

Reading Guide #11

Nozick, "Side Constraints" (in packet)

Nagel, "War and Massacre" (in packet)

- 1) **Explain Nozick's theory of side constraints. How is different from a "utilitarianism of rights"? (p. 136-138).**
- 2) Explain Nozick's claim that if there are constraints on the use of the tool, it is not "completely your tool" (page 139).
- 3) According to Nozick, utilitarians and others who believe that the rights of an individual can be violated for the sake of the greater good have a certain picture of society in which society is a social entity basically like a human body.
 - a) Explain how this picture underlies their position that it is permissible to trade off one person's rights for the sake of others.
 - b) What is Nozick's criticism of this picture of society as a social entity?
- 4) Nagel contrasts utilitarianism with absolutism.
 - a) What is absolutism?
 - b) Does Nagel think that absolutism is true and that utilitarianism is false? (Hint: no, he does not. His position is more nuanced than this—explain the nuance.)
- 5) Nagel gives examples of a politician running for office and someone in an altercation with a cab driver. Describe these examples. How do they "all derive from a single principle that hostility or aggression should be directed at the true object?"
- 6) Nagel's claim that "whatever one does to another person intentionally must be aimed at him as a subject, with the intention that he receive it as a subject." What do you think it means to aim your actions at a person's *subject*? Give an example to illustrate your point.
- 7) Nagel's introduces the principle that "hostile treatment of any person must be justified in terms of something about that person which makes the treatment appropriate" (62-63)
 - a) **Apply this principle to explain why Nagel thinks it is permissible to shoot at someone throwing a grenade but not at the grenade thrower's wife or kids even though doing so (i.e. shooting the wife and kids) might be more effective in getting the grenade thrower to stop.**
 - b) How would Nagel respond to someone who claimed that there *was* something about that wife and kids which justified their treatment—viz. they are the only people in the whole world, the attacking of which will get their crazy husband/father to stop launching grenades?

8)