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Lukas

Test 1

1. Cultural Relativism is a meta-ethical theory stating that all moral beliefs that an individual holds are relative to his/her culture. A person who believes that an act is morally wrong in one culture may encounter a person who believes that that same act is morally right in a different culture. This does not mean that either person is unequivocally correct, as both cultures are permitted to their own moral code, or system of moral rules that are accepted by that culture at that time. Therefore, moral beliefs of an individual are culture-specific and of equal value throughout cultures.

 The Reformer’s Dilemma argues that:

1. If Cultural Relativism is true, then all moral reformers are mistaken.
2. It is not the case that all moral reformers are mistaken.
3. Therefore, Cultural Relativism is false.

This argument against Cultural Relativism acknowledges the theory’s flawed perceptions of moral codes. Cultural Relativism implies that a society’s moral code is unquestionable at its given time. However, it is unlikely that all people would absolutely agree with the entirety of their society’s moral code. This is where moral reformers, or people who object an aspect of their society’s moral code, arise in society. As supported with moral reformers such as Martin Luther King, who aimed to advance civil rights for African Americans in the United States, it is not the case that all moral reformers are mistaken in their beliefs of moral reform in society. Therefore, the Reformer’s Dilemma argues that Cultural Relativism is false on the basis of the soundness of a moral code in any given society.

 A Cultural Relativist would defend the theory by stating that if a society is not upholding its own ideals, then the moral reformer would be acting for the betterment of that society and not be mistaken. However, the moral reformer cannot defy the ideals themselves because those ideals are correct by default. This argument is restricted to the moral standards of a society and how those standards interpret the moral reformer’s actions as correct or incorrect. If a moral reformer is attempting to make progress, then he/she is challenging the moral code of his/her society. Even if his/her actions are justified by his/her society’s moral code, it is challenging Cultural Relativism’s belief that one cannot impose negative beliefs on any society, even if that society is the same but at a different time period.

2. Simple Subjectivism is a meta-ethical theory that states that an individual saying “X is morally wrong/right” is equivalently saying “I disapprove/approve of X.” This is a simplification of Ethical Subjectivism, which is a theory involving moral judgments. Simple Subjectivism suggests that moral judgments that an individual has about a certain action are really the attitudes that he/she holds towards that action.

 The No-Disagreements Argument states:

1) If Simple Subjectivism is true, then there are no moral disagreements.

2) There are moral disagreements.

3) Therefore, Simple Subjectivism is false.

This argument acknowledges the flaw in Simple Subjectivism’s views on moral judgments. If two people were arguing about a topic such as abortion, one who says that it is morally wrong and another that says it is morally right would technically not be in disagreement with one another. Simple Subjectivism bases moral judgments simply on attitudes, so both people are expressing moral judgments through approval or disapproval. Therefore, there cannot be disagreement, but simply acknowledgement of two attitudes.

 A Subjectivist would argue that moral judgments cannot be proven to be factual. However, the idea that there is absolutely no proof towards moral judgments is doubtful. If a person is considered a bad driver because he deliberately passed through a red light, then his action is proof that he is a bad driver. With Simple Subjectivism, one does not require reasoning behind his/her stance on a topic of morality. However, moral judgment requires at least some other evidence as to why a person states that an action is morally right/wrong than whether he/she approves or disapproves of that action.

Works Cited

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