

Sophocles tragedy, antigone term paper sample

[Law](#), [Justice](#)



Introduction

Laws are intended to enforce and reflect the ethical and moral standards in a society that is civilized. Laws are used in civilized societies as fundamental instruments for controlling the behavior of man. There is a slight difference between ethics and morals that should be outlined. Morality deals with the aspects that are regarded as wrong or right. Morality originates from the conscience of the individual and from the values of a society that are based on political principles or religious traditions. A moral conduct, therefore, is that which is considered right in the conscience of the doer and the values of the society. It is a way in which a community defines an activity that is appropriate. Ethics is a kind of philosophy that tries to figure out the wrong versus right in any given scenario or situation. Ethics is moral standards that are practical, and that differentiates what is wrong or right and gives a guide to living a moral life. The ethical standards include the obligations that must be followed.

Religion is used to determine what is right or wrong. It defines the morality of man's actions. Ethics, on the other hand, applies religion less often in determining what is right or wrong. Woodruff's quotes " What laws? I never heard it was Zeus." (pg. 21). In the quote, Antigone alternates the theme through the use of religion for a different motive to give her the power. The quote illustrates how she is justifying her conduct by the use of a higher power against Creon. She claims that Creon cannot influence her decision. The idea of bringing in a higher power that is above them reveals how she undermines the sense of faith and power. It is clear that if she had brought a weaker power that is below them, Creon would have confidently dismissed

her notion. The quote illustrates how religion can be used to manipulate ethical standards and legislation in the society.

Antigone's second quote, " Many wonders.. More terrible than human" illustrates the amazing power that is bestowed in the humankind (pg. 332-75). The terrible and wonderful aspect of humankind is the power that they have through their inventiveness. The cleverness of man has posed a challenge to the civilized society. It is the cradle of amazing power that drives man in his quest for justice in situations when the law is used to oppress people. King is his letter, is impressed by the anxiety that people had in breaking the law (pg. 4). According to King, as much as the laws are implemented to ensure sanity in the society, there comes a time when unethical behavior is justified. He supports his call for revolution by the statement that, " freedom cannot be given voluntarily by the authorities, but must be demanded by the oppressed party' (pg. 2). Therefore, in the quest to become a moral and ethical society, man must have a clear mind of judging which laws are to be followed.

Divine Law and Written Laws

The divine laws are put in place by a divine power probably God. The divine powers are used to evaluate the credibility of human laws. The legal positivists have no criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of a given legislation other than the sense of perceiving an evolving need. Written laws are the laws formulated by man to instil order in the society. They are usually formulated based on the nature of the evolving needs of the community. They must not strictly be in line with the divine laws.

Morals and Ethics

Ethics is an array of moral rules and analyses of the behavior of humankind. The set of rules tends to encourage the practice of good behavior. The analyses also help to measure the extent of rightness or wrongness of their acts. The measurement of the acts is commonly done on the perspective of justice and truth. It is said that ethics cannot exist without justice. Justice is simply ethics that has been realized. Morality is time specific. It relies on the location and on the kind of judgment that is made on a specific behavior or act. The judgment goes beyond the determination of what is wrong or right. It also determines what is bad or good. It dictates what is virtuous and that which is not, the acts that cause the most harm and those that cause most benefit, what is acceptable within a given geographical location and the ease with which people within the locality can comprehend the wrongness or rightness of the acts. Event of torturing the Jews under the Nazi regime justifies that their behavior was morally good depending on the location, time and legislation. The United Kingdom also passed legislation that banned the blacks from getting accommodation in the council's houses in 1973, a move that was considered ethical in its context.

Justice in the legal, Ethical and Moral perspective

Justice is a concept that relates to moral rightness that depends on religion, natural law, law, rationality, fairness and ethics. In the legal sense, it can be said to be the strictness and fairness in following the laws of man. Justice according to the legislators is delivered through the execution of the law to the latter based on the true evidence presented to the courts. In the ethical sense, justice varies with the location. Ethically, justice is considered to be

done based on a set of rules that control the behavior of man. On the moral perspective, justice is based on what is good or bad. The question of the existence of justice in a given instance calls for the consultation with a higher authority such as God and other beliefs.

Points in which individuals break the law

In many occasions in life, many activists break the law due to many reasons. Individuals may go to the extremes of carrying out a revolution and sacrificing their lives for a course that is aimed at delivering humanity from the bondage of unethical and morally degrading laws imposed on humanity. The fight for freedom is an example of such an instance. During the periods in which people unite to oppose practices of discrimination are also inclusive. The breaking of the law is also necessitated when the people are denied their rights of humanity that are bestowed upon them by the divine and just laws.

Relationship of the Quotes to the Society and King's Letter

The quote by Antigone about the use of the superior power in making an argument serves to drive the point of embracing the divine power in man's dealings. The quote encourages the application of the divine laws because they are the superior laws of the creator. The quote relates to King's letter in the sense that the letter urged for equality for all men. Justice that the letter calls for is justice according to the divine manifestation and not according to the unjust laws of man. The second quote also acknowledges the uncertainty and the terrible nature of man that is not sensible at times. The inventiveness of man makes him perform activities that could be unjust to

the members of the society. The cry of liberation of human beings from the hands of a tragic humanity is expressed by King in his letter.

Conclusion

Morals and ethics are meant to guard against negative behavior of man in a civilized society. Laws are intended to enforce and reflect the ethical and moral standards in a society that is civilized. However, man has misused the provisions of the law by the use of the power of creativity to oppress other fellow beings. The unjust stance has contributed to the disobedience of the existing laws in a bid to acquire justice in accordance with the divine power. The troublesome aspect of man has contributed to corruption and injustices that are channeled towards fellow men. As much as it is noble to adhere to the moral and ethical codes, standing up to fight unjust legislation and for freedom is a necessity that remains outstanding among all odds.

Works Cited

- King, Martin Luther. Letter from the Birmingham jail. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1994. Print.
- Woodruff, Paul. Antigone. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 2001. Print.