

# phil

*by* Ffg Dfg

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Criticisms against Utilitarianism and answers to them

Student's name:

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## **Question 2: Criticisms against Utilitarianism and answers to them**

Utilitarianism is considered a convincing perspective to ethics in philosophical past. This is the view that the action that produces the best is the morally right action. It means that the right action is evaluated based on the consequences it produces. The overall good is thus maximized, that is, the good of others and oneself. This approach puts an emphasis on impartiality, meaning, the happiness of everyone counts the same (Zalta, 2014). The good done for oneself should not demote the good of another person. If the good done has to be morally right it has to promote the overall good of others instead of obstructing it. There are numerous criticisms against utilitarianism which have been answered using numerous explanations.

One of the criticisms of utilitarianism is that lack of disapproval of that which we think is vicious therefore not seeking to change of the one getting disapproved. This is because some of the things a man can find happiness in may not be morally right. Ideally, utilitarianism is concerned with individual's actions to access whether they are moral or immoral. Thus, it is viewed as cold and sympathizing because it does not consider the differences between people. For example, some of the actions which are against the will of God are seen as a rebellion towards Godly authority, even though they may give happiness. The utilitarian counters by saying that if we view our own happiness and that of others as good, we should not hinder others to experience their happiness (Zalta, 2014). This is because as long as their good does not demote ours, it is morally right. Pleasure and happiness ought to be a sole standard of morality and should direct us to admit the differences that may exist in quality.

Another criticism to utilitarianism is the action that the hedonistic view does not fit in the world since some things are good but do not give happiness. Ideally, this view advocates that actions ought to maximize pleasure and reduce pain all concerned parties. For example, one must

labor hard, sometimes in an occupation they don't like, so that they may get their daily bread. The criticism argues that pleasure must not be the driving force towards actions but that they should be a result of the action done, and whether or not pleasure comes, the good action must be done. The utilitarian counters this by saying that anything that is morally right brings about pleasure, some short term and some long term. The hard labor brings about the good of getting food, therefore the pleasure of eating.

The last criticism is that the action is being done to promote the good of human beings only and not animals. In this case, utilitarianism is viewed as a violation of justice which creates a standard objection (Bedau, 2010). The argument is that the happiness of oneself and that of others could lead to the suffering of the other living beings, for example, enjoying a good steak means that a cow was slaughtered for your enjoyment. The utilitarian would answer this by stating that though animals may be at pain, they don't necessarily suffer. Humans are intellectual beings experience emotional scars but animals do not, therefore, any pain subjected to them is for a good cause.

### **Question 3: Differences between Hobbes and Locke concerning the state of nature**

The notions for Hobbes and Locke generally state nature as a hypothetical condition which assists to explain the social contract. The views are driven towards the establishment of a legitimate policy body .However, differences are seen in terms of conclusion and opposing ideas regarding the kind of government that should be formed.

Hobbes advocates for freedom and equality in the state of nature and equates it to a state of war. According to Hobbes view of the state of nature, God is whom we require to put up laws.

Hobbes belief was that the Laws of nature are put by God in our reason, which he called God's word. Men are constantly in a state of war, and Hobbes made this observation after looking at the relationships between men (Woodfinden, n.d., p. 05) Men are naturally equal to each other in physical and mental abilities and cannot consider that alone as sufficient to make him superior to others. Therefore, he would be cunning and band together with others to eliminate a common threat.

The mistrust of men among each other is the basis on how Hobbes' saw the state of nature. He observed that even social constructs have policies to protect them against other men, for example thieves. They also shut themselves in at night and shut in their goods in their own homes. People accuse their fellow people including close loved ones for their doings therefore, people must fear people in general. It is that fear that puts people in the state of tension in which Hobbes was writing of. Although no actual physical harm occurs, fear is what brings about the state of tension which doesn't allow people to enjoy their lives or what they have.

The view for Locke is governed by the natural law and he supports the formation of governs to protect life and property. Locke came up with his idea about the state of nature from his own life, that is, what he went through. He tried to show this view as what led to the origin of the society as we know it today. He put together his observations with the religious views on natural law and God to come up with a possible origin of the today's society. As Locke believed, God's actions are presented in 2 types: The law which is in nature and divine inspiration (Woodfinden, n.d., p. 12) Men realize God through the design of nature and then come to see that there is a purpose for them just as there is a purpose in nature. Locke concluded that since man can know about God because of nature, he can also know about the law of nature.

Locke didn't think the law of nature was imprinted in the brains of men because men differ in so many things. He claimed by the use of reason, the law found in nature is found which makes it not an inborn idea (an idea imprinted in our minds in its very original). According to Locke, the law of nature is acquired throughout lifetime by reasoning and by experience. Locke takes reason as necessary to discover truths for the purpose of one's life and character development. He argues that the foundation is a sense of experience that drives individuals.

## References

Bedau, H. A. (2010). The Limits of Utilitarianism and Beyond.

<sup>1</sup> Woodfinden, B. (n.d.). Hobbes, Locke, and the theological foundations of the state of nature.

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