

LA1190: Ethics and Modern political theory

Final Assignment

CS18BTECH11042

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1. **Imagine a conversation between Socrates and Plato on one side and Fredrich Nietzsche on another. Write an essay on what would they possibly debate on and how?**

Socrates and Plato: Virtues maketh the man. See how that kind man moved closer to Eudaimonism by preventing the foreigner from being deceived by the shop-keeper.

Nietzsche: He's an utterly dumb fellow to do that. He should actually have concocted a detailed trap with the shop-keeper to fool the gullible foreigner.

Socrates and Plato: What nonsense! Why, exactly why do you think he would do that? Won't he try to achieve eternal happiness by sticking to his moral values? Would he not take a step towards the one truth by living up to his virtues?

Nietzsche: Eternal happiness by being honest? I laugh at your idiocy. Honesty is an empty concept, as are the insides of your skull. Why would happiness bring any sort of happiness? Deceit is the most valuable virtue. It brings unbounded pleasure and delight to the human soul.

Socrates and Plato: Good Christ! Look how you make no reason.

Nietzsche: Christ? Christ who? I live by Dionysus by lust, exuberance, and indulgence. Who made these morals you so religiously preach? Some random list of virtues a madman imagined one day to bide his time? Why is deceit not a virtue, but honesty is? What is the truth you so religiously seek? Truth is non-existence, and

thus an entire lifetime of epistemological contemplations would never unearth a non-existent entity. The search for this so-called truth is vile. The man should've deceived the foreigner and extracted more pleasure by looting him and then flushing away in indulgence. Your notion of seeking truth is a directionless method of dialect and doubt instead of an affirmation of reality, human instinct or possibility.

Socrates and Plato: This angered and goalless life would never help mankind achieve fulfillment. You'd be whiling away your time away from reason, away from understanding and learning, away from growth. An ideal state would never emerge. If the entire population lives a life of deceit where everyone is deceitful and being deceived, the state would descend into utter chaos. Everyone would be doing only what they want to do without a single bit of care of their fellow human beings.

Nietzsche: I'd rather live a life filled with enjoyment every second, indulgence every minute and joy every hour for the fulfillment of life. You can live a life shackled and suffocated with the imagined man-made moral values, trying to achieve fulfillment which is as blank a concept as your philosophy. I spit on your ideals. I'd go by my instincts and hot-blooded impulses and waste my time pondering between so-called good and bad. It is vile to talk sense into men who live a life of mere deliberation and no exuberance. Adieu.

Socrates and Plato: Sigh, may Christ lead you on the path of righteousness and truth. We shall hope you understand one day what life is actually meant to be and embark on a journey leaving behind these fleeting pleasures and seek what the truth meant to be discovered. Adieu.

2. What are the differences between the thoughts of Plato and Aristotle?

The foremost difference between thoughts can be seen as the innately opposing origins. Aristotle held very pragmatic views, Plato instead possessed utopian ideals and expected the world to behave in a utopian manner as well. Plato aimed to achieve Eudaimonia for all mankind through his teachings and it seems impractical

to implement his thoughts in a real-world society with deceitful and corrupt people all around. On the other hand, Aristotle believed happiness is the end goal of all humankind. His concept of virtuous life was feasible only through the development of reason and wisdom while allowing for fickle pleasures and leisures. This is in stark contrast to Plato's philosophy of Reason, Spirit and Appetite as the three sections of human soul. Plato expected humans to balance these three elements of the soul to make moral choices. Though both philosophers campaigned for higher levels of thinking and trying to understand beyond what's observable; Aristotle opined that every human being should strive to achieve the eternal truth with the assistance of external goods and opportunities, thus accepting the fact that every individuals journey towards eternal truth is different; Plato opined that every human being has the internal power to seek knowledge and thus must strive towards fulfillment.

It is evident how differently they perceive humans as a thinking and living entity. Aristotle portrays human nature as malleable and a teleological exercise of rational power, listing five intellectual virtues: prudence, art, scientific knowledge, Intuition and wisdom; while Plato believes that no man does wrong willingly, everyone has the innate tendency to be just and fair. Aristotle contrasts that every individual is not virtuous by birth, developing virtues is a long and tedious life-long process, where only good practice makes a good man. Aristotle does point out that humans can willingly commit vice if they fall prey to ill-natured learnings. He debates that the nature of nurture is imperative towards the development of human character.

To Plato, happiness is a condition in which there is perfect harmony within an individual's soul between its different elements whereas to Aristotle, happiness is a continuous strife, taking active steps to keep learning and achieving, as if each individual loves himself/herself, and aims to achieve the best of themselves, there is no need for working differently towards other people exhibiting virtues like selflessness, as the nation is inherently good if every individual constituting the nation is good.

For Plato, the goal is to reason about the nature of the Forms, ideal types of entities explained in his Theory of Forms and discover the one truth, and the network between the forms, condensing in an understanding of the singular most

fundamental Form. Plato opined that these forms were constant and universal. Aristotle rejected this notion and promoted the thought of accidental or created entities, where everything including the nature of these entities is dynamic.

Their approach towards the ideal politics of a nation also differ in their basis. Plato extends his thought of balance between Reason, Spirit, and Appetite in a soul to the balance between three classes of an ideal state: Rulers, Soldiers, and Producers. He was of the rigid opinion that a state is best ruled by a Philosopher King, a person well educated in the varied fields of wisdom and statesmanship. Such an individual will love truth and learning so much that they would not be tempted by greed and lust. A philosopher king's attraction to good, virtue and beauty would automatically direct the subjects to eudaimonia. He also took a strong stand against the inheritance of positions and even against democracy and campaigned for thorough testing of calibre irrespective of the backgrounds of the candidates. Aristotle noticed the impracticalities in such an ideal thought and tried to reason that politics in the inherent nature of mankind and thus spoke about "polity", rule by majority in the interest of all, thus allowing the engagement of common individuals in the upkeep and maintenance of the state. Thus allowing every human to express his/her political virtues freely.

Thus, we can see that though Aristotle did pick up quite a few of his notions from Plato, he established more pragmatic ideals that could actually be strived for rather than just being theorized.

3. Take some of the current issues like LGBTQ, feminism etc and explain why you agree or disagree with those issues.

- **Mental Health:**

With the increasing stress and pressure of daily lives, it has become tougher to remain in the pink of mental health at all times. With stiff competition in all fields of life, people go to all lengths to achieve their objectives, often at the cost of

well-being of other people. As we move towards an even faster-paced world, it's crucial to take a step back and pause and ensure that we are in the right place mentally.

The stigma around mental health issues is really bothering as while everyone invariably visits the doctor for even common minor physical health issues, visiting a therapist or a psychiatrist is frowned upon by society. Therefore the first step towards establishing healthy lifestyles is eradicating this stigma and encouraging everyone to visit mental health specialists whenever they feel even a wee bit unwell.

We must all take baby steps by ensuring the mental well-being of everyone we know, helping them recognize and overcome issues if any, and this would then propagate like a chain reaction and help us in achieving global well-being.

- **LGBTQ:**

Every human is unique. And we as humans should celebrate our uniqueness and revel in what makes us human.

There is biological evidence of homosexuality and bisexuality in other species as well and we as creatures of reason and logic should understand how it extrapolates to us, humans. Thus we should be respectful of all people irrespective of their sexual preferences and treat everyone equally. With laws around the world recognizing same-sex marriages and decriminalizing homosexuality, it is high time we individual view them as humans above everything else!

- **Feminism:**

Reiterating the fact stated above. All human beings are equal. All human beings are unique. We also must pay heed to this uniqueness across the genders and recognize each other as individuals possessing better skills in one domain if they trail in another. Historically patriarchal societies have been the norm and thus the best interests of the women have often been overlooked. But with advancing times we must take cognizance of the fact that equitable representation across all fields is essential for the progress of mankind. Recent movements like #MeToo have been necessary to bring awareness of the existing bias and injustice in our society and

important to pay attention to the positives from such motions while also penalizing the false accusations.

Every individual brings a different perspective to the table, originating from different experiences and thus it is necessary to provide representation to the sections that have been neglected historically. Providing equal opportunities irrespective of the gender is the need of the hour.

- **Abortion:**

If humans have the ability to procreate and decide when to bring a life into the world, I believe that before that life takes shape, those human beings have the right to prevent their creation from entering the world. It is often the case that many pregnancies are accidental and the lack of abortion rights might derail the lives of the expecting parents. They are often ill-equipped financially and stability wise to handle the inclusion of a new member in their family and thus must have the power to abort the baby until it is medically safe with the consent of the mother especially. There are lot of rape cases in which even minors face this choice and I am of the strong opinion that abortion should be a free will in such situations paid for by the perpetrator. The lack of abortion facilities and awareness in such a situation is plain inhuman to the woman who already has been through a horrifying experience and thus should have the basic right to try and restore normal life.

Thus I strongly believe that every expecting set of parents should have the right to abort their child whenever there is a valid reason. In India, Gender determination is illegal by law and thus abortions based on the gender of the baby should also be strictly prohibited.

- **Live-in relations:**

If two consenting adults decide to live together I believe the law should not prevent them from doing so. When we vest every individual above 18 with fundamental rights like the right to vote and right to speech, that individual also has the right to decide where and with whom they reside.

With the hectic and stressful lifestyle of today people might not find enough time to spend time exclusively with their partners and thus living together might be a good option to get to know them better and help develop understanding and harmony for a potential future. Marriage might seem like a legal bound on a similar situation and thus dissuade people unsure from committing to an entire lifetime to give each other a chance and help them visualize how their life may shape up ahead. It would prove to be an invaluable asset to learn the nitty-gritty characteristics of their partners which one might not be accustomed to otherwise. Living together brings up several opportunities to work together and help each other grow. Thus I firmly believe that live-in relationships are conducive to aspiring partners.

- **Euthanasia:**

Every adult has the right to pull the plug on their life when living life is worse than being dead. There have been several cases of individuals in a vegetative state and where they have been kept alive simply with the aid of artificial life. It is horrible for family members to witness their loved ones in such a state when all hope is lost. Euthanasia being legal in extreme cases would help end this endless suffering and pain for both the individual and their families. There have been several instances of cases calling for legal passive euthanasia, notably the Aruna Shanbaug in India. While the laws vary from country to country it is necessary to allow for euthanasia in irreversible cases in my opinion.

This would go a long way to even prevent unnecessary leeching by the hospitals and at least prevent the financial and mental burden of hoping in vain. It would also help the individuals die a death not forcefully held back artificially, an inevitable death, and end the torturous life they are being forced to endure.