

Utilitarianism and deontology essay

[Experience](#), [Happiness](#)



Two different moral philosophies, utilitarianism and Kant's categorical imperative are utilized for analyzing whether J.'s action of embezzling her employer was correct, even if the end was to provide a better private tuition for her son.

The utilitarianism philosophy is based on the principle of doing the greatest good for the biggest amount of individuals, while being free from pain and engaging in pleasure (Mill 220). However, the utilitarianism ethics provides that there should be clearly specified between simple, animal pleasures, and elevated pleasures, of which individuals with high intellectual capacities are capable. In this sense, Mill (222) reflects that “ it is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied”. Individuals with low expectations have more chances of being happy than those who have high expectations. Related to this aspect, Epicurus (2) indicates that if the health of the body and the peace of the mind are satisfied, individuals have sufficient reasons for being happy. Utilitarianism contradicts this view, as it promotes “ the greatest happiness” (Mill 220). Following Epicurus ethical model, J.'s action is morally wrong, because she woman exchanged her peace of mind for a financial comfort of providing a private education for her son. She is not happy, because she is knows her action is against the company's policy, hence the action is morally wrong.

The utilitarianism philosophy is founded on Christian principles. As such, Mill (224) indicates that in acting morally right, humans should engage in actions that would affect others in the same way that they would want to be affected by others' actions. This principle enlisted in the 10 commandments of Christianity is also translated by the religious value of loving neighbors as

people love themselves (Mill 224; Mortimer 206).

Utilitarianism holds that actions are wrong in the circumstances in which they produce pain or promote the absence of happiness and pleasure (Mill 220). It is wrong, according to act utilitarianism to indulge in less qualitative pleasures, when humans' capacities can reach greater pleasures. Resigning for the lower quality pleasures is set to generate frustrations, lack of enthusiasm and selfishness, which actually suggest the absence of pain and happiness.

Looking at J.'s case, her action of embezzling money from her firm for paying her son's tuition in a private school produces pleasure for her and her son, which can be considered right at the first sight, from the perspective of utilitarianism philosophy. However, her action produces the lack of pleasure, but pain for her company, which implies that it affects more stakeholders. Hence, quantitatively speaking, J.'s action of dilapidating her firm is morally wrong as it produces pain for more numerous individuals. Moreover, J. indulges in less qualitative pleasures, because she cannot find the resources for activating her capacity of reaching for the higher qualitative pleasure. As such, she chooses to still money from the company, when she could have worked more, or requested for a salary accrue, demonstrating proper qualification and expertize for certifying her demands. She also violates the Christian principle of doing to others what she wished others had done to her. J. would have desired that other people to steal money from her, so this Christian value demonstrates that she acted morally wrong from the utilitarianism perspective. Another utilitarianism philosopher, Jeremy Bentham states that the humans' actions can be judged as right or wrong

based on seven circumstances: intensity, duration, certainty or uncertainty, propinquity or remoteness, fecundity, purity and extent (Bentham 197). The balance of these circumstances indicates whether an action is right or wrong. J. action implied an intense process, wherein she decides to embezzle \$15. 000 per year, therefore, for a long duration, with a wide extent, having the certainty of committing an organizational crime. Summed up, it turns that according to Bentham (198), the woman's action was morally wrong. According to Kantian ethics, the moral worth is the absolute human value, which overpasses the others, humor, intelligence or any other talents of the mind and of the body (sursa 242). Moral worth should be aligned to moral rights for constituting right actions. However, Kant holds that human morality, enacted through their actions should be higher than the moral laws, following the metaphysics of universal right and wrong. Kantian philosophy considers actions as moral, hence as right, when their intention is morally oriented and that actions are judged as moral based on their motive, not on their consequences.

With this principle in mind, J.'s action could be judged as morally right, because her motive in dilapidating her employer is based on the second formulation of categorical imperative, which dictates " At in such a way that you treat humanity as an end and never simply as means." (sursa 242). J.'s intention is focused towards the end of paying for her son's tuition. Therefore, even if this end implies an immoral action, the end excuses the means, according to the second formulation of Kant's categorical imperative. Nevertheless, considering that the Kantian ethics is founded on the principle of aligning to the moral laws, J.'s actions are morally wrong, because stealing

is against these laws. In this case, J.'s action contradicts Kant's first formulation of categorical imperative, as it violates the absolute worth of reasoning individuals.

The Christian ethics seems to have inspired Kant's second formulation, according to which the society exists to serve individuals, hence, humanity is the end not the means (Mortimer 207). J.'s action can be justified, from this perspective, as right, because she pursued an individual end, involving the society (her company) in providing that end for herself.

Critically and personally evaluating the two ethical theories, I have developed a reasoning pattern for indicating which theory reaches the right answer. Kant's ethical theory prioritizes the ends, excusing the means, justifying like this the categorical imperative of answering the universal moral of nature. However, according to my beliefs, this theory the ends of an action from just one perspective. Indeed, according to this singular perspective, J.'s action cannot be judged as morally wrong, since her end is a moral one, of providing tuition for her son, hence, promoting happiness. Nevertheless, if we were to perceive the means as ends, than the result would be different. If J.'s dilapidation would be perceived as an end than this would classify her act as morally wrong. As Nozick (in Fumerton & Jeske, 122) observe, experience (by enlarging - reasoning) means that something matters besides one's experience. At this point, I should resume by stating that in J.'s case, Kant's categorical imperative philosophy is insufficient to reach the right answer.

On the other hand, Mill's utilitarianism perceives human issues from a closer perspective to humanity and religion. This moral philosophy explains that J.'s

action is wrong because she makes other unhappy, by stealing from her employer, and she even makes herself unhappy, as she understands the gravity of her action and the end does not generate a greatest happiness. As the case explains, her son is happy to where he currently studies and would also be comfortable with where his mother would like him to study.

Therefore, the utilitarianism philosophy reaches the right answer.

Utilitarianism justifies the answer to be right (meaning that J.'s action is morally wrong) by various arguments, including the Old-Testament inspired Christian value of treating one's neighbor as one would like to be treated.

Another argument of utilitarianism that justifies its right answer consists in the fact that J.'s action does not produce the greatest happiness for the biggest amount of individuals, as the utilitarian philosophy states, but on the contrary, it generates pain for most of the stakeholders involved.

In this time, Kant's moral philosophy, with its two formulations of the categorical imperative reaches the decision that the woman's action is good for the wrong reasons. As such, this theory perceives J.'s action as a noble end of achieving happiness for her son. But the basic element is that her son did not request for that happiness and as far as the case indicates, he might not even need the happiness that his mother intends to provide for him.

Learning in a private school, other than the one in which he currently studies, would imply separating from some friends, while, indeed, making new friends.

Kant argues that humans' reasoning gives moral value, but not everybody reason similarly and not everybody have good intentions. Mill states that in time, people tend to change their enthusiasm for selfishness and their

actions will turn morally wrong, as they will not focus on promoting happiness and pleasure, but pain. This explains J.'s case and this is why, utilitarianism does the best job from the two studied theories, of justifying the right answer: that J's action is morally wrong.

Works Cited

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