

Second Philosophy

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INTRODUCTION

Axiomatically, Freedom is something that all humans seem to crave. The vast majority of us wish to have or feel that we have control over our own lives. Most people also recognize that they are happier, more fulfilled and content with the lives they have chosen for themselves than when others make choices for them.

Recent cognitive psychological & neuroscience research on personal happiness confirms that to be true on a broad scale [1].

Morally and legally, we oppose slavery and in much of the developed world we have basic rights to speech and association. Economically, we know that nations which allow individual citizens more direct control over their affairs, such as “positive non-interventionist” Hong Kong, [2] [3] are more prosperous than nations which rigidly control economic activity such as North Korea [4], Soviet Russia or Cuba.

We all crave freedom, it makes us happier and more prosperous – yet, much of human history has seen freedom only apply to a small number of individuals, and even in America once sacred rights have been increasingly eroded. Yet strangely, much of the loss in individual liberty has come from those also claiming to advocate freedom.

How can this be? How can some freedoms be taken away by those claiming to uphold freedom? Do some “freedoms” supersede others? We will be discussing the difference between so-called “positive” and “negative” freedoms, what they mean and whether or not it is possible to maintain both simultaneously without contradiction.

First, for the purposes of our discussion, it is important to understand the fundamental ideas in question.

BASIC DEFINITIONS:

1. “**Negative**” **Liberty**: The right to be free from restraint. I.e. freedom from being the recipient of coercion, imprisonment, or force for exercising individual choice.
 - a. *Basis*: Fundamentally, negative liberty is based on the idea of self-ownership. If a human is his own master, it follows that no other human should rightfully have the ability to limit his thoughts, speech, actions, associations, or choices except in the event that those choices may interfere with another person’s liberty.
 - b. *Some Associated Philosophers*: John Locke, Thomas Hobbes (though as he believed that humanity is essentially evil, he favored strong limitations on the realm to which humans should be left alone from interference), David Hume, Voltaire, Baron de Montesquieu, Adam Smith, Helvetius – Individualists

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2. **“Positive” Liberty:** The right to have the means of fulfilling one’s “full potential” or in other words, the freedom to have one’s personal aims satisfied.
 - a. *Basis:* The idea that for humans to truly be free (in the sense that they are existing in the highest, most virtuous possible state), everyone should have the provision of basic needs. True freedom is thus not merely being left alone, but rather the means to obtain happiness.
 - b. *Associated Philosophers:* Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Erich Fromm – Collectivists
 - c. *From Wiki:* “Positive liberty is often described as personal ability to achieve certain ends, while negative liberty is described as freedom from being forcibly prevented from achieving those ends.”
3. *Slavery:* The forced submission of an individual’s life & choice to a 3rd party.
4. *Self-Ownership:* Opposite of slavery; A person’s asserted right to make any and all decisions concerning herself – her time, thoughts, speech, labor, actions, associations with other persons, etc.
5. *Government:* The organization, machinery, or agency through which a political unit exercises authority and performs functions and which is usually classified according to the distribution of power within it. Specifically, public/State government is singularly different from private organizational government in that it is sanctioned by members of society either through direct or implied social contract or by unilateral assertion (as in the case of dictators) to wield the use of force.

The United States’ Bill of Rights (freedom from government interference in speech, association, property, etc.) is largely based on the concept of Negative Liberty as espoused by John Locke especially – whereas the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is largely based on the Positive Liberty idea – in which you are entitled to food, shelter and a culturally relevant standard of living.

“Individualist philosopher David Kelley argues against positive liberty, saying that it requires that persons be guaranteed positive outcomes which often requires the coercion of others to provide it. Meaning, positive rights “impose on others positive obligations to which they did not consent and which cannot be traced to any voluntary act”

Many other philosophers and especially economic thinkers[5] have noted that Positive Liberty can and often does conflict directly with Negative Liberty in practice. Take for example, Article 25 of the UN’s Declaration of Human Rights, which says that everyone is entitled to, “*food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.*” Considering that food, clothing, housing, medical care, etc. are goods which must be created through the productive effort of human minds & bodies, Article 25 then intones that the means to survival (and even a high standard of living) must be provided by producers under threat of force rather than by mutual exchange of value.

Since Negative Liberty is the right to do what you want with your own mind, body and property voluntarily and free from forceful coercion (either by an individual or by a Government), isn’t Article 25 directly conflicting with those productive individual’s “negative” freedom? And by the definitions provided, wouldn’t the farmers, clothing makers, builders, architects, and doctors who are required to provide service to all people regardless of cost or desire be subject to decisions being made by a 3rd party backed by force – and thus slaves?

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QUESTIONS:

1. Are the definitions fundamentally agreed upon for the purpose of the discussion?
2. Can Positive & Negative Liberty both co-exist without contradiction? If so, how?
3. Is it contradictory to say that people have a “right” to food, clothing, shelter, medical care, etc. when to assert that right requires the producers those things to be coerced – thus violating their rights to (1) free association, and (2) meaningful property ownership? If not, why not?
4. Is a discussion of negative vs. positive liberty actually a discussion of rights vs. privileges and entitlements?

The discussion may take a different path than those of the questions posed throughout the introduction and specifically above, but let's try to stay on track with the issues of Freedom, Positive vs. Negative Liberty, and what different assertions as to the meaning of the term “Freedom”.

REFERENCE:

[1] Gilbert, Daniel. *Stumbling on Happiness*. Knopf, 2006.

[2] Economist Intelligence Unit. "Economic Structure of Hong Kong." *The Economist* 07 Sep 2007 17 Feb 2009
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[3] Friedman, Milton. "The Hong Kong Experiment." *Hoover Digest* 31998 17 Feb 2009
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[5] Rothbard, Murray. "The Ethics of Liberty." *Ludwig von Mises Institute* 1998 Ch. 27. 18 Feb 2009
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DISCUSSION:

Eolas: So first off, I'd like to open this briefly to the discussion of Positive vs. Negative Liberty - does everyone understand and agree on the definitions?

Simulat: I have a problem with the self ownership idea

Eolas: yes?

Sojourna: Why Sim?

Simulat: I don't think self ownership is not the opposite of slavery

Rasecel: what do you mean sim?

Kore: Interesting, Sim.

Simulat: in fact - if taken to extremes it becomes a source of slavery - it makes wage slaves

Eolas: If slavery is defined as your person being owned by someone *not* you, then wouldn't that be directly contradictory to be owned by you?

Kore: No, because you can be the slave of your hormones, emotions...

Simulat: yes - but I think that wage slavery is pretty real and it can be worse than owned slavery

Eolas: The distinction I'm making here Kore/Sim is that there is a fundamental difference between being owned by you, and owned by someone else

Rasecel: yes that gets into iffy territory. You'd have to take individuals at a case by case basis then

Sojourna: Eolas, I think if you will your sense of self to accept slavery (or imprisonment) then you can achieve self-ownership.

Kore: Owned in physical terms? Like a cage?

Eolas: if you are owned by someone else then you are subject to their hormones

Simulat: after all - with the wage slave the boss doesn't have a vested interest in the welfare of his workers

Sojourna: Not that you'd want to, but many prisoners, in the movies at least, seem to do this.

Rasecel: sim yes but how does self-ownership=wage slavery?

Eolas: the wage slave concept is not really germane to the definition is it?

Simulat: because it promotes inequality - and so the weaker are forced to work for the benefit of the stronger

Eolas: it's definitely part of the discussion - as far as positive v negative liberty is concerned.

Eolas: who is wielding the force Sim?

Rasecel: maybe i am not understanding the definition of "self-ownership then sim

Lewis: wage slavery isn't total slavery. A wage slave has the freedom to quit that job and seek another, or to have no job at all

Simulat: the person who is rich in this instance

Rasecel: Lewis, some choice!

Eolas: how does the rich person get to control your decision?

Lewis: it's not a great choice but it IS choice

Rasecel: sim yes okay. I thought we were talking self-ownership overall

Kore: Like the choice to stay alive or die...

Simulat: because workers are forced to go to rich people looking for work

Eolas: ok.... I actually need to pause for one second and set out something else

Eolas: This is a more controversial point

Rasecel: fair enough sim, yet there is entrepreneurship

Eolas: but reality cannot be circumscribed by will alone.

Simulat: in any competitive system there are both winners and losers

Eolas: if I start off poor or rich, that doesn't have any actual bearing on this discussion ultimately.

Simulat: this creates in inequality

Eolas: at least not on the definition of self-ownership vs. collective-ownership

Rasecel: sim so ya' mean perhaps we should be living in a utopia?

Simulat: and due to the nature of the competition the inequality gets bigger and bigger

Reflection: well sim, I think nature defines social reality as "unequal"

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Rasecel: hrm.. interesting point Ref

Simulat: no Rasecel - its just that we need to keep a sense of balance

Rasecel: okay sim and how do you propose we do this? I'm not saying it's a bad theory, but how to implement?

Eolas: ok... Sim, everyone... please hold this line of questioning for one second.

Kore: Yes Ref, inequality is just a consequence of natural justice

Simulat: and Ref - just because nature does something doesn't mean that its necessarily good

Kore: Sim: I'd rather say the opposite, that humans are pretending they're better than universe laws

Simulat: humans tend to try to limit the harm that nature does

Rasecel: Sim, well now you are putting your own morality into what has no morals

Reflection: well, Sim, it doesn't seem to be optional, as you seem to be suggesting, competition will be an unavoidable aspect of human existence, I think

Simulat: well - I'm setting one moral standard against another I'd say

Rasecel: sim so you are saying that the natural world has morals and ethics?

Eolas: ok, EVERYONE. Sim - what you have just said has no bearing on the definition of self-ownership

Eolas: you have made the case that self-ownership may not be good

Reflection: and Sim, the balance point is what is important, which is why the idea of positive and negative freedoms is so good, I think, they are actually competitive ideals and must be balanced

Eolas: I haven't stipulated that it is within the debate structure.

Simulat: I understand Eolas - I said I had a problem with the idea

Eolas: You are ahead of the questions, which is fine, but there's a specific reason I'm doing this in order.

Sensei: What is the question on the table?

Eolas: The question on the table is just that of definitions.

Sensei: One definition (i.e. freedom) or several?

Reflection: I can accept your basic definitions Eolas:))

Sojourna: I'm happy with the definitions.

Kore: I have a problem Eolas with your definitions.

Eolas: Sim, from what I can tell, you don't disagree with the fundamental definition of self-ownership, but you disagree with what it means

Eolas: Sensei, they are on the note card.

Rasecel remains like Canada and Switzerland lol

Eolas: Kore, what is your problem with my definitions, and how would you redefine them?

Simulat: I did disagree that it was the opposite of slavery Eolas

Eolas: ok..

Kore: Because you make the question and the answer by saying that neurological data says that self-ownership would be better than slavery, but it doesn't include religion.

Eolas: what do you mean Kore?

Eolas: first off, that wasn't part of the definition, re: neurological studies, but secondly, what bearing does religion have?

Kore: You say: "Most people also recognize that they are happier, more fulfilled and content with the lives they have chosen for themselves than when others make choices for them. Recent cognitive psychological & neuroscience research on personal happiness confirms that to be true on a broad scale. "

Eolas: yes, that's not part of the definition list.

Kore: How are your definitions connected to your introduction then?

Eolas: what I'm trying to establish here Kore is a standardization of terms; in that when we are discussing the issues posed in the introduction we are not engaged in a semantic discussion

Bubblesort: well some religions do endorse slavery fairly explicitly... the bible does, for example... slavery seems like the antithesis of self ownership, right?

Kore: Bubble: yes, that's my point, but Eolas says that the introduction has nothing to do with the definitions

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Eolas: yes... which is why I posited that "self-ownership" is basically the opposite of "ownership by 3rd party (slavery)"

Rasecel: Bubble I disagree that the bible ENDORSES slavery

Eolas: No, Kore, that's not what I said. What I am saying is, there is no sense in discussing any of this without agreeing on the terms we are using

Kore: Eolas: is submitting to someone slavery?

Bubblesort: it lays out rules for how long you can keep a slave and how they are to be treated... that seems like endorsement to me

Sensei: Eolas, I have a question.

Rasecel: bubble the bible is stating the facts of life as they were at that time

Eolas: yes Sensei?

Bubblesort: that doesn't excuse it

Rasecel: that's like saying I endorse capitalism if I write a quasi-religious document on it

Sensei: Among your definitions I think there is something missing, but I might just be missing it.

Rasecel: bubble it's not a question of excuse

Eolas: Ok, so obviously the disagreement here is actually not one of definition, but of moral value - which is the meat of the topic.

Reflection: oh, Eolas it *might* be somewhat useful to discuss the main thesis of your discussion, even if we can't completely agree on definitions (as is looking rather doubtful;-))

Sensei: Freedom is generally defined as being able to do what you want to do, providing you don't interfere with the freedom of others.

Eolas: Therefore: 2. Can Positive & Negative Liberty both co-exist without contradiction? 3. If so, how?

Rasecel: Eolas not purely no

Eolas: Yes Sensei... but the issue at hand is that there are two (I would say, competing) definitions of freedom.

Eolas: one is the way you described.

Kore: No, they are a permanent conflict

Sensei: Do you touch on not interfering with others?

Sojourna: Eolas, could you help by giving a situation when positive and negative might contradict?

Eolas: Yes, it is also in the note card

Eolas: Negative liberty is non-interference

Eolas: but for example: Positive liberty suggests that to be free - as Sim seems to suggest, it's not only being free from interference and force BUT also the right to be free from the "wage slave" idea as well... have "good" choices available.

Simulat: I think they can coexist comfortably - but not if you insist on absolutes

Sensei: Okay.

Reflection: yes, I would agree with Kore, they are opposed perspectives and if taken to logical extremes must powerfully impinge on one another

Bubblesort: so free will is not part of this then, right? I mean, your idea of freedom is not dependant on free will as philosophy tackles the question, more the vernacular of "I can choose to do X", right?

Eolas: this would mean that you need a basic standard of living for all people for people to have positive liberty

Simulat: nods

Eolas: free will is kind of implicit.

Sensei: That's progressive freedom anyway.

Eolas: but the problem, as I posed in the note card

Rasecel: bubble free will is positive freedom according to my understanding of the definition

Eolas: is that food, clothing, shelter, medical care, etc... does not magically appear, but takes human effort to create

Rasecel: and Eolas I don't agree that free will is always 100 per cent implicit

Kore: "Positive" freedom is robbery

Eolas: SO. If I own myself... this means that I have the right to choose what I do with my time and my body.

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Rasecel: Kore, would you equate positive freedom with capitalism then?

Eolas: But if I am a doctor for example, and I am *required* by force to treat you...

Reflection: so basically Eolas, taxes are coercive and promote positive freedom but at the expense of negative freedom

Kore: It's even worse than Christianity which only encourages charity

Kore: Rasecel: definitely not

Eolas: then my self-ownership is being negated

Rasecel: Kore, okay so you are a proponent of capitalism?

Simulat: I don't understand why taxes are coercive. Isn't coercion the unethical use of force?

Kore: Yes

Eolas: whether or not that is "good" is open to debate

Sojourna: Eolas if you are saying that the doctor is coerced to do his/her duties, well, that is just incoherent.

Rasecel: hrm...interesting Kore

Sensei: Different forms of morality will produce conflicting definitions of freedom.

Eolas: No, actually it's not incoherent at all...

Reflection: well sim, if I am required to give a payment, against my free will, then that is coercive, it may be lawful, but it is still coercive

Eolas: try a different person; a baker for example; if the baker is required to give you bread

Bubblesort: I would more equate knowledge with freedom... with enough knowledge you are free to do more than if you had a lot of money and very little knowledge... for example, without knowledge, no matter how much money I had I could not script or do philosophy

Rasecel: I don't have a problem paying my taxes, so long as everyone pays their fair share of taxes

Eolas: regardless of whether or not they wish to, or whether or not you provide anything of value in return - and the alternative is force/jail/etc....

Sojourna: I would say the same for a baker - or anyone. If one chooses to perform the duties of a given occupation then one cannot say they are coerced to perform them. They can change jobs.

Simulat: aren't laws part of how we determine what is ethical? - I mean if the majority of citizens agree on taxes designed to raise money to pay the doctor who looks after the poor - what is unethical about that?

Eolas: you are violating their self-ownership, by suggesting that your "positive freedom" overrides their free choice.

Rasecel: exactly sim!

Eolas: No Sim. Is slavery ethical? Are lynchings ethical?

Reflection: soj, one performs one's work for the benefits attached, not as a form of duty. If it were purely duty, without reward, then that would be enslavement, I think

Kore: Under what ethics?

Rasecel: Eolas sorry but I fail to see what these have to do with taxes

Sensei: To the slave owners and lyncher it frequently is, Eolas.

Simulat: is raising money by taxes to look after the poor unethical?

Eolas: Well, I didn't actually make the tax argument - but the laws don't define ethics

Sojourna: Ref - why would duty be enslavement if one chooses, freely, to be dutiful?

Reflection: Sim, one can be coerced, ethically, these are two separate issues. If a policeman rightfully detains me legally, this is ethical, but it is also coercive

Eolas: Soj, I think you are missing the fundamental difference between voluntarism and generosity and being told to do something at gun point, which is really the essence of this topic.

Sojourna: Eolas - ok - I missed the gun point - so you are saying that there's a doctor, for example, who finds himself in a situation, at gun point, and must perform some doctorly duty?

Eolas: If I assert that I have the *right* to food, someone has to produce that food for me and I am thus allowed to take it from that producer, with or without their direct consent

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Simulat: what if voluntarism and generosity doesn't do the job Eolas - and what if it works so as to reduce generosity?

Kore: Right Eolas, this is the problem of the human so called "rights"

Rasecel: Eolas but wouldn't self-ownership constitute that you produce your own food?

Eolas: Well that's a different question Soj.

Reflection: soj, I don't believe that people do choose to be dutiful. I believe people do things primarily because of the rewards attached, and I think duties tend to be more defined by external agents

Eolas: No, it wouldn't, Ras

Rasecel: alrighty

Eolas: it would constitute offering value to someone else who might produce something you need.

Kore thinks human rights is a religion

Eolas: I don't have to produce everything I use myself; but under the negative rights concept; I can't *take* from you; nor can I have a government or policeman *take* from you.

Sojourna: Eolas, you can produce it yourself - the food I mean. Having the right to something also means, quite possibly, having the right to produce it yourself, and not just take it, steal it.

Eolas: Yes...

Rasecel: well if I may oversimplify I am of the school of thinking that someone else's rights end where mine starts

Eolas: I *could* produce it myself as well... I just don't have to. The issue is whether or not I can claim a moral right on the products of your labor.

Sojourna: Ref - sure, though maybe there is a fine line between choice and duty...

Eolas: for any reason.

Rasecel: Eolas, a moral right? What do morals have to do with this?

Eolas: well yes, fundamentally that's what this is.

Eolas: everything Ras.

Sojourna: Eolas - I don't think it follows that you don't have to.

Sensei: Are we arguing whether these definitions are correct in and of themselves or whether the adequately represent that various views of freedom?

Eolas: what do you mean?

Kore: Rasecel: this is a good reason to remove others rights

Rasecel: well Eolas if someone else's produces my bread and i pay or barter for it that's just commodity

Reflection: yes, Rasecel, about the boundary between mine and others rights, and I think that is another way of describing the boundary between positive and negative freedom as it is being defined here

Eolas: well the topic on hand right now Sensei is whether or not we can have both positive & negative rights coexisting without contradiction

Rasecel: it's not nothing to do with morals

Eolas: it's got everything to do with morals

Rasecel: I don't see how Eolas

Eolas: it is a moral value to say that your life is worth more than someone else's and therefore you can take from them what they produced by force.

Eolas: the use of force and how it's applied to society is nothing *but* a moral issue.

Rasecel: Eolas but I wasn't talking about force; I was talking about even trade of some sort or another

Kore: Force levers can be psychological, emotional

Eolas: even trade is a moral issue as well

Rasecel: Eolas how so?

Eolas: It requires that I respect your right to what you have.

Sensei: Lakoff's book, *Whose Freedom*, links freedom and moral frames.

Simulat: Eolas - do you not see how a wage slave is forced to work for a boss or go hungry?

Eolas: Sim's point is one that I find, while not compelling, an interesting bit of this discussion where the nuts and bolts really come into play.

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Simulat: Don't you see that when you work for a boss you are forced to turn over most of the value you produce to him

Reflection: sim, you could say that almost all people are "forced" to work or go hungry

Eolas: Sim... we all work to survive, because survival isn't something that just "happens"

Simulat: yes

Eolas: whether or not you have to work on a farm by yourself or you have to work on someone else's farm or in a factory... is all work.

Simulat: reflection - we are forced by circumstances often to do things not in our own interests

Reflection: sim, I think you tend to set up a false dichotomy in framing the issue in terms of entrepreneurs as one class of people as opposed to say, the soviet state, which also required that people work (rather harder, and at less recompense)

Eolas: The issue though.. is "force"

Rasecel: Sim yes I see that. But then again it depends on what kind of work you do...

Eolas: you're using the word force in different ways; I am using it in the sense that someone is requiring me to do X or Y through physical restraint, violence or the threat thereof. You seem to be using it in a broader sense

Simulat: It seems to me Eolas that you are saying that taxes are illegitimate force but that working for low wages is legitimate force

Shingles: We exchange some freedoms for others, like I will commit to my office hours for the extra freedom that money gets me, the discontent arises when there is a discrepancy between the values of the freedom waved to the freedom gained

Eolas: though what I find disconcerting, personally, about that usage is that at that point, any constraints of reality would be force

Simulat: its not that you are opposed to force - its a matter of in whose favour its used

Eolas: low wages is a relative and rather specious form

Eolas: no... you have a completely different definition of force than I have Sim.

Kore: Eolas, I have an issue with Rasecel, could you help answer a simple question about neg/pos definitions?

Eolas: Sure, Kore

Reflection: Sim, I don't see how we have gotten to what is legitimate yet (although people do seem to have some views on that), I think we're still trying to figure out if these ideals are compatible or competitive

Kore: I was wondering, if I undress here in this place, am I looking for positive or negative freedom? I told her it was negative, because I just wanted people to let me doing my business, and Rasecel told me it was positive,

Simulat: Ref - I think they are compatible - but not if either is taken to extremes - and I think that calling taxes a form of force is taking negative liberty to an extreme

Kore: like to fulfil my potential. What is right?

Eolas: ha... well, I would say you are asserting your negative freedoms Kore, as being naked actually doesn't hurt anyone.

Kore: Ok thank you.

Bash: I live in a cave by a river and have to hunt to eat does that make me a slave to nature

Eolas: Bash - that is the point I wanted to make earlier, thank you

Shingles: can I ask a simple question? Are these ideas on freedom based upon the premise that each person should have self-ownership, Eolas?

Reflection: well, Sim, I think they can work well together if they are balanced, *because* they are essentially competitive perspective. Where to make that balance perhaps is the difficult issue

Eolas: No, "negative" liberty is based on the idea of self-ownership

Sensei: I think the moral legitimacy of government is the key factor distinguishing "negative" and "positive" freedom.

Eolas: positive liberty is more of a collective ownership idea.

Shingles: ok, then, ty

Eolas: i.e. for me to have my basic needs met, we all own at least a piece of each other's time and labor

Eolas: Sensei - I think you're absolutely right

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Simulat: I agree Reflection - but we need to strive for the balance - not reject one or the other

Rasecel: as in communism Eolas?

Bash: Freedom is the ability to follow your chosen path of survival without fear of persecution from governing powers. Not the ability to lay around motionless and absorb nutrients from the air.

Kore: So Rasecel, if I asked you to undress me, this would be positive freedom.

Eolas: ultimately, yes Ras.

Rasecel: Kore I really am not sure anymore

Eolas: That would be where positive liberty takes us, I think at its end.

Reflection: oh my Sensei, that is to open a box of worms:)), what defines the moral legitimacy of a government?

Eolas: which is kind of why this issue is interesting and important to me.

Rasecel: Eolas provided it's done in an intelligent manner

Sensei: Conservatives tend to view governments as lacking moral authority and progressives endow the government with a moral mission.

Kore: Rasecel: yes it would be, because I would ask you to do something for me, so like giving food to me to survive and so on.

Rasecel: unfortunately since humans are fallible, I have yet to see a communist system that works in practice

Eolas: Sensei, I'd agree with that in general, though in practice, American conservatives, at least view government with just as much of a moral mission as progressives.

Rasecel: Kore fair enough

Kore: **Rasecel:** do you think communism would be great and humans are just "fallible"?

Eolas: the goals are only a little different.

Rasecel: Kore, I think if we were capable of utilizing a communist system without messing it up, yes.

Eolas: Communism is the ultimate end to the idea of liberty being actually found in collective ownership.

Rasecel: but we're not, so it's a moot point

Kore: I don't think equality is anything but a wrong idea, because it prevents any evolution creativity, it freezes everything like death

Rasecel: Kore, which is why I personally favor socialism

Simulat: that doesn't make extreme inequality a good idea, Kore; equality of opportunity is surely a good, though?

Kore: **Shingles:** I don't consider that helping weak people will make everybody stronger

Bash: equality is bunk I would agree

Kore: I'd rather say the opposite; I can see it in my country

Eolas: Is equality of opportunity found in leaving people alone? Or suggesting that everyone should start with a shared baseline?

Bash: No 2 people are the same nor should they be treated the same

Kore: The more we help people, the more they need help and be depending on others

Reflection: well, the underlying assumption here is that maximizing freedom, positive and negative, is the essential goal, and that may not be the case

Kore: Helping the poorer is not justice

Shingles: loving and accepting and affirming one of our siblings when they are injured I see as one of the strongest things a person can do, Kore

Rasecel: Kore well again we can't make generalizations

Bash: You should prove your ability and earn respect

Eolas: Ok... I think it's time to move to the second set of questions

Eolas: "4. Is it contradictory to say that people have a "right" to food, clothing, shelter, medical care, etc. when to assert that right requires the producers those things to be coerced – thus violating their rights to (1) free association, and (2) meaningful property ownership? 5. If not, why not?"

Bash: As long as you have the freedom to attempt whatever you choose to

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Rasecel: Eolas personally I'd be happy if we went back to midwifery and herbs for all but, say, things like broken bones and that.

Kore: Bash: +1

Sensei: F.D. Roosevelt's four freedoms is an interesting articulation of the issue.

Eolas: I would imagine - Roosevelt being an enormous "positive freedom" kind of guy

Simulat: that question makes an assertion of coercion that I don't think is valid, and also it assumes an absolute by saying contradiction, instead of seeking a balance between competing values

Kore: " Rasecel: Kore well again we can't make generalizations": of course we can, this is the aim of science

Eolas: well... Sorry that slipped in their Sim, but I do think it is an absolute

Reflection: it is not contradictory Eolas, because "rights" are defined by a society. So if a society believes that it is most productive for the society to guarantee the basics of life to all citizens (which is happens to be), then the infringement on positive freedom of the most fortunate of the society (and who receive most of its benefits) is a perfectly acceptable cost

Sensei: Freedom of speech and expression and freedom of religion (negative liberty).

Rasecel: Kore well there is the crux of our problem. I am more of a natural philosopher than a scientist

Sensei: Freedom from want and freedom from fear (positive liberty)

Eolas: Are rights defined by society or are they asserted?

Shingles: asserted

Eolas: I would say asserted, Ref

Simulat: both :-)

Bash: You have the freedom to move to another society

Rasecel: I agree. They are asserted

Sensei: There is, of course, a dark side to freedom.

Eolas: Personally, I believe that anything in the positive liberty category is actually more aptly described as "a privilege"

Iris: yes but there is an assault on mobile capital

Reflection: society defines your rights Eolas, and the police and the courts, through coercion, enforce them

Rasecel: I mean seeing as it's black history month, do you think that desegregation would have happened without like likes of a king or a Malcolm X?

Eolas: rights which can be taken away or given at the discretion of a government are no rights at all.

Iris: Exit freedom to leave to Singapore or move your finances to Switzerland is under assault because of the revulsion toward globalization.

Sensei: Not as quickly, Rasecel. But probably eventually.

Eolas: No, but King, for example acted to change people's minds through voluntary means

Rasecel: Sensei, how?

Reflection: Eolas, where is there any right that cannot be theoretically taken away?

Eolas: discussion, speeches, thought provoking argument

Eolas: Ref... my rights, the asserted ones, cannot be taken away without my consent... they can be violated.

Rasecel: Eolas right but that was still an assertion

Eolas: which I think is a crucial distinction.

Eolas: you may kill me. But you didn't "remove my right to life". You simply violated it. I asserted that I have the right to live.

Reflection: ahh, Eolas you are talking about a platonic ideal, I am speaking about concepts with actual material referents

Sensei: I think in a democracy the politics and economics of segregation are suboptimal.

Eolas: your objections to that can only come through force.

Shingles: the right to be part of The Universe, perhaps. But that is speaking at a slightly different arena,

Reflection

Eolas: whereas

Second Philosophy

Sensei: In the long run, maintaining two parallel social systems would be silly and redundant.

Kore: Eolas, what about the freedom one takes and is not given to?

Rasecel: sensei segregation or desegregation?

Eolas: if I say that I have the right to something you produce; like... bread or a house

Sensei: Segregation

Reflection: Eolas, anyone can assert any right, and in doing so, also say it is being violated if restricted, but only the weight of consensus in society gives any real world credence to such things

Eolas: now *I'm* on the end of initiation of force

Rasecel: Sensei, okay I'm not sure what you mean; suboptimal as in not equal or...?

Eolas: I think that one has to recognize that if you assert a right as a moral principle Ref, you also have to recognize that that principle applies to everyone

Eolas: or else it's merely a nihilistic bit of selfishness and hardly a moral assertion at all.

Reflection: well that would be one theory Eolas, but it is debateable of course

Eolas: indeed.

Rasecel: can you two explain that without using extremes?

Eolas: Explain what?

Bash: force a set of morals on people? Not very free

Rasecel: asserting rights as a moral principle

Eolas: I agree Bash... the question, in my mind comes down more to who is initiating force.

Reflection: Eolas, hierarchical societies are not Nihilistic; they merely don't define all people as having the same rights. They don't feel that equality works as well

Rasecel: as opposed to a nihilistic bit of selfishness

Shingles: each human is free in themselves, however, Bash

Eolas: oh, if I assert a right Ras ... say to be able to speak whatever I want

Rasecel: mm hm?

Eolas: I'll even break that down

Shingles: unfortunately, in themselves they cannot self-feed, self-shelter, self-inspire, Bash

Bash: if they are free to move from one society to another that has morals they agree with and each society does not interfere with the others

Eolas: I own me -> ownership means self-determination -> I have the freedom to speak as I wish

Eolas: then I have to recognize that right in others; if I own me, then you own you

Reflection: but not "FIRE" in a theatre, Eolas:))

Rasecel: okay I am following..

Marya: yes you do Eolas, on your own turf that is ... but not on someone else's turf

Rasecel: Ref lol I was just thinking that

Eolas: and if speech isn't violating your rights, then your speech doesn't violate mine

Kore wonders what self-ownership means when most people depend on their culture, education, environment

Eolas: yelling fire in a theatre is a different sort of issue... it's more like fraud, which causes harm

Rasecel: okay Eolas let me ask you about a real world example and you tell me where you think it fits

Eolas: ok, shoot

Shingles: but most importantly with freedom of speech comes its sister-right: the right to not listen

Eolas: right, exactly correct Shingles

Iris: Did anybody ever consider the possibility that our morality is set and inflexible due to evolution. And in our efforts to achieve utopia we are using our reason to create a new morality where one already exists?

Eolas: the minute I use force to make you listen to me

Reflection: sure, society as determined that you should not have that freedom Eolas, because it is too destructive, same for wherever else society may decide to set those boundaries for the same general reason, I suppose

Eolas: I am bastardizing the very right I've asserted for myself

Kore: Iris: the only morality is walk or die

Second Philosophy

Rasecel: all right. The city in which I live has a policy enforced by the public transportation that profanity is not allowed on the bus and that if one should use it, the driver has the right or even the obligation at times to throw you out

Eolas: ok Ras?

Iris: I don't know what that means, Kore.

Rasecel: Eolas what is your determination on something like that?

Shingles: I think so, but I would disagree that innate morality does not originate from the genes, but originates from existence its very self, Iris

Eolas: oh, I would say that though it's certainly a real issue, it's something I would fundamentally oppose.

Bash: I think we are none free. We were raised to think along the lines that our parents taught us. We never developed our own true thoughts so we are in fact slaves to our parents, and grand parents all the way back to the cave.

Kore: Iris: it means that the only universal morality is the best win because they're stronger, more intelligent, more adapted

Eolas: the problem though to a degree is also one of ownership

Rasecel: on what grounds, Eolas?

Bash: The mind is never free so we can never be

Eolas: if I owned the bus, I'd allow anyone to say whatever you want... but if someone else owned it they'd get to set the rules.

Rasecel: I mean some people on the bus may not want to hear "F*CK F*CK F*CK"

Shingles: that sounds a bit like 'might is right', be careful with that, Kore

Eolas: since Government owns the bus in your situation....

Bash: Except those of us born in test tubes

Eolas: I would say that they had to be complicit with the freedoms guaranteed by the BoR if you're in America anyway

Iris: not really core. Man is bound by reciprocal altruism Trivers (71) an aleatory behavioural modality that allows us to reduce risk from a unpredictable environment

Rasecel: Eolas but what about someone else's freedom not to have to hear those words?

Eolas: I don't think it's harmful for anyone to hear profanity, or a violation of anyone's freedom.

Eolas: you don't have a freedom "not" to hear the words though - at least from a negative rights standpoint.

Kore: **Iris:** this is "the best" as a collectivity, it doesn't change anything.

Rasecel: okay their right then

Shingles: The mind is free, unless that mind tells itself it is not free, then it will make itself not. The mind has extraordinary influence, more than is traditionally thought, Bash

Marya: Rasecel, I think if that is the law of your state, then people should adhere to that law - the second you join a community, any community, you then agree to their terms - there is no such thing as 'total' freedom. The only place and time anyone can be totally free, is when they are not around other people. Otherwise any society would fail - as unfortunate as it is, you do have to have certain rules in place that the majority can agree to - and there will absolutely always be certain things that each of us disagrees with - but we compromise in order to function together, as a society - we all do this in some manner or another. This is not saying those compromises have to be taken to an extreme - we are capable of being rational about it.

Reflection: I guess the real world issue with the bus example is whether or not large percentages of people are emotionally traumatized by the behavior in question, not what the behavior structurally is (so in SL we wouldn't have that rule on the bus ;-)))

Eolas: imagine this though Ras...

Rasecel: I mean just b/c you don't think it's a violation doesn't mean that someone hearing them might not think it is

Kore: **Iris:** you're just using a different scale, but the rule is scale invariant.

Eolas: if we operate on that premise; that it's a violation of someone's rights to "hear X word being spoken"

Second Philosophy

Shingles: The mind is free, unless that mind tells itself it is not free, then it will make itself not. The mind has extraordinary influence, more than is traditionally thought, Bash

Iris: this has provided a framework for mutual cooperation, but now that we no longer live in tribal structures, but extended orders reciprocity bookkeeping has become impossible. Yet we struggle to maintain this tribal order.

Bash: Daaaaaamn Marya, now I am forced to go back up and read that you violate my chat freedom

Iris: what scale?

Eolas: and especially when the words banned are based on majority decree

Rasecel: my take on it Eolas is that if I don't like someone cussing in my presence I would tell them to shut up myself lol

Marya: lol, sorry for the long diatribe!

Reflection: as the Supreme Court has suggested, moral norms are local to the community

Eolas: what happens when society is mostly religious and decides that atheist speech isn't to be tolerated?

Iris: the limitation is one of memory in the altruist and the altruists likelihood of encountering the recipient of his altruism

Eolas: what happens when it's just politicians making decisions about who can speak ill of kings?

Iris: we have fractured this system and enabled cheating

Rasecel: Eolas you are assuming that religious = what? christian?

Eolas: freedom of speech *has* to mean freedom to say things people don't like.

Eolas: no, it doesn't matter if they're christian or not; it's just hypotheticals

Kore: Iris: Nothing new here. Mutual cooperation only implies making the collectivity better rather than the individual, just as one cell may commit suicide but still participate to the whole body. The result is that the best structure, being a person, a group or only a virus, will have to be the best to win this game.

Rasecel: Eolas well okay monotheistic then

Eolas: what if there were enough atheists in a society to ban religious speech just cause they didn't like it?

Rasecel: and yes that does matter

Eolas: the issue is one of liberty; if I assert that I have a right to say what I want, then it follows that you also have that right

Rasecel: so you are saying that all atheists are alike? You are saying that all theistic groups are alike?

Iris: no Kore it is not, the altruist will sacrifice for another under the self interested expectation they will sacrifice back.

Eolas: or, as I said earlier, I am just being nihilistic & selfish

Shingles: freedom of speech is most useful as the freedom to fail, which comes into learning by play, if one is hindered or restricted in their free speech, it shall hinder their, or perhaps that community's growth

Reflection: Eolas, the freedom of religion issue is a specific right, because of the historical happenstance of the American state, that is why rights, are evolved social realities, in truth, and not matters really of theoretical principle

Kore: Iris: So what? It's just the same. It's a social structure.

Eolas: no.... Ras... they're hypothetical situations about a majority banding together and limiting the rights of others.

Bash: Freedom of speech would not be the same if it was not illegal to physically harm people

Eolas: right Bash... this is where the force distinctions come into play

Iris: Kore: so we are trying to sustain this system of currency when what is needed is an extended order..

Simulat: exactly Ref

Kore: Iris: ?

Iris: Kore: we can no longer "bookkeep" via small social groups because of the limitations of our memory and the probability of encountering recipients

Rasecel: Eolas okay but that is assuming--hypothetically of course--that ALL or the MAJORITY members agree on this

Eolas: if I believe, like Sim, that force might be considered in non-physical terms... there's a whole other issue

Second Philosophy

involved.

Eolas: cause then, saying "shut up" would be force

Iris: money is this bookkeeping mechanism, the only one.

Eolas: No, Ras.... I'm just talking in a democracy of any kind

Rasecel: I mean you are not going to find that consensus among many

Eolas: sure you are ... happens all the time.

Shingles: but how to distinguish between force and coercion, Eolas?

Eolas: coercion is force applied for a specific goal Shingles.

Kore: **Iris:** I understand what you say, but you sure don't understand what I'm saying.

Rasecel: Eolas let's take the christians in this country. The ones who would limit atheistic speech are NOT the majority

Iris: it is not perfect, but the tribal order is finished and no longer viable for the magnitude of our society.

Kore: Iris: please, I know this.

Simulat: Eolas - I think that in your system there is lots of physical force applied - protection of property rights generally involves physical force

Iris: then any collectivism is doomed to failure kore.

Eolas: anyway Ras, the point is that if government can tell you the word F**k is a bad word and can't be said on a bus, that would extend to you not being allowed to say it on public property of any kind

Eolas: Shingles - yes, but not all force is coercion

Simulat: and usually with taxes no physical force is involved - most people just pay up

Iris: because we are short-circuiting the reciprocity framework, enabling cheating , rewarding it in fact.

Eolas: defensive force... force used to stop initiators...

Shingles: we used to have tribal orders in England, as little as 60 years ago, each street was its own community, its own tribe, Iris

Eolas: is not coercive

Rasecel: Eolas so you agree with me that if someone is yelling "F**K" enough so that it is getting on MY nerves, *I* should tell the person to shut up?

Eolas: yes, of course I do

Simulat: defensive force - the force used to prevent cheaters

Eolas: you have that right as well

Rasecel smiles

Eolas: Ok everyone, it looks as if our official time is up... I hope this has been thought provoking...

