**LA1190 Ethics and Political Theory**

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**Question1 :-**

The ancient Greek philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle that discussed on the theme of ethics throughout their lives.

Socrates:-

Socrates believed in Socratic method of argumentation which enables dialogues between two or more people. It is the method for asking questions and seeking answers. Socrates always preached to be just than unjust. He says that everything has its own function that which one can do only with it or best with it. They believed that everything is characterised by a virtue that has a direct relationship with its function.

They also attacked the concept of overreaching. He would say that overreaching is not a good thing and is actually a foolish way to live.

Plato:-

The main aim of Plato’s philosophy is to teach humans to attain Fulfilment which is possible only through higher level of thinking.

In his “Allegory of Cave” argument, his basic argument is that the physical world that we know is a mere shadow or reflection of the real world. So, humans should strive to understand and analyse what is beyond the seen world.

Plato encapsulated his idea of ethics in the Theory of “Philosopher King”

He addresses the main two problems in humans: ethics and justice. According to him an ideal polis should be ruled by a PK who rules by his knowledge not by his mere power.

His idea of human soul included three elements: Reason, Spirit, and Appetite and in order to make moral choices human should balance these three elements.

In design of an ideal city, Socrates proposed a king who will go under a long training in various fields and in this system property, wives and children would be common. The three controversial claims made were:

Even women can become rulers, these ruling men and women should reproduce and keep children communally and finally that these rulers must be philosophers. These children won’t inherit any position automatically and would be promoted on basis of their caliber.

But according to Plato philosopher is free from greed and lust that tempts others to abuse power. PK has more inclination towards the form of Virtue, Beauty and Good. He was against the idea of democracy in which many rule and none would have the wisdom of how to run the state.

Aristotle:-

According to Aristotle ethics should be premised on the needs and realities of the human nature. For him being excellent and virtuous are the same.

He defines the supreme good as an activity of the rational soul in accordance with virtue. According to him the highest good or end of all human activity is happiness and to attain this he goes through striving and achieving eternal truth.

For Aristotle, moral virtue is a relative mean which means that an ethical person will maintain a moderate lifestyle in every area of his life except virtue. Achieving virtue requires moral action in social environment. He also does separate the concepts of moral virtue and happiness. Happiness is an activity involving both moral and intellectual virtue.

Aristotle differs Socrates and Plato on theme of virtue. Socrates argues that no man does wrong willingly but Aristotle argue that a man can commit vice if he does not cultivate good nature. He also said that excellency of nature depends on the virtuous nature of its people. He also argued that everyone in nature has an end goal and human must balance five virtues namely prudence, art, scientific knowledge, intuition and wisdom.

According to me Aristotle is the most pragmatic one because he speaks on facts and provides examples to his arguments. He is considered with what could or should be and his realm is results and consequences.

**Question 2:-**

According to Nietzsche moral values are a mere friction and that there is nothing in nature that has moral value. He made a statement that god is dead that portrays him as an atheist but what he actually argues that the religious-cultural system which was associated with it should be dead. For he was not against all religions but Christianity because he thought it has tricked human to become passive and otherworldly.

He reverses what society thinks as moralistic, good, or positive. He argues that ancient values of war, plunder and bloodshed were more akin to human nature than passive values like love or compassion.

His ideology includes self-realization which allows a free spirit that is to unleash a man from his clutches.

He argues that a man should be live freely and not be burdened by passive values. One should run towards power, lust, and greed. He blames Christianity for all the current day problems.

I do not agree with him because if humans do not show passive feelings, then they could be easily exploited and there would be no unity. Also love, compassion, kindness are some mere values that distinguishes humans from animals and if humans just posses master morality then the world could not be at peace. One should live in harmony with others.

**Question 3:-**

The major differences among the thoughts are discussed below:-

In the text “The Birth of Tragedy” we come across Nietzsche’s criticism of Socratics philosophy that truth is objective, and it could be realised and attained by the humans. Nietzsche on the other hand argues that “truth” is non-existent and therefore no amount of epistemological contemplations would be able to uncover them. For the same reason he praises Sophists for having taught moral relativism.

In his “Beyond good and evil” he argues that there are no absolute moral standards. According to him there is no absolute moral force like god, we are responsible for setting up our own standards which should help the humans to progress.

In another text “Twilight of the Idols” he argues that man should live his life to fullest and not doodle between what is right or wrong. He disagrees with Socrates that self-knowledge is virtue. According to him honesty itself carries no element of pleasure in it as it is an empty concept. He would rather propose that deceitfulness should be considered as a virtue if it brings pleasure in any case. He also defies Socratic rationalism as decadent. He was against reason because it falsifies senses and urge to improve the human potential to full. He wishes to replace Jesus Christ with the god of Dionysus, the god of lust, indulgence, and exuberance.

In his other text “the Gay Science” he challenges the reader upon what kind of life he wants to live- A life filled with joy, enjoyment, indulgence and fulfillment or a life shackled and suffocated with moral values? , which contradicts the argument presented by the other three.

**Question 4:-**

The present-day ethical issues revolve around LGBTQ, eve-teasing, domestics violence, films, pollution etc

The broad idea of the four political thinkers are as follows: -

Plato :-

Plato’s main ideas surrounding morality stresses the importance of education and self-improvement. According to him humans can achieve an ideal realm through reason, education and logic.

For current ethical issues if one has good knowledge and logic then one would not do injustice or even not anyone do injustice. Human race has a lot of potential to grow and make a ideal place to live.

Socrates :-

Socrates’ focus on ethics was intended to generate practical outcomes. He believed in method of argumentation that is to question and seeks answers. He stresses on the importance of examined life. Socrates though that people make bad choice and do bad things out of ignorance. If people could see what is good, then they would choose good.

If humans could control the bad things now and set good examples for the new generation then they could stop the current social causes and do better things.

Aristotle :-

His main ethical views were: -

1. The highest good and the end towards which all human activity is directed is happiness.
2. One attains happiness by virtuous life and the development of reason and wisdom.
3. Moral virtue is a relative mean between extremes of excess and deficiency. No human desire is bad if it is controlled by a reason. Moral virtue is acquired by combination of knowledge, habituation, and self-discipline.
4. Man has personal moral responsibilities for his actions.
5. Moral virtues cannot be achieved abstractly. It requires moral action in a social environment.

In current world issues like eve-teasing or domestic violence can be stopped if proper action is taken to stop the unjust. In society men can live good and develop their full potential if every religion, race, sex, and cast is supported.

Nietzsche :-

He expresses a theory which believes all humans should strive for power regardless of how it affects others. He thought that it was important to balance our rationality with our sensual and passionate experience of life. He believed in that human should be a free spirit and not be burdened by the passive values. One should take control of his own life and embrace it in his own way.

For current era this mindset could collapse the society. If everyone becomes greedy and run towards lust and power the world would become unstable.

One should not be discriminated on basis of sex as its natural and no one has control over it. Eve-teasing and domestic violence should be controlled as it does not spread positive message and does no good to the society. In society these things can be controlled if proper logic and wisdom is spread among youth. If moral virtues and passive feelings are inculcated in one then he/her would respect everyone and everyone could live in harmony and peace with each other.

In today’s globe different people derive their ideas and point of reference form different ages. There are individuals who believe in Socratic and Aristotle mindset while there are others who believe in Nietzsche. For current world problems like equality for all and social causes like domestic violence or environmental issues like pollution can be controlled if one posse’s logic and proper wisdom. Humans can live happily and grow together if they realise their potential and do good for the same.