

Ethical Theory

Concepts in Normative Ethics: *Teleological Foundations and Egoism*

As you read the material for the next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the readings:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently to these issues in the next class meeting.

Readings

- Shelly Kagan, *Normative Ethics*, chapter 6.1–6.3.

Questions

1. What is a foundational theory in normative ethics? What is such a thing supposed to do or accomplish for us? Why might something like this be important?
2. What is the difference between factoral teleology and foundational teleology? What makes a foundational view teleological?
3. What is the difference between factoral egoism and egoism as a foundational theory?
4. What is an evaluative focal point? What distinguishes rule egoism from act egoism? How is virtue (or character) egoism different from both?