

Philosophy 3334 Summer 2021
Reading questions #12
Due Fri, Jun 18th

1) Read chapter 7 of Elliott Sober's *Philosophy of Biology*. On page 191, Sober claims that Dawkins definition of a gene for a trait mistakes causation for correlation. In the case of speaking Finnish vs. Korean, it is obvious that the problem here is that the individuals in each group are raised in very different environments. But what if they were raised in the same environment and still, 75% of individuals with a certain allele developed the trait (say speaking Finnish) while only 20% of individuals with the other allele developed the trait. Now would you conclude that this really is a gene for the trait? If not, what else would you need?

2) On page 212, Sober hypothetically presents the following statement:

A) The processes that determine what moral beliefs people have are entirely independent of which moral statements (if any) are true.

If that were true, that would support the claim that most of your moral beliefs were probably not true. So now think -- by what process do you think you have come to most of your moral beliefs? What your parents taught you? By just thinking hard about it? By your selfish genes creating your body and brain and and evolution? Do you think it is possible you are just massively mistaken about what is right and wrong?

3) After reading the chapter, come up with a question that you want answered or a topic that you would like to be discussed. This could be something that the chapters forced you think about or it could be something that you thought was particularly confusing in the chapters.