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PHIL 2305 Introduction to Ethics

Dr. Westfall, Summer I 2019

Exam 3: Capital Punishment and Drug Use, Harm, & Personal Liberty

1. The United States is the only country in western society where capital punishment is still a common practice, and specially the state of Texas has the highest execution rate in the nation. Even so, I still think that convicted murderers should die, because of their heinous crimes and their intent to take a person's life. An abolitionist of the death penalty would probably tell me life in prison is enough punishment and can be even more terrible than an execution because of confinement. A retentionist, somebody who wants to retain capital punishment, would of course agree with me. Their arguments would be that society should be saved from individuals like murderers or the Kantian approach, who kills should be killed. In my opinion, nobody should just be simply killed like before the dawn of ages because we live in a civilized society where we not just kill somebody, but we execute them in a lawful way administered by the state. That is how Reiman argues in his essay when he is replying to Van den Haag's argument, if you kill somebody, you should just be killed ,too. Like already mentioned, Reiman demands, not even the state has the right to kill somebody, a murderer deserves to be executed. Not to many people think about the person who actually does the execution what is sure not the most pleasant job to do, and many people in our society don't want to know that individual. It doesn't matter, if they are for or against capital punishment.

2. I would go with retribution and would take Immanuel Kant's argument under consideration what is about, if somebody deserves to be punished. Kant only permits that a person is being punished, if the crime, they are committing, deserves punishment and only then, it is moral, for example murder, to kill someone, otherwise it goes against the categorical imperative. Criminals, specially when convicted, are guilty and deserve the right amount of punishment according to their crimes. Nobody who commits a crime should go free by law and ethics or sneak their way out of it just by pure luck. Abolitionists would actually agree with Kant, but would say, is it not enough to lock them up for life instead of killing them. Kant and retentionists like Pojman would answer them, who commits the crime and is convicted deserves to pay the price. What would be not moral for me and Kant, if someone would be punished because some people want to statue an example to show everybody else, crime doesn't pay.

4. I think drug use is a choice what can turn into a disease shown heavy dependency on the substance. On the beginning, most users don't even realize that a dependency is developing and there are on the road to disaster. Peg O'Connor writes in her essay about the "Hijacked Brain" what that means, if using drugs the brain doesn't function normal anymore and the drug takes over through, for example hallucinations or paranoia. What are actually extreme cases, but continuing use can effect that. To take drugs is always a choice on the beginning and shows signs of pleasure what is maximized through the substance like O'Connor mentions in her essay. Then after awhile reality sets in and drug use becomes a habit and disease what spins out of control for the user. If they don't take the drug they can't control their lives and show also physical signs of dependency what is considered a disease. In the case of the drunk driver who killed unintentionally a person, he should be sent to rehabilitation because his brain was clearly under the influence of the toxin and a normal reaction was not expected. Most people who are driving drunk, they are already taking over by the dependency on alcohol, even if they think they still can handle it like they handled it so many times before. Most of them don't want to admit, they have a dependency until it is to late and they kill someone with no meaning of intent, but still grieve and sorrow to the victims. To go to jail for this, the intent is missing.

5. Under the law alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, cocaine, and heroine shouldn't be treated different. Szasz argues in his essay that the Constitution and the Bill of Rights are silent over the use of drugs what is correct because I'm sure when the Constitution was written, the subject of drugs was not on their agenda. He also argues, this means that citizen have a right to use everything from alcohol to heroine and not getting punished for it. What is absolutely correct again because around 100 years ago cocaine and heroine were legal drugs, and alcohol was to one time outlawed. What makes the whole situation even more confusing. Specially, the Harrison Narcotic Act what is actually unconstitutional, according to Szasz. It seems to me that the government outlawed certain drugs when it was convenient for a political agenda and not to protect the population what is highly unethical. Political gain is always a problem a government has to fight. Any drug can be a health risk and kill a person that would

be the focus point why they shouldn't be treated different ethically or in front of the law.