Moral Reasoning

Brief Intro

Some fundamental considerations

- Is there a "proper" normative ethical model?
    - What is your normative model and how do you justify it?
    - What is the normative model "they" (the position or person you're critiquing) are operating with and how do they justify it?
- How does one critique other moral models (macro-criticism)?
    - Incomplete or inadequate
    - Incoherent or contradictory
    - Not applicable to other people in relevantly similar circumstances and contexts

Some fundamental considerations

- Does it imply there are no moral principles?
    - Exactly what is their argument—write it out
- Is it relativistic and possibly have cross-cultural application problems; does it go against our deepest intuitions?
- Does it really help people to get along and produce a harmony?
- Does it help people internally to become "good" people; is it merely trying to legislate morality?
- Does it head the culture/organization in the right direction (most controversial)?

Some fundamental considerations

- Is the normative model properly applied to the situation (micro-criticism)?
    - Does it properly take the facts into account?
    - If it is teleological, what is account of the Good it's seeking?
    - How do you calculate "the greatest pleasure/ good for the greatest number?
    - Is it manipulative or deceptive?

Other fundamental considerations

- The 'Is/Ought' dichotomy
  - 'Is' has to do with the facts; what are the facts?
  - 'Ought' has to do with moral judgment about the facts
  - A fundamental question is whether there is a gap between the two (a real dichotomy) or not
    - If there is a gap, what kind is it? Logical? Category?
    - Is the 'is/ought' distinction moral theory dependent?

Moral Statements Schema

Cognitive

Non-Cognitive

Death of truth

Subjective

Objective

Emotivism

Imperativism
Or Prescriptivism
(R. M. Hare)

No analysis
(A.J. Ayer)

Individual

Social

Natural
Property

Non-natural
Property

Individual
Relativism

Cultural
& Religious
Relativism

(objective)
Naturalism
Hedonism
Utilitarianism

Personal Theism

Impersonal forms,
Brute Facts, Platonic

(G. E. Moore)