What is normative question and is there a place for normative question

Science, Social Science

Full On Normative Questions A normative question is, as the word suggests, a question about what have been believed to be right or wrong, the practices and beliefs which are considered norms. Generally speaking, there is perhaps an inert desire among peoples and cultures to create norms in order to avoid mistakes and walk the good old straight path of virtue and morality. However, this does not mean that people should simply accept the norms without questioning them. People are thinking beings and it is natural for them to ask questions about the things that happen around them. They have the tendency of finding reason for everything they do and observe because they are not automatons who simply will do what they are asked to do. Instead, people have feelings and dreams which drive them to make sense of the things that affect their lives. Philosophers such as Plato, Confucius and Socrates asked various normative questions, trying to find not only the meaning and reason behind the norms but also the meaning and reason of living itself. However, it does not always take a philosopher to ask these questions. Normative questions have been asked even by nameless, faceless children.

Normative questions are the opposite of positive questions. While normative questions focus on value, positive questions concentrate on the facts. For instance, normative questions will ask if a norm is good or bad or if it is right or wrong but positive questions inquire about the how the world moves, what is the distance between the moon and the earth or the speed of a falling body. In other words, positive questions spark a person's interest on things that can be described and measured and answered with proofs such as statistics and experiments. The answers for normative questions on the

other hand, are based on experience and general observations.

In the world today wherein wisdom and intelligence are equated with knowledge about facts, normative questions are not as desired as positive questions. It seems that more and more people are interested in finding out about facts that science can explain. Many people are abandoning the teachings of religions because they claim that only unquestioning fanatics get fooled by the inaccurate teachings of religions. Stories in the Bible, Qu'ran and other religious books have become mere fairytales which only our " uneducated" ancestors believed to be true. Those who follow such teachings are not considered bright enough to see that they believe stories made up by men. This then brings the issue whether normative questions have a place in modern times.

Personally, I believe that normative questions have a place today. Human beings are not only reasoning beings. They are also emotional and moral beings so it is but right for them to consider if the things they are doing are right or wrong, if they are bad or good. Normative questions keep people's beliefs in check. The reason why this is important is the fact that history shows the rise and fall of morality and humanity because of the presence or absence of normative inquiry. For instance, women were once considered to be inferior to men. It was believed that their place is the house and their task is to please their husbands, take care of the children and attend to the household chores. For centuries, women kept quiet about this issue because norms suggested that accepting their fate is the right thing to do. However, this led many women to be used and abused. It was not long ago when women started asking normative questions. With the nature of their gender

and expected roles, women writers expressed such questions through short stories and soon enough, they gathered momentum and finally had the attention they deserved. This example alone shows that normative questions can make things which were considered " right" to really become right.