

TITLE: ON THE SOLUTION OF ALL PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS
THROUGH THE CONSISTENT APPLICATION OF THE PETER PRINCIPLE

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It has long been a primary goal of philosophers to put themselves out of business by solving all philosophical problems. Previous attempts to achieve this noble goal have failed through lack of a sufficiently powerful principle. Such a principle has now been supplied by the Peter Principle which, in its most general form, states: Everything tends to rise to its own level of incompetence. In this paper I will demonstrate how the Peter Principle can be used to solve all philosophical problems. The paper will be in two parts. In part I the method will be illustrated with respect to two classical philosophical problems. In part II a consideration of a third problem will provide the basis for a proof that the method is complete.

I

A) Why is there anything rather than nothing? Originally there was nothing. Since this was working out quite well, nothing was promoted to something which it has been doing incompetently ever since.

B) What is the nature of the relation between mind and body? Previously there was no relation between mind and body. They were not on speaking terms and had absolutely nothing to do with each other. Since this was a thoroughly efficient arrangement, mind was promoted to the job of controlling the body, which it has been doing incompetently ever since.

II

Let us attempt to apply our method to the problem of freedom and determinism. We could argue that man was originally free and that since this worked well, freedom was promoted to determinism at which it is incompetent. But it is equally plausible to argue that man began in a state of competent determinism which was then promoted to incompetent freedom. Clearly, we have no way of choosing between these arguments. Thus the Peter Principle cannot solve this problem; in attempting to use the Peter Principle to solve all philosophical problems we have promoted it to its level of incompetence from which we infer that the method is complete. This inference is surely incompetent, which we take to be a further proof of our thesis.