devalued epistemology. He redefined ontology and broadened it beyond unique concern with existence criteria. He showed up the so-called ontological paradoxes as based on faulty reasoning. He united the theory of time with the philosophy of history. He revived medieval philosophy as significant for the modern world by freeing it from the concept of God. He first envisioned a critique of philosophy as a whole from a philosophical standpoint. He showed that the Aristotelian category system applied to only a certain sort of entity and devised alternative category systems to supplant and subsume it. In the process, he invented the notion of a mode of being, which represents the first real advance in category theory since the Middle Ages. He leveled the picture theory of meaning, thus opening alternatives to correspondence as a theory of truth. He devalued the notion of hierarchy in the theory of the sciences, showing that each science is autonomous and its methodology is object-relative. He first distinguished between interpretation and theorization in the theory of science.

He provided a conceptual framework for the social sciences. He redefined the notion of essence so it escapes from the Aristotelian stranglehold of unalterability and determinateness through a causal nexus. Astoundingly, the list could continue.

In the light of these basic contributions, belief that dating Heidegger's texts would affect our understanding of him seems exaggerated.

Willis Domingo

University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

Now Prof. Domingo presents a long list of what he takes to be Heidegger's "true philosophical merit."

Prof. Sheehan will later take issue with this claim.

(I thought this distinction was Spinoza's!)

10

Thomas Sheehan *replies*:

The demurral of Professor Cavell and his colleagues seems to blur two very distinct issues: the selfless efforts of translators and publishers (the fourth and seventh sentences of their letter) and the quality of the resultant translations (the third, fifth, and sixth sentences).

Regarding the first issue, I heartily agree that, given the difficulty of Heidegger's language and thought, the dedication of the late Professor Gray and his collaborators and the support of Harper & Row deserve our thanks, and I have said so elsewhere (*Research in Phenomenology*, Vol. IX, Humanities Press, 1980, pp. 225-228).

But the quality of the translations and the degree to which Heidegger and scholarship have been served by them are questions that can be decided only through a line-by-line comparison of the English with the German. I do not think Heidegger is served at all by the unacknowledged omissions of parts of his text or the invention of sentences he never wrote. This is not a quarrel over details but an outright scandal. Nor is he much served by the errors that mar so many pages of the English texts, no matter who publishes them. Scores of these errors are documented in two papers presented to the Heidegger Conference in 1977 and 1978 and in *New Scholasticism*, Vol. 53, No. 4, August 1979, pp. 540-544.

But I do think Heidegger is well served indeed by the excellent translations that David Krell and others have made for Harper & Row in the last years. These set high standards of accuracy and allow us to unite gratitude to the translators with confidence in the work.

continued...

Professor Domingo's letter suffers from some lapses of its own, at least one of them major.

1. No, in Heidegger's technical usage *Ereignis* does not mean simply "event" but rather "appropriation" (roughly: emergence into intelligibility). It is his interpretation of the underlying meaning of the Greek words *dynamis* and *kinesis*.

To be ignorant of that fact is to risk distorting Heidegger's main contribution to philosophy, and no extra-canonical lexicon can make up for that defect. But in order to know the Greek—not the German—origins of the word *Ereignis*, one must have studied both Heidegger's essay on Aristotle, which is already published. and his last Marburg seminar on the *Physics*, which is yet to appear in the *Gesamtausgabe*. Given his apparent misreading of Heidegger's key term, is Professor Domingo quite sure that he has nothing basic to learn from a proper edition (and dating) of such texts?

2. I think that Professor Domingo mistook the genre of my article. To adapt Mrs. Grogan's words in *Ulysses*: When I writes philosophy, I writes philosophy, and when I writes book reviews, I writes book reviews. And I publishes 'em in different journals.

Since this was a book review rather than a philosophy article, I thought it proper to let Heidegger himself state what he thought his "best" was. In his notes toward a preface for the *Gesamtausgabe* he summarized the core of his work as follows: "Thought as the relation to being as presence: Parmenides, Heraclitus: *noein*, *logos*." That simple, straightforward phrase, which I adapted for my review, fairly outlines the whole of Heidegger's thinking, whereas Professor Domingo's eighteen theses fill in some, but only some, of the blanks. In a brief book review maybe this matter is *de gustibus*. Do you prefer the master's modest but comprehensive summary or the disciple's elaborate but unsorted laundry list?

3. The accuracy or not of Professor Domingo's list of Heidegger's accomplishments can be judged on its own merits. Although I find much of it impressive, I have some hesitations.

Did Heidegger "undermine" phenomenology, or lead it back to its origins? (As late as 1969 he still insisted that his work was phenomenological.) Where and how could he have possibly freed medieval philosophy from the concept of God? And is it likely that he devised any "alternative category systems" when in fact he adjudged the whole of *Kategorienlehre* to be a *Seiendheitslehre*?

Questions like these and the one about *Ereignis* leave me just a bit skeptical in face of the claim that Heidegger's "true philosophical merits" are only beginning to emerge now that he is being read by Professor Domingo and his colleagues.

Altadena Close Reasoner

Straw Man

Here Prof. Sheehan is guilty of straw man. The genre of his piece is not the issue. Domingo took issue with Sheehan's statement about what Heidegger's best (i.e. philosophical merits and achievements) were. Notice the non-sequitur here: "Since it was a book review rather than a philosophy article, I thought it proper to let Heidegger himself state what he thought his 'best' was." There is something curious here, as though when one is writing a book review one must not engage in interpretation but only quote the philosopher himself. This becomes doubly curious when one notices the rather large discrepancy between Heidegger's summary of the core of his work and Sheehan's alleged "adaptation" (or translation) of it. But in any event Sheehan is defending a position other than the one he should be defending and so is guilty of straw man. The claim Sheehan cites from Heidegger concerns the type or essential focus of the work. Whereas Sheehan's "adaptation" of it may fairly be taken to be a kind of assessment of the significance of that work. It was the latter point that Prof. Domingo took issue with. Sheehan's rebuttal does not meet Domingo head-on and is thus unsatisfactory. His reference to Domingo's list as "elaborate but unassorted laundry list" is snarky.

Altadena Close Reasoner

Los Angeles Times, March 9, 1981

The Auto Workers' Stake

One of the arguments made by those who want to try to help the U.S. auto industry by limiting Japanese car imports is that the foreign manufacturers, thanks to cheaper labor costs, enjoy a competitive advantage in the American market. If labor costs were comparable, the argument runs, Japanese cars would cost a lot more and so, presumably, would be less attractive to American consumers.

It's true that the gap in the wages between Japanese and American auto workers is large and has been rising, up to 104% in 1980. But wages are only part of total labor costs. Add in the fringe benefits that Japanese workers get, and a rough comparability emerges. What has distorted the wage difference is the effect of American inflation.

The average American auto worker now makes more than $21,000 a year. That's about $10 an hour for a 40-hour week, but to that must be added benefit costs that bring the total to about $19 an hour. Among those benefits are an industry average of 14 paid company holidays a year plus another 8 or 9 days of paid personal holidays, as well as four weeks of vacation after 20 years and various other company-paid fringe benefits, like medical insurance.

In September, 1979, a new auto contract was signed. General Motors estimated that over its three-year life the contract would raise labor costs by 33%. In fact, with the contract period only half gone, GM says its labor costs have already risen by 26%. The big reason is inflation. Auto workers have for some time had in their contracts a provision for quarterly cost-of-living adjustments in pay. Last year, at Ford and GM, these payments came to about $1,400 per worker. In addition, ever since 1948, auto workers have had virtually automatic 3% annual raises that have supposedly been tied to productivity.

Fifteen years ago GM's costs for labor amounted to 29.5% of its revenues. By 1979, labor costs were 34% of its revenues. There was more. Labor agreements in the auto-parts industry tend to follow the pattern set in the manufacturing industry. In 1965, GM's payments to its parts suppliers came to 45.5% of its total revenues. By 1979, the figure had risen to 53%.

Japanese auto workers are indeed paid considerably less per hour than are American auto workers. But, when generous fringe benefits are added in—including company housing—and adjustments for inflation are made, total labor costs in Japan are very close to those in the United States. Moreover, productivity in the Japanese industry is higher than in this country. Part of the reason is that in Japan bonus pay is tied to productivity increases. Part of the reason also is the extraordinary system of job security and worker loyalty that prevails in Japanese industry.

U.S. auto workers are near the peak among industrial wage earners. Of course it would be dead wrong to contend that high labor costs are the chief reason for the American auto industry's troubles. But labor cost increases that have not been tied to real productivity gains have contributed very clearly to the industry's problems. It was one thing to have rising labor costs throughout the American industry when the Big Three auto makers were fighting for market shares primarily among themselves. In that case labor costs weren't much of a competitive factor. But now foreign cars account for about 25% of the American market. Now labor costs have indeed become one competitive consideration.

In the effort to save Chrysler Corp. from extinction, the United Auto Workers union has agreed to a $1.07 billion cut in wages and benefits, in exchange for a voice in company management and the chance for future profit-sharing. The talk in the industry now is that GM and Ford are also planning to ask for union agreement on cutting labor costs.

When both wages and benefits are considered, auto workers do about half again as well as others in the industrial sector. For all that, an average wage of $21,000 is not, these days, exactly a princely sum, and it is a harsh thing to ask workers to slow down or even give up some of the gains that they have made over the years. Harsher still, though, is the prospect of even further declines in an industry already suffering grievously from a decade and more of bad management decisions.

The auto industry needs tens of billions of new investment dollars in coming years to play technological catch-up. Auto workers have a major stake in helping to meet that goal.

continued...

Up Mental Health

If they were not aware of it before, inmates of public mental hospitals now know that they must do their bit to help get the federal budget under control. They got the word from no less an authority than the U.S. Supreme Court.

Under the government's Supplementary Security Income program, public mental hospital patients, most of them destitute, once received $25 a month, which they squandered on coffee, snacks, telephone calls and other items like paperback books. But Congress in 1972 passed a law that denied them the $25 monthly allowance generally paid to persons in private mental institutions receiving Medicaid funds—if their inmates can show financial need.

A federal judge held that the law was unconstitutionally discriminatory, but the Supreme Court last week ruled otherwise by a 5-4 margin. Writing for the majority, Justice Harry A. Blackmun, in a flow of felicitous phrases, said he was sympathetic to the claims of the indigents, but decided that the action of Congress was justified "in view of budgetary constraints."

Handing out this largess to an estimated 102,000 patients in public mental hospitals would have drained away about $30 million a year from the federal government's $615.8 billion budget.

11

Auto Workers and U.S. Imports

This is in response to your editorial (March 9), "The Auto Workers' Stake." The auto workers' future is indeed at stake, yet the Japanese presently hold the trump card in the battle for an even greater share of the U.S. car market.

This is by virtue of their commodity tax system that delivers their compacts to the United States virtually tax-free at 15% to 20% less than retail in Japan. On the other hand a U.S. export to Japan will sell for 40% more than in our local showrooms.

Our industry and the United Auto Workers union are powerless to do anything to counter the present $1,500 price advantage held by the imports here, thanks to this tax system in Japan that is designed specifically to promote exports.

A whole new generation of fuel-efficient and attractively styled U.S. cars are now in production; yet their success for the auto makers is very much in doubt due to the imports' price advantage.

It is now time for our lawmakers to review this Japanese tax system, which encourages exports, provides jobs, strengthens their currency and *keeps out imports*. This sounds as American as apple pie and we could use a big slice of this.

G. S. GREGSON
Los Alamitos

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As an American, I resent your unpatriotic stance regarding the Japanese imports into this country. While there will always be important differences that are needed to explain quantity and quality, I don't think your negative approach does much to strengthen the binding that is necessary for Americans to get things together.

In my opinion, your editorial position aids and comforts the wheelers and dealers in America who sell a product that does not represent either our American industries or their workers.

As long as you continue to convince the majority of Americans that they are inferior, so will it be. Remember, you can't keep selling your own people down the drain and expect things to come up roses. It just doesn't happen that way.

MILFORD C. WALKER
West Covina

Altadena Close Reasoner

Los Angeles Times,
March 27, 1981

Comment: It is interesting to compare these two responses to the Times editorial. The first comes from someone at least moderately informed on the issues, while the second largely cloaks itself in the rhetoric of nationalism and patriotism.

12

BLIND LOYALTY

continued...

Altadena Close Reasoner

MORE RESPONSES TO, "The Auto Workers' Stake"

13

Your editorial correctly [illegible] the economic reality facing Detroit: "The auto industry needs tens of billions of new investment dollars in coming years to play technological catch-up."

Puzzlingly, on the very same day you once again give tacit editorial approval to President Reagan's proposed $26 billion increase in military spending—an increase above and beyond President Carter's proposed fiscal year 1982 increase of $25 billion. That amounts to a total proposed increase of $51 billion in military spending for 1982.

Is there any wonder why we're so short of capital for industrial modernization?

LARRY AGRAN
Irvine

INCONSISTENCY

In effect, this writer charges the Times with inconsistency. On the one hand, the Times states that the auto industry needs new investment dollars. On the other hand, the Times supports increased defense spending. But there is no inconsistency: the money going for increased defense spending is largely furnished by U.S. tax dollars. Is the writer suggesting that the U.S. Government invest these tax monies as capital in the auto industry?

14

With your editorial you join the mass media of this country to attempt to create the myth about the "affluent auto worker."

One would think that the American auto workers are society's new elite, that these well-to-do workers should take cuts in wages and benefits in order to save the American auto industry.

But, are the auto workers really overpaid?

According to the U.S. Department of Labor report of 1974:

The modest but adequate annual budget for urban family of four is $20,517. According to the same source, the median family income of U.S. families is $19,684. The average auto worker's income (assuming a 40-hour week, 52 weeks a year) is $19,157.

Are auto workers wages pricing new cars out of the market? The price of new cars adjusted for quality improvement rose only 8.6% over a recent 12-month period, according to the Labor Department. That was less than the inflation rate. This compared to rental, up 8.7%; prescription drugs, up 9.7%; college tuition, up 12.1%; newspaper costs, up 12.7%, and hospital rooms, up 14.6%

What hurts auto sales now are high interest rates and declining worker purchasing power.

PAUL M. RUSSO
La Mesa

STRAW MAN (?)

I wonder if this correctly represented the Times' position. Did they use the phrase "affluent auto worker"? Did they assert that auto workers are overpaid? NO!

APPLES & ORANGES

These figures don't seem right. The median family income = $19,684. The average auto worker's income = $19,157. Apples and oranges: family income vs. individual income!

What does, "adjusted for quality improvement" mean?

15

Los Angeles Times
March 27, 1981

Altadena Close Reasoner

SLIPPERY SLOPE

Student Aid

When President Reagan proposed discontinuing Social Security payments to student, his justification was that there are more than enough funds available to these students through other sources of student aid.

Yet now, in addition to drastically reducing guaranteed loan to students, his Administration has frozen all applications for grants this coming fall under the basic student aid program. He is effectively eliminating all other sources of student aid.

It's the good old double-bind game. He is taking away from low-income students the incomes guaranteed them by the contributions of their now dead parents to the Social Security System, and at the same time burdening them with additional educational costs.

The result: These students will not receive the education promised them, they and their progeny will be locked into the low-income bracket, and thus Reagan will be successful in maintaining the class structure so attractive and useful to him and his supporters.

JOAN W. KAHN
Studio City

Question of fact:
What precisely was Reagan's proposal?

Assumption plus question of fact:
This is true only if student aid through the federal government basic student aid program is the only effective source of student aid.

I would want to check this out. It seems prima facie preposterous to discontinue social security payments guaranteed to persons. But perhaps this is so.

This is a slippery slope argument culminating in what appears to be an ad hominem criticism. The steps are: (1) Social security payments cut off to surviving children--(2) these children will not receive the education promised them (Who promised them an education? The government? Their parents? Education as right of all or as privilege?)--(3) they and their progeny will be locked into low-income bracket--(4) Reagan will be successful in maintaining the class structure so attractive and useful.

(4) is not really the end of the slope but rather an attempt to persuade that Reagan's policy is unsatisfactory because his motive is the maintenance of a class structure. (Low level Marxist analysis?)

The slope can be attacked both at the connection of (1) and (2) and of (2) and (3). Cutting off social security payments will mean that these children will not receive an education only if it is granted that this is the only means available to these students. That returns to the question of fact mentioned above; but I am quite sure that this claim is, broadly speaking, false; there are scholarships, state-aid programs; and people do work at menial jobs to support themselves while getting a college degree. The link between (2) and (3) is also questionable. A great many people in high income brackets have never had formal education (this is largely true in industries like television/record business/auto employees/etc).

Altadena Close Reasoner

BACKGROUND: In late February, 1981, President Reagan flew to his Santa Barbara ranch from Washington at a cost estimated to be c.$52,000. In the context of Reagan's budget-slicing and talk of restraint, this upset a number of citizens, many of whom expressed their discontent in letters. Many argued that such an expenditure was not justifiable on such grounds as these: (1) Reagan should be expected to practice what he preaches; (2) Camp David is close by, is available, and would have cost the taxpayers less money. A second round of letters appeared in the Los Angeles Times on March 8, 1981. Herewith an analysis of some of them:

16

Reagan's Trip and the Economy

a/ **Complaints! Complaints! Complaints!**

"Reagan's Trip to California" (Letters, Feb. 26) has suddenly become a major issue along with inflation, unemployment, and high interest rates.

When the patient (the economy) is ailing, we don't fight the doctor (President Reagan), we try his prescription. Nor do we quibble about "fees," for there is no room for pettiness and insignificant issues at this time. The moaners and groaners should find something constructive or creative to do so that they will not be so bored with their daily routine.

If President Reagan does the job for the country he proposes to do, he deserves anything we can give him, including a ranch on the moon with a ring around it. And free travel, too! (I have an idea that the stockholders of many big companies must feel the same way about the presidents of their corporations.)

What have the "complainers" gone without in order to help the inflation picture? An unnecessary trip? A new suit? Or perhaps a new automobile or TV set? How about one less trip to the race track?

MONROE RUBINGER
Beverly Hills

Exhibit a/ Faulty Analogy

Broadly speaking, this is an argument, relying on an analogy which is not apt. In the first place, people seem generally willing to try the prescription. Arguments against Reagan's visit to California cannot be compared to haggling about fees, but rather to complaints about the integrity of the doctor. But more importantly, economic management and medical diagnosis are not comparable; the latter is much less arbitrary than the former, generally speaking. And it can always be pointed out that a great many "patients" did not select this doctor, and do not care for his prescriptions. This is an attempt to persuade the critics to shut up and let Reagan do his thing, but on rational examination, it fails to provide any reasonable basis.

Here M.R. attacks the attackers by suggesting that they are moaners and groaners and bored with their daily routines, and haven't done anything themselves to make things better. But these remarks are ad hominem, for the personal situation of the complainers is not really to the point; the question is: what is wrong with their complaints or arguments against Reagan?

continued...

Altadena Close Reasoner

Exhibit b/

17

b/

A gap that has always existed in our government becomes clearer with the blatant consumption and luxury spending of the new Administration.

Reagan's Santa Barbara trips and Nancy's extravagant redecoration of the White House make unquestionably clear the vast gap in experience between our public officials and those they call "constituents."

Those in Washington have little understanding of what middle America experiences, let alone what it is like to live at the poverty level. It's so easy to say "tighten up *our* belts" when the speaker can easily afford to spend more for gas, milk and other necessities. Clearly, belt-tightening is an experience that affects only those who suffer from the law, not those who make it.

I think an appropriate learning and mellowing experience would be provided for our legislators, if they were to live for one month each year at the poverty level. If this were a requirement of public office, I believe we would find politicians considerably more sensitive to their constituencies.

ALLAN RABINOWITZ
Los Angeles

A.R. is using the Reagan visit as a jumping off point to argue for the existence of a gap between the government (executive & legislators) and propose a remedy for it. (I must say I have some emotional sympathy for the proposal, though one can imagine all sorts of obstacles standing in the way of its being implemented.) A.R. accuses the new administration of "blatant consumption" and "luxury spending", citing only two pieces of evidence: the Reagan trip to Santa Barbara and the redecoration of the White House. It's hard to see that this is sufficient support for the charges made. But then it's not clear just what will count here as "blatant consumption" and "luxury spending." Is a $52,000 trip "blatant consumption"? Perhaps if done on a regular basis; we don't know that yet. So A.R position is guilty of both vagueness (he's not at all precise on what counts as blatant and luxury at this level) and hasty conclusion.

A.R.'s point in the 3rd paragraph seems to be that legislators make decisions whose consequences they are shielded from, to some degree. They allow gas prices to rise, but the perks of the trade shield them from effects. There is, I think, something to this complaint. The problem is that it seems tied to the following missing premise, or something like it: legislators should be allowed to make decisions about the economy only insofar as they will themselves have to suffer the effects of those decisions, (along with the rest of us). But this seems impracticable.

Finally, A.R. seems a little confused; his complaint is initially directed against the executive branch, but his proposal is targeted at legislators (a common misunderstanding); also, his complaint is that there is a gap between government and middle America, but he proposes that legislators live at the poverty level for one month a year. Will that give them any deeper appreciation of the problems of middle America?

continued...

Altadena Close Reasoner

18
c/

1 This is an angry letter. I am referring to your printing seven letters faulting Reagan for taking time off for R & R at his ranch.

2 Who are these writers, this Kurt E. Wolff, this Louise Leung, this Willard L. Kenley, this Ann Larson, this Jonal M. Schissler, this Johathan D. Sauer, this Lu Hass? The answer is self-evident, they are, one and all, INCONSEQUENTIAL PEOPLE. No matter what they do, whether they live or die, has no consequence to the world at large.

3 Not so, with the President of the United States. What this man does, and the decisions he makes, has direct bearing on the welfare of every single person on the face of this earth. And Presidents are humans, which means that their decision-making powers are directly affected by their personal mental and physical condition. They become fatigued, and harried, and impulsive, and irritable, just like any other human; but the consequences of these negative states, the decisions that come out of them, are of the greatest possible pertinence to us all.

4 All right, then, if the President has the need to spend his weekends in Tierra del Fuego, or even at the North Pole—fine, no matter what the expense; so long as he returns refreshed and restored to a state of calm and correct judgment. Because, should it be otherwise, the "expense" to us all could be catastrophe.

ROBERT PHIPPENY
Los Angeles

Exhibit c/

It is easy to miss R.P.'s point here, unless one reads carefully. Paragraph #2 looks, at first glance, as though it might be ad hominem: these people are inconsequential and therefore have no right to criticize the President. But #3 makes it clear that this would be unfair as an interpretation. The argument is that the complainers fail to appreciate the monumental task of the presidency, and implies that they are applying to him standards which are not appropriate, but would be appropriate for ordinary people.

Once again, large portions of #3 appear to be irrelevant, for certainly none of the complainers denied that Presidents are human, become fatigued, etc. (and therefore need some R & R). But #3 is a lead-in to the principle that R.P. finally asserts in #4: No expense is too great to insure the health and well-being of the President, because the decisions he makes "have direct bearing on every single person on the face of this earth." (The decisions made by inconsequential people, on the other hand, have no such impact.)

While I have no strong disagreement with the substance of R.P.'s argument, his proposal seems somewhat overblown. Surely, one would think, some limits must be placed on the President's R & R.

Exhibit d/

19
d/

Has Reagan been so blinded by the glamour of Hollywood that he cannot see the stark reality of abject poverty? Has he no heart or soul that he can so readily cut out things like nutrition for poor young children while he freely spends $52,000 just getting away from the very thing he fought so hard to obtain?

I think it is time we all stood back and took another long look at this man whom the people so overwhelmingly voted into this position of power.

RUTH L. MACARAY
San Pedro

The implicit claim here is that Reagan readily (?) cut out nutrition for poor young children. But is this true? Obviously, this is a vague reference to some of the budget cutbacks proposed by Reagan and his administration, but is too vague to be effective.

Cheap shot: implies that Reagan can hardly wait to get out of Washington after fighting so hard to get there. Of course, Reagan wanted the Presidency, and that happens to be located in Washington, D.C. But that doesn't mean that Reagan must like the climate there (he obviously doesn't), nor can one trip back to his beloved California be construed as "getting away from what he sought to obtain"--except in a trivial sense.

continued...

Altadena Close Reasoner

20

e/

I wonder how many of the people who complained that our President chooses to take a few three-day weekends off from his job, take every opportunity they can to take these same weekends off themselves?

I also wonder how many of these bellyachers have a tougher job (10-12 hours a day, 7 days a week) that involves more stress?

I, for one, admire a leader who has enough brains to know it's necessary to unwind. (and does it by chopping wood on his ranch instead of chasing dollars and gals at Las Vegas, as some of the complainers are [illegible] allegedly.

ROBERT H. HULLETTE
Grover City

Exhibit e/

Straw Man: In this context, this is straw man. The complaint was not that he took a few three-day weekends, but rather that he took one in Santa Barbara, at the cost of $52,000 to the taxpayer.

Ad Hominem: R.H. is making an attack on the attackers and not their arguments. But their personal habits and life conditions and work conditions are not the point here; even if some of them do chase dollars and women in Las Vegas, they do it (presumably) at their own expense! But regardless of the personal circumstances of those who complained, R.H. has failed to address their arguments when he should have. Thus, ad hominem.

21

g/

Those who complained about Reagan's trip are typical of the type of individual whose mouth is always flapping in the breeze, their hands are always out, always taking, crying for more, and cry foul when someone tries to control their liberal ways.

I say thank God for Ronald Reagan. With the condition Jimmy Carter left Washington I can see why someone would want to get away for a break. He can use Air Force One anytime he wants.

LESLIE CALLAS
Glendora

Exhibit g/

Ad Hominem: Once again, this is nothing but personal abuse directed at the people who complained. How does L.C. know that this is the situation of the complainers, anyway? "Always taking, crying for more"? No basis for this allegation; but even if there were, it would not follow that their complaints were unfounded or illegitimate. The most would be that they were guilty of some moral flaw.

Straw Man: The issue is not the use of Air Force One, but rather using it to fly to California. L.C. makes it sound as if those who complained were denying Reagan the use of A.F. #1.

22

Altadena Close Reasoner

BACKGROUND: This is a column by one of the most respected of U.S. political columnists, David Broder. Two observations. First, how to analyze such a column? Is it an argument? an opinion piece? a series of comments/observations? What logical techniques or strategies should be used? Second, I was struck by what seemed to me, on one reading, the almost savage tone of what Broder writes--which causes me to want to look more closely at this piece. What follows are comments made "on the run" by A.C.R.

Thursday, March 5, 1981

D.C. No Longer Means Only What You Think

By DAVID S. BRODER

(1) Some time in the last 30 days, the name of the 39th President of the United States has been changed from Jimmy Carter to Difficult Circumstances.

(2) That fact became apparent when Walter F. Mondale appeared Friday at the reorganization meeting of the Democratic National Committee. He managed, in the course of his remarks, to omit uttering the name of the President for whom he and all his listeners had campaigned oh, so recently.

(3) When it came time for him to praise retiring national committee chairman John C. White, Mondale said only that his old friend and ally had been chairman under "Difficult Circumstances."

(4) How difficult the circumstances were for the Democratic Party under Carter was starkly displayed in an independent financial audit that pro-Kennedy members of the party's executive committee insisted on having made after the election.

(5) It showed, among other things, that the national committee received almost $1 million less in small direct-mail contributions in 1980 than it had in 1976, when Gerald R. Ford was in the White House. It showed that the party spent about $800,000 more in 1980 than in 1976 in direct support of the presidential campaign, but only half as much on voter registration. It also showed that the national committee paid out more money for Patrick Caddell's polls for the presidential campaign than it contributed to all the other Democrats running for office in 1980.

(6) It is that sort of pattern that explains the caustic comment of Senate Minority Leader Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.) to the national committee meeting that "never again must the Democratic National Committee become the adjunct of the Committee to Reelect the President."

(7) The implicit comparison to Richard M. Nixon's "CREEP" did not escape anyone—and that is about as cruel a jibe as any Democrat can take at another.

(1) An attempt to catch the attention of the reader, playing on the initials: D.C. The problem for the reader is how to cash in the meaning of "difficult circumstances." What is the literal way of putting this?

(2) Cites an appearance by Mondale before DNC as evidence of the point. The question to be asked is: what precisely was the context of Mondale's appearance? Broder is suggesting that the Democratic party wishes to erase the memory of Carter. Yet if the context were financial, would failure to mention Carter be significant?

(3) Is that all he said? This is the # that provided Broder with the theme.

(4) Note "starkly displayed" which assumes the reliability of the audit. But note as well that the audit was insisted on by pro-Kennedy members, who clearly have some vested interest in the results. The audit is said to have been an "independent financial" one. But who carried it out?

(5) Contains three pieces of information from the audit. The first (less money in direct mail) is not necessarily damaging to Carter. There could be many reasons for the fall-off. The second: Is $800,000 more a significant increase, given the rate of inflation? And who made the decisions about how the money would be spent? It is implied not stated that it was Carter himself (perhaps his campaign aides). The third needs more background before it can be assessed. What are the actual figures? What has been the practice in the past?

(6) Here Byrd is quoted, to make Carter look bad. But what was the context of his remarks? Was he referring to financial mismanagement by DNC?

(7) Was this remark intended as an implied comparison with CREEP? Broder assumes that it was; and perhaps it was. But we don't know that. If so, then both Broder and Byrd seem to be outrunning the facts in comparing the abuses under Nixon with those (yet to be clearly established) under Carter.

continued...

Altadena Close Reasoner

(8) Does Byrd believe this? Broder assumes that this is true. Who are these others? Did Carter in fact pre-empt party resources? What was the actual pattern of spending and how did it compare with the use of DNC resources in past Presidential campaigns?

(9) Here Broder begins to work the other side of the fence. Given the strident tone of 1-8, one intends to watch very carefully.
Is this true? What were the "negative criticisms" that Francis attempted to refute? Is this a reference back to the "abuses" mentioned in #5?

(10) So, according to "able" Francis, the problem goes back to 1968!

(11) So, according to Francis, the White House alone is not to blame.

(12) Reports Francis's views from the memo.

(13) Broder claims that Francis's evidence is curious. The basis for this is not clear, though the obvious intent is less argument on Broder's part than irony. The fact that the results predicted by the political targeting program were unpalatable to Democrats does not undercut their effectiveness; so why is this called "curious"?

(14) Francis is obviously here mentioning some of the problems encountered by the DNC during the campaign. Again, how these incidents are supposed to back up Broder's claim that Francis's evidence (for the claim that the DNC did quite well under difficult circumstances) is not at all clear.

(15) Now Broder delivers what he thinks is the clincher: the fact (not mentioned by Francis) that Carter asked Francis to replace Kraft when Kraft was sidelined. (I don't recall the facts here; when this occurred and for what duration.) But who says that this is "the most telling single fact of all" about the relationship between Carter and the DNC? Broder!

(16) Here Broder cites what he takes to be a fact: Carter's name in party circles is "D.C." and the explanation for the fact: Carter felt free to take whomever or whatever he wanted from the party and did not put much back. Question #1: Is this a fact? We have not much more than Broder's say so, based upon (1) Mondale's failure to mention his name (in circumstances which are not adequately explained; (2) Byrd's comment (whic we cannot be sure that Broder has correctly interpreted); and (3) Francis's memo.

(8) Byrd is not alone in his belief that Carter was largely to blame for November's Democratic debacle. Many others in the states and in Congress blame Carter, not only for the weakness of his own candidacy but for his preemption of party resources for his own doomed cause.

(9) An effort has been made to soften the criticism. Les Francis, an able former National Education Assn. organizer who served in 1980 as executive director of the national committee, put together a lengthy memorandum to White, attempting to refute the "negative criticisms" of the committee's work.

(10) The memo concedes at the outset that the national committee has been hobbled by the "horrendous debt" still carried over from the 1968 campaign. Actually, that debt was cut by two-thirds to about $800,000 during the past four years.

(11) It observes that "for a variety of reasons neither the Democratic Administration nor the Democratic Congress paid sufficient attention to the Democratic National Committee in recent years."

(12) It notes that the prolonged nomination fight between Carter and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) sapped the party's energy and its fund-raising ability. But then Francis argues that, under the circumstances, the national committee really did quite well.

(13) His evidence is curious. The political targeting program under Chris Brown, he says, "unfortunately performed flawlessly." Carter carried exactly as few states as Brown had predicted he would.

(14) He notes that many basic organizational programs, with long lead-times for effective payoff, were begun in only May or June of last year. He notes that the heads of major committee staff functions found themselves in the closing weeks of the campaign working for Carter in Santa Clara County, Calif., in Rochester or in South Carolina.

(15) But he does not make a point of the most telling single fact of all about the relationship between the national committee and Carter: It is simply that the man making this defense of the national committee, executive director Francis, was himself pulled out of his party job to fill in at the Carter campaign committee when field director Tim Kraft was sidelined by the investigation of his alleged drug use.

(16) The freedom that Carter felt to take whatever or whoever he needed from the Democratic Party, and not put much back in, is why his name in party circles is "Difficult Circumstances."

David S. Broder writes a syndicated column in Washington.

continued...

Altadena Close Reasoner

Question #2: If we assume that there is some factual basis for Broder's claim, has he offered the best explanation for it? In the wake of the decisive loss that the Democrats experienced, one would have to expect that Democrats would have ambivalent and even nasty thoughts and feelings about Carter. But are these widespread? And are they based on the view that Carter took whatever and whomever he wanted from the party and put little back? Notice further that the explanation that Broder offers (he took whomever and whatever he wanted from the party) outruns by some miles the "evidence" he has summoned, which deals mainly with the DNC and Carter's alleged abuses of it. We may well question this evidence, which consists of: (1) the audit (#5), from which we are given a few excerpts and for which we are not given enough background; and (2) Francis's report, with Broder's curious interpretation of it.

The proper category for this type of article, it seems to me, is not argument so much as "informed political commentary". The best strategy I can think of at the moment for dealing with such is to do something like I've done here: take the paragraphs and the points as they emerge; think of what QUESTIONS it is fitting and appropriate to ask; think of what's implied and assumed; note INTERPRETATIONS which one might not be prepared to accept. Then, wrap this all up in a summary, like so:

Broder's thesis or point here is that Carter has fallen into disfavour with the Democratic party and the basis for this is his alleged abuse of the DNC. Broder's analysis can be questioned on several grounds. He has not really established the fact which he presents in the column: that Carter is in disfavour. It is plausible; but the evidence is not impressive. He cites the fact that Mondale made no mention of Carter, but does not tell us enough about the context of Mondale's speech to enable us to decide whether the omission supports his theme. He cites Byrd, but again without sufficient context. He makes reference to "many others in the states and in Congress" (#8) but this is vague. (What, one would like to know, has Mondale actually said since the loss about Carter?) The reason Broder advances to support the fact (abuse of the DNC) is not supported by enough contextualized and usable information. The audit seems to point the finger at Carter, but we cannot be sure. And Broder offers a curious interpretation of Francis's memo. Finally, Broder puts his point in extremely strong language and outruns the evidence he has cited. All in all, A.C.R. is not inclined to believe that Broder's informed political commentary is that valuable.

Altadena Close Reasoner

23

Prickly Trudeau Will Test Reagan's Charm

By JOSEPH KRAFT Los Angeles Times. March 5, 1981

(1) Any study of leadership in this dwindling third of the century must reckon with the curious figure President Reagan encounters this week on his first official venture outside the country. Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau of Canada is an enigmatic, changeable man, regarded by many as quixotic.

(2) But amid the most trying circumstances he has held power with only a brief interruption for more than a dozen years. Doing business with Trudeau thus poses a true test of Reagan as President.

(3) Many heroic traits come together in the Canadian leader. He is handsome, well-born, rich, intelligent, articulate and adept at practically everything. But none of these qualities determined his political fortune. What counted more was an occasion—the emergence of tension between Quebec, with its French culture, and the rest of the country, with its English culture, as the central issue of Canadian politics.

(4) Trudeau combined in his person the dual national heritage. He rose overnight from comparative obscurity to the top of the greasy pole. Since 1968, his destiny and Canada's destiny have been intertwined.

(5) Bilingualism, the use of French on equal terms with English throughout the country, was his first enthusiasm. It earned him enough credit in Quebec to stamp out the violence of the separatist movement, and then to defeat a referendum that would have put the province on the road to separatism.

(6) But Canada's identity crisis turned out to run far deeper than language. Quebec seeks a surge of economic modernization as well as more political autonomy. The other provinces have reacted against bilingualism. Those with energy riches—Alberta and British Columbia and (more recently) the eastern provinces—have asserted provincial rights to exploit oil and gas for their own benefit.

(7) Against that threat of national disintegration, Trudeau has mobilized an uncompromising federalism. He is now driving through the Canadian Parliament legislation that would translate the British North American Act of 1867, which has been Canada's basic law, into a new constitution. The new constitution would protect individuals through a bill of rights but it would centralize economic power in Ottawa. It would allow for amendments by popular referendum rather than by provincial approval.

Preliminary observations. A scan suggests that this piece is a backgrounder (bringing Americans up-to-date on Trudeau as a leader) which ends with a prediction (#14): Reagan cannot expect to win Trudeau with charm but only with mastery of the issues. Some inferences are woven in, but two things to watch for: (1) Are the interpretations Kraft offers basically reliable ones? (2) (related) Does it show an understanding of Canadian affairs?

Comments on article: #1 focusses on Trudeau, and #2-12 provide background on Trudeau and recent events in Canadian political history and Trudeau's role in them.

(2) "Doing business with Trudeau thus poses a true test of Reagan as President." There's an assumption here, which I would phrase this way: "Doing business with a leader of government who has held power under the most trying circumstance for 12 years is a true test of Reagan as Presiden How much of a test can it be, given the short tim available to them?

(3) Kraft seems to be implicitly classifying as heroic traits: "being handsome, well-born, . . ." which hardly seems appropriate.

(4) It's overly dramatic to suggest that Trudeau rose overnight; after all, he was Justice Ministe under Pearson, and a well-known figure in Quebec politics for some years. A questionable interpretation, which tends to lend clout to the picture of Trudeau Kraft is sketching here, which emphasizes the dramatic qualities of Trudeau's career and personality, without any mention of the qualities which have irritated many Canadians

(5) Another questionable interpretation: Did Trudeau's advocacy of bilingualism earn him the credit to "stamp out" (Drama) the violence of the separatist movement? What's Kraft referring to here? The demise of the FLQ? How much of that was Trudeau's doing? Or to the defeat of the referendum?

(7) "uncompromising federalism"--a phrase repeated later--but accurate?

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Provincial leaders, except in the Canadian heartland of Ontario, have fought back at many levels. They have opposed Trudeau in the Canadian Parliament and in the courts. They have threatened to hold back delivery of oil. As a result, the British government of Margaret Thatcher has become nervous about the otherwise routine matter of approving the constitutional amendments Trudeau seeks.

But Trudeau, fighting for his life and his country, has outflanked the provincial chauvinists by two maneuvers that emphasize Canadian nationalism.

First, there is a new energy law that works to Canadianize development of oil and gas. Because the international companies own most of the drilling rights, Trudeau, instead of being locked into a petty quarrel with the provinces, is standing up for Canada against Big Oil.

Second, Trudeau has come up with a foreign policy that asserts Canada's independence from the American connection. After trying to align Canada with the European Community, and then with Japan and China in the Pacific basin, he has now embraced the Third World. He can combine with President Jose Lopez Portillo of Mexico to squeeze the United States for more generous help to the underdeveloped countries.

The uncompromising character of the Trudeau push for central authority has raised eyebrows all over the world. Many Canadians think that after years of fooling around, he is making a final bid to put his mark on the country. Oil companies everywhere have damned his energy policies. Not a few Americans believe that his quest for an independent foreign policy is what one high official in Washington calls "flaky."

But the United States has vital business in Canada. This country's energy future is bound up with development of Canadian resources, and the construction across Canada of a gas pipeline from Alaska to the northern states. Canada and the United States share responsibility for continental defense. Environmental issues have to be worked out together. A fisheries treaty, important to Canada, has been held up in the Senate because of opposition from New England.

Establishing rapport with Trudeau, in these conditions, presents a new challenge to Reagan. The two men are almost opposite in character and experience. If only because he is fighting for national existence, Trudeau is not going to be overwhelmed by the Reagan charm. Because circumstances oblige him to move to his left, Trudeau will be turned off by conservative slogans. He can be reached and won only by something that the new President has yet to show—mastery of a complicated subject.

Joseph Kraft writes a syndicated column in Washington.

(8) Questionable interpretation. Is the reason for British apprehension the opposition of provincial premiers?

(9) "provincial chauvinists": a questionable classification I think. There are tough differences between Trudeau and the premiers.

(12) "raised eyebrows all over the world": a slight exaggeration, one suspects; but one that serves to increase the dramatic tone.

Summary: Kraft's interpretations of recent events in Canadian political history and Trudeau's role in them are sometimes a bit flaky. He mentions none of the negatives that critics of Trudeau have been concerned about. In the main, he seeks to create an aura of drama around Trudeau--some of it no doubt justified, some not. There are no serious errors of fact here; but an unwary reader might well receive misleading impressions from this article. The prediction which Kraft appends may be close to the truth of the matter, though its basis in fact is slightly tenuous.

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In Defense of Culture, the Unraveling Tie That Binds

By ROBERT C. SOLOMON

Robert C. Solomon, who teaches philosophy at the University of Texas, Austin, is the author of "History and Human Nature" and "The Passions."

Los Angeles Times January 25, 1981

SYNOPSIS: The prevailing theme in this article is that culture has come upon hard times. Solomon cites some evidence that this is so (#2-3 from the Rockefeller Foundation study on the state of humanities and then later in #10-13 evidence drawn from Solomon's own experience) #4-7 appear to be devoted to rebutting an alternative point of view, & these #'s contain most of the argumentative portions to be found here My synopsis suggests three questions to be borne in mind in evaluatin this piece: (1) How compelling is the evidence Solomon cites? (2) How good are his arguments against the alternative point of view? (3) What can be said for his prescription (#9) about how to change the situation, if we were to agree that it is as he says it is?

1 In our aggressively egalitarian society, "culture" has always been a suspect word, suggesting the pretentions of an effete and foolish leisure class, like the *grand dames* spoofed in Marx Brothers' films. But the pretentions of a self-appointed cultural elite notwithstanding, "culture" actually refers to nothing more objectionable than a system of shared symbols and examples that hold a society together. Within a culture we are kindred spirits, simply because we understand one another.

2 A recent and somewhat frightening Rockefeller Foundation study on the state of the humanities in American life reported that the vast majority of even our most educated citizens are ignorant of the common literature and history that reinforce not only cultural identity but also moral choices. Doctors, lawyers and business executives are in positions of great responsibility, but often have little or no training in the ethical background that makes their critical choices meaningful. And across our society in general, we find ourselves increasingly fragmented, split into factions and "generation gaps"—which now occur at two- or three-year intervals—just because the once-automatic assumption of a shared culture, something beyond shared highways, television programming and economic worries, is no longer valid.

3 In our schools, according to the Rockefeller report, the problem lies largely in what has recently been hailed as a pedagogical panacea—the "back to basics" movement, which includes no cultural content whatsoever, just skills and techniques. Reading is taught as a means of survival in the modern world, not as a source of pleasure and of shared experience. The notion of "great books" is viewed by most educators as an archaic concept, relegated to the museum of old teaching devices such as the memorization in Greek of passages from Homer.

(1) Here Solomon attempts to disarm the unstated objection that a concer for culture is the occupation of a pretentious and effete and foolish leisure class.

(1) Here Solomon provides what is in effect a definition of the term "culture"--a system of shared symbol and examples that hold a society together.

(2) Here Solomon hints at his own view: that culture resides primaril in literature.

(3) Once again, Solomon hints at his own position: the "great books" are the bulwark of culture.

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4 But are "great books" (and legends, poems, paintings and plays) indeed the only conduit of culture, or have they been replaced by more accessible and effortless media of transmission—television, for example, and films?

5 Films, to be sure, have entered into our cultural identity in an extremely powerful way; indeed, it is not clear that a person who knows nothing of Bogart or Chaplin, who has never seen (young) Brando or watched a Western could claim to be fully part of American culture. But these are classics, and they have some of the same virtue as great books; their symbols, characters and moral examples have been around long enough to span generations and segments of our population, and to provide a shared vocabulary, shared heroes and shared values. No such virtue is to be found in television series that disappear every two years (or less), films that survive but a season or "made-for-TV" movies with a lifetime of two hours minus commercial breaks.

6 "Television culture" is no culture at all, and it is no surprise that, when kids change heroes with the seasons, their parents don't (and couldn't possibly) keep up with them. The symbolism of "Moby Dick" and "The Scarlet Letter," however much we resented being force-fed them in school, is something we can all be expected to share. The inanities of "The Dukes of Hazzard," viewed by no matter how many millions of people, will not replace them.

7 The same is true of our musical heritage. The Beatles are only a name to most 12-year-olds. Beethoven, by contrast, continues to provide the musical themes we can assume (even if wrongly) that all of us have heard, time and time again. This isn't snobbery; it's continuity.

(4) Here Solomon expands the referent of culture to include legends, poems, paintings, and plays, and cites an objection which he will argue against. The objection is this: the cultural role that was once played by the great books, legends, poems, etc., (i.e., print culture) has been superceded by a new, electronic culture, pre-eminent among which are television and films.
(5) Here Solomon is willing to grant (some) films entry into the land of culture while denying entry to television series.
(6) Continues the attack on television, which Solomon claims "is no culture at all" and
(7) excludes contemporary/pop/rock music from the realm of culture.

Most charitably, then, we can interpret Solomon to be arguing for the following claim (in #4-7): while some films may qualify as culture, television and popular music cannot qualify as culture.

What grounds does Solomon provide? He ought to be arguing that neither TV nor music can provide "a system of shared symbols and examples that hold a society together"--

which was the definition of culture he offered in #1. But it is apparent in #5, #6 and #7 that a somewhat different definition of culture is being appealed to here. For while one might agree with Solomon that "The Dukes of Hazzard" is an inane program, one can scarcely deny that it is part of a system of shared symbols and examples that hold society together. One need only consider the intense interest generated by "Dallas", for example. So if Solomon wishes to disqualify mass TV programming as culture, he must do it on other grounds; i.e., appeal to a different definition of culture. That he does so is apparent in #5, when he is discussing films. Referring to the films of Bogart, Chaplin and the (young) Brando (of "On The Waterfront", 1958), he says: "But these are classics, and they have the same virtue as great books: their symbols, characters and moral examples (Bogart?) have been around long enough to span generations and to provide a shared vocabulary, shared heroes and shared values." In other words, built into this definition of culture are two indices not mentioned in the first: (1) an evaluative component--he's referring to film classics; (2) a temporal component--nothing can be culture until it has stood the test of time. But what is the test of time? How long does something have to be around?

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Hence it seems to me that Solomon is guilty of ambiguity, because he uses the term "culture" in two different senses. On the one hand, culture is (#1) "a system of shared symbols and examples that hold a society together." Presumably because he cannot exclude popular television shows from culture in this sense, he later shifts to a second sense of the term (#5): "symbols, characters and moral examples (which) have been around long enough to span generations and segments . . ." It is the latter sense that is used in the reasoning which supports the claim that "television culture is no culture at all" (#6). Television is still a young medium, compared with literature, painting, sculpture, etc. It is also a very different medium. Solomon chooses to compare the best of classical literature (Moby Dick, The Scarlet Letter) with the worst of what television has to offer ("The Dukes of Hazzard"). Granted that the standards of programming in television are not high, yet one could cite series like "Upstairs, Downstairs" and even series like "All in the Family" and "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" which seem to have provided symbols and characters and moral examples for viewers. It is in the nature of the medium that such series are not permanently available for viewing; but this again points to the skewed nature of the comparison he draws. He compares "the great books" with mass TV programming. The comparison is loaded and tilted; a "great book" is, by definition, a cultural artifact.

His argument against contemporary music is ludicrous. He writes: "The Beatles are only a name to most 12-year-olds." What a peculiar argument! I have two objections. First, from my own personal experience: my three children, all under 12, love and enjoy the music of the Beatles, know some of the lyrics, and generally respond to their music. But, second, since when were 12-year-old children the reference point for deciding what is and what is not part of musical, or any other part of, culture? Melville is only a name to most 12-year-olds, too. Does that fact weigh against Moby Dick? Solomon continues: "Beethoven, by contrast, continues to provide the musical themes we can assume (even if wrongly) that all of us have heard, time and time again." Us? Who? Why not subject Beethoven's music to the same test suggested for the Beatles? Solomon is just wrong here (not to mention inconsistent). If he can argue that not having seen a Brando movie is perhaps sufficient to disqualify someone from the realm of American culture, then it can equally be argued that not to have listened to the Beatles and Dylan is also sufficient. To have been part of American life in the 60's and 70's and not to have heard "Yesterday," "Eleanor Rigby," "A Day in the Life," etc. etc.--that is equally impossible.

It can, I think, be said that Solomon's arguments against television and popular music as important cultural forces are very weak. His arguments are guilty of several fallacious moves: the ambiguous use of the term "culture," comparing apples and oranges, inconsistency, and just plain falsity.

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Solomon's perception of and arguments against contemporary mass culture, as represented particularly by television and music, are shallow. I would argue, against his view, that television and contemporary music are the two most powerful forms and forces within contemporary culture. Both forms are, by nature, evanescent, quick to change, mercurial, as contrasted with the cultural forms obviously dear to Solomon's heart: literature and painting. For my part, I am willing to grant that no one can claim to fully appreciate or participate in this culture who does not understand the ties that bind it with its antecedents. On the other hand, those who represent and find their fuller share of meaning in literate culture ought not to be so quick to dismiss these newer and different cultural forms and forces.

8 A professor recently wrote in the Wall Street Journal that he had mentioned Socrates in class (at a rather prestigious liberal-arts college) and had drawn blanks from more than half the students. My colleagues and I at the University of Texas swap stories almost daily about references that our students don't catch. Even allowing generous leeway for our own professional prejudices and misperceptions of what is important, the general picture is disturbing. We are becoming a culture without a culture, lacking fixed points of reference and a shared vocabulary.

9 It would be so easy, so inexpensive, to change all of that; a reading list for high-school students; a little encouragement in the media; a bit more enlightenment in our college curricula.

10 With all of this in mind, I decided to see just what I could or could not assume among my students, who are generally bright and better educated than average (given that they are taking philosophy courses, by no means an assumed interest among undergraduates these days). I gave them a name quiz, in effect, of some of the figures that, on most people's list, would rank among the most important and often referred to in Western culture. Following are some of the results, in terms of the percentage of students who recognized them):

Socrates, 87%; Louis XIV, 59%; Moses, 90%
Hawthorne, 42%; John Milton, 35%
Trotsky, 47%; Donatello, 8%
Copernicus, 47%; Puccini, 11%
Charlemagne, 40%; Virginia Woolf, 25%
Estes Kefauver, 8%; Debussy, 14%

Let us, for the moment, concentrate on (9), where Solomon offers his prescription. He suggests a reading list for high school students. I have nothing against this; but what will be on it? "a little more encouragement in the media"--meaning what? "a bit more enlightenment in our college curricula"--meaning what? Solomon's proposal betrays his bias for literature culture; but more devastating to it than that is the fact that it contains no specifics. No wonder he can write that "it would be so easy, so inexpensive, to change all that"! The proposal is too vague.

Finally, then, we turn to the question of evidence for the state of decline. I am perfectly prepared to accept this thesis. His evidence is found in (#2-3) courtesy of the Rockefeller study, #8, and the name quiz (plus interpretation) which he gave to his students dealt with in #10-12. (Here I cannot resist pointing out a dubious assumption which Solomon makes when he states: "My students . . . are generally brighter and better educated than the average (given that they are taking philosophy courses . . .). Solomon is assuming here that the best explanation for anyone's taking a philosophy course is that the individual is or wishes to be better educated! Would that it were so! My experience teaches that students take philosophy for any number of reasons: because they have a slot open and the phil. course fits; because it has a reputation of being an easy ("bird") course; because it's a course they haven't taken before; because an advisor steers them into it; etc.