### 1 – Disclose Please

**Interpretation – Debaters must disclose on the 2021-2022 NDCA LD Wiki their case positions, including AC, NC, DA, CP, K**

**Violation – they don’t. I have screenshots**

**A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated with medium confidence**

**Graphical user interface, text, application, email

Description automatically generated**

**Standards –**

**[1] Resource Disparity – small school debaters don’t have large backfiles or topic prep. Disclosing helps debaters learn about different arguments and articles to read/cut from. That’s key to education.**

**[2] Clash – knowing arguments beforehand allows debaters to introduce more robust arguments, which facilitates meaningful discussions in-round.**

**[3] Intel – before disclosure, big schools dominated since they knew what everyone was reading and they prepped people out. Disclosure equalizes the playing field for small schools by exposing people’s strategies and is key to accessibility since small school debaters now have a chance at winning.**

**Voters –**

**[1] Education – It’s the only terminal impact that we get from debate**

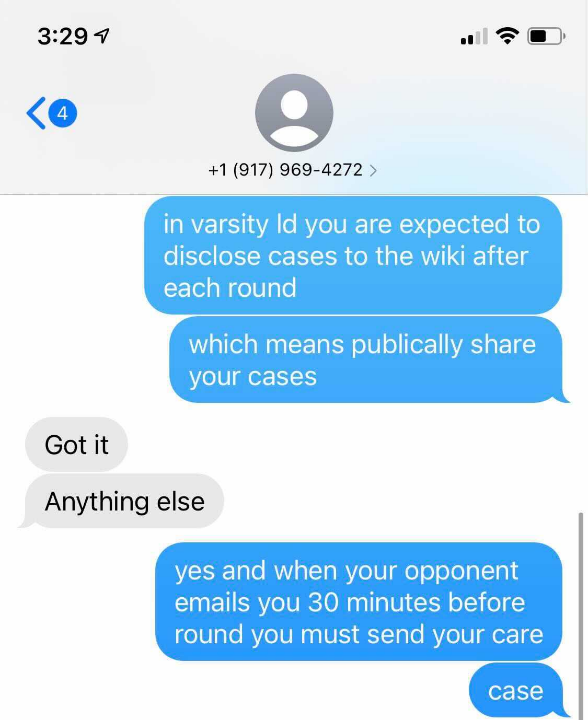
**[2] Accessibility – it’s a prerequisite to every other voter since you can’t get the benefits from debate unless you can access it**

**Drop the Debater – it’s key for norm setting. Empirically proven by the community actively disclosing.**

**Competing Interps – reasonability is too vague and arbitrary**

**Also, they are NOT reasonable – screenshots prove they acknowledged they should disclose but they still don’t**

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**No RVIs –**

**[1] Chilling Effect – no one will run theory if they get hit with pre-empts**

**[2] Logic – you shouldn’t win for being fair**

### 2 – Asteroids CP

#### Counterplan: Property rights for asteroids should be governed by the doctrine of appropriation. Private appropriation of non-asteroid celestial bodies should be prohibited.

#### No link turns -- rules of appropriation solve waste and abstract claims and alternative approaches don’t

Myers 16 -- Ross Myers (J.D. candidate at the University of Oregon Law School.), The Doctrine of Appropriation and Asteroid Mining: Incentivizing the Private Exploration and Development of Outer Space, 2016, Oregon Review of International Law, https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/19850/Meyers.pdf?sequence=1 WJ

Like water during the expansion of the American West, the exploration of space can be financed and incentivized by granting rights in resources to those who secure new resources and put them to beneficial use. Some legal scholars have suggested the traditional rule of capture be applied to asteroids,69 or that rights to asteroids be purchased directly from an international agency and owned as chattel.70 However, like water during America’s westward expansion, asteroids are not easily classified under traditional property regimes. Thus, a doctrine of appropriation would be more appropriate for asteroids than a traditional rule of capture or a chattel system, because a system based on the traditional rule of capture or chattel would result in waste, abstract claims, and complicated legal issues.

First, asteroid claims cannot be adjudicated under the traditional rule of capture, or as chattel, because such systems would be incredibly wasteful. As of now, scientists have observed approximately 450,000 asteroids in our solar system.71

But only a fraction of the observable bodies will be cost effective to mine. While it might one day be possible for a single entity to finance several mining missions at once, current costs associated with such a venture would limit almost any space-mining program to one or two asteroids, at least initially.72 The traditional rule of capture could allow an entity to quickly claim multiple asteroids merely by landing on them and planting a flag, without requiring the entity to show it can reasonably use the resources they have claimed.

Even worse would be a system where the same corporation could claim asteroids simply by discovering their existence and registering the claim. Allowing this type of unregulated claim would incentivize larger corporations capable of space travel to quickly claim reachable asteroids, but the claims could easily outpace those entities’ realistic expectations on what they could use. Under a traditional rule of capture system, the solar system could be divvied up long before the resources could conceivably be mined. A rule similar to the doctrine of appropriation used for water claims in the United States would alleviate this concern by limiting claims to those where a claimant can show a reasonable beneficial use for the resource.

Another concern posed by the traditional rule of capture or chattel system would be the creation of abstract claims. Some legal scholars have advocated for a system where asteroids would be categorized as chattel, and rights in asteroids would be granted to an entity that could identify an asteroid and register ownership of it with an international agency.73 The advantage of such a system would be that it would allow an international agency to keep track of asteroids, and it would allow for the mapping of the reachable solar system. The problem with this approach, however, is that it would result in abstract claims. If an entity could claim the rights to an asteroid without actual possession, there is nothing to prevent that company from claiming ownership long in advance of any real possibility of landing on it. One of the reasons for creating the doctrine of appropriation was to limit abstract claims over resources that were not being used in any reasonable way. Just as the plaintiffs in Hague had no recourse against the third party who wasted the natural gas reserve, there would be no cause of action against an entity that has the rights to an asteroid, but chooses not to exercise them.74 This may be particularly harmful to society because asteroids contain volatiles that may be essential to creating rocket fuel in space, which, in turn, may be crucial to deep space exploration.

Using asteroid-bound volatiles to make rocket fuel would reduce the cost and increase the range of space exploratory missions, possibly improving the human race’s ability to explore and develop space. Under a system were entities could claim asteroids without actual possession, those entities could exclude others from landing on the asteroids and using such resources, even when such resources are languishing unused in space. To prevent the creation of such abstract claims over asteroids, the doctrine of appropriation could be modified as to only grant rights only to entities who are able to demonstrate both actual possession and beneficial use. This would ensure that asteroids claims are limited to those where the resources are actually being used, thus, maximizing the utility of such celestial bodies to society.

Finally, asteroids cannot be adjudicated under the traditional rule of capture or a chattel system because their unique propensity to collide with other celestial bodies would result in vexing legal issues. Pop culture has popularized the notion of an asteroid crashing into the surface of Earth in movies and books, but interspace collisions may be a real concern. Asteroids are constantly moving through space, and they often crash into other asteroids or space debris, and sometimes onto the surface of planets. So real is the concern that space agencies regularly keep track of NEOs, or Near Earth Objects, which include around 10,000 asteroids large enough to be tracked in space.75 Imagine the scenario in the popular movie Armageddon, where society wrestles with the mechanics of destroying a huge asteroid that is headed straight for Earth.76 It would be strange, indeed, if the situation were further complicated by an entity owning the asteroid. Would the Earth have to compensate the company for the loss of resources, or would the company be forced to assume liability for the damage caused by the collision? What if the asteroid, rather than crashing into Earth, crashed instead into another asteroid owned by different entity? It makes sense that a company with actual possession of an asteroid should have a claim for actual mining equipment destroyed, but it seems unreasonable to treat the entire rock as the entity’s chattel. By limiting asteroid claims under a doctrine of appropriation-like system, society will be saved the headache of attempting to adjudicate such absurd situations.

Because the traditional rule of capture or a chattel system for the ownership of asteroids would result in waste, abstract claims, and absurd legal dilemmas, a modified doctrine of appropriation should replace existing outdated international space law relating to asteroids.’

### 3 – Asteroid Mining Good DA

#### Asteroid mining is an unqualified good – it’s essential to advanced asteroid deflection, deep space travel, and fighting climate change

Heise 18 -- Jack Heise (Judicial Law Clerk at U.S. Courts of Appeals), Space, the Final Frontier of Enterprise: Incentivizing Asteroid Mining Under a Revised International Framework, 40 Mich. J. Int'l L. 189 (2018). https://repository.law.umich.edu/mjil/vol40/iss1/5 WJ

Asteroid mining has the potential to facilitate space travel, an outcome the OST holds to be in the interest of humanity as a whole.39 The potential of asteroid mining to reduce the cost of spaceflight, moreover, could facilitate the growth of the space economy. Asteroid mining thus aligns with another stated purposes of the OST in the sense that an expanded space econ- omy could provide substantial benefits to all mankind.40 First, in seeking to face the challenges posed by space travel, the public sector space race gave rise to numerous technological innovations, ranging from LEDs to emergency blankets to memory foam.41 It seems likely that the private space race would result in a similar degree of innovation, the products of which could benefit people across the globe.

Second, a successful mission to Mars could provide benefits beyond a mere sense of interplanetary accomplishment. NASA suggests that, given the parallels between the formation and evolution of Mars and Earth, a voyage there could help “us learn more about our own planet’s history and future.”42 The scientific advancements from such a mission cannot currently be anticipated and are difficult to predict, but “expand[ing] the frontiers of knowledge” in this manner could well bring benefits to all mankind.43

Third, the development of asteroid mining technology could also help advance asteroid diversion tactics. The development of the technology required to conduct successful asteroid mining operations could “help us to divert any incoming asteroids.”44 This is of great importance since NASA recently eliminated its Asteroid Redirect Mission due to funding cuts;45 NASA’s project was hailed by some scientists as a “critical step in demonstrating we can protect our planet from a future asteroid impact . . . .”46 Asteroid mining could step in and fill an important void. While the probability of an Armageddon-causing impact is low, the effects of an impact would be extremely severe.47 Even some mitigation of this risk as a byproduct of as- teroid mining would be a benefit to humanity as a whole.

Finally, reduced launch costs could facilitate measures to combat global climate change. One proposed solution for canceling out predicted increases in average worldwide temperature is to “prevent[] . . . about 1% of incoming solar radiation—insolation—from reaching the Earth. This could be done by scattering into space from the vicinity of Earth an appropriately small frac- tion of total insolation.”48 Asteroid mining could facilitate such measures in that “[t]echnologies that could greatly decrease the cost of space-launch could make a telling difference in the practicality of all types of space- deployed scattering systems of scales appropriate to insolation modulation.”49 There are certainly intermediate measures to combat climate change that ought to be taken first, but asteroid mining would facilitate this expedited solution. While some of the benefits of asteroid mining would doubtless accrue primarily to those nations with asteroid mining companies within their borders, the benefits noted in this section—space exploration as a gen- eral proposition, technological and scientific development, improvement of asteroid diversion technology, and facilitated means of swiftly countering climate change—would inure substantially to the benefit of all mankind.

#### Asteroids have no significance beyond their finite resources – property rights for asteroids are necessary for deep space travel and rare metals

Myers 16 -- Ross Myers (J.D. candidate at the University of Oregon Law School.), The Doctrine of Appropriation and Asteroid Mining: Incentivizing the Private Exploration and Development of Outer Space, 2016, Oregon Review of International Law, https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/19850/Meyers.pdf?sequence=1 WJ

Asteroids are “metallic, rocky bodies without atmospheres that orbit the sun and are too small to be classified as planets.”33 Like water, asteroids are limited resources that are unconnected to any form of real property. Asteroids vary greatly in size, and are believed to consist primarily of metals and water, sometimes in staggering quantities.34 As such, asteroids may contain significant resources that would help serve to incentivize and facilitate the exploration of space.

Asteroids can be divided into classes, the three most commercially relevant being C-type, M-type, and S-type.35 C-type asteroids (carbonaceous) are the most common variety, and approximately half of the near Earth asteroids that are at least 1km large are C-type asteroids.36 These asteroids have a high content of water, hydrogen, and methane, all of which could potentially be mined to create rocket fuel on-site.37 Rocket fuel storage provides a limit on how far space vessels can be sent into deep space, so the creation of rocket fuel on asteroids would allow missions to probe deeper into space without having to bring enough fuel for a return trip. This could reduce the cost and difficulty of such endeavors significantly, allowing for more efficient exploration and development of deep space.

M-type asteroids (metallic) have the high radar reflectivity characteristic of metals,38 and are probably the most economically attractive targets for mining missions because of the commercial value of the metals in an Earth market. S-type asteroids (stony) are rocky mixtures of silicates, sulphides, and metals,39 but the metals they contain may not be as valuable as those found in M-type asteroids, so they will probably not be the target of initial space mining missions.

Recent scientific reports have suggested a single asteroid may contain staggering quantities of rare metals.40 One report estimated that a moderately sized (1 km) M-type asteroid with a fair enrichment in platinum group metals may contain twice the tonnage of platinum group metals already harvested on Earth combined with economically viable platinum group metal resources still in the ground.41 Put simply, it is believed a single asteroid could contain more platinum than has ever been mined or ever will be mined on Earth. While the economic gain from a mining mission on such an asteroid would be offset by the huge initial cost of reaching the asteroid and capturing the metals, this figure suggests mining missions to asteroids could be extremely profitable. Planetary Resources, a fledgling asteroid mining company, has already targeted a metallic asteroid for a possible future mining mission.42 According to Planetary Resources, this single asteroid may contain more platinum than has ever been mined on Earth.43

Scientific reports have also suggested asteroids may contain large quantities of volatiles, such as hydrogen and methane, which could potentially be broken down and used to synthesize rocket fuel and transport spacecraft between space environments.44 Several companies are already researching how to successfully mine the metals contained in asteroids by using frozen water contained in the asteroid to produce rocket fuel for a return journey.45

Asteroids are similar to water in many respects: both have economic and practical importance and limited availability; both exist as floating objects unconnected to land; and both are practically and commercially important to society and many different industries both in the context of space travel, and in the context of natural resource acquisition. However, unlike water, under the current international treaties regarding space, claims by either private or government entities on celestial objects are prohibited.46

#### Prohibitions on appropriation prevent asteroid mining despite growing space industries

Myers 16 -- Ross Myers (J.D. candidate at the University of Oregon Law School.), The Doctrine of Appropriation and Asteroid Mining: Incentivizing the Private Exploration and Development of Outer Space, 2016, Oregon Review of International Law, https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/19850/Meyers.pdf?sequence=1 WJ

Despite a decrease in national space program funding, corporate space missions are on the rise. In 2010, President Obama proposed that NASA exit the business of flying astronauts from Earth to low Earth orbit and move it to private companies.52 Several companies have stepped up to bat, and corporate space programs now include space tourism, supply missions, and in one case a one-way colonization mission to Mars.53 Corporate interest in space tourism and development demonstrates a strong private commercial interest in space as an industry, which could serve to finance the exploration of space in a period where national governments do not have an active financial interest in space. However, under current international treaties, the ownership of asteroids is prohibited, preventing corporations willing to invest in asteroid mining from having a secure claim.

#### NEOs can and will kill us all – ignore defense that confuses uncertainty with improbability – uncertainty in assessments means you should assign it a higher risk

Boslough 19 -- Mark Boslough (University of New Mexico), “Chapter 13 Uncertainty and Risk at the Catastrophe Threshold”, 2019, Planetary Defense, Space and Society, https://dl1.cuni.cz/pluginfile.php/634091/mod\_resource/content/1/Planetary%20Defence.pdf

The planetary defense community came to a similar conclusion. The NEO population is analogous the numbers of rounds in the revolvers of our pretend laboratory experiment. But the expected consequences of an impact depend on the size of the asteroid. The largest asteroids have the greatest effect—including the possibility of extinction—but the quantification of consequence is also very uncertain. We simply do not know how big an asteroid must be to cause an ecological collapse, to destroy agricultural production and end civilization, or to wipe out the human race. This calculation is not possible because we do not understand all the damage mechanisms associated with an Earth system that is complex and nonlinear. The asteroid that erased the dinosaurs altered the Earth forever, first by direct impact effects—the generation of an enormous crater and expulsion of ejecta. About 100 million megatons of energy was released in a massive explosion that changed the atmosphere, heating it up by an unknown amount. The air became opaque with dust and debris, leading to an impact winter that lasted years. The composition and radiative properties of the atmosphere were forever altered, and the climate changed. The precise mechanism for the resulting mass extinction is still debated and is unlikely to ever be completely understood. Fortunately, impacts by 10-km asteroids occur only once every 100 million years or so. The current risk is zero, because a 10-km asteroid on a collision course would be large enough to have been discovered already. The same cannot be said for long-period comets, however, the frequency of large comets entering the inner Solar System is low. A 5-km asteroid almost certainly exceeds the global catastrophe threshold, but at half the diameter of the dinosaur killer. An asteroid’s mass governs its impact energy and damage potential, so mass is a better measure of “size” for purposes of consequence estimates. A 5-km asteroid is therefore really only an eighth as big as the dinosaur killer, and its impact would deliver about one-eighth the destructive energy (for a given impact velocity). But there are more of the smaller ones, so the Earth is exposed to more frequent impacts from them (once about every 30 million years). The Earth doesn’t experience mass extinctions with that high of a frequency, so it is unlikely that 5-km asteroids exceed the extinction threshold, at least not every time they hit. But if one were to hit the Earth today, the energy released (roughly 10 million megatons) and the amount of debris produced would lead to certain global catastrophe, killing billions of people. The population of asteroids continues to increase as the size (and consequences) go down. Like the “bullets-in-guns” thought experiment, space is a shooting gallery where most of the shots are relatively harmless, but rare ones are catastrophic. There are sound arguments based on physics and backed by evidence in the geological record that more frequent and smaller impacts can have local, regional, or even continental-scale consequences without causing a major climate disruption or global catastrophe. That suggests the existence of an unknown size threshold for global catastrophe. There is no reason to think that such a threshold even corresponds to a definite size. An impact into one spot might release a large quantity of planet-warming greenhouse gases or cause soot-producing firestorms, resulting in an impact winter. On the other hand, if it landed in a deep ocean basin, there might be little if any global consequences. The threshold for catastrophe is therefore fuzzy in addition to being uncertain. 13.6 Avoiding Catastrophe by Situational Awareness Chapman and Morrison (1994) published the first comprehensive probabilistic risk assessment for asteroids and comets. They used observations of the effects of nuclear weapons along with physics-based scaling laws to estimate the direct damage caused by an impact of a given size. However, such scaling laws only work well for impacts that are too small to cause indirect global environmental effects such as climate change. They argued that above some threshold size (which they estimated to be around 1.5 km in diameter, with large uncertainty) a comet or asteroid impact would create a global catastrophe that would kill at least a quarter of the world’s population, increasing all the way up to extinction for the largest impacts. They spliced the nuclear weapons-based estimates together with the global catastrophe estimates to create a single, but crude “kill curve” that related the number of deaths to the size of an impacting body. In our Russian Roulette illustration, our three different guns were loaded with three different integer numbers of live rounds (since bullets exist as discrete units). This is a discrete math problem with three different possible consequences, each with its own probability. For the planetary defense risk assessment, the size of the comet or asteroid is a continuous parameter, so the sum becomes an integral. We can solve it by integrating the kill curve (as a function of size) times the probability of an impact of that size, over all possible sizes. In practice, this is done by dividing the curves up into discrete size bins. One can construct a table consisting of the number of expected impacts within some size range in a specified interval of time, and the number of resulting fatalities (averaged over all possible scenarios). According to Chapman and Morrison (1994), the expected long-term number of impact fatalities per year is 3000 if the threshold asteroid diameter for a globally catastrophic impact is 1.5 km (for further discussion of the threshold for global impact effects, see (Toon et al. 1997)). If our ability to simulate the consequences of an impact were perfect, we could improve on these estimates by running a statistically significant number of computer experiments and determining how many people would be killed, on average, from an impact of a given size. We could simulate random impacts in numbers proportional to the size distribution of the asteroid population, add up the numbers of fatalities, and divide by the number of impacts to generate a better kill curve. Unfortunately, our ability to simulate impact consequences is still far from perfect. The estimates for ocean impacts are particularly uncertain because the efficiency of impact tsunami generation is not well understood. The severity of climate-changing global catastrophes from asteroid impacts are even more uncertain because climate is a nonlinear dynamic system with unknown thresholds and feedbacks. With increased uncertainty comes greater assessed risk. Most of the uncertainty is associated with impact consequences and the “kill curve”. Complex geophysical simulations will never be perfect, therefore decisions will always need to be made in the face of this uncertainty. Nevertheless, such calculations are the best way to ensure that such decisions are objective. The estimated risk of a few thousand fatalities per year is counterintuitive, because there are no examples of unambiguous, confirmed asteroid fatalities. It depends on low-probability, high consequence events—something that only happens every million years or so but could kill hundred million people. The odds of such an event taking place in a given year are only about one in a million, but it would contribute 100 fatalities per year to the total. The expected number of fatalities per year is zero, but the long-term average is much greater. This is not the only possible way to quantify risk, and may not even be the best, yet it has become the de facto metric for the impact risk assessments, for intercomparison of contributing factors, and for performing sensitivity studies in support of cost/benefit analyses for various risk-reduction strategies. As an example, the Chapman and Morrison (1994) analysis led to an obvious policy recommendation: catastrophe avoidance. This is analogous to removing the single live round from the gun that is pointed at your head in the Russian Roulette example. The optimal risk reduction method is to prevent large impacts. The first step toward avoidance of catastrophic impact is to find all the asteroids in Earthcrossing orbits that are above the global catastrophe threshold. This recommendation led to the establishment of a survey program and the 1998 NASA directive to discover 90% of NEOs greater than 1 km in diameter. This was also the easiest solution, because there are only about 1,000 NEOs of that size. Since they are also the biggest and brightest in the sky, they were the easiest to find. The survey was a success and led to a large reduction in assessed risk. Using astronomical NEO surveys to eliminate catastrophic risk is based on the same philosophy as looking both ways before crossing the street. The survey is an act of situational awareness that doesn’t by itself change the probability of impact. An object in a deterministic orbit will either collide with the Earth on some specified time interval or it won’t. Its intrinsic impact probability is either zero or one. The situational awareness provided by looking creates the opportunity to take preventive action to mitigate the risk if something is discovered to be on a collision course. A pedestrian can change his or her own course by waiting until a potentially hazardous vehicle passes. For planetary defense, the preventive option of choice is asteroid deflection. But without a survey to discover the threat, that option is not available.

#### All moral framework agree that extinction is the highest impact

**Pummer 15** [Theron, Junior Research Fellow in Philosophy at St. Anne's College, University of Oxford. “Moral Agreement on Saving the World” Practical Ethics, University of Oxford. May 18, 2015] AT

**There appears to be lot of disagreement in moral philosophy. Whether these many apparent disagreements are deep and irresolvable, I believe there is at least one thing it is reasonable to agree on right now**, whatever general moral view we adopt**: that it is very important to reduce the risk that all intelligent beings on this planet are eliminated by an enormous catastrophe, such as a nuclear war.** How we might in fact try to reduce such existential risks is discussed elsewhere. My claim here is only that **we – whether we’re consequentialists, deontologists, or virtue ethicists – should all agree that we should try to save the world.** According to consequentialism, we should maximize the good, where this is taken to be the goodness, from an impartial perspective, of outcomes. **Clearly one thing that makes an outcome good is that the people in it are doing well. There is little disagreement here.** If the happiness or well-being of possible future people is just as important as that of people who already exist, and if they would have good lives, it is not hard to see how **reducing existential risk is easily the most important thing in the whole world. This is for the familiar reason that there are so many people who could exist in the future – there are trillions upon trillions… upon trillions. There are so many possible future people that reducing existential risk is arguably the most important thing in the world, even if the well-being of these possible people were given only 0.001% as much weight as that of existing people.** Even on a wholly person-affecting view – according to which there’s nothing (apart from effects on existing people) to be said in favor of creating happy people – the case for reducing existential risk is very strong. As noted in this seminal paper, **this case is strengthened by the fact that there’s a good chance that many existing people will, with the aid of life-extension technology, live very long and very high quality lives. You might think what I have just argued applies to consequentialists only. There is a tendency to assume that, if an argument appeals to consequentialist considerations (the goodness of outcomes), it is irrelevant to non-consequentialists. But that is a huge mistake.** **Non-consequentialism is the view that there’s more that determines rightness than the goodness of consequences or outcomes; it is not the view that the latter don’t matter.** Even John Rawls wrote, “**All ethical doctrines worth our attention take consequences into account in judging rightness. One which did not would simply be irrational, crazy.**” **Minimally plausible versions of deontology and virtue ethics must be concerned in part with promoting the good, from an impartial point of view.** **They’d thus imply very strong reasons to reduce existential risk**, at least when this doesn’t significantly involve doing harm to others or damaging one’s character. What’s even more surprising, perhaps, is that even if our own good (or that of those near and dear to us) has much greater weight than goodness from the impartial “point of view of the universe,” indeed even if the latter is entirely morally irrelevant, we may nonetheless have very strong reasons to reduce existential risk. **Even egoism, the view that each agent should maximize her own good, might imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk.** It will depend, among other things, on what one’s own good consists in. If well-being consisted in pleasure only, it is somewhat harder to argue that egoism would imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk – perhaps we could argue that one would maximize her expected hedonic well-being by funding life extension technology or by having herself cryogenically frozen at the time of her bodily death as well as giving money to reduce existential risk (so that there is a world for her to live in!). I am not sure, however, how strong the reasons to do this would be. But views which imply that, if I don’t care about other people, I have no or very little reason to help them are not even minimally plausible views (in addition to hedonistic egoism, I here have in mind views that imply that one has no reason to perform an act unless one actually desires to do that act). **To be minimally plausible, egoism will need to be paired with a more sophisticated account of well-being.** To see this, it is enough to consider, as Plato did, the possibility of a ring of invisibility – **suppose that, while wearing it, Ayn could derive some pleasure by helping the poor, but instead could derive just a bit more by severely harming them. Hedonistic egoism would absurdly imply she should do the latter. To avoid this implication, egoists would need to build something like the meaningfulness of a life into well-being**, in some robust way, where this would to a significant extent be a function of other-regarding concerns (see chapter 12 of this classic intro to ethics). But **once these elements are included, we can (roughly, as above) argue that this sort of egoism will imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk.** Add to all of this Samuel Scheffler’s recent intriguing arguments (quick podcast version available here) that most of what makes our lives go well would be undermined if there were no future generations of intelligent persons. On his view, my life would contain vastly less well-being if (say) a year after my death the world came to an end. So obviously if Scheffler were right I’d have very strong reason to reduce existential risk. **We should also take into account moral uncertainty.** **What is it reasonable for one to do, when one is uncertain not (only) about the empirical facts, but also about the moral facts?** I’ve just argued that **there’s agreement among minimally plausible ethical views that we have strong reason to reduce existential risk – not only consequentialists, but also deontologists, virtue ethicists, and sophisticated egoists should agree.** But **even those (hedonistic egoists) who disagree should have a significant level of confidence that they are mistaken, and that one of the above views is correct. Even if they were 90% sure that their view is the correct one** (and 10% sure that one of these other ones is correct), **they would have pretty strong reason, from the standpoint of moral uncertainty, to reduce existential risk.** Perhaps most disturbingly still, **even if we are only 1% sure that the well-being of possible future people matters, it is at least arguable that, from the standpoint of moral uncertainty, reducing existential risk is the most important thing in the world.** Again, this is largely for the reason that there are so many people who could exist in the future – there are trillions upon trillions… upon trillions. (For more on this and other related issues, see this excellent dissertation). Of course, it is uncertain whether these untold trillions would, in general, have good lives. It’s possible they’ll be miserable. **It is enough for my claim that there is moral agreement in the relevant sense if**, at least given certain empirical claims about what future lives would most likely be like, **all minimally plausible moral views would converge on the conclusion that we should try to save the world.** While there are some non-crazy **views that place significantly greater moral weight on avoiding suffering than on promoting happiness**, for reasons others have offered (and for independent reasons I won’t get into here unless requested to), they nonetheless **seem to be fairly implausible views.** And **even if things did not go well for our ancestors, I am optimistic that they will overall go fantastically well for our descendants, if we allow them to. I suspect that most of us alive today – at least those of us not suffering from extreme illness or poverty – have lives that are well worth living, and that things will continue to improve.** Derek Parfit, whose work has emphasized future generations as well as agreement in ethics, described our situation clearly and accurately: “We live during the hinge of history. **Given the scientific and technological discoveries of the last two centuries, the world has never changed as fast.** We shall soon have even greater powers to transform, not only our surroundings, but ourselves and our successors. **If we act wisely in the next few centuries, humanity will survive its most dangerous and decisive period.** Our descendants could, if necessary, go elsewhere, spreading through this galaxy…. **Our descendants might, I believe, make the further future very good. But that good future may also depend in part on us. If our selfish recklessness ends human history, we would be acting very wrongly.**” (From chapter 36 of On What Matters)

### Case