Weekly Writing Examples

Example 1: You agree with the author and add to the author's argument

Leibniz claims that animals have souls, and argues that the distinction between *perception* and *apperception* leads us to accept this conclusion. For Leibniz, perception is the mind's representation of external things, while apperception is reflective knowledge in the mind, or consciousness. I argue that Leibniz' claim that animals have souls is strongly admissible because I don't believe animals need language in order to show a capacity for thinking. I would even go further than Leibniz and say that some animals, though not all, have the capacity for what he calls apperception because they are able to show emotions.

Example 2: You disagree with the author and critique the argument

Nietzsche claims that the normative component of ecumenical morality is naive in demanding that the individual's actions follow one moral code appropriate for all . I argue for a non-Nietzschean view where the normative component for *public* morality is necessary in order for more than the highest type to flourish. Nietzsche is not concerned with a systematized morality for society at large, nor does he care about human excellence for the vast majority. In fact, Nietzsche doesn't think that lower types have the capacity for real flourishing, and this is where his view goes awry.

Example 3: Author criticizes a thesis, you defend that thesis

Charles Mills rails against the Oppression Symmetry Thesis, claiming that it is *obviously* false because some oppressions have 'greater causal significance than others in shaping [...] society's overall dynamic'. I intend to defend the Oppression Symmetry Thesis by highlighting recent events that suggest we cannot order some oppressions as having greater causal significance. If we do so, it would be tantamount to saying that some oppressions are *worse* than others.

Example 4: You evaluate the author's claim by looking at both sides of the argument: agree & disagree

Hume claims that improvements in philosophy are only possible if we reject the hypothetical and inventive discourse of past philosophers, and embrace observation and experience to bear on the study of human nature. My view of Hume's claim is twofold. First, I think that Hume's criticism of philosophy as "popular superstitions" is not unfounded. Writing in the age of heavy influence from the Church, Hume is rejecting infiltration of religious ideals on philosophical discourse. Hume's solution is to look to science as a method in which to avoid the imposition of beliefs in God and the soul, and get to what, he believes, is central to philosophical inquiry—empirical study of human nature. However, my second point denies Hume's solution to rely on the scientific method. I believe that Hume is naive in this solution because science is equally affected by "popular superstitions". What is acceptable in science is often what is socially acceptable, and in a strong sense, science is bound to our social practices.