Reflection Prompts for Week 9

Monday’s Reading

Read Quine’s ‘Epistemology Naturalized’ in Pojman and reflect on the following:

• According to Quine, now that the postivist’s dream of providing an external, sure foundation for the sciences must be abandoned, we must settle for “epistemology naturalized”. What does he mean by naturalized epistemology? And how does he respond to the worry that any justification for our scientific beliefs will be circular? [Hint: read pp. 299-230 and especially Neurath’s parable of the mariner who must keep his boat afloat]

Wednesday’s Reading

Read Sartre’s ‘Existentialism and Humanism’ in Pojman and reflect on the following:

• According to Sartre, what do all existentialists “have in common”? Why is atheistic existentialism “more coherent”? That is, what are some of the “distressing” implications that the existentialist draws from the claim the God does not exist? Having read Sartre’s account of existentialism, attempt to explain why Kierkegaard is considered a precursor of 20th century existentialism

Friday’s Reading

Read Sartre’s ‘Bad Faith’ in Pojman and reflect on the following:

• What is consciousness? What is bad faith? What is sincerity and is it possible?

• Briefly describe Sartre’s example of the exchange between the homosexual and his friend/critic and explain how both exhibit patterns of bad faith. How could the homosexual give a good faith response to his critic? (pp. 505-506)