

NAVIGATING ETHICAL TRADITIONS:

Western, Postmodern, African vs Biblical Ethics

Proposed Argument

God honoring wisdom is the basis of good ethics.

The Outline

- Western ethics – reason as its basis.
- Postmodern ethics – self as its basis.
- African ethics – community as its basis.
- Biblical ethics – God honoring wisdom.

Western Ethics

Virtue Ethics

- Happiness is the end goal of humanity.
- Happiness is desired for its own sake.
- Happiness is achieved through exercising virtue.
- Virtue is an in-built function.
- To act virtuously is to act in line with reason.

Deontological Ethics

- Categorical imperative – moral principles which applies to everyone, everywhere.
- Uses a formula of an end in itself: “never use a person as a ‘mere’ means.”
- Consent and intention based theory.

Consequential Ethics

- Utilitarianism – results based theory.
- What determines the goodness or badness of an action are its consequences – more pleasure, less pain.

Postmodern Ethics

Existential Ethics

- Friedrich Nietzsche – morality is a result of slave revolt.
- Martin Heidegger – humans are to live a life of authenticity, which is freedom from the ‘they’.
- Jean Paul Satre – an authentic life is owning our freedom.

African Ethics

Communal Ethics

- The epistemological principle – oral traditions (stories, liturgies, songs, rituals, and proverbs).
- The symbiotic principle
- The communal principle

Biblical Ethics

Divine Ethics

- God honoring wisdom – God for himself.
- The epistemological sources – biblical texts (various genres).
- Models and reception of wisdom within biblical traditions.