

Comparison of the ethical theories of kant, bentham and mill

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This paper intends to look into the theory of ethics of Immanuel Kant, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, and compare them from one another. In addition to that, it also aims to mention the uncertainty which has arisen as I tackled these theories.

Immanuel Kant's Theory of Ethics: Formalism

According to Immanuel Kant's Theory of Ethics, a deed is right if the acts involved in the progression are also right (Thomson Gale, 2008, n. p.). Simply put, "the end is only just if the means are as well" (Thomson Gale, 2008, n. p.).

Jeremy Bentham's Theory of Ethics: Ethical Universalism

According to Jeremy Bentham, his theory of ethics otherwise known as "ethical or moral universalism" is instituted upon "utility" which he categorically defines as "that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness or to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness to the party whose interest is considered" (Bentham, 1948, p. 126). In turn, the aforesaid concept of "universalism" is established by looking into the following hypotheses/assertions/principles:

1. Jeremy Bentham asserts that the following terminologies: " a) pleasure; b) happiness; c) goodness; d) benefit; e) advantage; 5) etcetera" are of the same value so to speak (Germino, 1972, pp. 235 – 236);
2. Jeremy Bentham reiterates that the following terminologies: " a) pleasure; b) happiness; c) goodness; d) benefit; e) advantage; 5)

etcetera” are actually gauged, thus, calculable and irrefutable as well (Germino, 1972, pp. 235 – 236);

3. Jeremy Bentham argues that an individual’s actions, as well as, the actions of the government ought to be founded or rooted upon the imperative which actually takes complete advantage of gratification and dwindles pain (Germino, 1972, pp. 235 – 236); and that
4. Finally, “ it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong of human action in every situation, and in particular when governmental action is called for” (Germino, 1972, pp. 235 – 236).

John Stuart Mill’s Theory of Ethics: Utilitarianism

“ Utilitarianism”, according to John Stuart Mill, is where morals/ethics/good deeds are based/founded/instituted upon (Ebenstein & Ebenstein, 1991, p. 580). The reason behind this claim is that, deeds are only correct or proper if and only if the at the end of it happiness is achieved/felt and wrong or improper if and only if at the closing stage of the deed wretchedness is reached (Ebenstein & Ebenstein, 1991, p. 580).

That being said, happiness for John Stuart Mill is equivalent to the absence of unhappiness or any kind of negative emotion (Germino, 1972, p. 240).

While, wretchedness for him, is when the occurrence of pain/ache/hurt is present at the finish of a certain deed (Germino 1972, p. 240).

Comparison

Immanuel Kant’s theory of ethics is known as formalism, while that of Jeremy Bentham’s is known as ethical universalism, and that of John Stuart Mill is

that of Utilitarianism which differs from each other a little since Kant reiterates that an act is good only if the process utilized to reach that is ethical as well; while Bentham is based on the number of people going to benefit happiness from; on the other hand, Mill states that an act is right if one ends up being happy (Germino, 1972, p. 240).

Confusion/Uncertainty Which Has Arisen

There is a certain concept that is a little confusing, for instance, why is it that the number of the population achieving happiness is important to Bentham when it should be enough that an individual becomes happy due to an ethical act being carried out (Germino, 1972, p. 240)? It gets confusing because instead of focusing on the quality of happiness, the ethical theories were focused on the quantity (Germino, 1972, p. 240).

References:

1. Ebenstein, W., and Ebenstein, A. (1991). Great Political Thinkers: Plato to the President. Forth Worth: Harcourt Brace
2. Germino, D. (1972). Machiavelli to Marx: Modern Western Political Thought. Chicago: University of Chicago Press