Good essay on aristotle and epicurus concept of ethics

Sociology, Ethics

Ethics and the role of ethics in almost every field have made its position either it is the field of philosophy or it is the field of modern capitalist organizations. The concept of ethics in philosophy and in the business organizations is different, but the purpose of emphasizing on ethics is for the benefits of the people either in the form of student or the form of customer. The concept of ethics is as old as the epistemology of philosophy is.

The ancient philosophers including Aristotle and Epicurus have touched in their theories on it. The philosophy of Aristotle and Epicurus are thought to be the foundational theories in the sense of starting out a discussion about ethics. The current paper forms a discussion to compare philosophies of these two philosophers and draw upon the similarities and differences between them.

Aristotle believes that every species has its specific nature, and the fulfillment of that nature is the good life for the species. Aristotle begins talking about his concept of ethics in the Nichomachean Ethics by investigating into human nature (Trinity University, 2001). Aristotle believes that the psyche of a human being is consisted of rational and irrational systems. He further says that there is a drive in human nature that provokes human beings to struggle for a society, for knowledge, for happiness and God.

Aristotle argues that the fulfillment of all these drives will be considered a good life. He argues that philosophy is the subject that helps individuals in achieving all these natural drives. Philosophy teaches individuals the right ways to act in different ways called as a virtue. Aristotle's concept of ethics fails in explaining or identifying or materializing the drive that leads human

being for a human society and learning.

In other words, his concept of ethics seems to be based on the assumption of the existence of the natural drive. It is not right to argue on the basis of assumptions. Furthermore, in the modern world there are a lot of people who do not believe in the existence of God. If there is a natural drive that leads people towards knowing God, there should not be a single person on the surface of the world who does not believe in God.

As compared to the Aristotelian concept of ethics, Epicurus' theory of ethic is based on pleasure. He argues that the essential purpose of life is a pleasure. Pleasure leads to happiness as well as pain (O'Keefe, 2006). The aim of life is to seek pleasure that is free from pain and distress. Epicurus believes that virtue and pleasure are inseparable, and the only means to achieve happiness.

The dilemma of epicurean theory is that it is not right to declare the fundamental purpose of life to achieve pleasure. The word pleasure bears a negative tone, and Epicurus does not define what pleasure is. Epicurean concept of ethics is a little bit confusing in this sense that he talks about pleasure as well as a virtue and makes virtue indispensible for achieving pleasure but pleasure can be achieved through other ways as well. For example if one seeks pleasure through stealing things, then this should be the purpose of his life or he or she should follow some other ways to seek pleasure?

I would like to support the Epicurean theory of ethics that virtue is indispensable to achieve happiness over Aristotelian theory of ethics. The reason is that in the life of individual real pleasure is only pursuable through

doing good deeds. If one successes seeking pleasure through crooked ways, his or her conscience will never let the person be happy and the person will suffer internally whenever the conscience reminds him or her of the pleasure pursued through crooked ways. Furthermore, individual should perform the responsibilities in daily life for the sake of achieving some pleasure out of it. Despite all the limitation of the ethical philosophy of Epicurus helps one in knowing what the word ethics stands for and how important role it plays in understanding life, purpose of life and in decision-making. Individuals have a very short life in this world and therefore they should give priority to pleasure seeking while making decisions. The philosophy of ethics by Aristotle and Epicurus are thought to be the touch stones of ethics and the whole tradition of so-called virtue ethics in modern capitalism society seems to be stemming from their ethical theories because these ancient philosophers gave birth to the concept of ethics (Leiter, 2006, p. 93).

The Aristotelian and Epicurean concept of ethics are different in their essential discussions but both give emphasis on the importance of virtue in fulfilling the essential tenets of ethical theories. These ethical theories are the foundations on which the field of ethics is dependent, despite all their limitations and drawbacks.

Furthermore, the modern concentration of ethics in different fields especially, in different organizations owes to Aristotle and Epicurus. One should investigate how the ethics practiced in the business organizations are different to those of Aristotle and Epicurus.

References

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