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Utilitarianism

When it comes to Philosophy, there are so many theories out there can be hard to keep up. One thing that many people know about, even if they do not necessarily know what it is called, are Normative Theories. These theories have everything to do with how we make up our decisions and how we should make our decisions. Three of these theories are called Virtue Ethics, Utilitarianism, and Kantianism. We are solely going to focus on one of these theories, Utilitarianism.

Jeremy Bentham is the philosopher who is associated with Utilitarian theory. There are many other philosophers that are a part of this theory and that have put much thought and say into it. Jon Gay, Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Claude-Adrien Helvetius and Cesare Beccaria are all philosophers that made the theory happen. Even though all these men played a major part, Jeremy Bentham was the man who made the theory what it is today. John Stuart Mill also helped Bentham when it came to developing the Utilitarianism theory. Those two are the most famous Utilitarian philosophers.

Utilitarianism mainly focuses on consequences. This theory believes that you should focus on what types of actions will give you the best consequences instead of the worst kinds of results. What is morally correct and what is morally wrong? In Utilitarianism, there is an easy answer. Does your action have good effects or bad ones? If you have good effects then your actions must be morally correct. If the results of your actions are bad, then it is safe to say that you are not doing the right thing.

Utilitarians also believe that mortality has a purpose and its purpose is to bring great things. For them, good things should be increasing in the world instead of bad. John Stuart Mill explains that, "Happiness is defined as pleasure and the absence of pain." Pleasure and happiness is a good thing that everyone enjoys. Different things or situations can make one person happy and another thing can make someone else happy, but at some point in your life you have experienced pleasure in one way or another. These types of feelings, in a Utilitarian mind, should be increasing within the world. While pain, suffering, and all the other bad feelings should be decreasing.

We should always choose the action that can bring the most positive results to the most people, even if that means that we are not happy. What does this mean? In the article that I read, *Act and Rule Utilitarianism*, it said, "People often need to judge what is best not only for themselves or other individuals but also what is best for groups." Let's say that we are all going out to celebrate your graduation. It is your graduation, so you should pick where you want to go. You want to go to your favorite restaurant, but it is a place that 70% of the people you are with do not like. Picking that place will be morally incorrect because you are making the majority of

the people around you upset. Now if you pick a place that everyone, or most people, enjoy then you will be doing the morally correct thing. By picking a place that everyone likes, the consequence is that everyone is happy and the effect is an overall good effect. That is all that Utilitarianism is all about.

In a way I agree with this, but there can also be some flaws. For example, if there is a man that is going around killing people and you end up in the position to kill him before he can kill someone else, would you do it? Technically killing is wrong, right? But what if the consequences are that many people are going to be safe. Does that then make it right to kill? According to Utilitarianism, the moral thing to do would be to kill the man. I personally think that it still is not the moral thing to do. I feel like if you kill someone, no matter the situation, it is wrong.

Another flaw is that just because you will be doing something that makes the majority of the people happy, does not mean that you should do it. For example, let's say that you are hanging out with people that do drugs. If they are pressuring you to do a drug, are you going to do it because it would be making the people around you happy? I hope not. There are situations that can make more than one result. Do not be a people pleaser either or else you will end up unhappy. Sometimes you have to think about what benefits you even if the people around you will be upset.

Work cited

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