[Name]

[Instructor]

[Course]

[Date]

**Title: Writing Assignment**

**Utilitarianism**

Utilitarianism is a moral theory which states that your actions are right if they promote happiness and wrong if they produce unhappiness. Happiness is the pleasure and absence of pain. Anything that scores ones’ motives, goals, virtue are considered as part of happiness. Stuart Mill argues that this theory overlaps the natural sentiments that come out of social nature of humans. So, if utilitarianism is considered as an ethical theory, humans should implement these standards in their lives as components of morality. And the sole basis of morality is happiness and every action should bring pleasure. He suggests that all the elements of people’s desires are meant to bring happiness. He also believes that the concept of justice is based on utility because human rights are made to provide happiness. But this theory has been strongly criticized on the basis that not every person’s standards of happiness are similar and it is a more complex mater than it is thought to be or even imitated by the theory of utilitarianism. Mill argues that happiness is the foundation of justice and there is a strong association between justice and utility.

**Kantian Ethics**

All rational beings are subject to morality and morality is defined as making choices based on reasons rather than sensual impulses. Emmanuel Kant’s theory suggests that every moral action is reasoned and determined by what drives those actions and not the consequences. The worth of any moral action can be determined by reasoning its motive if it can be applied as a universal maxim. Morality should be a universal for all human beings because the reason is same for all people at all the time. So, an action can only be termed as moral if it symbolizes sound reasoning and maxim can be applied as a universal law. We should all act according to this maxim that can be approved universally and Kant called it as a “categorical imperative”. He contrasts this phenomenon with “hypothetical imperative” in which people perform a certain action with a motive to achieve intended results. Kant argues that there are no ifs to determine the morality of any action. Morality is a categorical imperative where the motive of an action should be admirable but the consequences shouldn’t be calculated. A moral law is universal law meaning it is applied on all people equally. But acting morally requires that all other people are treated as moral agents and our actions must not prevent any other person to act morally. Kant believes that an ideally moral society is a kingdom of ends where people themselves are the authors and the subjects of moral laws. Morality is based on autonomous will even if we have to follow the universal laws because we ourselves submit to them upon rational reflection. He also explains the intricate question of free will. He says that laws of physics are only applicable to the world of appearances while will is a thing-in-itself phenomenon of which we know nothing about. Either the will is free or imposed, we still act according to the notion of freedom. We act as if we think we have an autonomous will and we are not accountable of our actions. Our autonomous will acts according to the laws dictated by our own reasoning. Kant has explained the science of will by a saying; “The will is conceived as a faculty of determining oneself to action in accordance with the conception of certain laws. And such a faculty can be found only in rational beings.”

**Greatest happiness principle and categorical imperative**

The theory of utilitarianism is based on the “greatest happiness principle” which suggests that actions can only be termed as moral if they promote happiness and utility and immoral if they don’t. It also includes the utility of the general public and their happiness overall. But logically any action that ensures utility cannot be implied s a moral action. An action to be called as moral must be an optimal choice for increasing utility and minimizing the pain from the society. Utilitarianism states the basis of greatest happiness principle. It considers good as happiness and right deeds that maximize the happiness and minimize the pain. Mill explains in his essay;

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure.

But there is a strong criticism on greatest happiness principle of utilitarianism theory that the future cannot be foreseen and the consequences of any action cannot be perceived. The malignant actions taken for increasing the utility in a society that causes harm to others and defies the universal laws of mortality cannot be justified (Vaughn).

**Summarization about driverless cars**

The concept of utilitarianism approach for the driverless cars evaluates any mode of action based on the degree of utility it will have on the people involved in that particular setting. This approach is useful in a way that the consequences of an action can be calculating while making any decision. The cars if designed to put the concept of utility ahead of everything, will only take actions that will ensure goodwill of the driver. This means that applying this theory in cars will improve the safety of the drivers. But at the same time, the safety of the pedestrians or fellow drivers or riders can be compromised. Cars don’t process like humans minds but rather have an instilled program that was designed at the manufacturing time (Bogle). The deontology approach on the other hand will ensure the maximizing the utility of a certain action. It prioritizes the ethical and moral values and avoids making any decisions that can cause harm anyone else no matter what. These cars should be designed in such a way that they should protect both the driver and the ones outside the car. It can be instilled by making a program to make the cars able to communicate with each other to save road accidents. For the safety of the pedestrians, the cars are required to be designed such that it ensures the maximum utility. Decisions is such crucial situations where the safety of the driver or others are compromised are very hard and it an ethical dilemma. When humans design the programs for these cars, they need to apply all moral actions based on reasons rather than only on sensual basis. There might be so many other situations that cannot be taken in consideration while programming that actually occur on the road (Smith). Sometimes the drivers themselves want to sacrifice their lives and save other people. But the action on field is entirely based on the fixed course of action. I believe I have more Kantian approach in the matter of driverless cars because according to it the only moral decision will be based on reasoning to bring about the goodness. Moral actions based on this will be categorically imperative and there would not be any ifs in making a choice. Rather the decision will entirely be based on reasons. It will be a universally accepted moral law and all the people will be obliged to follow it. This way, every driverless car will be programmed to make decisions similarly and thus improve the road safety for both the drivers and pedestrians.

Works Cited

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