

Mia Espinoza

Professor Sanchez

Intro to Philosophy

1 April 2023

Reading Questions Week 6

1. Explain why Kant thinks the only thing truly good "in itself" is a good will.

Kant thinks that the only thing that's truly good "in itself" is a good will because it's the only thing that can't be corrupted or affected by external factors. Basically, a good will means doing something for the right reason and not just because of the outcome or consequences.

2. What does Kant mean by doing our actions "from the motive of duty"? How is this different from acting out of self-interest, or out of natural inclination, or even just in "conformity" with duty?

When Kant talks about doing our actions "from the motive of duty," he means doing things simply because they're the right thing to do, not because we'll get something out of it. This is different from acting out of self-interest or natural inclination, where we might only do something if it benefits us, or just doing something because it's expected of us. Acting out of duty means doing something because we believe it's morally right.

3. What does it mean for an action to have moral worth based on its principle, not based on the end it achieves?

Kant believes that an action has moral worth based on its principle, not on the end result it achieves. So, even if something has a good outcome, if it was done for the wrong reasons or with a bad intention, it doesn't have moral worth. On the other hand, if something was done for the right reasons, even if it doesn't have a good outcome, it still has moral worth.

4. Explain in your own words Kant's two formulations of the Categorical Imperative, on 510 and 511-512:

a) I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law

Kant's first formulation of the Categorical Imperative means that we should only act in a way that we'd be okay with everyone else acting. In other words, we shouldn't do anything that we wouldn't want to become a universal law.

b) Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end

The second formulation means that we should always treat other people as ends in themselves, not just as a means to an end. We should respect their dignity and not use them to further our own goals.

1. Write out and explain Mill's "Greatest Happiness Principle".

Mill's "Greatest Happiness Principle" states that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness and wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.

Basically, it means that the goal of our actions should be to create the most happiness possible.

2. What does Mill mean when he writes, "Better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied"?

When Mill writes, "Better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied," he means that it's better to be a wise person who is aware of their dissatisfaction than a fool who is content with their ignorance. In other words, it's better to be aware of the truth and be unhappy than to be ignorant and happy.

3. How does Mill discuss quality and kinds of happiness in contrast to calculating the quantity of happiness?

Mill believes that happiness is not just about quantity but also quality. He argues that some kinds of happiness are more valuable than others, and that we should strive for the higher quality ones. For example, happiness that comes from intellectual pursuits or doing something meaningful is considered better than just physical pleasure. So, instead of just calculating the quantity of happiness, we should also consider the kind of happiness that we're pursuing.

4. What role does all of previous human history and the experience of wise and competent people play in figuring out what will bring the most happiness in our actions?

According to Mill, we can learn from the experiences of wise and competent people in human history to figure out what actions will bring the most happiness. By studying their

successes and failures, we can gain insight into what works and what doesn't. However, he also believes that we shouldn't just blindly follow tradition or authority, but rather use our own reason and experience to make decisions.