Unit 3 Journal

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Thomas Hobbes is one of the philosophers associated with the social contract theory. This theory states that society comes together to form an area in which we can live together but only through giving up our state of nature, but only rational humans would do this if it was going to benefit them in some way. This leads to “Some people believe that if we live according to a social contract, we can live morally by our own choice and not because a divine being requires it" (Social Contract Theory). Because under the state of nature we are left to fend for ourselves and come to our own safety and resources for survival. The advantage to the social contract theory is it helps us establish a society and put rules into places to get people to work together and make people work towards a beneficial state. With laws to keep people from stealing from others that are enforced by others it takes away the state of nature that man was before this point they no longer must fear that there will not be enough of something for them because there is a collective working to make more and that what they have is protected from thieves because of the society they are apart of has outlawed it. They also do not have to fear constantly watching over their shoulder for someone wanting to do them harm. Now the downfall to this is that you are a little less free in the sense that you are not allowed to do as you see fit with your own life and how you want to go about it. You are also born into these society standards and do not really get to choose whether you want to be apart of this system. This is an idea that was thought up a long time ago and put in place and the rest of us are just born into it and forced to keep it going because there is no way for us out of it even if we wanted to. Another philosopher by the name of Jean-Jacques Rousseau viewed the social contract theory as man evolving from the state of nature to a more civil state.

Another argument of the social contract theory is the prisoner’s dilemma which was brought up by Merrill M. Flood and Melvin Dresher. This shows how working together is more beneficial for both, than trying to do what is best for yourself. Two people are caught for a crime and told that if they turn in the other one, they will get no time and the other will get all the time but that is only if the other does not tell. If they both tell on each other they will end up with a significant amount of time each. But if they both do not tell on each other they will both only get a short amount of time. This idea only gives them one option that is best for themselves and that is to tell on the other. But since most people are going to do what is best for themselves instead of the collect then both people will end up with a significant amount of time behind bars. When they both could have just been quite and tried to spare their partner any time and got a very small sentence to serve.

The other theory we discussed this week was Utilitarianism. This is “Utilitarianism is a theory of morality that advocates actions that foster happiness or pleasure and oppose actions that cause unhappiness or harm” (Tardi *Utilitarianism Defined*). The advantage to this theory is that it benefits most people and that it is looking to appease the things that bring pleasure and happiness and minimize the things that us unhappiness or harm. Jeremy Bentham is one of the well-known philosophers that came up with the idea of utilitarianism. His theory has sparked many debates on things that would be believed to be beneficial for man a few of these are euthanasia which is whether or not it is okay to assist someone in ending their life because they are suffering from uncurable disease, and it would give them dignity to die without the pain. The other is whether or not marijuana should be legal it does not harm anyone and it makes people happy so why should it be illegal are some of the ideas people have proposed into why utilitarianism should be a way to go.

Utilitarianism – The doctrine that actions are right if they are useful or for the benefit of a majority

* The doctrine that an action is right insofar as it promotes happiness, and that the greatest happiness of the greatest number should be the guiding principle of conduct.

Social Contract – an implicit agreement among members of a society to cooperate for social benefits, for example by sacrificing some individual freedom for state protection.

Bibliography

“Social Contract Theory.” *Ethics Unwrapped,* 21 Feb. 2022, https://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu/glossary/social-contract-theory.

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