

COMPLETION MARKER --JOURNAL 5 & 6 on Ethical Egoism and

Utilitarianism

Cibele Toledo

March 11, 2021

Phil 2306: Introduction to Philosophy

Houston Community College

Journal Writing 5 and 6

1. Explain what is Consequentialist ethical theory? Why is this also called Teleological Ethics? What is the central basis for right or wrong in this theory?

A consequentialist/teleological theory with a clear aim or end in mind: optimizing net happiness for the largest number of citizens. It argues that acts are neither right nor wrong in and of themselves. Rather, an action's rightness or wrongness is measured purely by its consequences: the majority's satisfaction. The general population, for instance, would accept that lying is immoral. If, on the other hand, telling a lie helps save a person's life, consequentialism says it is the right thing to do (Fisher & Dimmock, 2017).

This theory is also known as Teleological Ethics because of what it rejects. It disputes that moral rightness is determined solely by outcomes; for instance, if the agent agreed to do the act now in the past. The morally correct behavior has the best overall implications of all the things an individual can do at any given time. Consequentialism is built on the following two principles (Fisher & Dimmock, 2017):

- Only the consequences of action decide whether it is right or wrong.
- The better or more ethical action is, the better or more ethical it is.

Moving on, a virtuously correct action may produce a better outcome from a consequentialist perspective. It asserts that any action's ethical price is calculated by its inclination to offer items of intrinsic value. Consequentialists believe that an associated action is moral if and only if it is intended to offer a greater balance of good over bad than any market disparity. Nevertheless, consequentialist concepts vary in how they define ethical goods, with gratification, the absence of suffering, the fulfillment of one's preferences, and wider notions of the “generally good” among the leading candidates. When presented with a moral dilemma, it

provides that the individual must decide the act that increases moral consequences, and it offers the basic advice on how to live (Fisher & Dimmock, 2017).

2. Compare Ethical egoism and Utilitarianism as consequentialist ethical theories?

According to Ethical egoism, a prescriptive theory about how things are ought to be. Argues that man OUGHT to pursue his or her own rational self-interest. However, Utilitarianism claims that actions that produce the most pleasure or happiness are good; those that promote pain are bad. The only intrinsic good is pleasure; the only intrinsic evil is pain. On top of that, the moral community of ethical egoists is limited to themselves and those who can benefit them. The ethical egoists' moral community will vary depending on their needs and who can benefit the most. Rather than reaffirming the dignity of the human being, they see other people not as people with intrinsic worth but as objects for one's own gratification and benefit.

According to Utilitarianism, associate behavior is ethical if it achieves the best consequences for the greatest number of people as it is all about size, the bigger the better. Ethical egoism, on the other hand, is a perspective in which the meaning of one's actions is determined by the effects on oneself. Let's take a look at the case of the associate. Assume you're walking down the street and come across a house that's on fire. What is the best course of action? What does it mean to be moral? Because we're following a consequentialist ethical framework, we're looking to select you based on the outcomes of your behavior. So, as this is a common theory, you'll want to look for the action that will generate the most benefit. Thus, choosing one is to simply keep walking. What are the consequences? It's a shame because people die, and no one is rescued. For the most part, the result was negative, with the majority of people believing that ignoring the fireplace was unethical.

Option two: rush through the burning building and search it to save as many of them as possible. What are the consequences? Some people were rescued, and this was an ethical decision. Option three: call the fire department for help but you cannot. Since the fire department will rescue far more people than you, this act has the most positive impact. Everyone has a life, and you have made the best ethical decision. Shortly, in making decisions, consequentialism and utilitarianism are often used. Before acting, it is reasonable and rational for an individual to consider the consequences of their acts. These ethical theories, on the other hand, have shortcomings and should be used per other normative ethical structures. In certain cases, the ethical decisions recommended by each principle are the same (Hart, 2021).

3. Explain the human grounding or foundation of Ethical egoism in the perspective of Thomas Hobbes?

According to Hobbes, our personal self-interests clash with the self-interests of others. As a result, there is a conflict between all against all, in which no one can be sure of achieving his or her goals. As a result, surrendering our rights to a strong centralized government that can best control competing self-interests amongst people is eventually in our best interests. Subsequently, at the very least, we'll be able to pursue some of our goals (Fisher & Dimmock, 2017).

Furthermore, he argues that man is inherently selfish, and that life would be lonely, bad, nasty, and brutish if social laws were not in place to govern our self-interests. Altruism (feeling for the wellbeing and betterment of others) is considered to be unlikely. Also, troops, heroes, scientists, and others, according to Hobbes, are egoistic by nature and behave to achieve their own personal "self-fulfillment" either explicitly or implicitly, knowingly, or unintentionally (Fisher & Dimmock, 2017).

4. Compare Thomas Hobbes and Ayn Rand's solution to handling the conflict of self-interest in society? Which do you think is the most useful solution in solving conflicts?

Ayn Rand and Thomas Hobbes both claim that human nature is inherently aggressive. Both claimed that natural rationality offers the common sense that helps individuals to understand the need for a legal structure that is in everyone's best interests. Human nature, according to Hobbes, is inevitably motivated by self-interest. Every man is out for himself in the natural state of things, which is a war of all against all. Hobbes advocates monarchy as a solution to this issue, arguing that society needs a powerful absolute central authority to avoid disorder and anarchy (Duncan, 2021).

Likewise, self-interest is inherent in man, according to Ayn Rand. She believes it is both immoral and unacceptable to act against one's own self-interest. Moral values, in her view, are affected by one's life and work. Since each human organism is primarily concerned with its own existence, she believes that selfishness is the appropriate moral value of life. According to Rand, it acts instinctively as the standard of value guiding its behavior is its life. After Thomas Hobbes, the Egoist theory rose in popularity. Later, in 1950, Ayn Rand initiated an entire campaign based on Egoism as the only true Morality (Badhwar & Long, 2020).

However, Ayn Rand has the most useful solution in solving conflicts. I don't believe she opposes ethical egoism but instead provides it a solid foundation in the facts she recognizes. She acknowledged rational self-interest after realizing that certain activities men do are advantageous to them while some are negative. It can help resolve self-interest disputes in society in this way. She realized this to be a concept of proper valuation — to rationally value that which is better for you while preventing those things which are detrimental to you — after making more insights about the essence of life generally, and her entire set of values preferred by volitional man is that

code of ethics. As she put it, a code of ethics is a set of principles that people want to follow (Badhwar & Long, 2020).

5. Explain Ayn Rand's concept of rationality as a solution to resolving conflicts of interests including the individual's obligations to himself and others?

Achieving purpose and self-interest, according to Ayn Rand, are both advantageous to the person in the sense that values should be designated or figured out to benefit one's own private life, and not to refute the notion that a man should be the beneficiary of his own behavior. The gold standard, according to Rand, is man's life—and each man's life is the ethical justification. Man must choose his actions, values, and ambitions on the basis of what is special to him in order to obtain, maintain, achieve, and appreciate the ultimate meaning, the end in itself, which is his own life. Man can feel positive or negative, but his standard of meaning defines what he considers right or wrong, what gives him pleasure or suffering, what he loves or hates, desires or fears. When he prefers irrational ideas, his mental process shifts from one of his defenses to his destruction (Badhwar & Long, 2020).

Because reason is a human's greatest and most powerful tool of survival, and because its operation is volitional, Ayn Rand stated that the choice to think is the root of all good - of survival - of flourishing. This brings us back to “is and ought”: she claimed that what a thing is to determine what it ought to do. If you want to survive, you must succeed in obtaining or producing that which is essential to your survival. If you desire to be happy, you must set your purpose and achieve your goals. If you desire to have self-esteem, you must feel both worthy and capable of living. If you want to gain the values you need to survive, you must be productive. If you wish to gain values from other people, you must treat them justly and require them to treat you in a like manner. If you desire to be happy, you must pursue what is in your self-interest. If

you desire to live a life where you can look in a mirror without cringing, you must live up to your values, you must practice integrity, and so on. Consequently, these considerations may be a solution to resolving conflicts of interests including the individual's obligations to himself and others.

6. Explain the human grounding or foundation of utilitarian ethical theory in the perspective of Jeremy Bentham and his principle of utility?

The utility is the balance of pleasure over pain and happiness over suffering, i.e., general welfare or collective happiness. Bentham was the first to give an expression to the philosophy or moral theory of utilitarianism. His idea has a moral intuitive appeal and is very simple: the right thing to do, i.e., the principle of either political or personal morality is to maximize utility.

According to Bentham (Crimmins, 2019):

- We are governed by pain and pleasure, and any moral system must account for both. How? by maximizing utility/happiness, i.e., the greatest good for the greatest number.
- Generally, all are equal, and each's happiness/suffering must be added/subtracted. The maximized total must reflect the decision of society, and be used for political, moral, and social reasoning.

Apart from that, the following are the points of Bentham's principle of utility (Crimmins, 2019):

- The principle of utility refers to actions that promote happiness to a larger group of people.
- Happiness, he defines as maximizing pleasure and minimizing suffering.

- The moral obligation of all is that which results in greater happiness for a larger number of people, and anything that doesn't is therefore morally wrong. That is, morality can be reduced to principles of sympathy and antipathy.
- Pleasure is universally good, irrespective of whose pleasure it is.
- According to Bentham, there were two major advantages to his moral philosophy; it was clear, and hence could be used to resolve conflicts; and his principle relies on human equality, i.e., “one man is worth just as much as another man/each person is to count for one and no one for more than one”.
- The greatest utility principle is consistent with hedonism.

Bentham believed that we should always act to maximize pleasure and minimize pain.

The action that maximizes pleasure has the most utility (hence the term “utilitarianism”). He did not see any other reasonable foundation for morality (natural rights he regarded as nonsense).

Bentham himself mostly developed his utilitarianism in legislation and he supported milder punishments. Bentham's theory applied the principle of utility to individual acts and situations directly. This meant that some abhorrent acts were permitted. For instance, two torturers may be justified in their activity if their pleasure outweighs the harm done to the victim. Bentham's utilitarianism focuses on the principle of Pleasure and Pain (Crimmins, 2019).

7. Discuss the principle of utility in utilitarianism? Why is this theory "hedonistic" theory?

The Principle of Utility is where the goodness of an action is based on if it promotes happiness for the moral agent. Actions are right or good if they promote happiness or pleasure and they are bad or wrong if what they produce is unhappiness or pain, actions are referred to their utility or usefulness in achieving happiness. Hedonistic theory or Hedonistic Utilitarianism

is when an action is considered right when it produces or most likely to produce the highest net of happiness for all. Happiness is for everyone and is distributed in equal weight. However, it is not, in the first place, an incitement to easy and immediate pleasure (as, by the way, was not the case in ancient hedonism either), but to calculate the medium and long-term effects of one's actions so that the final balance yields more pleasure than pain (Fisher & Dimmock, 2017)

8. Describe the difference between ACT UTILITARIANISM and RULE

UTILITARIANISM? Describe which of the kinds that can provide short term and long term solution in providing the satisfaction of interest of society? Show examples in your explanation.

To begin with, Act and rule utilitarianism are both concerned with the happiness achieved at the end of an action (IEP, 2021). But act utilitarianism when the principle of utilitarianism is directly applied to individual actions while rule utilitarianism is when the principle of utilitarianism is applied to the rules and then use those rules into evaluating individual actions. Act utilitarianism is when an action is created to have the highest net utility and promotes that action for the greatest good for the greatest number of people. For example, a person wants to feel happiness and debates between playing video games and doing charity work, doing charity work will be the right thing to do because it will produce more happiness instead of playing video games where there is only one who gained happiness.

Besides that, Rule utilitarianism is when an action is moral is it conforms to a justified moral code and that moral code would create more utility than other rules. Individual actions are measures by reference to general moral rules and those rules should be based on their acceptance into a moral code that produces more well-being (IEP, 2021). For example, you will choose to

donate to NGOs because sharing is a morally accepted action by a justified moral code since it produces more happiness as you help more people.

9. Show similarity and differences in Jeremy Bentham utilitarianism and John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism.

Jeremy Bentham created a method called hedonistic calculus that calculates the value of pleasure and pains because Bentham considers the quality of pleasure in a utilitarian act as its basis. He did not distinguish the difference between pleasures of man and animal. Bentham's utilitarianism is an act of utilitarianism. Whereas John Stuart Mill, on the other hand, focused on the quantity and quality of the utilitarian act. Higher pleasures are pleasures that require mental facilities that only humans can have. Lower pleasures are bodily pleasures that both humans and animals can experience. Higher pleasures are more heavily weighted to lower pleasures. Mill's utilitarianism is rule utilitarianism (Fisher & Dimmock, 2017).

10. Explain one critique to Ethical egoism and one critique to utilitarianism.

Ethical egoism is self-defeating. They will choose their own interest in a situation with limited resources (Fisher & Dimmock, 2017). Also, they will choose for other person's to not act altruistically towards them because it will be in their best interest. They view themselves as more important than others. The merits and desires of others will be less comparable than the egoists' merits and desires when in reality, there should be an equal moral consideration between the two.

Contrary to the claims of utilitarians', happiness can't be quantified. The extent of happiness to suffering is not measurable (Fisher & Dimmock, 2017). So how are we supposed to see if an act is a moral act? Happiest and happier are not measurements and comparing happiness can't make sense. For example, how can you quantify the happiness a person felt an hour ago? Actions can't be justified as right or wrong.

Work Cited

Hart, G. (2021). *Applying Utilitarianism: Are Insider Trading and the Bailout of GM Ethical?*

<https://sevenpillarsinstitute.org/ethics-101/applying-utilitarianism-are-insider-trading-and-the-bailout-of-gm-ethical/>.

Fisher, A., & Dimmock, M. (2017). *Ethics for A-Level*. Open Book Publishers.

Duncan, S. (2021, February 12). *Thomas Hobbes*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hobbes/>.

Badhwar, N. K., & Long, R. T. (2020, July 13). *Ayn Rand*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ayn-rand/>.

Crimmins, J. E. (2019, January 28). *Jeremy Bentham*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/bentham/>.

IEP. (2021). *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <https://iep.utm.edu/util-a-r/>.