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## Philosophy Paper 2

Utilitarianism is a well known philosophical theory that emphasizes the importance of overall happiness within a community. This theory argues that actions should be evaluated based on their ability to promote happiness, and that the most moral actions are those that lead to the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people. This theory interested me because of its simple yet complicated worldview. This theory has impacted the way we think about morality as a whole as well as justice, and real world social policies. Utilitarianism views one's life in which an individual's main goal is to strive to create the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people, while minimizing pain and suffering.

The Utilitarianism theory has several key viewpoints. Firstly, it relies heavily on the importance of maximizing overall happiness and minimizing pain. This is known as the principle of utility, which means that the most moral action is the one that produces the greatest amount of happiness for the most people. Secondly, utilitarianism takes a universal approach to morality. According to utilitarianism, the moral worth of an action is not determined by the intentions behind the action, but rather by the consequences that result from it. Another important concept in utilitarianism is the idea of impartiality, which argues that everyone's interests should be taken into account equally when evaluating actions. Since everyone involved or that could be affected by this decision has equal worth. Utilitarianism is a theory that prioritizes future consequences of an action over the past.

One of the most famous arguments for utilitarianism is the "hedonistic calculus," which is a method for measuring the amount of pleasure or pain that will result from an action. The hedonistic calculus takes into account factors such as intensity, duration, certainty, purity, and extent, in order to calculate the overall amount of happiness or that an action is likely to produce. For example, suppose a company is considering whether to dump toxic waste into a nearby river. According to the hedonistic calculus, the company would have to consider the intensity and duration of the pleasure such as profit resulting from the dumping, as well as the pain such as harm to the environment and future generations. Essentially this calculator weighs the morality of said action and if the good outweighs the bad meaning more people would benefit from this dumping of toxic waste then it would be completely moral to a utilitarian.

Another real life situation that could demonstrate the utilitarians beliefs in a real life situation is this scenario. Imagine that a small town is facing an economic crisis, and the only way to save the town is to build a large industrial factory like amazon that will provide jobs for the entire town. However, the factory will also produce significant pollution that will harm the environment and the health of those who live in the town. A utilitarian would evaluate this

situation by considering the overall amount of happiness that would result from the factory. On the one hand, it would provide jobs and stimulate economic growth which would save the town, lead to greater happiness for many people as well as provide monetary gain and an overall better way of life. On the other hand

, the pollution produced by the factory would cause pain and suffering for many people, including those who are more susceptible to illness from this pollution. In order to determine the moral decision the utilitarian would need to accurately weigh the benefits and costs of having the factory be built. If the amount of happiness produced by the factory in ways of job creation and economic growth outweighs the amount of pain and sickness caused by the pollution, then the utilitarian would argue that allowing the factory to be built is the morally correct thing to do.

In my opinion, the utilitarian theory seems to take genuine consideration of those affected by any moral decision in the way it's centered on weighing happiness for people as a whole body. What I struggle with is the idea of making these decisions based solely on that and removing the humane aspect of decision making completely. Sure what results in the most happiness might be the right answer but what if it's just the lesser of two evils. I kind of think of the analogy of the trolley problem that gets brought up in discussions of morality often. Would you sacrifice one person to save five, viewing the decision from a utilitarian aspect doesn't make the decision easier or feel like since that decision was made I have any moral high ground.

In conclusion, utilitarianism is a theory that emphasizes the importance of overall happiness and minimizing pain within a community. Its key viewpoints include the principle of utility, universal approach to morality, and impartiality. Utilitarians evaluate moral decisions by weighing the benefits and costs of an action in terms of overall happiness for the greatest number of people. While I appreciate this view it is hard for me to sign off immediately due to my reservations about humane morality. Nevertheless, utilitarianism has made significant contributions to our understanding of morality, justice, and the real-world and should be used in many circumstances to help guide us to a better future.