

Midterm 1 questions

Monday, January 28, 2019

2:42 PM

1) **What is meant by the term 'moral theory' (as it used in philosophy)**

A moral theory tries to give a complete answer to the question: "What is it that determines whether an act is right or wrong?". (Answering this question could help us resolve moral dilemmas and disagreements in health care.) It tries to explain why some acts are right with other acts are wrong. A plausible moral theory needs to be consistent with our moral sense, with your carefully considered moral judgements in different situations, and helpful in figuring out which acts are right. 2 types of moral theory: Consequentialism and Non-consequentialism. Consequentialism is the rightness or wrongness of an act depends only on its consequences. Non-consequentialism is consequences are not the only thing that affects the morality of an act. A good moral theory should be consistent with our moral sense, consistent with our carefully considered moral judgements in different situations and helpful in figuring out which acts are right.

2) **Three serious objections against act utilitarianism**

- a. Violate some peoples rights
 - i. Killing an innocent person to save many others in need of an organ transplant. Under this act its morally right however killing an innocent victim violates human rights
- b. Impractical
 - i. Believe that people should choose specific actions that will have the best outcomes producing the most happiness. We are not always sure what the outcomes of our actions will be and there is more to life than pleasure that would create a quality of life.
- c. Believe people don't have to keep promise if another act will produce more utility
 - i. Society would collapse if know one could rely on each other which gives weight to acts wrong.

7) **Kants universalizability test for the rightness of an act**

Identify maxim (rule) of your act, think of outcome if everyone follows some maxim, consider the result of both- result is contradiction (act is wrong), no contradiction in result (act is permissible)

- Kants universalizability test is a method used to determine whether an act is right or wrong. First, you must determine the maxim of your act, the maxim being a rule that tells you how to behave in certain situations. Then you must universalize your rule, and think about what would happen if everyone were to follow the same maxim,

determines whether the act is right or wrong.

8) **W.D Ross's "plualist" approach to ethics**

- Rejects idea of single moral theory- no single moral theory that explains all right/wrong since all acts/situations are different.
- No single property that all right things have in common other than just being wrong or right
- Instead, doing right involves follwing set of principles that act as guide (not absolute). If rules conflict, need to make decision of which rule may override other.

13) **The double decker (or hierarchial) theory of autonomy**

- a. Autonomy is having capacity to obtain many desires (2nd order) desire for desire
 - b. While critically reviewing general desires in world (1st order)
 - c. Autonomy is ability to clearly identify both orders and have ability/chance change them in order to pursue higher order
 - d. Allows understand our nature and give meaning to life by taking responsibility of who we are
- The double-decker theory of autonomy implies that we have 2 types of desires. We have 1st order desires that are ordinary desires that we come to have as we live our life, like wanted to eat some food or watch a movie. In addition to our 1st order desires, we also have 2nd order desires that are in some way about other desires, such as the desire to satisfy or not satisfy our 1st order desires, or even a 2nd order desire to not have the 1st desire. The double-decker theory of autonomy implies that we have the capacity to reflect critically on our first-order desires and the ability to identify whether we want to satisfy these desires. It also indicates that to be fully autonomous, we must be empowered to pursue the choices that we've made. If we don't believe that our first-order desires are in our best interest, we are able to resist them or even change them. By exercising this capacity, we are able to give meaning to our lives, and take responsibility for our actions. This theory of autonomy takes into account internal constraints, unlike the negative concept of freedom.