

Analysis Paper

Introduction

Immanuel Kant is an influential philosopher who attempted to work out how people could be good and compassionate outside of the pressure and flattery of traditional religion. Kant appreciated how much religion can influence how people behave towards society and self as well as how it helps them to cope during hardships. After examining human behavior, he observed that people held some mannerisms that though private or with little impact on self held an impact on others or went against the philosophy of civil liability. Thus, his outlook on this matter is that people should pay society the respect it deserves, while on the other hand, there should be limits which society can draw up in turn.

Kant on Civil Liability

Kant is recognized for his moral philosophy that prohibits ethical duty of the self-determination of resolve. As such, he argues that each person is born with a desire for self-determination and therefore wishes not to be restrained. Even so, Kant denies humans this right in the case where what they do results in moral harm than good (Aune, 1979). In that sense, every person is obligated to choose a direction or course that will be for the general good, even when there is a desire to act in the way we feel like we should. This form of law by Kant is not associated with religion so that he recommends what deity commands, neither does he recommend what the law requires.

Kant's philosophy on civil liability revolves around people's respect for society and what it permits when it comes to civil waywardness. Kant believes that people have a moral duty to respect the law and as such, there is no scope for civil disobedience. From his perspective,

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people have no freedom to challenge legal authority as he disallows the right of insurgency even in the case that the country's leader goes against the contract that approves his lawful assertion to power. Even so, there are Kantian limits to civil disobedience, with the term standing for the things that Kant stands for as they come from his general point of view. The claim by Kant for unconditional civil disobedience is based upon two suggestions, which are treating the supreme ruler as similar to the constitution (Corlett, 2001). This helps him in his argument on the illegality of unseating a supreme governing authority and doing this according to him goes against the law. He then asserts the existence of one set of unifying laws that call for our obedience. If a strict self-ruling law were to exist, then it would not sanction any form of disobedience that seemed to favor it. These two perspectives make Kant's political perspective seem puzzlingly contradictory. From this point of view, Kant seems to say that political authority pretty much determines a people's liberty. On the other hand, this philosopher appears to embrace an intensely oppressive relation of power.

Handwritten notes: "A?" in the right margin; "???" above "seems to say"; "formal" written vertically in the right margin; "???" above "correctly"; an arrow pointing to "according to Corlett" with "???" below it.

As such, it is important to ask ourselves what 'right' is, from Kant's point of view. The Universal Principle of Right by Kant deciphers 'right' as "Any action is right if it can coexist with everyone's freedom in accordance with a universal law, or if on its maxim the freedom of choice of each can coexist with everyone's freedom in accordance with a universal law" (Kant and Gregor, 1996). By Kant's standard, hindering a person from Kant's 'right' interferes with his/her freedom and therefore does wrong hence triggering resistance. As such, every person has the right to do anything that is correctly since according to him, that determines one's freedom and according to Corlett (2001), disobedience must be met with punishment.

References

Aune, B. (1979). *Kant's theory of morals*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Corlett, J. (2001). *Responsibility and Punishment*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Kant, I. & Gregor, M. (1996). *The metaphysics of morals*. Cambridge New York: Cambridge University Press.

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