Thesis 1

When we understand being human as an evolutionary process, then we can say that being human is being consciously open to a creative and/or destructive future.

For those students in class who do not accept evolution, we can rephrase the thesis as:

“Reflecting upon the fact that the last 200 to 300 years of human history have given rise to profound changes in science, technology, and government and even much more propound sharing of and learning from different cultures, then we can say that our humanity needs to be consciously aware of all these changes and to guide them today towards a creative future.”

Consider the contrast amongst species:

Arachnids: More Instinct Less Openness to a New Future

Chimpanzees: Less Instinct More Openness to a New Future

Humans: Least Instinct Most Openness Potentially to New

We are able to imagine an open future more than any other species and

can say “No” to the past and present as it has been and as it is.

We can look at the past and present and ask “Why?” “Why did this ‘X’ happen and not something else, ‘Y.’ So, we are able to imagine that something else, ‘Y,’ could have happened and ask why did X happen and not Y. So, our ability to say ‘No’ depends upon our ability to be free from the past and free for a new future.

and “Yes” to what could be and, indeed what should be.

We can look at the future and ask “Why not?” We can imagine a new future and say ‘Yes’ to an open future.

You see things; and you say, 'Why?' But I dream things that never were; and I say, "Why not?"   
George Bernard Shaw (1856 - 1950), "Back to Methuselah" (1921), part 1, act 1

* **There are those that look at things the way they are, and ask *why?* I dream of things that never were, and ask *why not?***
  + Variant: "Some people see things as they are and say *why?* I dream things that never were and say *why not?*"
  + Though Kennedy stated that he was quoting [George Bernard Shaw](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/George_Bernard_Shaw) when he said this, he is often thought to have originated the expression, which actually paraphrases that of Shaw in his play *Back To Methuselah* : **“You see things; and you say, ‘Why?’ But I dream things that never were; and I say, “Why not?".**

Two Essential Questions in Rationality: Why and Why Not.

Why?

The Greek Philosophers developed the four causes, the four why’s.

They had a limited sense of what those four causes could be:

Material cause: Only four basic elements: earth, air, fire, water

Formal cause: Only four basic forms: inanimate things like rocks and only three forms of animated things, vegetables, brute animals, and rational animals.

Efficient cause: Only limited number of tools such as: [Lever](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lever), [Wheel and Axle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wheel_and_axle), [Pulley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pulley), [Inclined plane](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inclined_plane), [Wedge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wedge_(mechanical_device)), and [Screw](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screw_(simple_machine))

Final Cause: Only limited number of fixated goals or ends built into all beings through their formal cause. For example,

Formal Cause of Living Being: Grow, Mature, Reproduce

Formal Cause of Animals: Grow, Sense, Desire, Move, Mature, Reproduce

Formal Cause of Rational Animals: Grow, Sense, Desire, Move, Mature, Reproduce, and Know the Truth, and Live in Accord with the Truth by Just and Loving Actions (Aristotle—Know the Truth of God)

Why Not?

The Contemporary Scientists and Philosophers have developed a new sense of the four causes, the four why’s.

They have an open and potentially unlimited sense of what those four causes could be:

Material cause: More than just the table of elements discovered by humans, but we have created new elements such as:

Einsteinium.

Formal cause: The species are not fixated, but new species have developed, and scientists can develop new species.

Interesting example: Invention of American Democracy in a Republic covering a large and diverse number of states. It had never been done before.

Another example, Madison College becoming James Madison University.

Efficient cause: New tools can be developed such as:

Genetic splicing and computer analysis of these spliced fragments in order to decode the human genome.

Development of atomic powered submarines and electricity

Final Cause: A potentially unlimited set of goals can be designed into living beings that never existed before.

For example, full acceptance of the humanity of all others was not present in the origins of American democracy, but it is an ideal that guides us now.

Thesis 1: We can now understand being human as being open to a creative and/or destructive future in which the four essential causes are never fully defined but are always open to new developments which may be creative and/or destructive.

There are two essential questions in rationality, “Why” and “Why Not.” Each approach can deeply illuminate our understanding of the other essential question.