

Paper #2

Phil 3024: Existentialism

T. Parent

What is gender? Haslanger's view features an account that is not so much *descriptive* as *prescriptive* of what terms like 'man' and 'woman' should mean. Please write a paper critically examining her account. In this process, I would like you to address three tasks in the following order:

- (1) Reconstruct *thoroughly and in detail* Haslanger's account, including (what she calls) her "analytical" approach to the question 'What is gender?' Rest assured, there isn't clearly *one* correct reconstruction of Haslanger's account, but it is also clear that some reconstructions would be better than others (for example: some would be more consistent with her text than others, some would be more charitable than others, etc.)
- (2) After you have given the *most charitable reconstruction* of the account you can, please raise the *strongest objection* you can think of to Haslanger. Explain this objection *thoroughly and in detail*.
- (3) Then, explain *thoroughly and in detail* whether you think the objection you have raised is successful or not.
 - a. If you think the objection is successful, *defend it* from the strongest rejoinder that Haslanger could make. Or,
 - b. If you think the objection is unsuccessful, explain exactly how the objection goes wrong.

Did I mention that you should explain your points *thoroughly and in detail*???

As before, the last portion of your paper is the *most important part* of your paper. So I would expect it to be longer than just one or two paragraphs... Remember your paper isn't just a "book report" on what Haslanger says, but rather, an explanation of her argument *for the purpose of critically evaluating it*. Accordingly, you are not being graded on whether you agree or not with Haslanger, but on the quality of your arguments in evaluating the issue. As a guide to argument quality, please refer again to the list of argument fallacies posted on the course website, as well as to the handout "advice on writing."

The paper should be a maximum of 5 pages, double-spaced with 1" margins, using a standard font like 12 pt. Times New Roman. Also, do not add extra space between paragraphs. (One extra paragraph-break is ok before a new section, but otherwise nix it.)

This assignment is due at classtime on **Nov. 14**. Please turn in both a hard copy in class (labeled only with your Hokie ID#), and an electronic version as an email attachment. As before, clear writing is essential, argument fallacies are to be avoided, and the use of secondary sources is discouraged.