

Assignment 1

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After studying Jeremy's case, I believe that the utilitarian approach is the best to explain how Jeremy should be treated. Utilitarianism is characterized primarily by a focus on the consequences which an action may have. It is focused on the outcomes or results of a decision or action. Actions are basically termed to be ethical or unethical based on the consequences they have. Choices which result in the right consequences are morally right while decisions which result in incorrect consequences are immoral. Consequentialism is also referred to as teleontological theory, and it primarily focuses on the outcomes of an action.

In utilitarianism, an action is morally right if it brings maximum pleasure or happiness to the greatest number of people (Mill, 2016). In this case, the staff who were caring for him would be happy when Jeremy was restrained. A moral act promotes happiness, while an immoral act fosters unhappiness. Utilitarian states that the right action is the one that produces the greatest ratio of good to evil for all concerned. Utilitarianism tells us to promote happiness. The highest balance of good over evil lies in restraining Jeremy rather than his freedom to what he wants. We have to weigh the pros and cons of Jeremy's action, which makes utilitarianism the best approach in deciding how Jeremy should be treated.

In the case of Jeremy, I believe that the happiness of his caregivers should take priority. Since restraining him makes the caregivers happy and pleasant, then that is the ethical thing to do. Controlling Jeremy makes everyone happy (possibly except him), and this makes it a moral thing to restrain him. Giving him the freedom causes discomfort to the caregivers; thus, Jeremy should not be allowed to do whatever he wants to do with his body. Since restraining Jeremy produces the highest amount of pleasure for the greatest number of people rather than maximizing individual welfare, restraining Jeremy is an ethical thing. I believe the happiness of the caregivers and staff should be considered. Jeremy could bite chunks of flesh from his body;

this does not bring a feeling of joy at all. Jeremy could even kill himself. Therefore, I believe that restraining him was the right decision. This is because it made the staff happy.

I reject Kantianism approach in Jeremy's case because it would lead to the harming of Jeremy. Applying Kant's Categorical Imperative, in this case, would be very wrong because Jeremy is not a rational being. Categorical imperative should only be used to people who are sound and capable of making sound decisions. From the case of Jeremy, he is cognitively disabled. This means that he should be allowed to do what he wants since he cannot make rational decisions. His self-destructive actions support this. If we were to go by the Categorical Imperative, then we would have already lost Jeremy because he would have killed himself. Therefore, I do not subscribe to Kant's idea. Kantianism maintains that their consequences do not justify actions. I disagree with this statement as far as Jeremy's case is concerned, because we have to look at the implications of allowing Jeremy to destroy himself.

The categorical imperative is a term which was coined by philosopher Immanuel Kant whereby he meant that we should treat people as an end and not as means to that end (Wood, 2017). This implies that people should be treated with dignity. The categorical imperative by Kant is where deontological ethics is grounded. Deontological theories maintain that their consequences do not justify actions. In other words, in deontology, the means justify the end and not the vice versa. The categorical imperative is unconditional and therefore, still valid irrespective of the circumstances (Thomas et al., 2014). I reject categorical imperative in Jeremy's case because he is not a rational being, and the principle of autonomy should not apply. If we were to uphold Jeremy's dignity by not restraining Jeremy, dignity would turn to harm or even death.

Philosopher Immanuel Kant maintained that rational human beings should be treated as an end in themselves and not as means. This is because humans have inherent value in themselves. According to Paton (2011), the value does not depend on whether the person is enjoying their life or not or whether he/she is making other peoples lives better. While I do not deny Jeremy being treated as an end and not as means, **am concerned** with the rationality and sanity of Jeremy. Kant maintained that rational human beings to be treated with autonomy (Thomas et al., 2014) but since Jeremy was not a rational being (cognitively disabled) this principle should not be applied on him.

Autonomy is an ethical principle which gives individuals the freedom to make decisions about themselves. Kant maintained that people should be treated with autonomy because they have self-worth. The principle of autonomy identifies the authority of law and bases the law on our esteem for the dignity of rational nature of human beings which makes every rational being an end in itself (Kleingeld, 2018). **Kant states that autonomy as to when humans make decisions which are not to satisfy a dispositional end.** Although autonomy is a sound principle that should be applied in treating individuals, I believe that there should be exceptions. Should freedom be allowed for people who cannot make sound decisions, who are irrational? I think the principle of autonomy should only apply to people who can make sound decisions. Since Jeremy could not make rational decisions, giving him the freedom to exercise his autonomy would be wrong. Therefore I would reject the Kantian approach in the case of Jeremy.

Additionally, I reject Kantianism as a good approach to solving Jeremy's case because it does not fulfil our duty. Do we have a duty to care for others? Definitely yes. If that is the case if we allow Jeremy to do what he wants to do (which is harmful to him), have we performed our duty? The answer is no. Therefore, we have a duty to fulfil which is to take care of others.

Leaving Jeremy to do what he wishes, we do not perform our duty of caring for others. Whether perfect or imperfect duty, caring for others is a duty that we should uphold all times. If we allow Jeremy to do whatever he wanted to do, then he would even end up killing himself. This would be similar to killing or allowing the poor to die of hunger. Thus we have not performed our duty. I, therefore, disagree with Kantian ethics in solving Jeremy's case because we should not give Jeremy the freedom to do what he wants since we will not have performed our duty of caring for others.

I also reject the Humean approach of liberty or free will in deciding Jeremy's case. This approach is not useful in determining what should be done to Jeremy. If Jeremy is allowed to exercise his free will and liberty, then he would harm himself. Therefore, he has to be restrained from hurting himself. I believe that freedom is not worth if it leads to harming of a person. If Jeremy was given the freedom to do what he wished, he could have ended in killing himself. Hume contends that we know moral truths through our sentiments (feelings of approval and disapproval).

References

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