

Chapter 1 : Virtue Ethics Archives - Thomas International Center

The Ethics of Groundhog Day: Phil Connors and the Platonic Tripartite Division of the Soul Rachel Cedor Course: Philosophy Instructor: Brooke Ertle In the film Groundhog Day, the character of Phil Connors is forced to relive the same.

Foley, which appeared in Touchstone Magazine. You can find it on-line here. The movie stars Bill Murray as Phil--a weatherman who finds himself re-living a single day of his life--Groundhog Day. Remove the fear of punishment, Glaucon argued, and the righteous will behave no differently than the wicked. Nineteen hundred years later, Machiavelli, arguably the father of modern philosophy, elevated this view to a philosophical principle. And Phil embodies it perfectly: He unhesitatingly steals money from a bank, cold-cocks a life insurance agent, and seduces an attractive woman. And so the overriding question of the story becomes clear: What will it take to attain true happiness? What will it take to buy the pearl? Machiavelli contended that it is better for a prince to appear to be virtuousâ€”which fosters in others a gullible trustâ€”than to be virtuous, which hamstringing his actions. The logic here is also Hegelian: Injustice is justified in the name of historical progress. Yet the ruse never works; each night ends with Phil receiving a slap in the face rather than acquiescence to his overtures. The pearl of happiness, it turns out, cannot be bought with counterfeit money. At the end of his rope, he now commits suicideâ€”over and over. Yet no matter how often he jumps off buildings or electrocutes himself, he stills wakes up to another Groundhog Day. His poignant awareness of his emptiness recalls the chilling line from St. Phil begins pursuing excellence which in Greek is the same word as virtue , not for any ulterior motive but because he enjoys it. In good Aristotelian fashion, he cultivates moral virtues e. And thus Phil starts to become happy, for he is now fulfilling the conditions of happiness identified by the moralists of antiquity: Of course, the movie clearly has theological implications, as Foley goes on to explain. Part of his conversion involves recognizing that there is a God and he is not it. In the final scene of this subplot, he is kneeling down, vainly administering CPR to the man, when he stops and plaintively looks heavenward. The article goes on to find references to Augustine and significance to the liturgical feast celebrated on February 2nd Groundhog Day. Read the rest here. Foley is not alone--others have discussed the significance of this movie. For more check out this article as well as Joseph H. Westview Press, ,

Chapter 2 : Need help with a Philosophy question? | Yahoo Answers

Groundhog Day & Aristotelian Ethics. A 4 page essay that draws discusses the movie Groundhog Day (directed by Harold Ramis) and Aristotelian ethics.

A Rhetorical Analysis A 5 page rhetoric analysis utilizing the neo-Aristotelian approach. Bibliography lists 5 sources. No additional sources cited. In 5 pages the author discusses the ways in which Socrates exemplifies virtue. Keeping this in mind, and given what Socrates says about virtue in the dialogues, in what way or ways does the philosopher exemplify virtue? The paper notes that each of the papers has a different view on ethics. Bibliography lists 2 sources. Linear Outline for a Paper on Students and Ethics This 3 page paper is an online plan for a paper examining students and ethics. The outline proposes the use of three ethical models; virtual ethics, consequentialism and deontological ethics. Issues which may be particularly pertinent for students are identified, to assess how ethics are applied by students. The bibliography cites 5 sources. A Discussion of Virtue 6 pages in length. The Meno is comprised of a discussion between Socrates and Menon regarding virtue and in particular whether or not virtue can be taught. The dialogue takes place between Menon, Socrates, a slave of Menon, and Anytos. It is generally agreed upon that virtue is knowledge, and being such, that knowledge can be taught. Virtue, then, should be able to be taught. But even this brings about a perplexing argument. If virtue is indeed knowledge, and knowledge therefore can be taught, that would mean that there would be both teachers and learners of virtue. This is a compelling look at an intriguing philosophical question. Bibliography lists one source.

Chapter 3 : Virtue Ethics Archives - Tlcenter

Aristotle, Kant, Mill, and Plato: All influential philosophers with differing opinions on what it means to be marked by morality. One situation in which the opinions of these philosophers could be used to evaluate the morality of a person is in the movie Groundhog Day, specifically looking at the.

This is the time of year for thinking about fertility and nurturing, about defining goals, and about preparing to meet the year ahead. With the return of the light, the earth awakens. In the secular U. If he does, tradition goes, we have six more weeks of winter; if he does not, spring is just around the corner. For neo-pagans today is the festival of Imbolc, half-way between the winter solstice and the spring equinox; for the Irish, it is St. Many of these celebrations involve lighting candles, torches, or bonfires, and they also involve purification in order to gain insight. This is a day associated with women who look out for the humble, and are themselves humble. The ancient Celtic fire goddess Brigid is said to walk the earth. Brigid looks out for the poor and marginalized, especially poor women. Brigid is the patron saint of babies, children of unmarried parents, women who suffer domestic abuse, midwives, fugitives, nuns, poets, scholars, dairy and poultry workers, sailors and travelers, blacksmiths and cattlemen. On this day, forty days after giving birth, the Virgin Mary is supposed to have undergone the ritual purification required of Jewish women after the birth of a son, bringing an offering of a lamb and turtledoves to the temple, and presenting the child Jesus, as required by Jewish law. Maybe she was happy to celebrate a happy birth by giving thanks in the traditional way. Still, she went, and Simeon and his wife were there. Simeon, according to Luke, knew that he would not die before he had seen the Messiah, and when he saw Jesus in the temple, he took him in his arms and thanked God. How does humility help us find what we seek, and know when we have found it? Humility is one of those virtues that aptly illustrates the classical ideal of virtue as a mean: There is good reason to be suspicious of humility; women have always been encouraged to be humble, as have the poor. Part of the reason we often define self-assertion today as the opposite of humility has to do with the long tradition of those with great social, economic, and political power keeping people in their place by encouraging them to ask for nothing. On the other hand, those seeking to make profound and lasting changes in their lives are rightly encouraged to be humble. Many recovery programs stress the necessity of acknowledging a higher power, acknowledging, too, the damaging effects of grandiosity. Political candidates who have gotten where they are because of extraordinary self-marketing are encouraged as elections draw near to be humble, to try to understand the plight of the little guy. In this season, as we see the return of the sun and look within ourselves for new ways to make life better, it seems especially valuable to consider the ancient connections this holiday insists on, between a humility that purifies one to be open to the world, and the profound insight we might have if we allow ourselves to risk it. When the sun sets tonight, put on all the lights in your house, light some candles, and celebrate this ancient holiday, rejoicing in the light, in the new year, and in the coming spring.

Chapter 4 : The Sacred Page: The Theology of Groundhog Day

The day he is forced to relive happens to be groundhog day (Feb. 2). In the movie the groundhog sees his shadow, which means six more weeks of winter, and may explain why Phil experiences what he is. At first, Phil takes advantage of the situation, by eating what he wants, driving drunk, sleeping with women, except his coworker Rita (MacDowell).

He is not going to abandon the world. On the contrary, he is released back into the world to save it. And when I say that the groundhog is Jesus, I say that with great respect. That would mean there would be no consequences. There would be no hangovers. We could do whatever we wanted! I met a girl. At sunset we made love like sea otters. That was a pretty good day. From our rival conclusions we can argue back to our rival premises; but when we do arrive at our premises argument ceases and the invocation of one premise against another becomes a matter of pure assertion and counter-assertion. Hence perhaps the slightly shrill tone of so much moral debate. But that shrillness may have an additional source Yet if we possess no unassailable criteria, no set of compelling reasons by means of which we may convince our opponents, it follows that in the process of making up our own minds we can have made no appeal to such criteria or such reasons. If I lack any good reasons to invoke against you, it must seem that I lack any good reasons. Hence it seems that underlying my own position there must be some non-rational decision to adopt that position. Corresponding to the interminability of public argument there is at least the appearance of a disquieting private arbitrariness. It is small wonder if we become defensive and therefore shrill. That is why ever-hopeful renewal of life at springtime, at a time of you have bodhisattvas, who reach the brink of nirvana, pagan-Christian holidays. And when I say that the and stop and come back and save the rest of us. Bill groundhog is Jesus, I say that with great respect. He is not going to abandon Michael Bronski the world. A familiar problem As the reality of his situation slowly sinks in, Phil Connors talks with a pair of drunks at the bar in a bowling alley: PHIL What would you do if you were stuck in one place and every day was exactly the same, and nothing that you did mattered? Phil the aesthete MacIntyre defines an aesthete as follows: I was in the Virgin Islands once. The wretch, concentrated all in self, Living, shall forfeit fair renown, And, doubly dying, shall go down To the vile dust, from whence he sprung, Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung. Practice After discovering that he cannot end the cycle of repetition by dying, Phil tries to make the most of his situation. He decides to learn to play the piano. It belongs to the concept of a practice as I have outlined itâ€” that its goods can only be achieved by subordinating ourselves within the practice in our relationship to other practitioners. We have to learn to recognize what is due to whom; we have to be prepared to take whatever self-endangering risks are demanded along the way; and we have to listen carefully to what we are told about our own inadequacies and to reply with the same carefulness for the facts. AV, Phil gradually develops a new daily routine, helping the townspeople whose needs he is uniquely able to anticipate. Punxsutawney Phil The morning of what, unbeknownst to him, will be his last day stuck in the cycle, Phil delivers his broadcast: When Chekhov saw the long winter, he saw a winter bleak and dark and bereft of hope. Yet we know that winter is just another step in the cycle of life. That evening we see Phil in the town hall entertaining the townspeople by playing with the band as part of the festivities. The people are enjoying his performance and he is enjoying being a source of their enjoyment. Phil has come to see his good as interconnected with the good of the community of which he is now a part. Phil has learned why not. He has learnedâ€”something no argument could have taught himâ€”that his good is interwoven with the good of others, a discovery that has transformed his conception of a good day. Stuck in time and unable to make a lasting difference to anything or anyone other than his own self, Phil could not give unity to his existence by connecting one day to the next and his life to the life of others, making himself part of their story just as they have become part of his. Narrative unity is an elusive concept, but we can begin to grasp the idea by asking why it is that Groundhog Day could end happily on February 3rd, but not the day before. The good life for man is the life spent in seeking for the good life for man, and the virtues necessary for the seeking are those which will enable us to understand what more and what else the good life for man is. Groundhog Day illustrates how in the course of this striving we may come to realize the inadequacy of our conception of the good life and gradually acquire a

better understanding of what it is that we are striving for.

Chapter 5 : Virtue Ethics (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

To conclude, whether Phil becomes virtuous one must first understand Aristotle's ethics, such as Character Virtue, Intellectual Virtue, and Friendship. Character virtue can be described as the difference between virtue and vice.

Groundhog Day Michael Faust reviews this film in the light of eternity. Is Groundhog Day one of the great philosophical movies? It also throws light on postmodern thinking regarding simulacra – representations without originals. Finally, it updates the ancient Greek myth of Sisyphus, casting its protagonist, played by Bill Murray, in the role of Sisyphus, the absurd hero. If not, eternal recurrence may strike us as a curse. Our misery, far from being over when we die, is destined to echo through eternity. This is a chilling recasting of Hell, as horrific as anything Dante conceived. In a sense he has achieved immortality. But is this immortality a blessing or a malediction? French philosopher Gilles Deleuze might have offered Connors a crumb of comfort. Each of these returns selects the life-enhancing while rejecting the life-denying, leading to each iteration being more affirmative than the last. It is the moment or the eternity of becoming which eliminates all that resists it. But, as Nietzsche pointed out, if the world were moving towards any perfect state, then, taking into account his belief that an infinite amount of time has passed before now, we would have arrived at perfection by now. If Deleuze is right, we should have reached a world of supreme affirmation. Groundhog Day actually contradicts both Nietzsche and Deleuze. Groundhog Day presents a far more human version of eternal recurrence. Connors largely muddles his way through. Driven on by love, he does finally reach a state of transmutation, and at that point he escapes from the recurrence. This gives us a clue that Luce Irigaray is perhaps the right philosopher to furnish us with the key for unlocking the mysteries of Groundhog Day. In other words, recurrence is entirely self-referential, akin to a cloning process. Irigaray wishes above all else to promote the value of the other, which she largely conceives in female terms, in opposition to the traditional philosophical subject that she considers rigidly male and masculine. Become other, and without recurrence. In Groundhog Day, Connors most certainly does. All the others with whom he shares his eternal recurrence are in the Nietzschean position of having no recollection of their past existences. In postmodernist thought, especially the thought of Jean Baudrillard, simulacra eventually cease to resemble what they were originally a copy of: In a way, Groundhog Day traces the journey of a simulacrum. However, if we accept his scenario in its strictest sense, then ultimately our response to the concept of eternal recurrence is nothing over which we can have any control: For Connors, this objection is removed. He can change; he has complete free will. At first, understandably, he experiences complete shock, before enjoying a brief sensation of godlikeness. Then suicidal depression kicks in. He then has only four choices: Arguably, Connors chooses the third route, that of making the most of the world he now inhabits. He educates himself in many new fields, becoming an accomplished doctor, artist, linguist and musician. He also develops as a person and achieves ever-increasing self-awareness, finally, it might be said, reaching self-enlightenment. This is symbolised by the fact that at last he secures the love of the woman he has pursued from the beginning. This is so momentous that at that point Connors actually escapes recurrence and re-enters the normal flow of time: In every way he has found himself. A radically new life beckons. Round and Round Groundhog Day also brings to mind the ancient Greek myth of Sisyphus, in which the eponymous anti-hero defies the gods and is punished by being sentenced to push a huge rock up a steep hill in the certain knowledge that as soon as he has succeeded, the rock will roll back down and he must start the process again. The existentialist writer Albert Camus was fascinated by the myth of Sisyphus, seeing it as a metaphor for the human condition. For most of us, each day is only fractionally different from the previous. We have the same breakfast, go to the same job in the same office, see the same people, and commute backwards and forwards along the same route, staring into space like zombies. Each day, whether we like it or not, we are presented with the same set of unpalatable facts. Only precise repetition is missing. Are we really so different from Connors and Sisyphus? Some of us may escape into the fantasies offered by religion, or we may adopt a philosophical position such as Stoicism. Perhaps we will take drugs and drink to shut out the misery and absurdity of our lives. Although the task confronting Sisyphus seems soul-destroying, Camus imagines that Sisyphus can transform his situation through acceptance: Like Sisyphus,

he is happy. Camus says that there is no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn. But for Connors, rather than scorn, it is love which liberates him. He longs for his self-created life to be repeated endlessly in every detail. No greater affirmation of life is possible than to wish every part of it to return forever. The moment of affirmation is the sublime moment when a person can look at his life, no matter what it consists of – good, bad, or indifferent – and find within himself the desire never to be freed from any aspect of it. Connors belongs more to the Camus camp than the Nietzschean. But Nietzsche is not the most Hollywood-friendly philosopher: Very few movies are so powerful that they can offer you a valuable treatise on how to lead your life. Groundhog Day manages to do just that, and therefore rightly takes its place in the pantheon of great philosophical movies.

Chapter 6 : Virtue Ethics Essays: Examples, Topics, Titles, & Outlines

Tag: Groundhog Day Happy St. Brigid's Day! This is the time of year for thinking about fertility and nurturing, about defining goals, and about preparing to meet the year ahead.

Morality and Ethics, Why be moral? In an everyday sense, Rowlands suggests that possibly we uphold these morals because of an outside force that will punish us such as God or society. Yet another view from Aristotle says we realize our own potential and act morally to find happiness Falzon, So what drives each of us to behave well, or not at all? How would a person react in a modern day situation if these consequences or threats of chaos were removed? Imagine for a moment that you are stuck repeating the same day over and over again. Would you maintain your morals and ethics? Would you use this consequence free environment to do some of the things you always wanted to do but held yourself back from? Main character Phil Connors Bill Murray is a weather reporter stuck repeating February 2nd, Groundhog Day over and over again in a time loop. He begins the first few repeats continuing the day as normal, trying to figure out his the how and why of his situation. He proceeds to eat like a glutton, rob a bank, drive while intoxicated, seduce women, and get arrested. When the boredom and frustration become too much, Phil gives up on living and begins to find new and inventive ways to kill himself. He takes the advice, learns to play piano, helps the townspeople, and captures the love of Rita, successfully breaking out of the time loop. This series of decisions would support the views of Aristotle, who believed that when people realize their inner potential, they will strive to act morally in order to reach happiness. He is rewarded with true happiness in his romance with Rita and feelings of self fulfillment. In the end there are many different motivations that drive Phil to act morally or act simply act out his own desires, but the strongest drive was one of self realization and the desire for true happiness. Philosophy Goes to the Movies: An Introduction to Philosophy. The Philosopher at the End of the Universe: Philosophy Explained through Science Fiction Films.

Chapter 7 : The Moral of the Story: An Introduction to Ethics

In this short video leading philosopher Dr. Fulvio Di Blasi discovers traces of Aristotle in the movie "Groundhog Day" with Bill Murray In the movie Groundhog Day, starring.

It persisted as the dominant approach in Western moral philosophy until at least the Enlightenment, suffered a momentary eclipse during the nineteenth century, but re-emerged in Anglo-American philosophy in the late s. Neither of them, at that time, paid attention to a number of topics that had always figured in the virtue ethics tradition—virtues and vices, motives and moral character, moral education, moral wisdom or discernment, friendship and family relationships, a deep concept of happiness, the role of the emotions in our moral life and the fundamentally important questions of what sorts of persons we should be and how we should live. Its re-emergence had an invigorating effect on the other two approaches, many of whose proponents then began to address these topics in the terms of their favoured theory. It has also generated virtue ethical readings of philosophers other than Plato and Aristotle, such as Martineau, Hume and Nietzsche, and thereby different forms of virtue ethics have developed Slote ; Swanton , a. See Annas for a short, clear, and authoritative account of all three. We discuss the first two in the remainder of this section. Eudaimonia is discussed in connection with eudaimonist versions of virtue ethics in the next. It is a disposition, well entrenched in its possessor—something that, as we say, goes all the way down, unlike a habit such as being a tea-drinker—to notice, expect, value, feel, desire, choose, act, and react in certain characteristic ways. To possess a virtue is to be a certain sort of person with a certain complex mindset. A significant aspect of this mindset is the wholehearted acceptance of a distinctive range of considerations as reasons for action. An honest person cannot be identified simply as one who, for example, practices honest dealing and does not cheat. An honest person cannot be identified simply as one who, for example, tells the truth because it is the truth, for one can have the virtue of honesty without being tactless or indiscreet. Valuing honesty as she does, she chooses, where possible to work with honest people, to have honest friends, to bring up her children to be honest. She disapproves of, dislikes, deplures dishonesty, is not amused by certain tales of chicanery, despises or pities those who succeed through deception rather than thinking they have been clever, is unsurprised, or pleased as appropriate when honesty triumphs, is shocked or distressed when those near and dear to her do what is dishonest and so on. Possessing a virtue is a matter of degree. To possess such a disposition fully is to possess full or perfect virtue, which is rare, and there are a number of ways of falling short of this ideal Athanassoulis Most people who can truly be described as fairly virtuous, and certainly markedly better than those who can truly be described as dishonest, self-centred and greedy, still have their blind spots—little areas where they do not act for the reasons one would expect. So someone honest or kind in most situations, and notably so in demanding ones, may nevertheless be trivially tainted by snobbery, inclined to be disingenuous about their forebears and less than kind to strangers with the wrong accent. I may be honest enough to recognise that I must own up to a mistake because it would be dishonest not to do so without my acceptance being so wholehearted that I can own up easily, with no inner conflict. The fully virtuous do what they should without a struggle against contrary desires; the continent have to control a desire or temptation to do otherwise. If it is the circumstances in which the agent acts—say that she is very poor when she sees someone drop a full purse or that she is in deep grief when someone visits seeking help—then indeed it is particularly admirable of her to restore the purse or give the help when it is hard for her to do so. But if what makes it hard is an imperfection in her character—the temptation to keep what is not hers, or a callous indifference to the suffering of others—then it is not. The concept of a virtue is the concept of something that makes its possessor good: These are commonly accepted truisms. But it is equally common, in relation to particular putative examples of virtues to give these truisms up. It is also said that courage, in a desperado, enables him to do far more wicked things than he would have been able to do if he were timid. So it would appear that generosity, honesty, compassion and courage despite being virtues, are sometimes faults. Someone who is generous, honest, compassionate, and courageous might not be a morally good person—or, if it is still held to be a truism that they are, then morally good people may be led by what makes them morally good to act

wrongly! How have we arrived at such an odd conclusion? The answer lies in too ready an acceptance of ordinary usage, which permits a fairly wide-ranging application of many of the virtue terms, combined, perhaps, with a modern readiness to suppose that the virtuous agent is motivated by emotion or inclination, not by rational choice. Aristotle makes a number of specific remarks about phronesis that are the subject of much scholarly debate, but the related modern concept is best understood by thinking of what the virtuous morally mature adult has that nice children, including nice adolescents, lack. Both the virtuous adult and the nice child have good intentions, but the child is much more prone to mess things up because he is ignorant of what he needs to know in order to do what he intends. A virtuous adult is not, of course, infallible and may also, on occasion, fail to do what she intended to do through lack of knowledge, but only on those occasions on which the lack of knowledge is not culpable. So, for example, children and adolescents often harm those they intend to benefit either because they do not know how to set about securing the benefit or because their understanding of what is beneficial and harmful is limited and often mistaken. Such ignorance in small children is rarely, if ever culpable. Adults, on the other hand, are culpable if they mess things up by being thoughtless, insensitive, reckless, impulsive, shortsighted, and by assuming that what suits them will suit everyone instead of taking a more objective viewpoint. They are also culpable if their understanding of what is beneficial and harmful is mistaken. It is part of practical wisdom to know how to secure real benefits effectively; those who have practical wisdom will not make the mistake of concealing the hurtful truth from the person who really needs to know it in the belief that they are benefiting him. The detailed specification of what is involved in such knowledge or understanding has not yet appeared in the literature, but some aspects of it are becoming well known. Even many deontologists now stress the point that their action-guiding rules cannot, reliably, be applied without practical wisdom, because correct application requires situational appreciation—the capacity to recognise, in any particular situation, those features of it that are morally salient. This brings out two aspects of practical wisdom. One is that it characteristically comes only with experience of life. Amongst the morally relevant features of a situation may be the likely consequences, for the people involved, of a certain action, and this is something that adolescents are notoriously clueless about precisely because they are inexperienced. It is part of practical wisdom to be wise about human beings and human life. It should go without saying that the virtuous are mindful of the consequences of possible actions. How could they fail to be reckless, thoughtless and short-sighted if they were not? The wise do not see things in the same way as the nice adolescents who, with their under-developed virtues, still tend to see the personally disadvantageous nature of a certain action as competing in importance with its honesty or benevolence or justice. These aspects coalesce in the description of the practically wise as those who understand what is truly worthwhile, truly important, and thereby truly advantageous in life, who know, in short, how to live well.

Forms of Virtue Ethics While all forms of virtue ethics agree that virtue is central and practical wisdom required, they differ in how they combine these and other concepts to illuminate what we should do in particular contexts and how we should live our lives as a whole. In what follows we sketch four distinct forms taken by contemporary virtue ethics, namely, a eudaimonist virtue ethics, b agent-based and exemplarist virtue ethics, c target-centered virtue ethics, and d Platonistic virtue ethics. A virtue is a trait that contributes to or is a constituent of eudaimonia and we ought to develop virtues, the eudaimonist claims, precisely because they contribute to eudaimonia. It is for me, not for you, to pronounce on whether I am happy. If I think I am happy then I am—it is not something I can be wrong about barring advanced cases of self-deception. Contrast my being healthy or flourishing. Here we have no difficulty in recognizing that I might think I was healthy, either physically or psychologically, or think that I was flourishing but be wrong. Most versions of virtue ethics agree that living a life in accordance with virtue is necessary for eudaimonia. This supreme good is not conceived of as an independently defined state made up of, say, a list of non-moral goods that does not include virtuous activity which exercise of the virtues might be thought to promote. It is, within virtue ethics, already conceived of as something of which virtuous activity is at least partially constitutive. Thereby virtue ethicists claim that a human life devoted to physical pleasure or the acquisition of wealth is not eudaimon, but a wasted life. But although all standard versions of virtue ethics insist on that conceptual link between virtue and eudaimonia, further links are matters of dispute and generate

different versions. For Aristotle, virtue is necessary but not sufficient—what is also needed are external goods which are a matter of luck. For Plato and the Stoics, virtue is both necessary and sufficient for eudaimonia. According to eudaimonist virtue ethics, the good life is the eudaimon life, and the virtues are what enable a human being to be eudaimon because the virtues just are those character traits that benefit their possessor in that way, barring bad luck. So there is a link between eudaimonia and what confers virtue status on a character trait. For a discussion of the differences between eudaimonists see Baril. It is unclear how many other forms of normativity must be explained in terms of the qualities of agents in order for a theory to count as agent-based. The two best-known agent-based theorists, Michael Slote and Linda Zagzebski, trace a wide range of normative qualities back to the qualities of agents. Similarly, he explains the goodness of an action, the value of eudaimonia, the justice of a law or social institution, and the normativity of practical rationality in terms of the motivational and dispositional qualities of agents. Zagzebski likewise defines right and wrong actions by reference to the emotions, motives, and dispositions of virtuous and vicious agents. Her definitions of duties, good and bad ends, and good and bad states of affairs are similarly grounded in the motivational and dispositional states of exemplary agents. However, there could also be less ambitious agent-based approaches to virtue ethics see Slote. At the very least, an agent-based approach must be committed to explaining what one should do by reference to the motivational and dispositional states of agents. But this is not yet a sufficient condition for counting as an agent-based approach, since the same condition will be met by every virtue ethical account. For a theory to count as an agent-based form of virtue ethics it must also be the case that the normative properties of motivations and dispositions cannot be explained in terms of the normative properties of something else such as eudaimonia or states of affairs which is taken to be more fundamental. Beyond this basic commitment, there is room for agent-based theories to be developed in a number of different directions. The most important distinguishing factor has to do with how motivations and dispositions are taken to matter for the purposes of explaining other normative qualities. If those motives are good then the action is good, if not then not. Another point on which agent-based forms of virtue ethics might differ concerns how one identifies virtuous motivations and dispositions. As we observe the people around us, we find ourselves wanting to be like some of them in at least some respects and not wanting to be like others. The former provide us with positive exemplars and the latter with negative ones. Our understanding of better and worse motivations and virtuous and vicious dispositions is grounded in these primitive responses to exemplars. This is not to say that every time we act we stop and ask ourselves what one of our exemplars would do in this situations. Our moral concepts become more refined over time as we encounter a wider variety of exemplars and begin to draw systematic connections between them, noting what they have in common, how they differ, and which of these commonalities and differences matter, morally speaking. Recognizable motivational profiles emerge and come to be labeled as virtues or vices, and these, in turn, shape our understanding of the obligations we have and the ends we should pursue. However, even though the systematising of moral thought can travel a long way from our starting point, according to the exemplarist it never reaches a stage where reference to exemplars is replaced by the recognition of something more fundamental. At the end of the day, according to the exemplarist, our moral system still rests on our basic propensity to take a liking or disliking to exemplars. The target-centered view developed by Christine Swanton, by contrast, begins with our existing conceptions of the virtues. We already have a passable idea of which traits are virtues and what they involve. Of course, this untutored understanding can be clarified and improved, and it is one of the tasks of the virtue ethicist to help us do precisely that. But rather than stripping things back to something as basic as the motivations we want to imitate or building it up to something as elaborate as an entire flourishing life, the target-centered view begins where most ethics students find themselves, namely, with the idea that generosity, courage, self-discipline, compassion, and the like get a tick of approval. It then examines what these traits involve. A complete account of virtue will map out 1 its field, 2 its mode of responsiveness, 3 its basis of moral acknowledgment, and 4 its target. Different virtues are concerned with different fields. Courage, for example, is concerned with what might harm us, whereas generosity is concerned with the sharing of time, talent, and property. Courage aims to control fear and handle danger, while generosity aims to share time, talents, or possessions with others in ways that benefit them. A

virtuous act is an act that hits the target of a virtue, which is to say that it succeeds in responding to items in its field in the specified way. Providing a target-centered definition of a right action requires us to move beyond the analysis of a single virtue and the actions that follow from it. This is because a single action context may involve a number of different, overlapping fields. Determination might lead me to persist in trying to complete a difficult task even if doing so requires a singleness of purpose.

Chapter 8 : Nicomachean Ethics - Wikipedia

This is exactly the situation in Harold Ramis's Groundhog Day (). Main character Phil Connors (Bill Murray) is a weather reporter stuck repeating February 2 nd, Groundhog Day over and over again in a time loop.

The Nicomachean Ethics is very often abbreviated "NE", or "EN", and books and chapters are generally referred to by Roman and Arabic numerals, respectively, along with corresponding Bekker numbers. Opinions about the relationship between the two works— for example, which was written first, and which originally contained the three common books, are divided. Many believe that these works were not put into their current form by Aristotle himself, but by an editor sometime later. If there are several virtues then the best and most complete or perfect of them will be the happiest one. An excellent human will be a person good at living life, who does it well and beautifully kalos. Aristotle says that such a person would also be a serious spoudaios human being, in the same sense of "serious" that one contrasts serious harpists with other harpists. He also asserts as part of this starting point that virtue for a human must involve reason in thought and speech logos , as this is an aspect an ergon, literally meaning a task or work of human living. He describes a sequence of necessary steps to achieve this: First, righteous actions, often done under the influence of teachers, allow the development of the right habits. These in turn can allow the development of a good stable character in which the habits are voluntary, and this in turn gives a chance of achieving eudaimonia. Aristotle does not however equate character with habit ethos in Greek, with a short "e" because real character involves conscious choice, unlike habit. Instead of being habit, character is a hexis like health or knowledge, meaning it is a stable disposition that must be pursued and maintained with some effort. However, good habits are described as a precondition for good character. As he proceeds, he describes how the highest types of praise, so the highest types of virtue, imply having all the virtues of character at once, and these in turn imply not just good character, but a kind of wisdom. Being of "great soul" magnanimity , the virtue where someone would be truly deserving of the highest praise and have a correct attitude towards the honor this may involve. This is the first case mentioned, and it is mentioned within the initial discussion of practical examples of virtues and vices at Book IV. This style of building up a picture wherein it becomes clear that praiseworthy virtues in their highest form, even virtues like courage, seem to require intellectual virtue, is a theme of discussion Aristotle chooses to associate in the Nicomachean Ethics with Socrates, and indeed it is an approach we find portrayed in the Socratic dialogues of Plato. But achieving this supreme condition is inseparable from achieving all the virtues of character, or "moral virtues". As Burger points out p. As part of this, Aristotle considers common opinions along with the opinions of poets and philosophers. Who should study ethics, and how[edit] Concerning accuracy and whether ethics can be treated in an objective way, Aristotle points out that the "things that are beautiful and just, about which politics investigates, involve great disagreement and inconsistency, so that they are thought to belong only to convention and not to nature ". For this reason Aristotle claims it is important not to demand too much precision, like the demonstrations we would demand from a mathematician, but rather to treat the beautiful and the just as "things that are so for the most part. This is understood to be referring to Plato and his school, famous for what is now known as the Theory of Forms. The section is yet another explanation of why the Ethics will not start from first principles, which would mean starting out by trying to discuss "The Good" as a universal thing that all things called good have in common. Aristotle says that while all the different things called good do not seem to have the same name by chance, it is perhaps better to "let go for now" because this attempt at precision "would be more at home in another type of philosophic inquiry", and would not seem to be helpful for discussing how particular humans should act, in the same way that doctors do not need to philosophize over the definition of health in order to treat each case. Defining "happiness" eudaimonia and the aim of the Ethics[edit] The main stream of discussion starts from the well-known opening of Chapter 1, with the assertion that all technical arts, all investigations every methodos, including the Ethics itself , indeed all deliberate actions and choice, all aim at some good apart from themselves. Aristotle points to the fact that many aims are really only intermediate aims, and are desired only because they make the achievement of higher aims possible. He concludes what is now known as Chapter 2 of

Book 1 by stating that ethics "our investigation" or *methodos* is "in a certain way political". Ethics, unlike some other types of philosophy, is inexact and uncertain. Aristotle says that it would be unreasonable to expect strict mathematical style demonstrations, but "each man judges correctly those matters with which he is acquainted". The refined and active way of politics, which aims at honor, honor itself implying the higher divinity of those who are wise and know and judge, and potentially honor, political people. The way of contemplation. Aristotle also mentions two other possibilities that he argues can be put aside: Having virtue but being inactive, even suffering evils and misfortunes, which Aristotle says no one would consider unless they were defending a hypothesis. As Sachs points out, this is indeed what Plato depicts Socrates doing in his *Gorgias*. Money making, which Aristotle asserts to be a life based on aiming at what is pursued by necessity in order to achieve higher goals, an intermediate good. Each of these three commonly proposed happy ways of life represents targets that some people aim at for their own sake, just like they aim at happiness itself for its own sake. Concerning honor, pleasure, and intelligence *nous* and also every virtue, though they lead to happiness, even if they did not we would still pursue them. Happiness in life then, includes the virtues, and Aristotle adds that it would include self-sufficiency *autarkeia*, not the self-sufficiency of a hermit, but of someone with a family, friends and community. By itself this would make life choiceworthy and lacking nothing. To describe more clearly what happiness is like, Aristotle next asks what the work *ergon* of a human is. All living things have nutrition and growth as a work, all animals according to the definition of animal Aristotle used would have perceiving as part of their work, but what is more particularly human? The answer according to Aristotle is that it must involve articulate speech *logos*, including both being open to persuasion by reasoning, and thinking things through. Not only will human happiness involve reason, but it will also be an active being-at-work *energeia*, not just potential happiness. And it will be over a lifetime, because "one swallow does not make a spring". The definition given is therefore: Moreover, to be happy takes a complete lifetime; for one swallow does not make a spring. According to this opinion, which he says is right, the good things associated with the soul are most governing and especially good, when compared to the good things of the body, or good external things. Aristotle says that virtue, practical judgment and wisdom, and also pleasure, all associated with happiness, and indeed an association with external abundance, are all consistent with this definition. If happiness is virtue, or a certain virtue, then it must not just be a condition of being virtuous, potentially, but an actual way of virtuously "being at work" as a human. For as in the Ancient Olympic Games, "it is not the most beautiful or the strongest who are crowned, but those who compete". And such virtue will be good, beautiful and pleasant, indeed Aristotle asserts that in most people different pleasures are in conflict with each other while "the things that are pleasant to those who are passionately devoted to what is beautiful are the things that are pleasant by nature and of this sort are actions in accordance with virtue". External goods are also necessary in such a virtuous life, because a person who lacks things such as good family and friends might find it difficult to be happy. Aristotle says that it admits of being shared by some sort of learning and taking pains. But despite this, even if not divine, it is one of the most divine things, and "for what is greatest and most beautiful to be left to chance would be too discordant". Aristotle accepted that it would be wrong to call Priam unhappy only because his last years were unhappy. Aristotle justifies saying that happiness must be considered over a whole lifetime because otherwise Priam, for example, would be defined as unhappy only because of his unhappy old age. Only many great misfortunes will limit how blessed such a life can be, but "even in these circumstances something beautiful shines through". But he says that it seems that if anything at all gets through to the deceased, whether good or the reverse, it would be something faint and small. One irrational part of the human soul is "not human" but "vegetative" and at most work during sleep, when virtue is least obvious. A second irrational part of the human soul is however able to share in reason in some way. We see this because we know there is something "desiring and generally appetitive" in the soul that can, on different occasions in different people, either oppose reason, or obey it—thus being rational just as we would be rational when we listen to a father being rational. The virtues then are similarly divided, into intellectual *dianoetic* virtues, and the virtues of character ethical or moral virtues pertaining to the irrational part of the soul, which can take part in reason. The intellectual aspect of virtue will be discussed in Book VI. Concerning excellence of character or moral virtue[edit] Book II: That virtues of character can be

described as means[edit] Aristotle says that whereas virtue of thinking needs teaching, experience and time, virtue of character moral virtue comes about as a consequence of following the right habits. According to Aristotle the potential for this virtue is by nature in humans, but whether virtues come to be present or not is not determined by human nature. Someone who runs away becomes a coward, while someone who fears nothing is rash. In this way the virtue "bravery" can be seen as depending upon a "mean" between two extremes. For this reason, Aristotle is sometimes considered a proponent of a doctrine of a golden mean. A virtuous person feels pleasure when she performs the most beautiful or noble kalos actions. A person who is not virtuous will often find his or her perceptions of what is most pleasant to be misleading. For this reason, any concern with virtue or politics requires consideration of pleasure and pain. It is not like in the productive arts, where the thing being made is what is judged as well made or not. And just knowing what would be virtuous is not enough. Being skilled in an art can also be described as a mean between excess and deficiency: But Aristotle points to a simplification in this idea of hitting a mean. In terms of what is best, we aim at an extreme, not a mean, and in terms of what is base, the opposite. As Sachs points out, , p. Aristotle says that such cases will need to be discussed later, before the discussion of Justice in Book V, which will also require special discussion. In practice Aristotle explains that people tend more by nature towards pleasures, and therefore see virtues as being relatively closer to the less obviously pleasant extremes. While every case can be different, given the difficulty of getting the mean perfectly right it is indeed often most important to guard against going the pleasant and easy way. Moral virtue as conscious choice[edit] Chapter 1 distinguishes actions chosen as relevant to virtue, and whether actions are to be blamed, forgiven, or even pitied. Involuntary or unwilling akousion acts, which is the simplest case where people do not praise or blame. In such cases a person does not choose the wrong thing, for example if the wind carries a person off, or if a person has a wrong understanding of the particular facts of a situation. Note that ignorance of what aims are good and bad, such as people of bad character always have, is not something people typically excuse as ignorance in this sense. However, these actions are not taken because they are preferred in their own right, but rather because all options available are worse. It is concerning this third class of actions that there is doubt about whether they should be praised or blamed or condoned in different cases. Several more critical terms are defined and discussed: Things done on the spur of the moment, and things done by animals and children can be willing, but driven by desire and spirit and not what we would normally call true choice. Choice is rational, and according to the understanding of Aristotle, choice can be in opposition to desire. Choice is also not wishing for things one does not believe can be achieved, such as immortality, but rather always concerning realistic aims. Choice is also not simply to do with opinion, because our choices make us the type of person we are, and are not simply true or false. What distinguishes choice is that before a choice is made there is a rational deliberation or thinking things through. Deliberation is therefore not how we reason about ends we pursue, health for example, but how we think through the ways we can try to achieve them. Choice then is decided by both desire and deliberation. We cannot say that what people wish for is good by definition, and although we could say that what is wished for is always what appears good, this will still be very variable. Most importantly we could say that a worthy spoudaios man will wish for what is "truly" good. Most people are misled by pleasure, "for it seems to them to be a good, though it is not".

Chapter 9 : Aristotelian virtue ethics - Research Database

3) Make three explicit links between the film Groundhog Day and Aristotle's virtue ethics. If you are one of the first ten to respond then that is all you must do. If however, you are not one of the first ten, you must make reference to the ideas of two other students that you agree with/disagree (explaining why fully).

Posted on September 23, by emmanuel89 For this blog post I chose to watch the movie Groundhog Day The day he is forced to relive happens to be groundhog day Feb. In the movie the groundhog sees his shadow, which means six more weeks of winter, and may explain why Phil experiences what he is. At first, Phil takes advantage of the situation, by eating what he wants, driving drunk, sleeping with women, except his coworker Rita MacDowell. When Phil realizes he will never be able to sleep with Rita, he becomes suicidal. He successfully kills himself several times, only to wake up on groundhog day all over again. Eventually he somewhat convinces Rita of his situation, and she tells him to make the most of it. He has the opportunity to help people, even if its only for one day. Phil does just that. He saves the mayor from choking, buys a homeless man a meal, etc. At the end of the movie Phil somehow gets Rita to fall in love him; they spend the night together, and when he wakes he finds out time moved forward again, it is February 3rd. Presented to us here is a man who clearly is not the embodiment of happiness. His one good quality is that he is good at his job when he wants to be. But like a lot of people throughout history, he is given a second chance to prove himself. It is through this second chance that Phil finds virtue, and ultimately happiness. And while Aristotle might argue that Phil never finds true happiness, because he technically did not die, I would say that Phil did die, or at least the unlikable parts of Phil died. Through his experience Phil displays the virtues Aristotle mentions in order to attain his so-called happiness. He displays intellectual virtue when he learns how to play the piano and speak French. He displays moral virtue when he saves a boy who fell out of a tree and when he helped some old ladies change a flat tire. This is something off topic, but as I was watching the movie I could help but think of the novel A Christmas Carol and the main character, Ebenezer Scrooge. Both are mean, grumpy men who are given a second chance. While their situations were different, both found virtue and happiness at the end of their respective adventures.