Good ethics in western civilization essay example

Parts of the World, European Union

Abstract and Introduction

Ethics is one of the oldest fields of studies. Its roots can be traced back to as early as the time of the ancient western civilizations. In this study, we try to answer several questions about the correlation and importance of the genesis of knowledge (about ethical theories and thoughts, in the western civilization) and of history, in the present day study of ethical thoughts and theories. The author of this paper has developed the notion that ethics (and morality for that matter) is a continuously evolving field of study, and is therefore a product of evolution; and this is what makes the study of the different geneses of knowledge and the history of even the most ancient forms of ethical thoughts and theories important. It has been then concluded in the end that having a solid background on the historical context of ethics in western civilization is important because it is in fact a prerequisite in studying the present day ethical thoughts and theories.

Ethics largely pertains to the study of right and wrong. It has long been established that ethics essentially falls under the study of philosophy. The earliest developments in the field of ethics, that is, the foundation of the current ethical principles, concepts, and theories, that are being used today, can be traced back to as early as the ancient times. Ethics have always been correlated with morality. In that regard, the history of ethical theory has always been correlated with that of moral theory. Morality pertains to the differentiation of decisions, actions, and intentions between those that are proper or improper, good or bad, and right and wrong. Essentially, ethics and morality pertain to the same field of study. In a paper authored by Trevino (2004), he conducted a historical recount of ethical and moral theories,

including discussions on the contributions of ancient philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Cynics, Cyrenaic Hedonism, Epicurus, Stoics, and Pyrrhonian Skeptics on the development of ethical and moral theories. These orders of ethical and moral theories offer a unique perspective on the development of the western civilization, from an ethical and moral perspective that is. By reviewing their works and how they different from each other, one can gain a broad understanding on how the perceptions of right and wrong, or good and bad developed throughout history. What can be inferred from the broad work of Trevino (2004) is that ethics, the branch of philosophy that emphasizes the different processes involved in defending, systematizing, and recommending concepts about good and bad and right and wrong conduct, is a continuously evolving field, and is therefore a product of evolution. One way to accurately test this notion would be to compare the way how ethics has been portrayed during the time of the ancient philosophers Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, with the way how ethics is being portrayed today. In doing so, one can easily see the differences and contrasts.

The differences and contrasts would most likely be start; and it is only normal and in fact expected for them to be so because the time gap between the two periods of comparison in that simple verification test would be thousands of years. Nonetheless, readers and observers of the development of ethics in western civilization would most likely notice that there are still traces, pieces, or fragments coming from the ancient ethical theories that can be found in today's ethical theories . This simple fact reinforces the notion that ethics in western civilization is largely a product of

evolution. This in turn answers the question on what value is knowledge about the genesis of history of current day beliefs and on why history matters in the study of ethical thought.

In his book Classical Ethics: east and west, author Robert Zeuschner (2014), presented a comparison of the Western and Eastern philosophical and ethical systems emphasizing the use of a multi-cultural historical framework. His work essentially supports the notion that is being proposed in this paper that answers the question on why history (and the genesis of knowledge) is an important element of studying contemporary ethical thoughts and theories; that ethics is a continuously evolving field and that it is therefore a product of evolution. One can notice in both Trevino (2004) and Zeuschner's (2014) work, it was shown, although indirectly, how the field of ethics (including the thoughts and theories associated with it) have significantly developed as the world's cultures developed and evolved too.

It would therefore be impossible for people who are given the task of studying contemporary ethical thoughts and theories to successfully have a solid understanding of those thoughts and theories without first having a background on how those thoughts and theories emerged and evolved through time. Within the context of ethics as a field of study, a philosopher who has a solid background on the historical context of ethical thoughts and theories would easily outperform another philosopher who does not have a historical context of ethical thoughts and theories.

There are multiple clear and subtle evidences that one can look at today that would serve as evidence about this notion that answers the questions formulated at the start of this paper. By, doing a simple comparison of the

ethical theories and thoughts of the past and present, focusing on finding the differences between them, and verifying the fact that despite the stark contrasts and differences between the past and present ethical thoughts and theories, there are still traces that can be found, one can already verify this notion that has so far answered all of the questions about why history (and knowledge on the genesis of knowledge) on ethical thoughts and theories is important. Being continuously evolving, it would have been impossible for modern and present day ethical thoughts and theories to have been developed without the guidance of the former ethical thoughts and theories that preceded them. This notion applies to all forms of ethical thoughts and theories, regardless whether it originated from the western or eastern civilizations.

References

Trevino, N. (2004). Ancient Ethical Theory. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Zeuschner, R. (2014). Classical Ethics East and West. Echo Point Books and Media, 334.