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Ethics-Project 1

Sexual Morality

The definition of sexual morality is different for every person. The main two positions that one person could choose from is traditional, which states that there will be no sexual intercourse or anything until marriage. The other position is libertarian. This position states that sex is just for “fun” only, and it is just seen as an activity, such as something as simple as playing tennis. Mappes’s point of view comes from Kant’s principle that a person should be respected as ends in themselves, and should never be used merely as a means to someone else’s end. Mappes’s position and his reliance on using Kant’s principle make his argument much different from the traditional point of view because he relies on the concept of “voluntary informed consent.” The “voluntary informed consent” is both his position and opposing position. The first point he makes is about using another person. The second point is about deception, and the third point is about coercion.

The idea of “using another person” came from Kant. He says that it is wrong to use a person for your own needs and not think about their needs. He also states that not thinking about the other persons needs is similar to not respecting them as a person. When we think about this though, we use people on a daily basis for our own needs, and never think about them in the process. I believe that there are good and bad ways to use a person. The good ways being that we use teachers to teach us, and they use us to make a living. Both people in this situation are benefiting from using each other. The bad way would be using a person for something that benefits only you, and in the process hurts the other person. When you use a person for your own selfish needs, it does not make it right.

Deception is when one person keeps an important piece of information from the other person so that the person will do what the person wants. Deception also is known to happen when one person is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The non-intoxicated person is easily able to talk the intoxicated person into something sexual without the person fully understanding what is going on. When the intoxicated person finally realizes what happened they tend to feel used, or tend to be very angry at the person. My opinion with the intoxicated issues is that a person should not become so drunk that they do not remember what is going on. In a way it is almost their own fault because they were not smart enough and went over their alcohol limit. Also, it was their choice at the time and they said yes, therefore it was partially their decision. I can also can see how a person would be upset, or feel used afterwards because they did not exactly understand what they were agreeing too. I think in this situation it is in the fault of both people. The intoxicated person is at fault because he/she drank too much, but it is also the other persons fault for knowing that the other person is not coherent enough to make an actual conscious decision and they took advantage of it. Both people will be faced with consequences because one could feel used and the other one may feel guilty, or tried to be charged with rape, etc.

Coercion has two different extremes. One is rape, and the other one is threats/offers that a person will use. Rape is not considered sexual interaction because the person is being forced to do what they are told. Most rapists also look at the person as a physical object, so the rape is completely physical and is not counted as an actual sexual experience. The threats/offers are somewhat similar. The threats can be used by bosses or people in higher positions to their employees. For example, a boss can tell his employee that he/she will be fired or not get promoted if they do not engage in sexual interaction. This is a threat because the choice will have consequences to the person whose job is at risk. The offers are when one person will offer a sexual experience for something they owe another person, or that it is the only type of payment they will take from another person. For example, if a man loans money to a woman and he expects her to repay him within a year, but when the woman goes to repay him he wants the money and sex and will not take no for an answer. This sort of situation also will have consequences for the person that will be affected if they do not take the offer because it could turn into something worse for them.

Overall, sexual morality is different to each person, but for the most part there is a point where everybody can agree. For one, I would hope most people would agree that rape is wrong and should not be accepted. Also, I believe that the threats/offers should not be accepted because that is selfish of one person to use another person in that meaning just for their own benefit. I believe with what most of Mappes says because I like the way he uses “voluntary informed consent’ as his main basis because a person knowing exactly what they are doing is the most important part. If information is denied to a person or forced upon them then it will cause consequences in the end; however, if both people are fully aware of what is going on and have all the right information, then I believe there is little to no consequences that would be able to come out of the sexual interaction.