



School Mate®

Name: Chukwuka.

Class: _____

Subject: Ethical Theories / ~~Social~~

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LEAVES

1. Examine Aristotle's Theory of friendship.
2. Analyze Critically Joseph Fletcher's situation ethics.
3. Discuss Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist ethics.
4. Analyze Critically Naturalism as a meta-ethical theory.
5. Kant considers the immortality of the soul, the freedom of the will and the existence of God as the postulates of practical reason. Discuss.

5 Kant considers the immortality of the soul, the freedom of the will and the existence of God as postulates of practical reason. Discuss.

Introduction

Postulates of Practical reason

Immortality of the soul

Freedom of the will

Existence of God

Conclusion,

Introduction

The postulates of practical reason are also referred to as postulates of morality. Kant argued that morality is a categorical imperative which commands good in itself and not as a means to an end. However he noted that the source of this moral law is Man's rational will, which means that moral law is a self-imposed law. The will is autonomous in obeying the moral law, it is not determined or motivated by anything outside of itself. This principle of the autonomy of the will according to Kant is the

supreme principle of morality.

Kants argued that it is through morality that we can explain the immortality of the soul, the freedom of the will and the existence of God. His argument would be elaborated thus.

THE POSTULATES OF PRACTICAL REASON.

The postulates of practical reason; immortality which are immortality of the soul, the freedom of the will, and the existence of God. according to Kant cannot be proved through speculative reasoning or by any rational argument

For Kant, it is morality that leads us to assume them. Morality leads us to assume that the soul survives death, that man's will is free and that God exists. These would be explained thus:-

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

According to Kants, Man has a moral obligation to conform his will to the moral law, an obligation to aim at the complete conformity of his will with the moral law. This complete conformity of the

will with the Moral Law is holiness, and holiness is a perfection which no human being ever attains.

Kant maintains that holiness is an ideal which no man is capable of attaining during his earthly existence, yet Man has a Moral obligation to strive for it. This means that holiness is attainable but not in this life, hence we are led to assume that there must be life after death and the strive continues after death.

The progress towards holiness is, according to Kant an infinite progress which cannot cease with death. Kant concludes that morality therefore leads us to assume the immortality of the soul since it is presupposed by the imperative of the moral law which obliges man to strive for holiness.

FREEDOM OF THE WILL

Kant argued that since the moral law is not a law of necessity, but a law which could be obeyed or disobeyed. It therefore presupposes that man's will is free. Man can decide whether he should obey the dictates of Moral law or whether he should not.

Therefore, morality also leads us to assume that man's will is free.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The moral law obliges man to promote the highest good. According to Kant, highest good is the complete conformity of the will with the moral law and the happiness that is proportionate to such conformity. Therefore, the highest good is holiness and the happiness that is proportionate to it, hence man has a moral obligation to promote it. However, But it is not within man's power to do this since he does not have full control over nature and therefore cannot ensure that holiness is accompanied with proportionate happiness.

According to Kant, morality should be rewarded with the amount of happiness commensurate with it. But it is not within man's power to give himself the happiness that is commensurate with his morality, because he is not the author of nature and does not have full control over it. We are therefore led to assume that there must

be God, who is the author of nature, who fully controls it and who can ensure that morality is rewarded with the happiness that is proportionate to it. Kant therefore concludes that it is morally necessary to assume the existence of God.

Kant noted that although morality leads us to assume the existence of God, morality does not presuppose religion. For him, morality is autonomous, it neither presupposes religion nor does it need religion.

CONCLUSION:

Kant made use of morality to assume the immorality of the soul, the freedom of the will and the existence of God, which are also called the three postulates of practical reason. Morality for Kant is not based on religion or on the command of God or his existence. Man does not need religion to be moral or to know his duty because morality is a self-imposed law of the autonomous will of man.

Analyze Critically Naturalism as a Meta-Ethical Theory.

Discuss Jean Paul Sartre's Existentialist Ethics.

INTRODUCTION.

Existentialist ethics is derived from existentialist philosophy. It follows (inextricably) from the metaphysics of existentialism. The major proponents include Soren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers and Jean Paul Sartre.

Four major factors are regarded as the fons et origo of existentialism. These include; the philosophical neglect of the individual, historical events; like wars, technology and the decline in religious belief. Our focus is on the existential ethics of Jean Paul Sartre, but we would give a brief explanation of existential outlines.

COMMON EXISTENTIAL OUTLINES.

Existentialist see man as a conscious being, a self-transcending being. Man transcends the present and looks towards the future. Only a conscious being can behave this way.

According to existentialist, Consciousness makes one unique. This is because no one penetrate another's consciousness. Since for the existentialists, the individual is unique because of his consciousness that is impenetrable it implies that a concrete individual is identical to no one. No two individuals are the same.

The individual becomes aware of his strong individuality and uniqueness only when he has to experience death alone. This ineradicable fact that an individual is unique implies that he must live his life as he wants it to be.

To live in this way is to live an authentic life. To live otherwise, that is according to the dictates of others is to live inauthentically. To live authentically or inauthentically implies that man can live either way. Freedom is a very important theme in existentialism.

JEAN PAUL SARTRE'S ETHICS.

Sartre is one of the existentialist philosophers who is most committed to the question of human freedom. He exaggerated freedom so much that he used it to deny the existence of God.

For him, the notion of God and human freedom are not contiguous. If God were to exist, there would be no human freedom because God would control him. This denial of the existence of God is denial of objective universal moral laws. If God were not to exist there would be no one to give out objective universal moral laws. This belief that there is no objective universal moral law is called antinomianism.

Sartre is a professed atheist and antinomian. Nietzsche also is an atheist and antinomian but he derived his antinomian from the nature of man. For him each person has his own nature and is different from others.

Sartre's metaphysics is what brings about the consequence on his ethics, which is the denial of God and objective universal moral law. His metaphysics is centered on Existence precedes Essence, which

is a reversal of traditional metaphysics that "existence precedes essence".

EXISTENCE PRECEDES ESSENCE.

ESSENCE PRECEDES EXISTENCE.

Essence is referential. It refers to the nature of a thing or what makes a thing what it is. The traditional metaphysicians argued that the nature or essence of a thing precedes its actual coming into existence. For instance an aircraft, Before it is manufactured, its nature, that is, the image or idea of how it will be produced, as well as the purpose for embarking on the project would exist in the mind of the manufacturers mind.

Using this instance, transferred analogically to God and man, it would mean that the nature of each human person existed in the mind of God before coming into existence, that God had the foreknowledge of the nature of each person.

Jean Paul Sartre, objects, and argued that if it were true, man would not be free because God would control him. He believes strongly that man is free and responsible.

which he tried to explain using his metaphysical claim that "Existence precedes essence"

Existence Precedes Essence.

According to Sartre in defending his thesis that existence precedes essence he said that Man has no nature preconceived by God. Man exists, confronts himself and gives himself essence or nature. It is man that makes himself what he is. He has the awesome freedom to do this. He is a self-creating being in the sense that he has the capacity and freedom to make himself what he wants to be.

Sartre makes a distinction between L'en soi - the being-in-itself and Le pour soi - the being-for-itself. L'en soi refers to a being that remains the same all the time. An example is a mountain or a stone, which is immobile and inertial.

Le pour soi refers to a self-conscious being. It has more dignity than L'en soi. This is because it is self-conscious. It knows itself as a subject and other things surrounding it as objects; it can transcend the present and move towards the future. It can

imagine something in the future and move towards its actual realisation

Sartre therefore, observes human freedom from the self-consciousness of Le pour soi. Man is that self conscious being, he has the power and freedom to develop himself, create values and give himself essence. For him, man cannot escape from freedom. He is condemned to be free. Freedom is power and parcel of the human person.

It seems that Sartre's existentialist ethics would lead to anarchy if everyone were allowed his freedom to create his values and give himself essence, but it would not lead to this conclusion. For Sartre "Nothing can be good for us without being good for all". So in choosing a value for oneself, one is at the same time choosing for all. So there is no moral anarchy. To make choice and not allow others to do the same for Sartre is called self-deception.

Sartre also established that there is no escape from human responsibility. He calls the denial of human freedom and responsibility Mauvaise-foi (self-deception). Also for him attributing human errors to determinism, human nature, custom, or social pressure is Mauvaise

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Sartre's emphasis on human freedom and responsibility is good. People should be ready to take responsibility for their actions. But his exaggeration of freedom is absurd. What makes an action good is undoubtedly because it is good itself and not simply because it is freely chosen.

One freely choosing to be a kidnapper does not make kidnapping good. Hence, there is need for objective moral laws to serve as guides in exercising our individual human freedom.

Also the existence of God is necessary not necessarily against human freedom. The individual has the freewill to obey or not to obey the command of God. Hence, man is not determined just because God exists.

Analyse Critically Joseph Fletchers Situation Ethics.