



Ethics

Part I

Sophie's Choice



What is “Ethics”?

- ◆ **Usual use:** a code or set of principles by which people live. It is only since Socrates, Plato & Aristotle that ethics has more or less become reduced to a set of rules for living without treading on other people’s toes.
- ◆ **Classical ethical theories:** what is “the good life” for people?
And, how should people act?
- ◆ **Modern ethical theories:** applies analysis to moral theory. The process of clarifying the meaning of questions and answers through “philosophical analysis.”
- ◆ (e.g., what is “brain dead,” improper parenting... abortion.)

What's in the box?

“Innocent” Bystander



WWYD?

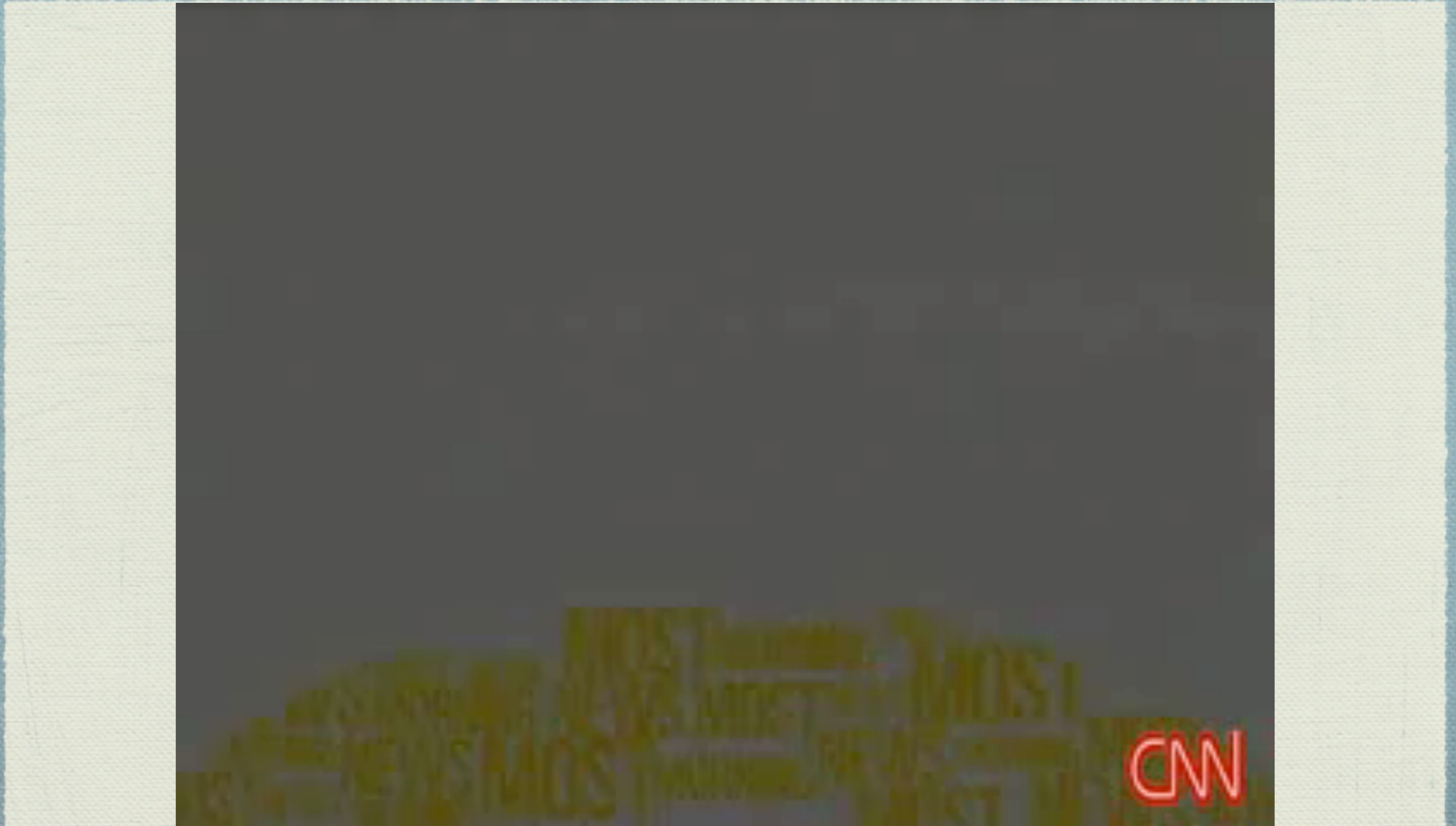
**Spencer
Patterson**

**ABC
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Old Greek Guy 1

- ◆ **Socrates (470-399 BC)**
- ◆ “He who knows what good is will do good”
- ◆ Socrates believed in the existence of “eternal” and “absolute” rules for what was ‘right’ or “wrong.”
- ◆ Socrates believed that the ability to distinguish between “right” and “wrong” lies in people’s reason.
- ◆ By using our “common sense” (reason) we can all arrive at these “immutable norms,” since “human reason” is, in fact, “eternal” and “immutable.”

Oh no Po-Po



Old Greek Guy 2

- ◆ Plato (428-347 BC)
- ◆ “Evil” is due to “a lack of knowledge”
- ◆ If people can discover what is “right,” Plato believes they will never act wickedly.
- ◆ But the problem is to discover what is “right,” or as Plato calls it “the good.” i.e., some people may well understand that stealing is wrong, but they may still persist in stealing.
- ◆ Plato would say that people who steal do not really understand what is meant by “stealing,” since no people willingly will do what they “know” to be “wrong.”

Greek Salad

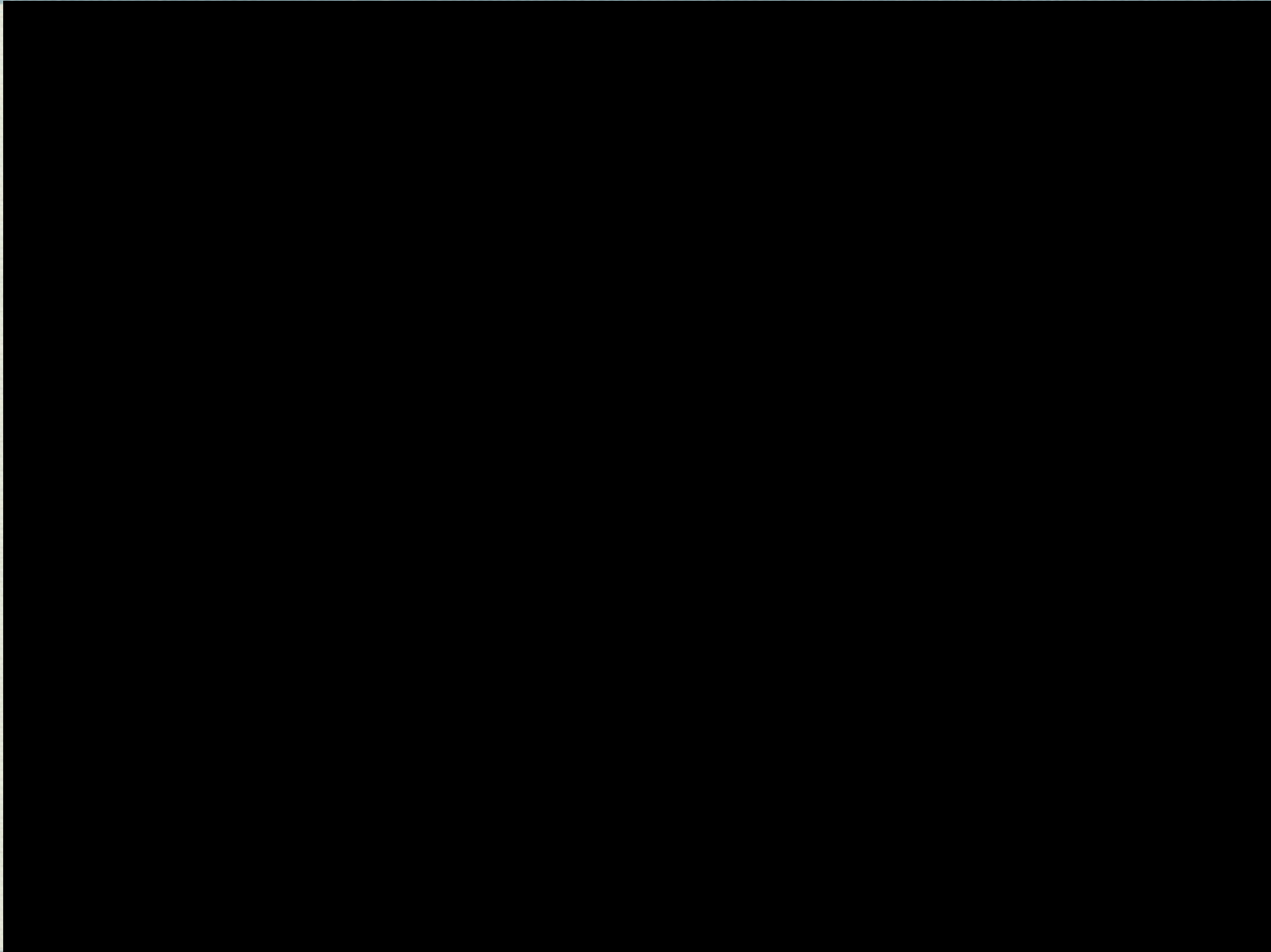
◆ Do you agree with either Plato or Socrates? Why or why not?



Plato's Objective

- ◆ Plato is concerned with both what is “eternal” and “immutable” in nature
- ◆ Therefore, Plato is concerned with what is “eternal” and “immutable” as regards morals and society.
- ◆ To Plato, these two problems were one and the same.
- ◆ Plato argues for the **objectivity** of moral principles as opposed to other philosophers who contend that morality is merely a matter of “opinion” or “preference.”

Welcome to Con Air



Subjectivity of Objectivity

- ◆ • What do you think about a universal set of morals?
- ◆ • Do morals change with different circumstances?
- ◆ • What if I want to protect my family?
- ◆ • What if I have martial arts training?
- ◆ • What if I use a weapon of some kind?

Good God?

- ◆ Plato believed “Goodness” exists independently of mankind and remains to be discovered if “people can be properly trained.”
- ◆ In fact, Plato believed that moral standards were superior even to God; and God is good if, and only if, he acts in accordance with a standard.
- ◆ Without getting too religious (that will come later), does this make sense?

Livin' a Good Life

- ◆ In order to discover what “the good life” is, people must first acquire certain kinds of “knowledge.”
- ◆ Such “knowledge” can be arrived at only if people are carefully schooled in various disciplines, such as mathematics, philosophy, and so on.
- ◆ Only when people have been through the long period of intellectual training that Plato believed suggests will they have the capacity to know the nature of “the good life.”
- ◆ People must be instructed in developing “virtuous habits of behaviour” as well as developing their “mental powers” through the study of such disciplines as mathematics and philosophy.

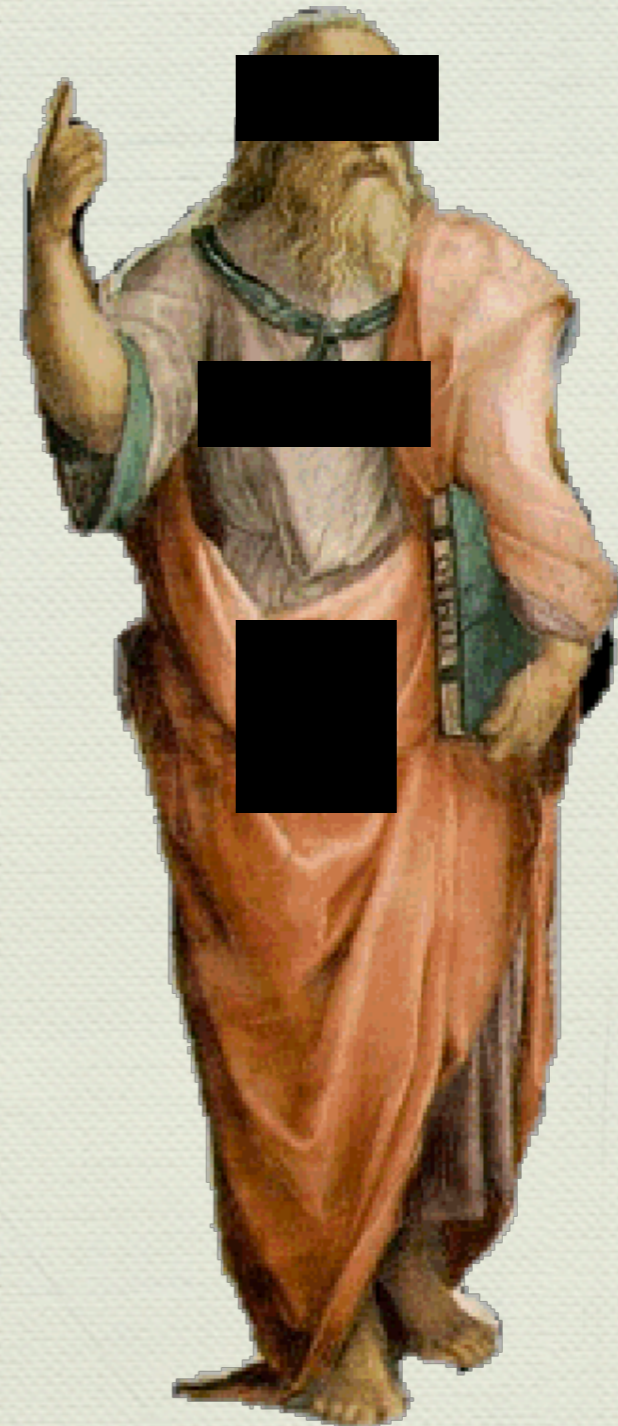
Modern Philosophers

◆ Math and Philosophy
are SO 2500 years ago.
What discipline and
philosophies might a
young person consider
today?



Plato loves to censor himself

- ◆ Plato advocates the necessity of censorship in what he calls an “ideal” society.
- ◆ Plato feels that it is necessary to prevent young people from being exposed to certain sorts of experiences if they are to develop virtuous habits and thus lead a good life.



THE WORST
THING ABOUT
CENSORSHIP
IS .

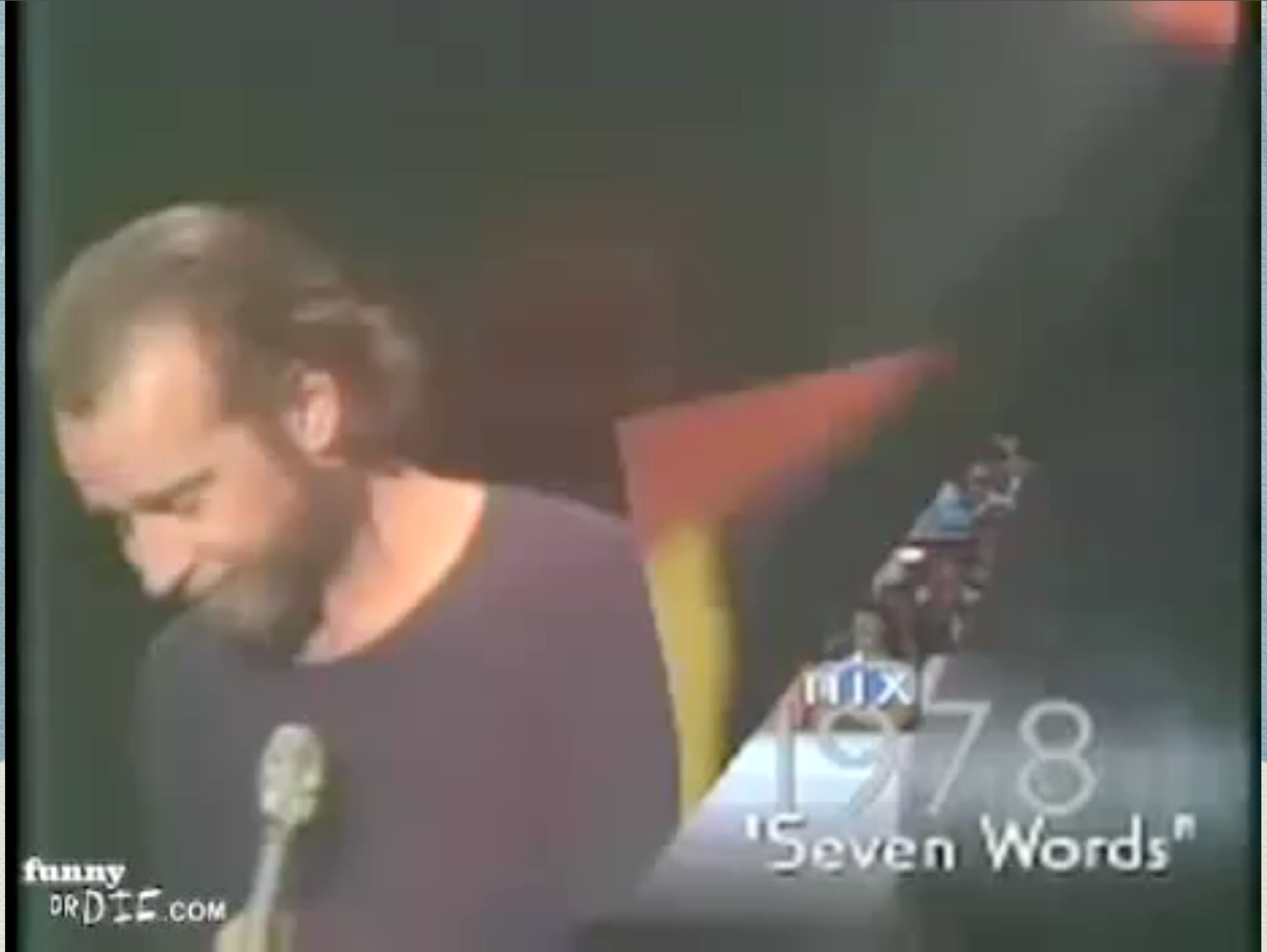
Censorship: For or Against?
Always / Some cases?



The Final Frontier



Dee Schneider



7 Words to Never Say at Dinner



Bill Maher & Dennis Miller



The FCC

The IOC



politicalprisoner@gmail.com

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The Last Old Greek Guy

Aristotle Loves Pharrell

- ◆ Aristotle (384-322 BC)
- ◆ What is the “good life” for man? Aristotle answered, “it is a life of happiness.”
- ◆ Aristotle explained that “happiness is an activity of the soul” in accord with perfect virtue.”
- ◆ Aristotle stresses the fact that happiness is not something static, but that it is an activity.
- ◆ Happiness is not a goal: Rather, it is something that “accompanies” certain activities, instead of being the goal of these activities.

What makes you happy?



When are you
“happy” just
“doing”
something?



Mean means not to be mean

- ◆ Aristotle believed that man can only achieve happiness by using all his “abilities” and “capabilities.”
- ◆ **Sensual:** The first form of happiness is a life of pleasure and enjoyment.
- ◆ **Social:** The second form of happiness is a life as a free and responsible citizen
- ◆ **Intellectual:** The third form of happiness is a life as thinker and philosopher.
- ◆ Aristotle (& Plato) advocated “**the golden mean,**” which contains echoes of Greek medicine: only by exercising “balance” and “temperance” will I achieve a “happy” or “harmonious” life.
- ◆ Like Plato, Aristotle believed young people must receive a sound training in good habits when they are young, so that when they come to understand what “the golden mean” is, they will also have the “self-control” to follow it.

Self-Help for Dummies

- ◆ Do you agree with learning self-control when you're young?
- ◆ What is "happiness"?

