

Bentham, Mill and Kant on the Proof of Utilitarianism

Bentham has given different formulations of the principle of utility and also tried in different ways to prove it. In his later writings, some of them unpublished, he makes a distinction between two senses of the principle of utility: the exegetic or expository and the deontological or censorial. They are indeed two different principles leading to different results, one egoistic, altruistic the other. The legislator ought to make them artificially coincide by using the proper sanctions. Mill's "proof" of the principle is a misleading attempt to derive the deontological from the expository sense. Bentham's attempts to prove the deontological principle of utilitarianism bring Bentham closer to Kant than usually admitted.

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