I. Questions concerning ethical theories

A. What is the moral community and what are its boundaries?

1. What are its values?

2. Who has moral standing? Basis of moral standing?

B. How ought members of the moral community act?

C. How should society be organized?

II. Kantian Ethics (duty or rights based ethics)

A. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

1. Critique of Pure Reason (1781)

2. Critique of Practical Reason (1788)

B. Reason

1. practical reason (formal rationality) is basis of morality

a. not god

b. not tradition

2. practical reason (formal rationality) allows us

a. to determine the morality of an act

b. create universal moral laws

c. Kingdom of Ends

C. Morality as Intention

1. act is good if intention of actor is to do good

2. practical reason allows us to determine intention

:

1. not subjective

b. not consequences

1. make a maxim out of it

e. determine whether that maxim could be a universal law

f. categorical imperative: law that could universally and categorically be obeyed by all rational beings in the same situation

"Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law."

"Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a Universal Law of Nature."

D. Kingdom of Ends

1. duty to the categorical imperative will lead to

2. community of rational beings bound by common moral law

3. not just principle but historical development (society)

4. each person is member and sovereign

a. sovereign

i. as moral agent - rational moral being- moral legislator

ii. freedom is condition of moral being

iii. freedom means

freedom from desires and inclinations

freedom to exercise moral agency

b. member

i. respect and dignity as member of the

moral community, absolute moral worth

ii. respect and dignity of others

"So act as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of any other, always at the same time as an end and never merely as a means."

E. Answering our questions

1. value: individual human beings

2. moral standing: human beings

3. basis: reason

4. ought: duty to universal moral laws

5. social organization

* 1. democracy

b. rights

III. Utilitarian Ethics ( consequentialist)

A. Jeremy Bentham 1748-1832 and J.S. Mill 1806-1873

1. Reformist and practical: political, legal, and penal reform

a. public policy

b. social morality

c. personal

2. construct a secular scientific morality

a. goal: "tell us our duties, or by what test we may know them."

b. test as a means for determining right/wrong

c. test should be scientific and quantitative

d. test determines consequences of action(s)

B. Assumptions

1. psychological hedonism

a. all human beings always act to achieve

pleasure and to avoid pain

b. maximizing happiness

c all other desirable things are means to pleasure and pain, not of intrinsic value in themselves

2. moral terms such as good and bad, right and wrong need to be understood in terms pleasure and pain

a... pleasure and pain can be measured

b. calculus or formula to determine the morality of actions or policies

c. principle of utility

“Principle of utility or greatest happiness principle "actions are good in proportion as they tend to promote happiness; wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure."

C. The Test

1. principle of consideration

a. all those whose interests are involved

b. interests = pleasure-suffering

2. principle of equality

1. each person affected counts as one

"all persons . . . have a right to equality of treatment, except when some recognized social expediency requires the reverse."

b. measuring pleasure and suffering

i. intensity

ii. duration

iii. certainty

iv. nearness

v. purity

3. Consequences: act is good if its consequences are greatest happiness for greatest number

"Hence an act of legislation or of government is said to conform with or be dictated by the principle of utility when 'the tendency which it has to augment the happiness of the community is greater than any which it has to diminish it.'"

3. examples

a. Disney vs wilderness

b. resort hotels vs traditional fishing villages

c. “in the long run”

D. Answering questions. moral community

1. value: maximizing happiness

2. moral community: human beings

3. basis: sentience

4. ought: principle of utility

5. social organization

a. principle of equality

b. principle of justice

III. Judeao-Christian Tradition and ethics

1. The Law
2. Covenant

C. “Neighbor”