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PHIL-1010-002

6/30/2019

Homework Assignment #1

Questions from “What is Philosophy?”

1. Why is philosophy an activity rather than a subject matter?  
    This is because philosophy requires us to reason within ourselves and often with others as we can experience philosophical concepts differently from one another. This is also why philosophy falls away from empirical measurements as that experience and difference aren’t traditionally measurable. The deeper questions about causation are always more pervasive than any discussion about the results of an experiment. We’ve learned how to edit genes very efficiently but is it something we should do? This question couldn’t be answered by science, but through deep discussion and application it could be answered.
2. What are the three major areas of philosophy? Provide examples of two different questions that belong to each area—the examples should be different than those in the reading.  
    The three major areas of philosophy are metaphysics, epistemology, and areas of moral and political philosophy.   
   Metaphysics questions could be:  
   Why do we choose to make computers smaller rather than larger?  
   Why do we use toilet paper on adults and not babies?  
   Epistemology questions could be:  
   How do we know if we are living in a real world and not a simulation(simulation theory)?  
   If we see reflected colors, what is the actual color of the object?  
    A political or moral question could be:  
   If you could save one person or a group which would you choose(trolley problem)?  
   Are we obligated to others happiness?
3. What makes the kinds of questions philosophy asks different from science? Why can philosophical questions not be answered in the same way as scientific ones?  
    Science can provide us with empirical measurements about our world but no real suggestions for causation. I could measure the movement of a blade of grass all day long and still know nothing about why it is moving. Philosophy can give the reasoning skills to arrive at the conclusion we were seeking all along that grass moves when the wind blows, and it was windy that day means that it moved because of the wind. Science is question of measurement from measurable things while philosophy usually isn’t a measurable sort of question.

Questions from *Euthyphro*

1. A discussion arises near the beginning of the dialogue between Socrates and Euthyphro. How does the discussion arise? What is it about? What are Socrates and Euthyphro doing at the courthouse?   
    The discussion arises between Socrates and Euthyphro because they ran into each other at the courthouse and they each are curious about why the other is there. Socrates has been indicted by Meletus for corruption and Euthyphro is there to sue his father for murder.
2. Euthyphro begins attempting to define a particular concept. Why is he so confident he knows what it is? How does he first attempt to define it? How does Socrates’ refute this initial attempt?  
    Euthyphro is trying to define piety in order to justify his actions in indicting his father for murder. He believes he is right because believes that the Gods are just so by being himself just that he is pleasing the Gods. In his discussion he states he believes pious actions are those that are pleasing to the Gods, therefore his actions must be just. Socrates says if those stories were of absolute fact then he would have agreed to his assertion of just, but he asks if those stories could hold on their own. He argues they must have some bearing in universal truth in order to be truly moral.
3. On pg 11, Euthyphro broadens his definition of this concept as having to do with the Gods. How does he define it?  
    He combines the previous asserts by claiming that we should then define pious as what the Gods love and impious as what they hate. For those that fall in between as loved and hated is paradoxically both pious and impious.
4. What question does Socrates immediately ask him at XII 10? Explain what you take the meaning of this question to be.  
    Do the Gods love piety because it is pious, or is it pious because they love it? I think he is asking if the Gods love piety for the sake of piety, or do they love actions that have a pious characteristic? I liked his question because I thought he was trying to get at the heart of his argument by forcing Euthyphro to confront this conundrum.
5. What is revealed to be wrong with Euthyphro’s definition as a result of this question?  
    He points out the problem with basing such a big concept on something so little universal truth. He shows the fallacious reasoning in saying that something’s state is affected by actions when they really have become the thing. If I were to say a blade of grass moves because I blew on it, does it really say anything about the blade movement? The movement itself has some intrinsic meaning that truth must be grounded in.
6. Euthyphro proceeds to try and define the concept in terms of justice and an analogy is made to reverence and shame. What is the point of this exchange? (15)  
    He is trying to highlight the fallacy in assuming something will always be linked to together. He says that things that are feared have reverence but it’s false that all things feared are worthy of reverence. He is trying to get Euthyphro to think for himself and see the fallacy of his reasoning about the world.