

Example of argumentative essay on ethics

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



Introduction

Moral philosophy or ethics is a philosophy branch, which involves systematizing, protecting, and recommending the concepts of wrong and right conduct. Thus, ethics are the standards or rules that govern the conduct by which we live our lives and make socially accepted decisions. Philosophers frequently wonder why individuals act ethically. Since ethical behavior appears to be the societies' norm they speculate that there must be specific reason for it. There have been a number of theories that have been formulated to demonstrate ethical behavior as being rational or being motivated by some natural grasp of the universal goodness or by self-interest. Albeit a number of these theories might agree with human intuitive sense of wrong and right, and additionally may make reasonable code for human to live by, they do not explain the reason as to why we must be ethical hence this leaves us wondering about the actual reasons that individuals are good more frequently than they are actually bad. This paper thus demonstrates that ethics is both a learned and natural behavior and tries to explain why ethics is more a learned behavior than a natural behavior.

The big question in the field of ethics is whether ethics is natural or a learned behavior. Ethics, or things that we must do, can in fact be both a learned and natural behavior. In addition, ethics can help us determine the distinction between what is wrong and what is right or what is considered bad in the society and what is considered good. Ethics on one hand is actually a natural behavior because there are a number of things that as human beings we are born knowing (Bostock 2000). For instance, when we are born we know that

when drinking we must apply the sucking mechanism. Alternatively, ethics can essentially be a behavior that is learned. For instance, the manners that our parents taught us when we were young demonstrate that ethics is also a learned behavior. This argumentative essay therefore debates these two sides and through this it clearly shows that ethics is more a learned behavior and not a natural behavior.

A number of philosophers believed that as human beings we are naturally born to fight and therefore a learned order of the behavior can under no circumstances exist. Peter Kropotkin falls under this category of philosophers. However, their theory appears contradictory as it suggests that individuals cannot be good. In addition it suggests that merely evil can exist. It is a theory, which gains great skepticism particularly from aspects of religion and ethics. Kropotkin also suggests that a number of people wish to coexist in harmony with the others whereas several people wish to coexist in competition (Spinoza et al 2000). The philosophers who oppose this theory might even consider Kropotkin ideas to be of an anarchist ideology. While we are born with various natural tendencies, it remains to be discussed if fighting is in fact one of them. Nevertheless, the senses that we are born with can definitely be considered as natural ethics. Since the time human beings are born, they have a sense of closeness, fear, and comfort. In real sense, these are things that we do not learn as we grow since they are a part of human natural intuition.

The other aspect of the concept of ethics being a natural behavior, which one can explore, is the awareness that without the natural behavior, the learned behavior could really not exist. In simple terms, if as human beings

we were not programmed at the time of birth to learn things that we are taught in our lives, we cannot understand what is right and what is wrong. Ethics is a phenomenon that is among the things that our parents teach us from the time we are young but if we do not have that inbuilt nature of learning new things in us, we cannot understand right and wrong. Thus, this proves that ethics is a natural behavior.

Moreover, the concept of natural ethics proves that ethics is natural. This concept is essentially based on human organisms' natural valuing process. That is, it is based on human nature natural laws and the human existence for the proper growth. The development of morality or ethics is naturally revealed with human potential unfolding in a normal process of moral development (Richerson 2004). Therefore, moral development is in fact a function of biologically moral consciousness process development. This consciousness is essentially the inner voice of an individual's sense of strength, responsibility, needs, courage among others.

This means that the social values of the ethical behaviors in real sense originate from a natural valuing system that is actually intrinsic to the individual. Ethical values don't involve conceptual or cognitive thinking. This simply means that these ethical values are operative values that originate from human organism's intrinsic valuing process that is shared by all human beings. In addition, this means that ethical behavior is actually rooted in rational human conscience morals (Richerson 2004). Conscience development is therefore a function of human intellectual, psychological, emotional, and moral development.

On the other hand, we can argue that ethics is learned behavior. The big

question is whether ethics can be taught or learned. The Wall Street Journal in an editorial, announced that courses in ethics are useless since ethics cannot be learned. This raised issue is in fact old because in nearly 2500 years ago, Socrates debated this question together with his fellow Athenians. His position was clear. According to him, ethics consists of realizing the things we ought to do, and this can really be taught (Katz and Ward 2000). Therefore, this side of the debate relies much on Socrates position and the evidence that some psychologists have amassed on whether ethics can be taught.

A number of psychologists in modern times would in fact agree with Socrates. In an overview of the contemporary research in moral development field, James Rest, a psychologist found that young adults between 20 and 30 years' experience dramatic changes in terms of their basic strategies in solving problems that are associated with the ethical issues. Besides, his findings revealed that these changes are essentially linked to the fundamental changes in the way an individual perceives the society in addition to his or her role in such a society. Rest also found that extent to which that change takes place is associated with number of years of the formal education (Krebs 2005). The deliberate educational attempts to influence moral problems awareness and judgment or reasoning process have actually been proved to be effective. Therefore, studies have indicated that an individual's behavior is essentially influenced by moral judgments or moral perceptions that such an individual has.

Much of this research by Rest was previously carried out by Lawrence Kohlberg, a Harvard psychologist. Kohlberg was among the first

psychologists to determine whether an individual's capability to deal with the ethical issues can actually improve in later life and also whether education has any effect on that development. He found that the ability of an individual to deal with the moral issues is in fact not found all at one time. This means that the ability of a person to think morally develops in stages. Moral development earliest level occurs in childhood. He called it preconventional level. At this level, an individual defines wrong and right in terms of what the authority figures says is wrong or right (Krebs 2005).

The next level of moral development according to Kohlberg is the level that most adolescents reach. This is the conventional level. At this level, the adolescence has internalized norms of the groups among who she or he lives. For an adolescent, wrong and right are essentially based on the group loyalties: loyalties to the nation, loyalties to the friends, or loyalties to the family. Thus, if you get a chance and ask an adolescent at the conventional level why something is correct or why something is incorrect, they will in fact answer in terms of the teachings of their families, what Americans believe, or what their companions think (Krebs 2005). A number of individuals normally remain at this particular level, and continue to define wrong and right in terms of what the law require or what the society believes.

However, if an individual continues to advance morally, he or she will actually a stage Kohlberg called the postconventional level. It is at this level that a person stops defining wrong and right in terms of group norms or loyalties. Instead, an adult person at this particular level advances his or her moral principles, which define wrong and right from the universal point of view. Moral principles at this level are principles, which would actually appeal

to a reasonable person since they take the interest of everyone into account. Therefore, when you ask an individual at this level why something is wrong or right, he or she will appeal to the thing that promotes or fails to promote human welfare or human rights or universal principles of justice (Krebs 2005).

Numerous factors can essentially stimulate the growth of a person through all the above discussed moral development levels. Kohlberg found out that education is one of these factors. He discovered that when students took ethics courses, they were challenged by these courses to look at the issues from the universal point of view. These findings have in fact been proved by the other researches.

References

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