
FROM THE DALTONIST UTILITARIANISM TO THE ETHICS OF RESENTMENT SPEECH ON MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS

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Abstract

Starting from the vision of F. Nietzsche on the utilitarian man suffering from daltonism and trying to shape the causes of modern moral crisis with some resentful aspects (Max Scheler), we believe that a common constant, subsidiary to all ethical guidelines is the most important component of the self, namely – the moral conscience (J. Piaget, K. Jung). The critique brought to pragmatism promoted by the utilitarian approach (J. Bentham, J. Stuart Mill) in contrast with that typology of resentment (Max Scheler) highlights the relative interpretations and the lack of a device of ethical knowledge. In our view, relativism of these ethical interpretations is that, the three dimensions of analysis are disregarded: the concepts of *equality*, *inequality* and *otherness*. (N. Cusanus, *De docta Ignorantia*). Moreover, the law of homogeneity and the law of specification (Arthur Schopenhauer) support the concept of moral conscience as a unit generating unity and coexisting in us.

Keywords: Ethics, utilitarianism, resentment, emotion, moral responsibility, legal responsibility, judgment, moral self, moral archetype

1. Introduction

The validity of a theory or the value of an author is confirmed by time, which substantiate the *intellectual intuitions*, always involving some sort of knowledge. Until such confirmations, some theories may cause some controversy with effects upon the rational thought and scientific knowledge, which may be due to either availability theory to different interpretations, because of the lack of conceptual clarity and coherence, or due to the fact that the author did not anticipate the effects of theoretical and practical aspects of his theory. We believe, therefore, that in such a situation is also the utilitarian doctrine which can be found and applied today in a variety of theoretical disciplines, with negative effects on social life. In any social, political and philosophical context, the ethical and political theories relate to current trends, or the doctrine of J. Stuart Mill is built precisely in the context of the Enlightenment values. Of course, we cannot even address the question of why

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the utilitarianism promoted by J. Bentham, dismantled and completed by J.S. Mill may find its applicability today. So, why not the utilitarian doctrine proposed by J.S. Mill would not be today up-to-date and perfectly suited when you actually find inside a development space prepared for what we call: normative utilitarianism or multi-leveled utilitarianism, motivation or character utilitarianism and especially the presence of the biographical utilitarianism.

“The ethical writings are necessary especially for those in which virtuous feelings are weak and their specific mission is to strengthen them. But to be fit for such a task, you need first to have and then to express in each sentence and each row a firm and solid confidence in the human ability of being virtuous. Through a kind of sympathetic contagion or inspiration, a noble mind assimilates in itself other spirits, and no one was ever inspired by someone whose own inspiration was not sufficient to make and believe in the possibility of making others to feel what he feels.” [1] The presence of the *biographical utilitarianism* to J.S. Mill shows not only a good knowledge of J. Bentham’s theory, but rather the existence of that intuition which will traverse the history of ethics since him. This is because J.S. Mill has created an entire *architecture of the moral principles* which is obviously included, but subtle the *intentional nature of the offense* which is closely related to that psychological moral foundation that F. Nietzsche, Max Scheler, Otto Weininger, etc. The history of a life or biographies in general, shows J.S. Mill, disclose us in fact the value of that fundamental element of the self, namely the *moral consciousness*. In this context of analysis, we distinguish between two major concepts for the foundation of any ethical theory, namely between the *moral consciousness* and the *self awareness*. The distinction that is made under this aspect is of a *background*, in terms of *individual and collective responsibility*. We believe that the ethical perspective on the concept of moral consciousness requires the reiteration of current ethical interpretations, from the moral and legal points of view – of *individual responsibility* derives the *moral conscience* and from the *collective responsibility* – the *self-consciousness* (see the article *Ethical Iterations on the concept of moral conscience – Jean Piaget, Jean Libis, Max Scheler* – communication submitted at the international conference *Consciousness and Personal Identity. Philosophical Perspectives and Neuroscience*, Vatican, Italy). Moreover, it reveals the current issue of moral crisis and justifies from the utilitarian perspective the critique on the *virtue of ethics*. One of the causes of the current moral crisis is found precisely in this classification that J.S. Mill anticipates, namely the *utilitarianism of biographies*. “All languages and literatures are full of general observations on life, both as to what it is, and on the manner in which man should act in life; observations known by everyone, that everyone repeats or hears, with his/her consent, welcome remarks like some truisms, but whose meaning most of them truly finds for the first time only when the experience, usually a painful experience reveals its reality.” [2] So, that, the resumption of some moral and life principles without understanding the nature of their requirement is as harmful as their absence. Or, human or character models abounds in today’s society to meet

human needs which are characterized by the *economy act of conscience*, reflected in obtaining an immediate benefit under the impetus of an *immediate moral*.

2. Critical perspectives on the doctrine of utilitarianism to John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham

Yet, in the pleasure-pain dyad taken up and developed by Jeremy Bentham or in the edifice of happiness promoted by J.S. Mill as a basis for a whole system of moral principles and political features, we find a continuum of emotions, motivations, so characters and customs, etc. leaving room for relativism, which is currently responsible for the quantitative numerical priority. If criticizing a utilitarian orientation, be it those who founded doctrine, be it the current followers of utilitarianism, then what is to be criticized is the appeal to the human transformation into an object. In this new vision of the human, the moral component is the one that suffers the most and therefore it requires a recovery.

If J. Bentham's utilitarian theory led to the transformation of an entire system of law in science, J.S. Mill's doctrine is underlying all political and social theories that take into account current and even argumentative, reason to respect individuality/freedom, variety of character and social life. If in the "policy domain the keywords are freedom, social order, constitution, law of nature, social contract, etc., the Ethics has its analogous words" [1, p. 93]. The key concepts of the current ethics are *moral conscience* and *self consciousness*, *character*, *intent*, *memory*, *affection*, *will*, *freedom*, *moral obligation*, *moral agent*, all understood as moral guidelines for a society that operates under hypothetical democratic criteria. Otherwise the concepts of equality and liberty tend not to find justification in a society which, by promoting equality has not in mind to cause inequalities.

The sensitive side of the utilitarian doctrine is precisely made on the vulnerability of the ethical knowledge which can be removed by recourse to *the principle of the sufficient reason* proposed by Arthur Schopenhauer [3] but before that, by the simple demonstration of the *three fold eternity* of Nicolaus Cusanus [4].

"For equality is between a 'more' and a 'less'." "So, if you remove what is 'more', the equality will appear. If it was a 'less related', then cut the remaining element, namely what is 'more' and the equality will appear. You can do this until you reach, continuing to cut, simple elements. It follows that any inequality is reducible through reduction to equality. Thus, the equality is naturally above inequality. On the other hand, the inequality and otherness have an identical nature: where there is inequality, in one place, there is also necessity and otherness, and vice versa. Otherness will be at least among two things and the two things each against others will lead to duplicity and therefore there will be inequality. Thus, otherness and inequality are identical in nature, especially that the number two represents the first otherness and the first inequality. It

remains, therefore, concluded that the equality precedes by nature the inequality, so, the otherness.” [4]

Starting from N. Cusanus' theory of unity, we see the subterfuge of the so-called *equality* (of rights and less in obligations and liabilities) underlying most of the ethical and social policy arguments. Jeremy Bentham is aware of the variety and importance of the inner feelings, of the value of motivation within the meaning of the concept of *intentionality*, but he also knows that raising the *law to the perfection of reason*, i.e. giving an ultimate value can disregard the unity that is found in N. Cusanus, a *unity that we identify in the concept of the moral conscience which is in fact the sum of all human virtues*, namely the *experience*.

The Utilitarianism promoted by J. Bentham negates the most important side of the human typology, namely the moral living. In other words, what you find in the *doctrine* of J. Gotlieb Fichte in *The Doctrine of science* – “the representations system accompanied by the feeling of need is called experience: both inside and outside. As a result, to put it in other words, philosophy must show all the ground of the experience.” [5]

However, J.S. Mill has no evidence upon an overall assumption on the ethical reflection and this is also proven by the last part of his life, which is characterized by *political radicalism*. J.S. Mill believes that “*certain rules of conduct should be primarily imposed by the law and for countless things that are not the objects of some laws, by public opinion*” [2].

But these public opinions differ from one society to another, from one culture to another and J. Stuart Mill was conscious of this and maybe that's where it's another subtlety of his doctrine, partly justifying the utilitarianism of the biographies and how he understood the concept of happiness in a pragmatic sense. Both J.S. Mill and J. Bentham use the ethical reflection, moral principles in a practical sense, as a ground on the creation of *political theories* (Mill) as well as the creation of *legal systems and rules* (Bentham).

The legal experience that J. Bentham benefits from leads him to emphasize the moral value only as a legal argument, for which it stands to reason why in his opinion there are only three sources from which a society can be managed and controlled and they are *the law, the public opinion and religion*. However, the foundation of his doctrine is rooted mainly in the first two – law and public opinion as opprobrium or moral sanction. The moral principles are only indicators in identifying and classifying the concepts of law under which the penalties are applied. At this point of J. Bentham's doctrine we think that the source of J.S. Mill's intuition on the Utilitarianism of the biographies stands in some degree, which means the spirit of society, of culture, and not least the individual biographies of the scholars or thinkers of that time that enhance the scientific value of the work and selects its public.

J. Bentham saw his time in a highly specific assessment and a balance of power which is characterized by a so-called formalism in the Church and State corruption, and led the method of analysis to a moral evaluation which found its concreteness and applicability in the sanctions of the law. In other words he has

in view the two existing powers – the Church and the State that he apparently offers the control by his method of analysis “of dealing with the whole by separating it into its parts – of the abstractions by reducing them to things, of the classes and the general principles (*generalities*) by separating the individuals that compose them (..).” [1, p. 92] And this largely explains the later fragmented utilitarian approach of the contexts and actions which identify today in various institutions. Furthermore, the Bioethics represents from this point of view an example of what the utilitarian directly involves, where the man turns into an object and loses his quality of a human being, of a *person*. Under this aspect of the analysis the Bentham’s utilitarianism is rather characterized by the *formal side of duty* and less by *the material side of duty*, as Kant defines them (see Table 1 [6]).

Table 1. The material side and the formal side of duty–virtue.

1. The first <i>purpose</i> is my <i>own</i> duty. (My <i>own</i> <i>perfection</i>).	2. The <i>purpose of others</i> , the support which is also my duty. (<i>Others’ happiness</i>)
3. The <i>Law</i> is also motivation. Which the <i>morality</i> of any determination of free will is based on.	4. The <i>Goal</i> is also motivation. Which the <i>legality</i> of any determination of free will is based on.

As J. Bentham’s emphasis of the utilitarian doctrine is on the conduct appearance, on behaviour, in other words on the outside human events that supported it in the creation of law frame, where he substantiate and justifies his method. But to rank and classify the outside human manifestations would have been required first a systematic and profound knowledge of the inside causes, an aspect which the author transfers to the plan of future generations.

The second counterargument that can be brought to promoted J. Bentham and J.S. Mill’s utilitarianism is *the principle of sufficient reason*. The rule in any method of ethics analysis imposes to fulfil *the principle of sufficient reason* while satisfying two laws respectively: the law of *homogeneity* and the law of *specification*. According to the first one it is required today “to grasp the types, taking heed to the similarities and consistencies of things, and so to combine these into species, and the species into genres, to reach an inclusive, ultimate concept. Since this law is a transcendental one, essential to our reason, it anticipates the compliance with the nature itself, the hypothesis expressed in the ancient rule: *Entia praete necessitate non esse multiplicanda*. [The number of the existing entities should not be increased if necessary.] (...) Instead the law specification is expressed by Kant as follows: *Entium varietates non temere esse minuendas* [The varieties of the existing entities should not be unnecessarily reduced.]” [3] The utilitarian directions are only concerned by an overall aspect, namely that of a common good that is utopia in terms of character individualities.

Why should the utilitarianism be colour blind? To this question we will answer by appealing to a sequence of *moral argument* from the debate of Frederick Copleston and Bertrand Russell [7].

R: You see, the fact that some things are good and some bad is linked to the feeling. I like good things, those I believe to be good and I hate those I believe to be evil. I am not saying that some things are good because they participate in the divine goodness.

C: But then, how do you justify the distinction between good and evil or how can you see this distinction?

R: In the same way in which I distinguish between blue and yellow. What's the reason that I distinguish between blue and yellow? Simply, because they are different.

C: I have to admit that is an excellent argument. You make the difference between blue and yellow just seeing them, but how do you distinguish between right and wrong?

R: By intuition. (...)

C: Well, we can consider the deeds of the Belsen camp commander. You see them evil and undesirable as they seem to me, as well. But we can assume that to Adolf Hitler they appeared as something good and desirable, and you must recognize that what was good for Hitler, for you was evil.

R: I do not think I would go that far. I think people can make mistakes in this regard, as well as they can fail just as any other. If you suffer from jaundice, you see things as yellow things that do not have this colour. And this is an error, a mistake.

C: Of course, it may be wrong, but does it really exist an error if the reporting is just an intuition or an emotion? Certainly, Hitler is the only one able to judge things in terms of his own emotions.

R: It's very well said, from the perspective of his own emotions, but among others, there can be said more about this, for example, that if that sort of things has such a relation to the affects/emotions of Hitler, then Hitler and my emotions are in a completely different connection.

C: Right. But in your view, is there any objective criterion outside the affects to condemn the acts of the Belsen camp commander?

R: Not more than for the colour blind, which is exactly in the same situation. Why are the colour blinds given as bad examples? Not because they are a minority?

C: I would say that the reason is that they lack something that normally belongs to human nature.

3. The *Ethics of Resentment* – A shift in traditional moral values? – Max Scheler

“In periods of greatest vitality men were indifferent to life and its end. This indifference itself is a valuable mood in terms of vital.” [10] From this perspective of the doctrine of utilitarianism, specific to capitalism Max Scheler

developed the concept of *resentment* – of *resentful man*, as a product of modern morality. Within the framework of our analysis we are interested in the root and manifestation of resentment, because on this basis that reversal of *critical values* takes place, *the values of spiritual culture, of the sacred*, not only at a moral level, but rather at a mental ability of the archetype, with effects on the *world conception* and beyond the *science* sphere. “None of those who feel they have the power or gift to win the game of forces in any field of values does not require equality! Only the one who is afraid of *losing* requires equality as a *general principle*. ‘The imperative of equality is always a speculation à baisse.’” [8]

So we participate, says Scheler, to a process justifying the so-called *subjectivization* of the *moral principles* because the resentment is the responsible source for the forging of the moral values. “Neither the Antiquity nor the Christianity did recognize this evaluation that pulled the moral value and the meaning of life in all the internal connections with the Universe, with the biological origins, with history and, ultimately, with God, trying to put everything into account only on its own bounded force, to the individual.” [8, p. 148] “The general acceptance of the principle of sufficient reason is immediately reduced to the fact that always and everywhere, everyone is only *due to someone else*.” [3, p. 217]

Max Scheler made such a picture that shows this rollover of the moral values through some fundamental key concepts to springs moments of any *moral society* based on *solidarity, freedom, property rights (the finer currency of work), the human equality regarding the spiritual, moral predispositions*.

Table 2. Max Scheler’s values.

Useful values	Critical values
1. The value of <i>conservation</i>	1. The value of <i>development</i>
2. The value of <i>adaptation</i>	2. The value of the <i>conquest</i>
3. The value of the <i>instrument</i>	3. The value of the <i>authority</i>

If we rationally consider this disposition of the society to focus on useful work, then the current paradigm of ethical knowledge must *also* include the *mobile of its own theory*, namely the utility risks upon its own promoting values: the pleasure and happiness that it is useful. “For a consequence of the law that we guide our priority is that it is not benefic to multiply the causes for what it is nice if these cases cannot be controlled in terms of vital and if they are delivered to their owner at a certain point depending on their power to control them. (...)It is necessary for life to produce the useful and to taste the pleasant only insofar as it places itself *above* the critical values series and can freely *control* the useful things. “ [8, p. 167]

What M. Scheler captures by identifying the resentful human characteristics largely clarifies the human nature and the motives underlying the promotion of the so-called modern moral values. He treats this typology of the motivations of the human actions, precisely in order to restore the autonomy of life, which is characterized by the vitality of the reason-heart unity that is not the same with the ration and sensitivity – when “the lower nature, more uncertain, cannot bear the initial distance which separates it from the upper one and thus, this distance makes him suffer! Then, according to resentment mechanism, depicted above, there tended to disagree that it outruns according to the mechanism of the resentment moral depicted above, there is a tendency to disagree as a moral value, the value that outruns it; and this is when it is considered that this value depends solely on *labor*, on which occasion an increase in moral occurs (independently of the value of the initial and final level).“ [8, p. 148]

In such sense as that of the utilitarianism, the autonomy but life keeps its name, but loses from its value because the emphasis does not fall on the potential labour which gives freedom, but we find it in the idea of doing only what is useful in the sense of pleasure, in other words the emphasis is on the sensory *mechanisms of pleasure*.

4. *The Moral conscience or moral judgment? – Another sense of the self – Jean Piaget and K. Gustav Jung*

The concept of moral conscience is perhaps the only concept that gives the ethics a moral dimension, because ethics in our view is a subject of the inner feelings that determines or not the come up in a unit of virtues, while all the other external aspects are rather related to the political or legal theories. “A reduction in criminal law in Europe today in the hierarchy of legal *goods*, required by law, would show that the critical values are subordinated throughout this hierarchy of utility values and the prejudice of these latter is more severely punished than those first.” [8, p. 167]

Within this context of analysis it is necessary to distinguish on a moral aspect between the two perspectives of the concept of sanctions that brings responsibility, namely:

- between the *legal theory* or that of *moral duty*
- and the *theory of good* or that of the *self-consciousness*.

“The murder is first a material fact. And the relationship between the murder and the one who must answer for it, is almost always, firstly a material report. On the contrary, for our contemporaries, the responsibility arises in the consciousness of the one in charged, after a spiritual fact, in the virtue of a psychological relationship between this consciousness and this fact.” [9] This largely explains the archetypal perspective of C.G. Jung, who is found by J. Piaget in the social penetration within the individual, namely the spirituality of the moral or religious concepts. In such a sense on moral consciousness it is

necessary to distinguish between the moral constraints and the moral cooperation.

“The *moral constraint* is the moral of pure duty and of the heteronomy: child receives from the adult a record number, which should be subjected, in any circumstances. The Good is what is recorded in accordance with these records and evil, which are not complying with; the intention has only a small role in this conception and the responsibility is objective. The *cooperation moral* has the principle the solidarity and it emphasizes the self-consciousness, the intent and subjective responsibility.” [9, p. 211]

The Philosophy is given various connotations of the concept of *moral conscience*; the dispute is between the representatives of *idealism* and *dogmatism*, between *phenomenology* and *Theology*. The debate on the concept of moral conscience could be also comprised in the epistemological analysis of Piaget on *moral realism*, in the meaning of *moral judgment in children*.

J. Piaget distinguishes the existence of two plans, which determines the sense that there is a moral thinking which may be found in the psychological corresponding for the concept of moral conscience. In J. Piaget’s view there is first the actual moral thinking, ‘the moral experience’, which gradually builds in action, in contact with the facts, during some clashes and conflicts and which leads to value judgments that enable the subject to orient himself in each case and to assess particular acts of others, when they look on him more or less directly. On the other hand, there is a theoretical or verbal moral thinking, linked to the preceding in all kinds of links, but moving away from it as far as reflection may depart from the immediate action; this verbal thought occurs whenever the child is forced to judge the acts of others which are of no interest directly or to enunciate general principles of its own conduct, independent of the current action [9, p. 114]. In our view, the concept of moral conscience upgrades the Ethics within the meaning of *science of morality*.

The *moral consciousness in terms of individual and collective responsibility is the foundation* for the theories of social and political rights, because of its intrinsic character. “The distinction between the moral consciousness and the self-awareness or simply consciousness, it must be done especially in particular situations, as it would be the *moral judgment in children*, the presence or absence of *memory-affectionate dyads*, *will-possible*, because this framework provides a conceptual subtleties which are later dimmed by the analytical context. “This convergence between our results and those of the historical analysis or of the logical and sociological leads us to a second point: the parallelism between the moral development and the intellectual development. (...) From the outset we say that, in a sense, no logic rules or moral rules are born in the individual conscience.” [9, p. 249] The moral principles are *alive* in the collective unconscious of society to the extent that they were transmitted and understood. However, the childhood is perhaps the most important for these structures to show the level of generating what we will later call *self-consciousness* and especially *moral conscience*.

The *archetypal unconscious* under which C.G. Jung [10] based his psychoanalytic theory on the valences of the unconscious and its role in ontological terms, constitutes in the mythological and philosophical landmark of all customs and laws that legislate the moral and human communities. The moral primarily works based on the *affects* and then on a *moral reasoning fund (in terms of individual and collective responsibility)*, which is often grounded in childhood through those behavioural and thinking matrices, which bear the mark of previous generations.

5. Conclusions

Inspired by Hegel's dialectic we can utilize the next formula as an alternative for conclusions of the paper.

- Work Thesis – *the moral conscience is a natural given;*
- Work Antithesis – *the moral conscience is acquired through education;*
- Synthesis – *the moral consciousness exists only if the following conditions are met: there is a natural potential; there is the experience of living in terms of cognitive-affective; to all these being added the moral judgement.*

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