

Best Way to Introduce Teachings?

Post by "Daniel Van Orman" of March 16, 2019 at 12:05 AM

[Cassius](#)

"Greatest happiness for the greatest number" might be an ideal. It is enforced by "education and opinion", as mentioned earlier. Although, I think it comes partly from nature (so, maybe not an ideal?).

I am not sure exactly how he reaches that principle, but this is generally the reason he gives:

"once the general happiness is recognised as the ethical standard, will constitute the strength of the utilitarian morality. This firm foundation is that of the social feelings of mankind; the desire to be in unity with our fellow creatures, which is already a powerful principle in human nature, and happily one of those which tend to become stronger, even without express inculcation, from the influences of advancing civilisation" - John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, Chapter 3

I am not sure we are in agreement on "universal truth"... I think we are not in agreement. I believe there are certain principles/facts which are always true and always will be true for all times and places, very few of which are true for all situations/environments/circumstances.

I believe those principles/facts are not deontological ideals, such "theft is always wrong" ("ideals" from nature, such as pleasure/pain, cause-and-effect, etc. are fine - they are based on sensations, real data, etc.). I think deontological ideals are wrong (ex: theft is usually wrong, but not *always* wrong) or circularly correct (ex: "virtue is always good because virtue is defined to be always good - good is always good").

For example, I think certain principles, such as this one, are "universal truths": "It is impossible for someone to dispel his fears about the most important matters if he doesn't know the nature of the universe but still gives some credence to myths. So without the study of nature there is no enjoyment of pure pleasure" ([Principal Doctrines](#), 12 ; Vatican Sayings, 49). This principle probably doesn't fit all situations/environments/circumstances, but I think is fairly close to doing so.

Another example, I think the sciences, for the most part, are in search of facts which are "universal truths". They gather, verify, and explain things, hoping to reach conclusions which are and always will be true regardless of situation/environment/circumstance.

I think a key concept of ethics is to define a set of principles which are "universal truths". Those principles may help determine ethical choices depending on the situation, regardless of time

period, bias, etc. Those principles should be valid for all places and all times. If possible, some of them for all situations/environments/circumstances (ex: if dead or not alive, then dead or not alive thing feels no sensations).