 Ethics vs Right and Wrong

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**Introduction**

Ethics is the branch of philosophy that deals with morality, which is the system of principles that determines whether an action or a decision is right or wrong. Morality is often thought to be based on values that are inherent in human nature or are universally accepted as being fundamental to the well-being of individuals and society. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate whether actions and decisions that are considered ethical are always right, and those that are considered unethical are always wrong. On that note, while ethical behavior is generally considered to be in line with principles of right and wrong, there may be situations in which this is not the case. As such, it may not be accurate to say that ethical behavior is always equivalent to right behavior, and unethical behavior is always equivalent to wrong behavior.

**In Support of the Proposition**

I agree with the proposition that ethical behavior is equivalent to right behavior, and unethical behavior is equivalent to wrong behavior. One argument in favor of this proposition is that ethical principles, such as honesty, fairness, and respect for others, are widely accepted as being fundamental to a healthy and functioning society (Reid, 2022). These principles are based on the idea that certain actions, such as lying or stealing, are harmful to individuals and society as a whole and should be avoided. As such, it can be argued that acting in accordance with these principles is the right thing to do, and acting in opposition to them is the wrong thing to do.

On the other hand, unethical behavior is behavior that goes against these principles and is generally seen as harmful to individuals and society as a whole. As such, it can be argued that ethical behavior is equivalent to right behavior and unethical behavior is equivalent to wrong behavior.

Additionally, ethical behavior is often motivated by a sense of responsibility or obligation to others. For example, a person may act ethically because they believe it is their duty to help those in need or to protect the environment (Vieweg, 2020). In these cases, acting ethically can be seen as a form of fulfilling one's responsibilities and doing what is expected of them.

**Opposition of the Proposition**

There are several arguments that can be made against the proposition that ethical behavior is equivalent to right behavior, and unethical behavior is equivalent to wrong behavior. One argument is that what is considered ethical or unethical can vary widely across different cultures and societies. What is considered ethical in one society may be considered unethical in another, and vice versa (Fowler, 2018). For example, certain practices that are widely accepted and even celebrated in one culture, such as female genital mutilation or arranged marriages, may be considered unethical and even criminal in other cultures. This suggests that what is considered ethical or unethical is not universal, and therefore cannot be equated with right or wrong.

Additionally, some may argue that the concept of right and wrong is subjective and dependent on an individual's perspective. They may argue that what is considered right or wrong is a matter of personal opinion and that there is no objective standard of right and wrong (Darwall, 2018). On that note, an individual's personal values and beliefs may lead them to view certain actions as ethical or unethical, even if they are not generally accepted as such in their society. In these cases, it may be difficult to determine a universal definition of what is ethical or unethical, and therefore it may not be accurate to say that ethical behavior is always right and unethical behavior is always wrong.

Another argument against this proposition is that ethical principles are not always clear-cut, and there may be conflicting principles at play in a given situation. For example, a situation may involve conflicting ethical principles such as autonomy versus beneficence, or individual rights versus the greater good. In these cases, determining what is ethical or right may require careful consideration and nuance, and may not be a simple matter of following a single ethical principle.

Additionally, some argue that what is considered ethical or unethical can change over time, as society's values and beliefs evolve. For example, practices that were once considered acceptable, such as slavery or discrimination based on race or gender, are now widely considered unethical and wrong. This suggests that what is considered ethical or unethical is not fixed, and what was once considered right may no longer be considered right in the future.

Another argument against this proposition is that there may be situations in which the consequences of an action are more important than the ethical implications. For example, a person may act unethically in order to prevent a greater harm or injustice (Waldron, 2018). In this case, the action may be considered unethical, but it could also be argued that it was the right thing to do given the circumstances.

Overall, while ethical behavior is generally considered to be important and desirable, it is not always straightforward to determine what is ethical or unethical in a given situation, and what is considered ethical or unethical can vary widely across cultures and change over time. As such, it can be argued that ethical behavior is not always equivalent to right behavior, and unethical behavior is not always equivalent to wrong behavior.

**Rationale for Position**

On the other hand, it can also be argued that ethicality is not the only factor to consider when determining whether an action or decision is right or wrong (Warnock, 2020). For example, in some cases, an action that is considered unethical may be necessary to achieve a greater good. In such cases, it may be necessary to weigh the ethical consequences of an action against its potential benefits in order to determine whether it is the right course of action.

Therefore, there may be situations where an action that is considered unethical by some is actually the best course of action in a particular situation (Wallace, 2019). For example, if a person is faced with the choice of either telling a lie or letting someone come to harm, they may choose to tell the lie in order to prevent the harm, even though lying is generally considered to be unethical.

On the other hand, it is possible for there to be situations in which acting ethically and acting in a way that is considered "right" may not be the same thing. For example, consider the case of a doctor who is faced with a difficult ethical dilemma, such as whether to provide medical treatment to a patient who has a terminal illness. The doctor may feel that it is their ethical duty to provide the best care possible for the patient, even if it means prolonging their suffering (Trotter, 2020). However, from the perspective of the patient, it may be "right" for them to refuse treatment and allow their natural death to occur. In this case, the ethical and "right" actions may not be the same thing, and the doctor may need to consider the values and wishes of the patient in order to make a decision that is both ethical and "right."

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, while ethical actions and decisions may often be considered right, it is not always the case that ethical equals right and unethical equals wrong. In some cases, it may be necessary to consider a range of factors in order to determine whether an action or decision is right or wrong. Thus, the definitions of these concepts can vary depending on an individual's moral principles and the context in which the actions take place. On that note, It's important to consider both ethical principles and societal norms when making decisions, as both can play a role in determining what is considered right or wrong in a given situation. Ultimately, the best course of action is often one that aligns with both ethical principles and societal norms, as it can help to promote a fair and just society.

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