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24.120 Moral Psychology
Spring 2009

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Second Assignment

Due: Sunday March 22nd

Length: 6 pages (i.e. around 2000 words)

Gary Watson argues that the addict is 'more like a collaborationist than an unsuccessful freedom fighter' ('Disordered Appetites', p. 65), and later that we are 'not so much overpowered by brute force as seduced' (*ibid* p. 71).

- (i) What implications does this have for the view that addicted actions are still chosen? (You might like to distinguish rational choice accounts from accounts that involve irrational choice.)
- (ii) Does this, as Watson claims, help to make sense of the idea of why addicts frequently feel a sense of guilt. (NB. Not being forcibly defeated might be a necessary condition for feeling guilt, but is being a collaborator sufficient? What kind of collaborator would one need to be?)
- (iii) How well does this sit with the emphasis put by others on the centrality of craving to addiction (see here George Loewenstein's paper 'A Visceral Account of Addiction' on the website). What is it in addiction that is compulsive?
- (iv) How plausible do you think that Watson's approach here is? If you are sympathetic to Watson's account, explain what you like about it, but also stress any shortcomings or gaps that you think it contains. If you think that some other account does better, say what it is and why it does.