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## Am I wrong about morality influence on laws ?

7

(self.askphilosophy)  
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[\[-\] Dr\\_Kenneth\\_Noisewat](#) 3 points 4 days ago

What do you mean children's rights get less attention than animal rights, can you elaborate on this statement? Additionally human rights (children included) are much further progressed than animal rights anyways.

And yes, while animals can communicate, it is much less complicated than what humans can do. That is the point that the above poster was making. Animals can signify that they are feeling pain or pleasure, but they cannot dictate terms that they believe to be fair treatment, what circumstances are or are not acceptable. It is even harder to identify satisfaction/dissatisfaction in an animal like a chicken over a dog or cat.

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An example is that children can't vote. There is little interest in fixing this injustice.

Children are routinely imprisoned without trial (for short time periods – detention, timeout, grounding), competent 17yos aren't allowed to have sex in some states or view porn, skilled 15yos aren't allowed to drive, in general children are not allowed to work even if they want to and enjoy the work. Children are prevented by law in many ways from getting away from cruel parents (who aren't at a certain level of cruelty so that CPS will step in, which is typically not what the kids want either). Kids have no rights when their parents divorce – they can't pick who to live with. Not even if the court agrees both parents are decent and non-abusive. That's so messed up. Truancy and curfew laws are nasty. Children are limited from signing contracts and giving consent to things in ways that go beyond the objective and fair treatment of all citizens according to their actual attributes (e.g. if you don't understand a contract, you can't consent to it – that is a FAIR rule, whereas going by age is not fair because some

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people below the cutoff age could understand the contract just fine). There's age-discrimination laws for cigarettes, alcohol, and some other things. I think there's even some kinda law against kids under some age using internet forums.

Children are routinely discriminated against too. Let me show you a brief email I found memorable:

Date: Tue, 24 Jul 2001 01:49:24 +0100  
From: David Deutsch [david.deutsch@QUBIT.ORG](mailto:david.deutsch@QUBIT.ORG)  
Subject: In denial about age discrimination  
To: TCS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

I noticed that a lot of universities in the US use very similar forms of words in a 'non-discrimination' statement, such as:

"ABC College does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, ethnic or national origin, handicap, veteran status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, taste, or smell."

I wondered what I would find if I did an internet search for such statements, combined with phrases of the form "at least X years old" on the same page. I got some comical results.

For instance:

Central Piedmont Community College does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, ethnic or national origin, handicap, military service, race, religion, or sex in its administration of education policies, programs, [or] admissions policies ... CPCC has an open-door admission policy for applicants who are high school graduates or who are at least 18 years of age.

Also, on the Lycos web site the following two sentences appear consecutively:

Certain areas of the Lycos Network, however, may not be available to children under 13 under any circumstances.

Lycos does not discriminate on the basis of age...

Hmm. Well, here's my age-discriminatory opinion: some people like to babble lengthy streams of words with little or no regard for what they mean. Some of these people have the perfectly acceptable excuse of being under three years of age.

-- David Deutsch

<http://www.qubit.org/people/david/David.html>

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It sounds like the majority of what you take issue with are age cutoffs (and secondarily some other cutoffs). So, I'm going to spend the this post addressing that. But if you'd like to continue the discussion further feel free to PM me too! This discussion is already falling off-topic from the original post but I'm always happy to talk and learn!

There are many reasons for it, the biggest being pragmatic reasons. There is no possible way to tailor the law to every single individual. So what the government does is use the best of it's knowledge (often studied knowledge of average psychological development) to create a cutoff point that is fair for most individuals. Of course this means that some will fall above and below. For example, I know plenty younger kids who would be better suited to vote than many adults. Additionally I completely acknowledge the fact that a lot of cutoffs are either incorrect or nonsensical.

The only alternative to cutoffs (that I know of) is testing individuals but too many problems arise from this. The biggest being unintentional test bias. I don't know how much experience you have with test creation, but bias is a huge issue. Tests will often unknowingly favor some demographics over others which will lead those demographics to then gain more rights before others even though in reality there is no difference between the two. The second problem is intentional test bias, the US for example has a long history of abusing tests to keep minorities from their rights. I don't imagine it would be a huge stretch to imagine much our current congress making it so that the tests allowed certain more "favorable" demographics to vote earlier (ie white males from the south for the right wing and northern ethnic groups for the left). Next, how does one even measure such things in a test form? How does one measure whether an individual will use alcohol responsibly (especially when many adults can't) or when they fully understand implications of a contractual agreement? How do we know if each child has happily entered into a job or is being coerced Another issue would then be the sheer amount of tests this would lead to, one would need to take tests for all sorts of rights. Then how often would

they have to take them? And do they have to ever retest upon competing a test, would we then have the right to take other's rights away? There are a lot more issues here but I think I hit a few of the major ones here.

Of course there may be some option besides these two routes. I'd be interested if you had any thoughts on possible strategies.

I'd also like to acknowledge that you definitely have some points but they may need some more thought. For instance, I totally agree that any time a child is truly suffering they should be able to escape it and that the CPS may have a cutoff level high enough that it doesn't address some instances. But if they lowered their cutoff level, there is also a chance that they may take children away from a usually good household harming both the children and parents. I don't have much experience in this area but I could see something like an intervention and monitoring system in place. I'd love to hear your thoughts on this if you have some.

Lastly, I'd like to empathize. I remember when I was younger, I was very upset that despite being more qualified. It took me a while to see that it's simply not a possible thing for any government to be able to do. So what they do is use their best judgement to set limits to protect children from being abused. Before these limits, children were abused on multiple fronts because of this. I'm not saying the government always gets it right, in fact, I have many issues with their cutoffs. But, I do recognize that it is the only practical solution to such a complex issue. Again, I'd be happy to continue this conversation and I would love to hear a response to some of these points especially from someone who seems like they have been deeply invested in the issue. Feel free to reply here or send me a PM (which the mods might prefer). Actually, you could even open this up to more people as it's own post! I'll try and keep an eye out if you do, but you should let me know too, I wouldn't want to miss it!

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[\[-\]](#) [curi](#) 0 points 4 days ago

Thanks for the discussion! I don't like taking comments out of public. I have an audience who read my comments. I like to be able to link them later. The way to deal with topic changes, IMO, is stuff gets nested in a tree structure, like reddit does.

About CPS, I would like to see them do less. In particular, I think if the kid says "please leave

us alone" and there isn't a lot of violence, then CPS should do nothing besides, say, give the kid their phone number. What I meant is, kids should be free to be able to go pursue other options of their own choosing, e.g. get a job and an apartment, or move in with their uncle, or there are a variety of options they could have but would currently be prevented from doing.

A friend of mine used to live with his father's girlfriend during part of highschool. They'd known each other a long time and she acted like a mother figure. No big deal. In this case, the dad was fine with it. But the dad could have said "no" even if the kid and girlfriend both wanted it. I think that sucks and violates the kids' rights. I don't think it's the case that everyone ought to always live with their parents until 16 or 18, or always ought to if the parent wants/demands it. This can happen even with young kids. Even a 4 year old might want to live with someone else, perhaps his grandparents, and might be right to prefer that and have a moral right to do it, but not be allowed to :(

Regarding pragmatic issues: yes they exist. But consider that blacks kill more people than whites in the US, and commit more of various other crimes. But we don't make any special laws and take away any privileges from blacks due to these aggregate statistics, we deal with them as individuals, which is the right thing to do. Children are people and deserved to be treated like individuals, even if it's harder than the one-size-fits-all approach. And we already have some systems for dealing with incompetent, e.g. driver's tests. It'd be good if we had better systems like that, and then as a side effect 4 year olds wouldn't get their license and also some more dangerous-driver adults wouldn't either.

With stuff like smoking and alcohol, leave it up to the family. If it's such a bad idea for the kid to drink or smoke, let the parent enforce that, not the government. And some parents don't see the problem with smoking, that's their right! I'm not saying this is totally ideal but it'd be a good start, better the parents control the kid than the government.

I agree some of this stuff is tricky and tests are problematic and often biased (driving is an area where testing works relatively well, though far from perfectly. testing to try to decide if someone is competent to decide whether to smoke or drink or not, by contrast, would work really really badly!!). I'm mainly saying there's some serious issues here and not a ton of interesting in reform. I definitely think trying to reform this stuff has less interest than animal rights.

i'm not really a fan of testing for more stuff in general. women don't have to be tested to drink or smoke or vote. blacks don't have to be. people are people. the general thing is, even if you think someone is dumb and messing up their life, that's their right, leave them alone. freedom!

| How do we know if each child has happily entered into a job or is being coerced  
how do you know if each woman has entered a job happily or is being coerced?

not saying this is easy, but i am saying it's an area where people should work on reform, and i absolutely believe some reforms could be figured out.

in general, life can be harsh and unfair. bad things do happen. but if you tried to have the government completely protect women from that, you'd end up oppressing from them. and a lot of protective measures would do more harm than good. same goes for children.

if you'd like to discuss more, i will reply by reddit, but i'd also recommend:

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/fallible-ideas/info>

this kind of thing is an ongoing/reoccurring topic and we're always happy to discuss it more if

someone brings it up or has a question.

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[\[-\]](#) [Dr\\_Kenneth\\_Noisewat](#) 2 points 4 days ago

Thanks for the offer, I'll keep it to reddit for now but will check out that community in the future.

First for the examples of the 4-year-old. I think a side issue here is that younger children do not have their cognitive abilities developed significantly enough for them to be trusted to use reason. This is an issue of personhood in which I don't think children would qualify for moral rights. This is why the courts don't try a child for murder if they manage to retrieve a gun and shoot someone, because they haven't developed enough to properly understand the consequences of their actions.

Now to get into the giving the child freedom to choose their living situation. By giving children such enormous freedom, there is potential for these children to abuse this system as well. Say Susie wants ice cream but her parents won't let her. Now Susie can just decide to move in with her grandparents until her parents change their mind. These kind of freedoms remove the parent's ability to enforce any kind of authority necessary to teach kids proper behavior, parents who love their children would be subject to their children's will. Now of course this issue seems to be solved if the grandparents' are required to give consent to it to, but how would this system work? The child would obviously need to call their grandparents. So if Susie calls, her grandparents would obviously shut down this proposal, but what if she lies? Susie could claim her parents are abusing her to her grandparents or even the police. Now the truth would need to be determined, so somebody would have to determine if there was abuse, preferably somebody trained. So the CPS has to step in. Additionally, for cases of real abuse, the CPS is ideal for many situations too. Young children may not have the means to report abuse (like parents keeping them under close watch, not allowing them to contact anyone, etc.) so the only way to report the abuse is for a third party to notice warning signs and report them.

As for drinking and smoking, these kinds of activities can be extremely harmful to young children and irresponsible parents could end up extremely harming those children and suffer no repercussions for it.

Obviously these kinds of situations become less of an issue the older the individual gets. But even still, treating everyone as individuals still has its own extreme problems beyond the sheer amount of tests and manpower: more bias. I would like to take your example of black people statistically committing more crimes as a direct example of this claim. It has been shown time after time the racism our law enforcement and judicial system are prone to. They treat individuals with prejudice, sometimes to the extreme. Now if all other rights were open to such individual judgement, we would see a great deal more prejudice and denial of rights. If these issues were handled individually, what happens when statistically men were allowed to drive at an average age of 15.5 and women at 16? That's a small example, but what happens when whites are allowed to vote at an average of 16, and blacks at 21?

Thoughts?

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This is an issue of personhood in which I don't think children would qualify for



| moral rights.

more people seem to think animals qualify for moral rights than children. i think this is a travesty.

if you want to get into details, young children demonstrably learn all kinds of things, showing they do have minds, while animals never learn anything. i know this is controversial. do you want to get into this stuff?

| Now to get into the giving the child freedom to choose their living situation. By giving children such enormous freedom, there is potential for these children to abuse this system as well. Say Susie wants ice cream but her parents won't let her. Now Susie can just decide to move in with her grandparents until her parents change their mind. These kind of freedoms remove the parent's ability to enforce any kind of authority necessary to teach kids proper behavior,

good. parents should teach with reason, not authority.

| of course this issue seems to be solved if the grandparents' are required to give consent to it to

of course the grandparents have to consent for Susie to live with them. she can't just move in with anyone in the world she feels like. she isn't their responsibility, unless they want her to be and consent.

| As for drinking and smoking, these kinds of activities can be extremely harmful to young children and irresponsible parents could end up extremely harming those children and suffer no repercussions for it.

parents make mistakes all the time. SO DOES THE GOVERNMENT, TOO.

all sorts of mistakes can be very harmful.

it's better if parents decide than the government because then there's diversity and freedom. it's worse if the federal government forces a mistake on you than if it's a family matter. if a parent does, the kid can argue back, explain his complaints, etc, whereas the government won't listen. and the kid knows the parent loves him, but the government doesn't love that kid.

by allowing freedom on a family level, if there is a popular parenting idea that's a very harmful mistake, some people can parent a different way. and new ideas can be tried out. and some will be mistakes, but others will be improvements and will catch on. having the government decide stuff for everyone suppresses this trial-and-error, and suppresses OUTLIERS both good and bad ones, and suppressing the good outliers completely ruins progress.

| Now if all other rights were open to such individual judgement, we would see a great deal more prejudice and denial of rights.

in the big picture, i'm saying instead of the govt treats people more like individuals (2 classes: adults and children), it treats them more uniformly (1 class: people). this is the same reform from (2 classes: blacks, whites) changing to (1 class: people).

now on a completely different level, this means more individual treatment in some ways because instead of having a racist or ageist policy like "if you're a black and you went in a white-only store, and now they claim to be missing money, therefore you're guilty of robbery and go to jail" you have to deal with individual cases and have a trial.

removing blatant racism or ageism from a system can require more individual attention to some cases that used to get glossed over IN A BAD WAY, so this is an improvement for the people involved (now they have a chance instead of being guilty due to their group).

look at it this way. you're 15. would you rather the government says you absolutely can't drive no matter what, or the government sends some guy to see if you can drive who doesn't do a great job and might be ageist? you'd rather have the individual treatment, even if it's not that fair, because then you have a chance instead of no chance. you have nothing to lose here, you only gain.

If these issues were handled individually, what happens when statistically men were allowed to drive at an average age of 15.5 and women at 16?

nothing. who cares? if men choose to put more effort into learning to drive earlier – or even are genetically safer drivers – so what? and if some individual woman doesn't like this, she can work on her driving earlier.

if you mean: what if it's cuz the driving testers are actually biased? well, that sucks. try to advocate reform. still, letting some men who aren't quite 16 drive makes the world better, that helped some people. not letting them drive either won't make the 15.5 year old competent female drivers in a better situation.

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[\[-\] Dr\\_Kenneth\\_Noisewat](#) 1 point 3 days ago

Some great points here, and now that I'm finally on a computer I can quote and do some other things as well.

more people seem to think animals qualify for moral rights than children. i think this is a travesty. if you want to get into details, young children demonstrably learn all kinds of things, showing they do have minds, while animals never learn anything. i know this is controversial. do you want to get into this stuff?

Sure we can discuss more about this! I was not suggesting that either children or animals qualify for full personhood because neither have sufficiently developed abilities to be held full accountable for their actions. The frontal lobe of the brain isn't finished developing until the mid-20's and plenty of other faculties are still developing during the growth of a child. Additionally, having the ability to think and learn is not sufficient enough to be responsible, I refer back to my earlier example of a child killing someone because they don't understand the consequences of their action.

Also, humans are not the only animals that can learn (dogs being an easy example). Interestingly, certain adult primates have been shown to outperform young children in many different mental areas (see the movie Ape Genius if you would like to learn some more introductory information about that). For most people, I don't think the issue is that people think animals should qualify for rights over children, it's that children have significantly more rights in place than animals (see hunting, factory farming, etc.) and that people are more worried about the outrageous amount of pain and suffering others are causing to animals rather than the potential for much smaller violations of rights for children (ie if I saw a dog getting kicked and a child getting his lollipop stolen, I would rush to the dog's aid well before the child's).



parents should teach with reason, not authority.

I wholeheartedly agree but this assumes that children will listen always listen to, and be swayed by, reason which is absolutely not the case. And while reason should be used to justify punishments, the punishments are there to teach children that there are real consequences for one's actions, just like the actual law.

Also, I curious if you had any thoughts on what I wrote about if a child is actually being abused but is unable to contacting others about it.

parents make mistakes all the time. SO DOES THE GOVERNMENT, TOO.

Yes I agree, but in my example about drugs, they can have a very negative impact if abused and do relatively little good when used appropriately, here I wonder why you think organ and brain damage is a acceptable risk. By banning, the acts outright, the government aim to protect all people from such harm. I'm not saying I 100% agree with those practices, but it is at least a reasonable thought.

the kid knows the parent loves him, but the government doesn't love that kid.

This seems to be assuming all parents are caring and that the government does not care for the wellbeing of its citizens. I'm not calling the government infallible, but they are protecting against the worst case scenarios since those scenarios have significantly less desirable outcomes than the best case scenarios (at least in the case of drugs).

having the government decide stuff for everyone suppresses this trial-and-error, and suppresses OUTLIERS both good and bad ones, and suppressing the good outliers completely ruins progress.

Another great point that I mostly agree with. However, this seems to be assuming that government laws are stagnant and do not progress. Law reforms are made all the time including this area. Now I will concede that reform may not progress as quickly with the government than on an individual level, but I would argue that the slower progress is due to being conservative about the potential wellbeing of the children which is not a patently bad thing considering the trade offs (like the case about drugs).

in the big picture, i'm saying instead of the govt treats people more like individuals (2 classes: adults and children), it treats them more uniformly (1 class: people). this is the same reform from (2 classes: blacks, whites) changing to (1 class: people).

I feel like I have already addressed this point earlier in which a child would then be charged with murder. Additionally, treating adults and children as one group is different from treating blacks and whites as one group. In the latter, both groups are of equal mental capacity, while in the former each group has a different mental capacity.

now on a completely different level, this means more individual treatment in some ways because instead of having a racist or ageist policy like "if you're a black and you went in a white-only store, and now they claim to be missing money, therefore you're guilty of robbery and go to jail" you have to deal with individual cases and have a trial. removing blatnat racism or ageism from a system can require more individual attention to some cases that used to get

glossed over IN A BAD WAY, so this is an improvement for the people involved (now they have a chance instead of being guilty due to their group).

I'm not sure I understand what you mean here especially in regards to how your suggested system would remove the potential for racism or ageism. Could you please elaborate on this more?

look at it this way. you're 15. would you rather the government says you absolutely can't drive no matter what, or the government sends some guy to see if you can drive who doesn't do a great job and might be ageist? you'd rather have the individual treatment, even if it's not that fair, because then you have a chance instead of no chance. you have nothing to lose here, you only gain.

An excellent point, I don't think I disagree with you here except for my previous points about bias and the sheer amount of resources necessary to apply this kind of treatment to all areas of rights.

if you mean: what if it's cuz the driving testers are actually biased? well, that sucks. try to advocate reform.

Yes, this is exactly what I mean. It is a huge issue that is hard to reform and I would love to discuss this issue more in depth with you because I think it is a lot bigger of a roadblock to your ideas than you are crediting it.

still, letting some men who aren't quite 16 drive makes the world better, that helped some people. not letting them drive either won't make the 15.5 year old competent female drivers in a better situation.

Not true, it has no turned from a system that treated all equally to a system that is now demonstrably prejudice and denying women equal treatment without reason. Furthermore, I would like to hear your response to my second half of that example: "That's a small example, but what happens when whites are allowed to vote at an average of 16, and blacks at 21?" as I think it helps to illustrate the real problem even more.

Also, thanks again, it's rare to get into a deep discussion with another individual on here and I always love the chance to talk things out and learn!

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Also, humans are not the only animals that can learn (dogs being an easy example).

do you think software pets learn? they store data in memory about past interactions and act differently in the future.

trying to set aside terminology, whatever you call that, it's a different thing than human learning which can learn philosophy, politics, language, etc

with this stuff i think it's very helpful to look at computers and software and make comparisons there, and really hard to understand without that. we have NOT yet developed AI, so when animals do stuff we could achieve in software TODAY, that doesn't necessarily imply intelligence and intelligent-learning, it could be explained by the animal having non-intelligent type software algorithms (that do include things like storing information in memory and

factoring it into the algorithms later).

as to kids, the big thing is that learning works in a general purpose way with universality. this gets into epistemology. the way people learn is fundamentally by evolution of ideas, and there is no known other ways to learn, and either you can or can't do this. if you can learn something, you can learn anything. this is a huge topic and this view i'm advocating is unpopular, but i believe it's true and has no known flaws and there are refutations of all rivals. the best book to read to approach this material is The Beginning of Infinity by David Deutsch.

Interestingly, certain adult primates have been shown to outperform young children in many different mental areas (see the movie Ape Genius if you would like to learn some more introductory information about that).

it'd be easy to show that many different non-intelligent computer programs can outperform young children in many different "mental areas". like math or naming state capitals.

so your argument doesn't work. this kind of argument is really common but, i think, mistaken.

parents should teach with reason, not authority.

I wholeheartedly agree but this assumes that children will listen always listen to, and be swayed by, reason which is absolutely not the case. And while reason should be used to justify punishments, the punishments are there to teach children that there are real consequences for one's actions, just like the actual law.

i don't agree.

consider reason and adults. you try to persuade people. if you fail, you try to think of better arguments. you don't punish him.

i think it's the same with kids. this is premised on kids having functional humans minds like discussed above. and it's premised on epistemology: i don't think punishment is educational, only reason is. so if you do something other than reason, i don't think any learning happens.

there are two quotes from an old philosopher i like about this:

<http://curi.us/more/godwin>

plz click, they are short.

Also, I curious if you had any thoughts on what I wrote about if a child is actually being abused but is unable to contacting others about it.

yeah that's a hard edge case and i see the purpose of CPS there. i don't think it changes much regarding children's rights in general.

parents make mistakes all the time. SO DOES THE GOVERNMENT, TOO.

Yes I agree, but in my example about drugs, they can have a very negative impact if abused and do relatively little good when used appropriately, here I wonder why you think organ and brain damage is a acceptable risk. By banning, the acts outright, the government aim to protect all people from such harm. I'm not saying I 100% agree with those practices, but it is at least a reasonable thought.

i don't think "mistakes in this area are costly" or "i think people who disagree with me and are wrong are making a huge mistake" are good arguments for the government to control people.

you have a good point about more downside if drugs are bad and used, than downside if they are good and not used. i agree about that. so i would say: persuade people. point this out. if they STILL think drugs are a good idea, that's their opinion despite your argument. that's their freedom. this kinda freedom is very important because, while many intellectual outliers are idiots, some are geniuses who you don't recognize are right about tons of stuff. outliers can be scary but they need to be allowed for progress and innovation.

This seems to be assuming all parents are caring and that the government does not care for the wellbeing of its citizens.

i think that's a pretty decent first approximation, though yes i recognize there are bad parents. i'm pretty anti-government. i think we have different political philosophies.

Another great point that I mostly agree with. However, this seems to be assuming that government laws are stagnant and do not progress. Law reforms are made all the time including this area. Now I will concede that reform may not progress as quickly with the government than on an individual level, but I would argue that the slower progress is due to being conservative about the potential wellbeing of the children which is not a patently bad thing considering the trade offs (like the case about drugs).

it's soooo much harder and slower for progress to happen by legal reforms. and, to a good approximation, you can't change a law until you have majority opinion for the change.

but for innovative new ideas to get anywhere, they need to be possible to explore and work on when they are very unpopular and most of society considers them harmful.

I'm not sure I understand what you mean here especially in regards to how your suggested system would remove the potential for racism or ageism. Could you please elaborate on this more?

freedom does not remove the potential for racism and ageism. i'm not trying to remove them in general, except by giving philosophical arguments for why they are a bad idea in various ways including not being in the self-interest of the people who do that.

in the free market, racism isn't such a big deal because if Target is racist you go to Walmart instead. the big problem is government racism because of lack of alternatives. one of the big things i'd suggest here is getting government to stop being involved with most of life.

An excellent point, I don't think I disagree with you here except for my previous points about bias and the sheer amount of resources necessary to apply this kind of treatment to all areas of rights.

it doesn't take a ton of resources to treat people this way in general, due to our "default allow" policy. freedom. for most stuff, the government leaves people

alone and lets them do whatever they want.

what takes a lot of resources, besides preventing the use of force (the government's proper role), is mainly the exceptions where freedom is limited. e.g. the war on drugs. but leaving people alone is cheap. extending that freedom to children is still cheap. stuff where you'd want to test them, like driving, is the exception – and that expense is done with adults too!

if you mean: what if it's cuz the driving testers are actually biased? well, that sucks. try to advocate reform. Yes, this is exactly what I mean. It is a huge issue that is hard to reform and I would love to discuss this issue more in depth with you because I think it is a lot bigger of a roadblock to your ideas than you are crediting it. still, letting some men who aren't quite 16 drive makes the world better, that helped some people. not letting them drive either won't make the 15.5 year old competent female drivers in a better situation. Not true, it has no turned from a system that treated all equally to a system that is now demonstrably prejudice and denying women equal treatment without reason. Furthermore, I would like to hear your response to my second half of that example: "That's a small example, but what happens when whites are allowed to vote at an average of 16, and blacks at 21?" as I think it helps to illustrate the real problem even more.

in general i advocte no testing or qualifications at all. let anyone vote. we let stupid adults vote. why not stupid kids too? i'm totally against any kind of intelligence test for voting, or understanding of politics test, or anything like that. yes they'd be HUGELY biased (they would also be politically biased IMO which would be my biggest bias concern).

with driving, i don't think "our driving testers are sexist" is a good reason to not let 15yo males drive to try to even thigns up. screwing over even more people, while "fairer" in some sense some peopl elike, doesn't really fix anything IMO and I don't see the real value. (and btw are they only sexist when dealing with children? that'd be kind of strange. if it's a broader problem, then again i'm totally in favor of fixing that but totally against intentionally mistreating the not-biased-against people to try to even things up.)

Also, thanks again, it's rare to get into a deep discussion with another individual on here and I always love the chance to talk things out and learn!  
yeah, same to you!

this is getting very long and i'd like to reiterate the suggestion to discuss at <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/fallible-ideas/info> you can have nice discussions with lots of people there.

another reason is because reddit has a 10000 character limit on comments (this post just barely fit). and email can handle nested quoting better. and at this discussion group, there are other people familiar with The Beginning of Infinity, children's rights, etc, who may contribute to the discussion. and i don't think anyone else is reading this on reddit, except my friends that i linked here, but i don't think regular reddit traffic will see it. also i don't normally check reddit

this often. but, again, if you insist i will continue at reddit.

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[\[-\] Dr\\_Kenneth\\_Noisewat](#) 1 point 1 day ago

Ah, finally! Sorry for the late reply I've been really busy with work the past few days. Anyway, I've gotten a chance to read much of what you have linked to as well as explore your community a bit. For at least the remainder of this conversation, I plan on keeping the discussion here although you are welcome to link to it or post a transcript (I trust you enough to know you won't alter it). Anyway I'm going to break this down into two post, this first one mainly addressing the current conversation and the second more detailing what I think about some of the reading and research you've asked me to do. Also, I accidentally deleted my first draft of this post and lost all the stuff I wrote so please forgive me if it seems a little rushed this time around. Here we go:

| do you think software pets learn? they store data in memory about past interactions and act differently in the future.

Yes, I absolutely think so. While the definition you list here is a little simplistic, I believe it holds true to most philosophical and psychological definitions of learning.

| it's a different thing that human learning which can learn philosophy, politics, language, etc

This seems to be implying that humans are distinct from animals rather than different by degrees of complexity. But your definition of human learning can still be refuted by using animal examples. Many animals have language (again in the same degrees of complexity). The best example would be Koko the gorilla who was taught human sign language. Additionally, animals also learn things such as tool making, pass on cultural ideas, and many have very primitive political systems or at least social orders with leaders which seems like a primitive political system.

| [your software animal example]

Again, I think this is implying that humans are somehow distinct from other animals, if we can model animals now it is certainly possible to model humans in the future. Some popular theories suggest that our minds are modelable as such. I think some introductory readings on the philosophy of mind and free will might help clear up some of the points that you've made here so far. I'll post a few sources for introductory material below:

<http://consc.net/guide.html>

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/freewill/>

| it'd be easy to show that many different non-intelligent computer programs can outperform young children in many different "mental areas". like math or naming state capitals. so your argument doesn't work. this kind of argument is really common but, i think, mistaken.

Hmm, this may have been an issue of clarity on my part for simply stating "mental areas." By that, I mean puzzles and challenges designed to test



reasoning, knowledge of causation, learning, and adapting to create new solutions. I highly suggest you check out the movie when you have the time because it'll clear that up. But, even if we could create programs that model animals in this way and outperform children, wouldn't that seem to state from your earlier example about software, that humans are modelable as well?

consider reason and adults. you try to persuade people. if you fail, you try to think of better arguments. you don't punish him.

Except we do punish adults for breaking rules as well, especially if they haven't responded to previous attempts at reason. I would like to note here that many of the views I am expressing here are not ones that I entirely support but are more a byproduct of me playing devil's advocate to many of your ideas.

i don't think punishment is educational, only reason is. so if you do something other than reason, i don't think any learning happens.

This seems to imply that learning can only occur from reason. Let me try a counter example: If I place my hand in a fire and burn my hand, I learn to avoid placing myself in direct contact with fire.

Of course, it is also possible to state that reasoning is the basis for this learning in that after getting burned, I think: "fire can cause pain if touched, I want to avoid pain, so I should avoid touching fire." However, I think this may necessarily lead one to accepting that punishment can cause learning in a like way. Say my child takes a cookie that I told him was mine, in return I take one of his toys (while explaining that I am taking something like he did). Now the child can learn "having something of mine taken feels bad, others must feel this way too, I shouldn't steal from others." This I think may be a good middle ground between punishment and reason.

there are two quotes from an old philosopher i like about this:  
<http://curi.us/more/godwin>

I mostly agree with the linked quotes. However, people (both children and adults) are not logical or reasonable 100% of the time. And if a person is being unreasonable or is not willing to listen to reason, there is little that reason can do to change their minds. That said, I think it is important to give everyone the benefit of the doubt and to use reason whenever possible.

if they STILL think drugs are a good idea, that's their opinion despite your argument. that's their freedom.

I absolutely agree with you here the problem comes in with the case of children. Children are very impressionable and so if their parents are advocating or at least displaying use of harmful drugs without warning the child of the potential dangers, they are infringing on the child's right to make an informed and uninfluenced decision.

i think that's a pretty decent first approximation, though yes i recognize there are bad parents. i'm pretty anti-government. i think we have

| different political philosophies.

Agreed. And hahaha yes, we do have pretty different political philosophies, no worries there.

| it's soooo much harder and slower for progress to happen by legal reforms. ... but for innovative new ideas to get anywhere, they need to be possible to explore and work on when they are very unpopular and most of society considers them harmful.

Again, totally agree, as long as their exploration of those harmful ideas do not infringe upon other's rights to choose not to experience those harms (as in the case with drugs and children).

| freedom does not remove the potential for racism and ageism. i'm not trying to remove them in general, except by giving philosophical arguments for why they are a bad idea in various ways including not being in the self-interest of the people who do that.

Gotcha, thanks

| in the free market, racism isn't such a big deal because if Target is racist you go to Walmart instead. the big problem is government racism because of lack of alternatives. one of the big things i'd suggest here is getting government to stop being involved with most of life.

Definitely part of this is due to a simple difference in political philosophy again, but I would continue to argue that alternatives themselves do not solve racism. What if all alternatives are racist? Or what if a monopoly develops and now the racist option is the only choice?

| but leaving people alone is cheap. extending that freedom to children is still cheap. stuff where you'd want to test them, like driving, is the exception – and that expense is done with adults too!

No direct disagreements here

| in general i advocate no testing or qualifications at all. let anyone vote. we let stupid adults vote. why not stupid kids too?

This would be a huge problem. As said, children are impressionable, and so if an individual wants to gather more support for their views one simple option open to them would be to have more kids. I'm sure we both agree that this would be disastrous treatment towards children and consequently one of the reasons child labor laws were instituted, to stop people from having children just to make a profit.

| if it's a broader problem, then again i'm totally in favor of fixing that

Yes, I was referring to a more general problem and how hard it is to reform things like that.

Alright, finally re-finished response part one. Expect response part two to come in a little while. Again, I'm sorry for keeping the conversation here for now but I appreciate your understanding. In the meantime, I may consider making my second post over on your community. You'll either get a message from me here saying so or you'll just get the full response here.

Thanks again.

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[\[-\]](#) [curi](#) 1 point 1 day ago

no worries. i will wait until you finish writing before i read/reply. (i just read your last paragraph now).

if my reply to you is too long for one reddit comment, i will probably just blog it and put the link here, and you can reply here if you want.

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[\[-\]](#) [Dr\\_Kenneth\\_Noisewat](#) 1 point 1 day ago

## Part 2:

Thanks for waiting!

Upon reading some of BOI, looking into your community, reading some posts and other things as you have suggested; I can't say that I was surprised at your views. I had already managed to guess at quite a few of them from the discussion we'd been having. But, I can say that I was pleasantly surprised to find that you seem to have much more depth and breadth in your studies/research to be labeled as a simple "Ayn Rand worshiper" as I'm sure the community has done, and so I've been excited to engage with you.

I think a lot of the bad blood towards objectivism supporters on the philosophy subreddits is not necessarily the presence of criticism that seem to be ignored. Often times in this subreddit people will come in with a reading of Ayn Rand as their only exposure to philosophy. Yet they will believe every word she says and usually have an attitude as if all the problems of philosophy have already been solved. The community has gotten tired of trying to engage with these people as they are often unreceptive and stagnant towards criticism and other ideas (I apologize for whoever as been downvoting you in this discussion we've been having). This leads to both sides dismissing the other which I think is a bad thing and prevents possible learning or at least productive discussion. But as I said, you seem to be at least extremely more read into your areas of interest than this stereotype that I've depicted. Even if I tend to agree with the majority on the philosophy subreddits about criticism towards objectivism and some other ideas, I respect the amount of effort you have obviously put into developing these positions for yourself, and I think these kinds of discussions can always be a good thing. So I'll just move into some thoughts I had about some of the things I've read and you can feel free to (or not to) respond to any areas I bring up.

## BOI:

Upon reading the intro and skimming through a few other sections it is obviously a very well written book. The author has an excellent control of his prose (although it may be a little too "grand" for my tastes). But the book didn't ignite whatever compelling spark in me that it has to you and your community. The language was often awe-inspiring but I wonder if a lot

of it's ideas held up to the promises of the language.

Philosophy: Deutsch obviously has a very strong understanding of Popper and manages to explain his ideas very well. This was enjoyable because often when none-philosophers do philosophy, they either have a poor understanding of the philosophers they engage with or no knowledge and wind up repeating ideas that have already been done way before, missing out on the large body of work already present. His arguments for Popper's ideas are clear and convincing although I'm not sure much convincing needs to be done at this day in age for falsifiability. Unfortunately, what he knows of Popper he seems to be missing in some other key areas of philosophy. When he later goes onto to argue against things like positivism and postmodernism, I don't know if he realizes that these kinds of things have already been critically dismissed by the large part of current academic philosophy. Nevertheless, the arguments provide another mostly-original approach to add to the pile. His whole aesthetics thing felt pretty unnecessary to me especially considering all the literature he is ignoring there, but I didn't hold this issue to be of any critical importance to the book anyway so no big deal.

Dichotomies: He has a few dichotomies which I think would be more wise to re-evaluate as spectrums such as the dynamic vs. static cultures and the rational vs. anti-rational memes. Classifying everything as black or white is hard to do and almost always the incorrect approach.

The other areas I will go into will be much further out of my area of expertise than this so take my comments with a grain of salt. I don't know either how solid these classifications even are in the first place, but again, my reading time was limited.

Multiverse theory: I'm not a physicist. That being said, from what I've been able to gather from most of these theories it seems as if multiverse theories often lack any additional explanatory power over their opponents. And interestingly, these theories seem to be able to be classified as infalsifiable ones according Popper's own ideas which would seem to be a huge contradiction for Deutsch. But again, I'm not a physicist and these criticisms may be handled in this book or elsewhere.

Beginning of Infinity: This proposal too seems to have a degree of infalsifiability around it given that we can't ever really know if there isn't more to progress on. Additionally, for someone against induction, this whole idea of the beginning of infinity came off to be to be something more or less induced out of the patterns he explains in parts of his book. I'm sure I'm missing parts of the author's argument here and I would be interested to see if these criticisms have any merit. Additionally, this kind of idea of infinite progress has been theorized over and over by many different people (see: singularity, although there are many different forms of it) and this just seems to be another, although I will grant that it seems to be a little more creative and rigorous than the ones currently out there.

Good explanations: This whole idea just seems a little broad and already

intuitive. Of course finding good explanations for things allows us to progress in the areas better explained. Progress leaves us better off, that's the definition of progress. So of course we pursue progress/better explanations because we like to be in a better situation over a worse one. Additionally I would be hesitant to list any single cause for the enlightenment, even if that cause happens to be one as broad as "good explanations" although the approach is certainly a novel and interesting one.

Overall Impression: He's a great writer and certainly one capable of inspiring others. He is a strong thinker with the ability to apply many solid ideas in creative ways. But that seemed to be kind of it. His "unifying theory" seems to only sort of connect the major issues he goes into and kind of comes off as rambling sometimes. That said, I loved his optimism for the future and even if I don't agree or believe in all of his ideas, I respect and appreciate that kind of progressive outlook.

### **Fallible Ideas:**

Both space and time are getting a little sort for me here so I may find myself rushing again. I'm unfamiliar with Yahoo groups and so the structure is currently harder for me to navigate and read (one of the reasons why I didn't want to post to the group). But other than that it is an interesting group. I know you yourself seem to have ideas in libertarianism, anarchism, capitalism, atheism, objectivism, Karl Popper's ideas, and possibly some support for futurology (please correct me if I'm wrong, it isn't meant to be offensive). The group seems to be mostly linked to the objectivism and Karl Popper. As you are probably aware, this is not my area of interest but I also don't have anything against it. The one thing I noticed which I hoped was just a mistake on my end was that there seemed to be some favor in shaming others on the group which I found disagreeable. Particularly [here](#) and [here](#)

Although I understand that at least the intent of the former was to promote discussion on that forum, it seemed use some guilt and public shaming as controls to meet that end goal. Hopefully I'm mistaken but discussions like that seem to be in the minority anyway.

Now although my beliefs differ greatly from those on your community I would be happy in the near future to have a discussion some time. I would be open to having a ground up discussion of objectivism especially from a morals/ethics point of view in which I could argue back and forth in a manner like we have been doing here. As long as it remains civil which I'm sure will be the case. If you think your community would have some interest in this shoot me a PM and we can figure out a date or time or something to start it off.

Dang! I ran out of room on my last bit haha! Well it looks like I'll be adding a part 3 to this very shortly. I promise the final part will be very short, and it's already almost finished being written. I'll post it as a third reply to your above comment.

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[\[-\] Dr\\_Kenneth\\_Noisewat](#) 1 point 1 day ago\*

### Part 3:

#### Moving Forward:

Anyway there are a few suggestions/recomendations I would like to make for you if you don't mind. I don't wish for them to come off as insulting and they may not apply to you but they were just some thoughts/questions I had.

**Burden of Proof:** I'm sure you're aware that many of the positions you hold are minority ones in the current philosophical climate. What that will often mean is that you will find yourself making the challenging claim to the current state of affairs. This will usually place the burden of proof upon you. I think this may be another reason the community has been harsh. This means that instead of asking for others for criticisms against your ideas, it will be more effective for you to lead with criticisms of their ideas or with actual proofs to the claims you make. This may help you find a generally better reception here and be seen as someone more open to discussion.

**Studying Philosophy Independently:** I get the sense that much of your philosophical learning has been done on your own/outside the classroom. In one way, this is an extremely admirable thing because of the difficulty. And in another way this difficulty can make it challenging to be correct all the time. There was a post a little while ago that I think does a great job handling this: [here](#)

I'd like to add one additional thing to the sentiments there. It's not just about being around people that have similar interests to you, but also about the people that have different interests to you. A community of all like-thinkers will have a much slower time being exposed to new ideas to progress, and it will have a near impossible chance at accepting any ideas that are so radically different from the ones the community currently has (no matter how correct/rational the new ideas are). That is one of the main reasons I love the philosophy community on reddit because so many different view points can meet and discuss here. The community obviously isn't perfect and niches obviously have their place as well, but I think holistic, inclusive meeting places are the best ones for sharing and debating ideas and one of the best places to learn. If you have the opportunity (if you haven't already) definitely take some university-level philosophy classes, in particular any upper level moral theories class. With good teachers and decent students, these kinds of classes are often full of some of the best group discussions and learning one can find. And it often provides a chance for many to explore the outcomes of a variety of moral systems. Additionally, if you are an objectivist, ethical egoism (which - in my opinion - includes objectivism as well), is usually the first theory discussed in most classes. So you would be able to almost immediately engage in a topic that is very meaningful to you.

Again if these suggestions are off-base I completely apologize and they are



meant in the best way possible. I look forward to whatever parts of the discussion you wish to continue and thanks again for waiting for me to type out this whole mess.

Best!

**[EDIT]:** One last thing I forgot to add but wanted to because it applies to me too! I'm sure you're familiar with this concept but when reading philosophical texts, the favored method is to read it once charitably, meaning trying ones best to think like the author and convince oneself of the ideas presented before moving on. After that, one should read the text critically, looking for flaws in the arguing and trying to disprove the theory with examples and such. This does not mean attacking the weakest arguments or making them to be weaker (straw man) but instead challenging oneself to go after the strongest ideas. I talk about this because it is something most people need help practicing this, myself included. And I think my need for practice showed in what is probably an overly critical and simplified analysis of BOI. I still believe many of those points have merit, but I should have definitely put more work into both understanding and strengthening Deutsch position before making those attacks. Night!

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**[–] curi** 1 point 17 minutes ago\*

I wrote my reply here (it would have taken 7 reddit comments to fit):

<http://curi.us/1722-discussion-childrens-rights-and-much-more>

It's long. You may want to read and reply in chunks. Anytime you see the next section is talking about a different topic is a pretty safe break point.

EDIT: i noticed if check with an incognito chrome window, my previous post in this discussion has been deleted (without telling me, and with an effort to hide it from me when i view reddit normally). if anyone wants a copy, PM me your email address i guess. sigh.....

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**[–] LaoTzusGymShoes** ethics, Eastern phi. 2 points 3 days ago

| An example is that children can't vote. There is little interest in fixing this injustice.

I'm just going to address this one - How is this an "injustice"? At what age should a child have the right to vote?

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**[–] curi** -5 points 2 days ago

voting should not be restricted by age.

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**[–] LaoTzusGymShoes** ethics, Eastern phi. 7 points 2 days ago

Should a baby get to vote?

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**[–] curi** -4 points 2 days ago

if the baby wants to vote and knows how and is able to.

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[\[-\]](#) [LaoTzusGymShoes](#) [ethics, Eastern phi.](#) 8 points 2 days ago

How would you know if this was the case?

Don't you see how obviously problematic this is?

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[\[-\]](#) [curi](#) -3 points 2 days ago

how do i know if you can vote?

if you manage to vote, i guess you could vote.

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[\[-\]](#) [ahhbrendan](#) 6 points 2 days ago

By "manage to vote", do you mean that they have the ability to recognize that in each section, one circle should be filled in? Presumably, someone who has not yet developed language skills could do this. How do you distinguish someone who only understands the mechanics of voting from someone who understands the purpose?

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[\[-\]](#) [atnorman](#) 3 points 1 day ago

How do you distinguish someone who only understands the mechanics of voting from someone who understands the purpose?

Wait, zombies can vote?

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[\[-\]](#) [curi](#) -2 points 1 day ago

maybe it'd help if we let them vote from home on an ipad with pictures of the candidates (in randomized order).

note, if they vote randomly, who cares? it'll just even out.

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[\[-\]](#) [potzdamn](#) 1 point 15 hours ago

It will be fun to see Hillary try to work pacifiers into her new national healthcare bill.

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