

Daniel Dennett, *Elbow Room*, Chapter 1

Please read Chapter 1 and answer the following questions:

- What is an intuition pump? Dennett seems to have mixed feelings about them. Can you clarify his discussion? What's good about intuition pumps and what should we be wary of?
- Logicians tell us to beware of straw man arguments. (In England these are called Aunt Sally arguments.) To attack your opponent using the straw man strategy, you take his position and distort it, perhaps by oversimplifying it, exaggerating it, or twisting it in some way so that it seems ridiculous. In other words, you create a straw man. You then show that the straw man is indeed ridiculous, and if your audience isn't following too closely, they will think you have won the argument. Dennett's bugbears are in fact an amusing parade of straw men (straw bears? straw bugs?). Since Dennett isn't here to make fun of us, we can speak openly – what does free will mean to you? Can you think of a rigorous way of defining free will? (Personally I think that the concept of free will is meaningless. I think it's impossible to give a fool-proof definition. I hope you will prove me wrong.)