
UTILITARIANISM

Activities:

1. Videos to watch:
 - a. Utilitarianism <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-a739VjqdSI>

Assessment

A. Short Quiz

Direction:

Identify the differences between Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism to John Stuart Mill's version?

Jeremy Bentham considered all happiness equally or quantitatively. Bentham says majority rules meaning that what gives the most people pleasure regardless of the quality is the best option. While John Stuart Mill took it one step further and claimed that some happiness /pleasures are of greater meaning than the simpler pleasures (such as unintellectual stimulation-watching a sitcom). Mill took the qualitative view on it, Quality of the pleasure, while Bentham looked at in the quantitative view, the more people pleased the better or the more pleasures received the better.

Reflection

Utilitarianism

Direction:

Answer the following questions using the utilitarian ethical principle:

1. In what ways can the enjoyment of pleasure be unjustifiable?
If the enjoyment of pleasure exceeds to the higher extent or the impact of pleasure goes beyond our mind. After that, it can result to an unjustifiable and illogical thinking of a person.
2. Explain briefly the difference between lower pleasures and higher pleasures.
Higher pleasures depend on distinctively human capacities, which have a more complex cognitive element, requiring abilities such as rational thought, self-awareness or language use. Lower pleasures, in contrast, requires ability to perceive or feel things.

Assignment

Utilitarian Dilemmas

Direction:

Search for at least 5 ethical dilemmas and answer it using the utilitarian ethical perspective.

EXAMPLE #1

How can the inhumane homicide of thousands of people be justified as anything even distantly resembling morality? This is the opinion that the majority of us, who know how (during World War 2) the atomic bombs dropped upon these two Japanese towns nearly wiped out their entire populations, maintain. It was an utterly unnecessary action. However, a few people who were aware that the Japanese were in the process of developing atomic weaponry themselves debate that had the United States not undertaken this brutal but intervening action, many more nations could have been wiped out in Japan's quest for world dominion. Again, I would like to remind the reader that this is not my personal opinion, but rather a compilation of what an influential minority forwarded as a justification for the bombings.

EXAMPLE #2

If we delve deeper, we can see a lot of examples of utilitarianism in business and workplace. One very good example is the airlines industry. We all know that business class passengers pay a premium price to get all the luxuries of that class that the airline offers. Now, if you know the huge difference between the price of an economy class ticket and a business class ticket, do you think that the extra amenities that are being offered to the business class travelers, traveling for the same amount of time as the economy class, really worth the exorbitant price? Now, once you come to delve deeper into this, you'll realize that the premium price charged from the business class travelers – the ones who can easily afford it – are actually used to ease out the burden of deficit that the airline would have to bear if it is to allow the economy class passengers the opportunity for air travel at a lower price. The principle also plays in case of discriminatory pricing strategies of companies when pricing products for different customer segments having different income levels.

EXAMPLE #3

Imagine there is a trolley heading toward a group of 5 workers on the tracks. You are sitting in a control center several miles away, and you have a button that can switch the trolley onto another track where there's only 1 worker. If you flip the switch, one person will die. If you do nothing, 5 people will die. Should you flip the switch?

In surveys, most people in America and Britain say yes. 1 death is better than 5 deaths, so if you have to choose, you should try to minimize the loss of life by flipping the switch. This is an example of utilitarian reasoning, and the survey results show that this school of thought is popular in British and American culture. (In other cultures, people think about the problem differently.)

EXAMPLE #4

Take the example of a judge sending a murderer to prison. Say the judge knows the convict will not commit any more violent crimes, and wants to be lenient based on this knowledge (maybe the convict is very old or terminally ill). The judge knows that this will make the convict very happy, not to mention their family and friends. Imagine that the victim's family has forgiven the convict and will not feel pain as a result of this decision.

EXAMPLE #5

Movie villains often have some sort of diabolical utilitarian reasoning for what they do. For example, in *I. Robot* the supercomputer V.I.K.I uses her massive database to calculate that human beings prefer safety over freedom, and therefore concludes that the most moral course of action is for her to imprison all the humans so they can no longer harm themselves or each other. If a few human rebellions have to be crushed along the way, she calculates, this is still justified.

References

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