

Introduction to Ethics

Review Questions:

1. Define in your own words what “the ethical point of view” means.

The topic about “the ethical point of view”, we are just basically an expression on how we deal things or actions with the principle of morality. It is an action about morality or not. A good example for this is the Reproductive Health Bill. Some people, they say that it is ethical or they think that it is right to have this bill in order to avoid poverty that can also affect the children of course. Whereas the stand of the church and other people believe, that it is not morally right because you are not giving a chance for a person to live.

2. Define morality and ethics in your own words.

Morality plays a vital and critical function in formulating man’s ethical theories. It is generally used in the society to have an existing code of conduct that applies to all the human beings. This is what differentiates our actions between right and wrong. However, ethics is a set of principles that examines our moral beliefs and behavior. It is a part of philosophy that deals with the values relating to human conduct according to its rightness and wrongness. I believe that ethics is a collection of a person’s morality based on his/her decision of what is right and what is wrong.

3. What is the difference between morality and ethics?

Basically, morality defines our personal character. It is our own understanding of what is right and what is wrong, while Ethics is the principle in which we apply the concept of morality. Morality is somehow, centered on “spiritual standing of a person”, whether his actions are good or evil or if it’s wrong or not. Ethics on the other hand is society based. People judge you according to the result of your actions. Whether it benefits or harms other people. Ethics is created to improve the way people are living and morality is already a part of what we believe in. It is not something that is created anytime we want to.

4. What is the difference between relativism and objectivism?

Relativism is the view of something if the act is right or wrong but it depends on what the person thinks which is right or wrong. If a person does something that is wrong like taking revenge to another person and that person believes that it is right, then that person’s action is right. On the other hand, Objectivism is a view of something if the act is right or wrong but depends on what everyone thinks and believes. Objectivism is somewhat depends on the tradition and beliefs of the community, an example of it is having a concubine for the Muslims. For the Catholics, it is believed that having concubines is not a good deed and for the Muslims, they think that having concubines is just normal and does not harm other person which they believe is a good deed.

5. What are the advantages of using an ethical theory in which all humans are treated equally and guidelines are developed through a process of logical reasoning?

In reality, using an ethical theory I think will be a great approach to have a peaceful or maybe a wonderful harmonious world. If human are all living in an ethical world, I believe mankind will all benefit from it. Since man are living in an ethical world, one of the advantages will be all humans will live equally. One thing there will be no more crimes and maybe nobody will suffer from hunger or poverty. Having said these advantages, I can say that the humans are living peacefully in a perfect world.

6. What do we mean when we say an ethical theory is rational?

When man says that ethical theory is rational it means that people carefully judge things first before making any assumption in their actions. Besides when a certain person make a decision it is not just reasoned for the sake of having a reason but it has a goal to solve a problem. Ethical theories are rational because they exercise the ability to reason out. It has a consistent logical explanation on why it is wrong or right. Additionally, it confirms information and the reasoning of the agent who is using it.

7. What is the many/any fallacy? Invent your own example of this fallacy.

Fallacy of many questions is a fallacy that tackles about rhetorical questions that cannot be answered without admitting a presumption that may be false. This kind of fallacy generally, assumes whether a person is guilty since that answer in the question whether you answer a yes or no, will only be concluded as guilty. For example, *are you done cheating?* If you answer no, then basically this only proves that you're guilty, same when you answer yes. Although you're done the answer concludes that you still cheated. But what if your answer is neither of the two, then you don't have a chance to defend whether you're innocent or not.

8. What is the equivalence fallacy? Invent your own example of this fallacy.

Equivalence fallacy is a defining distinct and conflicting moral behaviour in similar terms. It seeks to draw comparisons between different, often unrelated things, to make a point that one is just as bad as the other or just as good as the other. It may be used to draw attention to an unrelated issue by comparing it to a well-known bad event, in an attempt to say one is as bad as the other. Or, it may be used in an attempt to claim one isn't as bad as the other by comparison.

9. Come up with your own example of a moral rule that would violate Categorical Imperative.

For me, stating an opinion is right of a person or expressing what he believes or ideas is his right. In school, sometimes teachers discuss the lecture in a way with what they believe in, but not everyone can agree with it. Since some of the teachers do not want to listen to the opinions of their students, or cannot accept their opinions, so these students just keep their opinion in themselves which I believe is violating their categorical imperative. I believe that there no wrong answers as long as a person voice out his opinion and heard what is in his mind as long as did not commit harm to others.

10. What is plagiarism? Describe four different ways that a person can commit plagiarism.

Plagiarism is an unauthorized use of someone's original work. As well as, it is a form of cheating that represent's someone else words and thoughts without any references. When someone is caught, there is a law stated that a person can be punished in this action. A person can commit

plagiarism in many ways. First is by not citing his/her sources at the end of a research paper. Then, when a person is copying word per word or phrases by phrase the author's work whether it's written in the book or in the internet. Next, when certain person takes an entire paper from another person without any permission. Lastly by not putting quotation marks in what the author had said.

11. What is the difference between plagiarism and misuse of sources?

Plagiarism is copying other people's work. Mainly, the action is done intentionally. If one's user did not recognize the sources of his works and take the full credit as his works. For example, I have an assignment that is due tomorrow since I cannot finish it on time; I copy other people's work in order to pass it exactly on the due date. On the other hand, Misuse of sources is due to ignorance and understanding when it comes to citing sources. This also includes wrong way of paraphrasing. This kind of plagiarism is unintentional.

12. What is the difference between a consequentialist theory and a non-consequentialist theory?

Consequentialist Theory tells that an act is right or wrong depending on its consequences. Consequentialist Theory believes that if an act of a person brings good things to others means that, that person's deed is right; if an act of a person brings bad things to others means that, that person's deed is wrong. It does not consider the true nature of the act. A good example of this is Robin Hood, his act is considered as a bad deed because he steals money from rich and corrupt members of the society but then he gives it to the less fortunate which makes his action right. On the other hand, Non-Consequentialist Theory tells that an act is right or wrong depending on the true nature of the act.

13. Give three examples of a situation in which your action would be primarily motivated by a sense of duty or obligation. Give three examples of a situation in which your action would be primarily motivated by its expected consequences.

Examples for actions that will be motivated by a sense of duty or obligation: first, when you make a lie and something wrong happen to a certain person because of what you did. Second, if you commit a crime you have to pay for what you did. Lastly, as a student, we have to study to pass the subject however, do all the requirements of the teacher. However, all these are neglected the consequences of all these actions are not favorable to the student. All man's actions have consequences.

14. What is the problem of moral luck?

The problem of moral luck is when actions do not have the intended consequences and the agent did not intend to do that event and be blamed after. For example, there are two students, Student A and Student B. They are classmates and both scheduled to take a remedial exam to pass the subject. Student A arrived on time and takes the exam but Student A has a copy of previous exam without the knowledge of the teacher. So the student A successfully passed the subject because of the leakage. The Student B did not arrive on time and was not able to finish the exam but has no knowledge about the leakage. Student B was prepared and study hard. The only fault of Student B was not able to arrive on time. Unfortunately Student B gets a failing grade while the Student A passed the exam. If the teacher has the knowledge of

what the Student A did, I think the teacher will say that student A must be punished while student B will be given a chance to pass the subject. In that case, the problem of moral luck enters because both students gave a second chance but did not use it properly.

15. Why do businesses and governments often use utilitarian thinking to determine the proper course of action?

The governments and businesses often use utilitarian thinking way because they knew that if this will be their basis for proper course of action then a lot of people would be benefit from it. The officials of governments and businesses leans toward the maximization of the overall “good” of most of individuals. For the rulers of a government or businesses, anything that brings happiness is an advantage to the community while anything that gives “unhappiness” is definitely a disadvantage.

16. What is the difference principle?

The difference principle tells that there are inequalities in the world that must be accepted like the social and economic aspects of the world. In accepting the difference of the social and economics, one must arrange these differences to be able to give the greatest benefit to who truly needs it. With this, it helps to have freedom and equality among the society. Our society is full of people that are selfish which make our society unequal, with the difference principle, this will help to balance out the inequalities in the society.

17. Is social contract theory as first presented a consequentialist theory or a non-consequentialist theory? Is social contract theory as articulated in Rawls’s two principles of justice a consequentialist theory or non-consequentialist theory?

Social Contract Theory as first presented is a consequentialist theory. For what I believe that man’s every action will have a certain consequence. Whether the action is good or bad, it will still surely have a consequence. Based on the chapter, the two principles of Rawls are both under the consequentialist theory because as being stated in this chapter: “we call utilitarianism a consequentialist theory, because the focus is on the consequences of an action. “

18. Describe similarities and differences between divine command theory and Kantianism.

The similarity between divine command theory and Kantianism is that they have their own universal moral guidelines for the people to follow. There is only one maxim that all the individuals use for making their own decisions. Their difference is that in divine command theory, they are obliged to follow God because they believe that it holds morality according to God’s Will. They also believe that because God created literally everything in the world, they believe that their also created morality. Whereas in Kantianism, they believe that there is a formulation rule. This states that “Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it would become a universal law” and “ Act so that you always treat others as an end, and never as means to an end only”.

19. Describe similarities and differences between subjective relativism and act utilitarianism.

The similarities of relativism and act utilitarianism don’t follow what is on the moral code. For both theories there are no basis in determining which is right and which is wrong. Both of these

theories are based on what they know & sometimes it is just something they create since they think that it will be good for the many. Nevertheless, these two still have their differences. Act utilitarianism still aims for the happiness of many while subject relativism can be a little biased thus resulting to unhappiness of other people.

20. Describe similarities and differences between Kantianism and Rule Utilitarianism.

Kantianism believes that one's action focuses on the true nature or the intentions of the actor, that one must look first on the motive of the actions thus, then decides if the action is moral or not. Most likely, Kantianism asks the Question "*why*", why that person did that action. In Kantianism, it is believed that doing something, most probably using someone just to get to the end, is not morally accepted. Thus, a person must react to one another to achieve the end but not using the other person. While Rule Utilitarianism, is the total opposite of Kantianism. It states that one's action is considered good if it brought happiness to others or if it benefited someone; and that one's action is considered as bad if it harmed someone. The bottom line of these theories, it all considers the people that it around us because we are not the only people here in the world and focused on rules.

21. Describe similarities and differences between act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism.

Act Utilitarianism is mainly an act which is concerned with the consequences, whether it is good or bad. On the contrary, the Rule Utilitarianism is based on rules it is the rules of conduct and other important principle. The rule is the first one needed to be decided then the act is performed. This is the difference between Act and Rule Utilitarianism. I believe that the only similarity is they are both connected with the study of ethics.

22. Describe similarities and differences between cultural relativism and social contract theory.

The difference in cultural relativism is it differs from culture to culture. They have an equal view of each other's culture. There is no comparison or better than the other. The opinion of a person coming from the other culture is not different from the opinion of a person coming from another culture. Their views are not viewed best or worst. However, in social contract society accepts the rules for their mutual benefit. As well as, it has a set of rules that governs the behavior of the people that they will accept as rational people and accept them as well in return. While the similarity between the two is that their moral rules reflect their respective behaviors.

23. Describe similarities and differences between Kantianism and social contract theory.

The Kantianism and Social Contract Theory are both geared towards the judgment of what is right and what is wrong depending on the consequences of the action. As well as the similarities of both theories are fairness is actually measured. These two theories, on the other hand also have their differences. The social contract theory is more focused on the social and political obligations of a person. Whether he/she disobeyed any rules that are in line with their obligations. Kantianism is more focused on the moral rules. They judge according to what is written in the moral code.

24. Evaluate the four scenarios presented in Section 2.1 from a Kantian Perspective.

The following are the Kantian Perspective Analysis of each scenario:

Scenario 1

In the first scenario, a girl named Alexis used the library of a private college near her family's apartment for her to complete a research to have final grade of A. Alexis may be a gifted and hardworking high school student that will do anything to achieve her dream of becoming a doctor but what she did is wrong because she used a library that is exclusively for the students of the private college. She used it just to reach the end which to have a final grade of A for her to grant a scholarship to become a doctor. It may be a simple act of lying but that simple act is wrong.

Scenario 2

In the second scenario, an organization "black list" the ISPs of an East Asian Country. With what the organization have done with this, it resulted a positive effect on the organization but a negative effect to the innocent users of the East Asian Country that was affected by the said action of the organization. This act was truly a selfish act of the organization because they are the only ones who benefited from it. They done things just to achieve their end, reduce spam, but they don't think about the consequences of their actions.

Scenario 3

In the third scenario, the FBI used the EDSP's data to arrest five members of a terrorist organization. They used others data to achieve their end which is to arrest the members of the terrorist organization. They might have used others to achieve it but their intentions are pure and for the citizens of their country. In addition, they asked permissions to the EDSP to use their technology which means that what they did is not a wrong act.

Scenario 4

In the last scenario, as the senior software engineer of a start-up company, the right thing to do is to postpone the launching of the new product. It may be a crucial point for the company. However, it is better to take that risk rather than launching a product that has bugs just to achieve the end which is to improve the sales of the business.

25. Evaluate the four scenarios presented in section 2.1 from an act utilitarian perspective.

The following are the Utilitarian Perspective Analysis of each scenario:

Scenario 1

In the first scenario, Alexis violated the rule utilitarianism by lying to the librarian, saying that she's a student of that university. In my point of view, what Alexis did is just right because if she will not do that, she might fail in her subject. And no one got hurt with what she did, so I think it is just right.

Scenario 2

In the second scenario, I feel that the organization can have other option to reduce or prevent the spammers because in what they did, those innocent computer users are also affected by it. I believe there is other ways to do it without getting those innocent ones affect by it.

Scenario 3

In the third scenario, what EDSP did was just right. With their actions, it helped people and no ones are affected. It also helped people to follow the rule in the road – not over speeding. At the same time, it also became a way to arrest those people who committed crime like the terrorist.

Scenario 4

In the last scenario, the company promised something to a client. Therefore, they should give what they have promised. But in this case, if they push through the project and give it to the client on the date they promised, the system might have multiple errors and in the worst case scenario, will give wrong information to the client which is the hospital. So I think instead of following the rule of promise, it is better to fix all the bugs first before giving it to the client.

26. Evaluate the four scenarios presented in Section 2.1 from a rule utilitarian perspective.

The following are the Rule Utilitarian Perspective Analysis of each scenario:

Scenario 1

In the first scenario, from a rule utilitarian perspective, Alexis' action is wrong because in accordance to the libraries policy, only students studying from that college are allowed to use the facilities of the school.

Scenario 2

In the second scenario, I think the anti-spam organization did not do anything wrong. In a rule utilitarian perspective, what they did was right. They were only doing their duties.

Scenario 3

In the third scenario, I think what the FBI did was also right because their intention is good and it is according to the rules.

Scenario 4

In the last scenario, in that case, I think the best solution for this based on the rule utilitarian perspective is not to release the product because as a software engineer you are trained to produce a high quality product.

27. Evaluate the four scenarios presented in Section 2.1 from the perspective of social contract theory.

The following are the Social Contract Perspective Analysis of each scenario:

Scenario 1

In the first scenario, I believe that in terms of her determination in getting a really high grade I think there is nothing wrong with it. But pretending to be a student of other private school is wrong. What if she broke the computer then definitely she will be busted. She's like trespassing just to finish her researches. Of course she's the one who will benefit for her actions. Also her family as well, since she got her scholarship. The one's she hurt are those who are waiting in their school libraries to get their turn to use the computers.

Scenario 2

In the second scenario, In my point of view, that the anti-spam organizations and the ISP's who refuse to accept mail did something wrong. Even though, the spam-emails dropped down into 25% it is not right to put it in their so-called "blacklist" without even considering the East-Asian citizens that don't send spam messages. Only the organization and the other ISP owners benefited from the action. Noticeably the ones who are hurt are those people who live in the East-Asian countries.

Scenario 3

In the third scenario, I think the East Dakota State Police didn't do anything wrong, in fact what they do is really smart. The one who benefited are citizens of course because first of all the one they caught are terrorists; these group of people are trained to hurt innocent people.

Scenario 4

In the last scenario, I would not recommend the release of my product especially if it still has some issues that are needed to be fixed. Of course, my company would benefit from the recommendation. My reputation would not be affected. If ever I recommended releasing the product obviously the users will be the one who is harmed. Absolutely, I have the responsibility since I proposed that I will deliver a good product to the users.

- 28. A college student attached a webcam to his laptop computer and left the computer running in his dormitory room in order to broadcast video images of his roommate and his roommate's girlfriend engaged in sexual intercourse. They were unaware of his actions. The student's website accumulated thousands of hits for the two weeks it was up. Copies of some images were posted on at least one other web site. Using each of the four workable ethical theories presented in this chapter, evaluate the actions of the college student.**

What the college student did was immoral. It is not acceptable on what he did for every person has a right to have his/her privacy. This action does not only cause a scandal but also a self-degrading act on the his roommate and his roommate's girlfriend. The person did not think what will be the consequences of his action to a point that he caused difficulties to the other person. Doing such an action shows that he is selfish and does not think about others.

Discussion Questions:

- 29. If everyone agreed to take the ethical point of view by respecting each other and their core values, would there be any need for a rigorous study of ethics.**

In my point of view, there is no need for a careful analysis or study of ethics. Since everybody has already agreed to take the ethical point of view by respecting each other as well as their core values, I guess that everyone is aware of what is right and wrong. Then, everything will go peacefully by respecting each other point of view.

- 30. If you had to choose only one of the ethical theories presented in this chapter and use it for all of your personal ethical decision-making, which theory would you choose? Why? How would you respond to the arguments raised against the theory you have chosen?**

The theory that I would choose is the divine command theory because I believe that good actions are aligned with God and the bad actions are not. I chose this because I think this is the best way to show God how thankful I am for his love. This is also the only way to show him how blessed I am today. Without him, I would not be in this world right now. This is all I can offer for him at this moment.

- 31. Most ethical theories agree on a large number of moral guidelines. For example, it is universally held that it is wrong to steal. What difference, then does it make whether someone subscribe to the divine command theory, Kantianism. Utilitarianism or one of the other ethical theories?**

I believe the only way it could be different is depending on how these theories are applied. There is theory that describes it is not wrong as long as you are happy while doing it. From that theory alone we can say that it's already not following the moral code. As a result there are still ethical theories that if you analyze it further the meaning would be different. Then instead of promoting positive attitudes you will figure that is actually promoting good and bad.

- 32. Suppose a spaceship lands in your neighbourhood. Friendly aliens emerge and invite humans to enter the galactic community. You learn that this race of aliens has colonized virtually the entire galaxy; Earth is one of the few inhabitable planets to host a different intelligent species. The aliens seem to be remarkably open-minded. They ask you to outline the ethical theory that should guide the interactions between our two species. Which ethical theory would you describe?**

In my opinion, I would choose the Rule Utilitarianism rather than the Kantianism and other theories present in the book. The Rule Utilitarianism tells that an act can be considered as a good or bad depending on how others respond to it, if they received happiness and benefited from it or if they were harmed from it. Through this, it will help the interaction between humans and aliens since the aliens will know that each action has its own consequences not only to them but also to others.

- 33. According to the golden rule, you should do unto others what you would want to do unto you. Is the categorical imperative simply the golden rule in disguise?**

34. Are there any ethical theories described in this chapter that would allow someone to use the argument “Everybody is doing it” to show that an activity is not wrong?

I think there is no ethical theory that would allow someone to use the argument “Everybody is doing it” to show that an activity is not wrong. I believe that all the ethical theories in this book are showing that that activity is wrong. I think it is because the ethical theories inside this book are all suggesting good intentions in all the actions.

35. What are some examples of contemporary information technology issues for which our society’s moral guidelines seem to be nonexistent or unclear?

Even though, there is a moral code that can be applied in Information technology. I believe there are still issues that are solved by these moral rules. Invasion of privacy, cybersex, plagiarism and piracy these issues are still abundant in the net. Although there is the so-called cyber ethics I think people don’t apply it every time they use the internet.

36. People give a variety of reasons for copying a music CD from a friend instead of buying it. Refute each of the reasons given below using one of the visible theories described in this chapter.

a. I don’t have enough money to buy it.

If you really want to buy it, you could save little by little until you could afford to buy the CD.

b. The retail price is too high. The company is gouging customers.

The retail price is not high, comparing the number of illegal downloaders of music to the actual people that buy the CD, they are just reciprocating the loss.

c. Since I wouldn’t have bought it anyway, the company didn’t lose a sale.

But the fact that you still listened to the music gives potential buyers. You don’t know if it is not good until you try it, in this case buying the CD.

d. I’m giving my friend the opportunity to do a good deed.

It is not a good deed if it is done with the wrong intention. You should go by the 4 step rule, the question, is it fair to all concerned?

e. Everyone else is doing it. Why should I be the only person to buy it when everyone else is getting it for free?

Be the change you want to see. If you set an example to the others and explaining the pros and cons of doing it, they might follow and help the music industry.

f. This is a drop in the bucket compared to Chinese pirates who sell billions of dollars’ worth of copied music.

They probably don’t care about the artists that made the music. This is their way of living, though it may be wrong we shouldn’t copy what is not right.

g. This is insignificant compared to the billions of dollars' worth of music being exchanged over the net.

Every little act is significant. If you put all the people who said that, it would sum up to that billion. So start doing the right thing and help others.

38. Should moral guidelines for individuals apply to nation-states as well? Are the interactions of nation-states analogous to the interactions of individuals? Should there be a different kind of morality to guide the actions of nation-states, or are the actions of nation-states with each other outside the moral realm?

Yes, there should be moral guidelines for individuals in nation-states. Some interactions of nation-state are analogous to the interactions of individuals. I think what the nation-states have right now is enough in terms of the kind of morality to guide the actions of the people. I can see that the people there are well formed according to their own preferred kind of morality.

39. Are the citizens of a representative democracy morally responsible for the action of their government?

I still believe that the citizens still have a responsibility towards the actions of their government. First of all, they are the one who voted for the officials of their government. Whether these officials do good or bad depends on how the citizens react to their action. If they are doing something wrong and the citizens don't do anything about it, then obviously these officials will continue to do wrong actions.

40. Students in a history class are asked to take a quiz posted on the course website. The instructor has explained the following rules to the students: First, they are supposed to do their own work. Second, they are free to consult their lecture notes and the textbook while taking a quiz. Third, in order to get credit for the quiz, they must correctly answer at least 80 percent of the questions. If they do not get a score of 80 percent, they may retake the quiz as many times as they wish. Mary and John are both taking the quiz. They are sitting next to each other in the computer room. John asks Mary for help in answering one of the questions. He says, "What's the difference if you tell me the answer. I look it up on the book, or I found out from the computer that my answer is wrong and retake the quiz? In any case, I'll end up getting credits for the right answer." Mary tells John the correct answer to the question. Discuss the morality of Mary's decision.

What Mary did in their History Class Quiz was wrong, it may be John who asked something from her but she is the one who gave the answers and did not bother if what she did is wrong. It is perfectly included in the rules that they are supposed to work on their own but Mary let John to use her for him to achieve his goal, his end. If Mary is ethical, she will be able to know what is right and wrong, she will not let herself be controlled by someone whose intentions are only for himself.