

Candidate 7 evidence

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<p>4.</p> <p>Utilitarianism is a consequentialist or teleological moral theory that focuses on the consequences of an action when making on moral decisions. Utilitarianism was initially found by Bentham, who was act utilitarian but later amended by John Stuart Mill where they differed in ways about their views on utilitarianism. In this theory the consequences are the only important thing to look at when making an act or decision (consequentialism). However the main aspect of utilitarianism is the great happiness principle and focuses on creating the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people, this is how we decide if an action is moral by the amount of happiness it produces. Another aspect would be the hedonic principle which tries to create the most happiness for all concerned. In this essay I will argue to what extent ' utilitarianism would be a great moral theory, if it were actually possible to apply to any real 'life situation' is a fair criticism.</p> <p>First of all we have the Hedonic principle which is 1 of 3 principles in the consequentialist theory. It focuses on creating the greatest amount of happiness for all concerned. What this implies is that we should make everyone happy when making a moral decision. However some people believe its too simple of a way of understanding whether something is moral or not. It seems to reflect what we would normally want (to avoid pain and produce pleasure). Opposingly, it can avoid the accusation of being of animalistic creed as there can be different types of pleasures involves such as higher and lower pleasures. This area of utilitarianism I believe could be applied to real-life situations because its simple to understand and it wouldn't be difficult to pursue what we would naturally want.</p> <p>Consequentialism is the second principle of utilitarianism and it states that the morality of our actions come from the consequences unlike Kantianism which focuses on motives. By using consequentialism, you are only looking at the consequences because in a utilitarian opinion that is the only thing worth valuing when looking at moral worth. However, there comes problems with only looking at consequences and nothing else. Its difficult to predict the actual consequences to the predicted ones. We might think an action would be morally right as the consequences are "good" but they come out much different than expected, leaving us possibly with an immoral action on our hands. Looking at consequences can be good in some way, but it doesn't leave us with any clarity on if we should actually act this way due to actions coming out unexpectedly which could make it hard to apply to real life because there is the chance they come out much differently. It would make it unreliable to apply to real-life if we aren't getting the actual outcome, what use is that!</p> <p>Equity on the other hand is the last principle of utilitarianism and it entails that everyone one's happiness is equal in our deliberations. This means that when we apply equity, everyone's happiness must be the same. When we apply equity, we arrive at the greatest happiness principle (greatest happiness for the greatest number). However, with this in mind, there could still be room for unequal actions. The tyranny of the majority is a main issue within utilitarianism which philosophers have failed to sort. It happens when the majorities decision is favoured of the minority groups and they are always left unhappy in acts and decisions which isn't ideal. If the majority view it always being favoured then does this mean that the minority is limited to their rights and freedom of speech? However, Mill sorts this issue by saying that minority still have rights because they are not a "notion". This means minority groups can still have their say because if majority groups didn't allow them to then we may be limited in what we know to be true which is a strength from Mill and makes the equity principle possible to apply to real-life situations.</p>	

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<p>Leading on from there we arrive at the GHP. When making a moral decision we should aim to create the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people in any given situation as this is how to decide the moral rightness and praiseworthiness of an action. This is something many people favour because after all, we want to minimise pain and increase our chances of happiness but could there be an issue with this as well? Some people believe there is no way to measure the amount of happiness in an action because everyone's happiness is so different to one another. So how can it make everyone happy? Bentham believed in quantity above all else and producing the most amount of happiness as possible. But is this really possible to do in day-to-day life, can everyone's happiness really be the same? We are unique and what makes us happy may not make others feel sad, disappointed. Happiness isn't easy to quantify, and it would make it hard to apply the GHP to real life actions as we don't know what makes each individual have maximum happiness.</p>	
<p>Another main aspect of how people apply utilitarianism to act and situations is through Hedonism. Hedonism when pleasure is the only thing worth valuing. People who live these sorts of lifestyles are characterised as indulging in everyone pleasure imaginable e.g., partying, drinking, eating. On the flip side, if Utilitarianism is not right in saying that pleasure is the way to revealing the morality of actions then are people just being selfish by indulgence. People can agree on many times where actions do not involve getting pleasure at all. For example, do you die of leukemia painfully and slowly or do you get euthanised? None of these options involve pleasure so can it not have any moral value at all? Moreover, should people really be praised for doing things that are pleasurable but produce a lot of greed and selfishness. For example, should someone really be morally praised for stuffing their face with cake every day? Applying hedonism to actions just doesn't seem like a morally praiseworthy thing to do and actually quite greedy.</p>	
<p>From there Bentham states that this way of calculating pleasure is the ultimate aim for seeking a good life- The Hedonic Calculus. The hedonic calculus is a formula devised upon 7 different factors. Some of the factors include certainty (how certain is that pleasure), duration (how long will the pleasure last). This was predominantly apart of Bentham's act utilitarianism as each amount of pleasure in an action is considered individually on its own merits. The Hedonic calculus can compare 2 or 3 alternative actions and the highest rating should be the one you do because in Bentham's mind that is the one that produces the most pleasure, meaning its the most morally praiseworthy one to do. However, this seems very unrealistic and impractical to apply to real-life. Who really has the time to sit around apply a formula upon 7 factors in day to day actions. It seems unrealistic and non-applicable to real life situations.</p>	

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<p>Utilitarianism can be divided into 2 categories to create the greatest happiness in a given situation- Act and Rule utilitarianism. Act utilitarianism is when the principle of utility is applied to each individual act and decision to bring about the greatest happiness for everyone. This was how Bentham, saw we could make moral decisions. A moral system you could use is the Hedonic calculus as it as well judges each action individually on its own merits. For example, imagine you have a sick child in the car, the roads are clear and its a red light. Do you cross this red light? An act utilitarian may consider the following conditions on what we should do individually to create the greatest happiness. If the roads are clear and it would make you and your child happier to cross then an act utilitarian may say yes because it would creating more happiness doing so and they would cross the red light. If the situation differed, the roads were busy and people were crossing then an act utilitarian may say no as it could result in catastrophic damage and death. It just depends on the situation you are in. On the other hand, rule utilitarianism applies the principle of utility attempts to establish the validity of moral rules of conduct (moral principles). The rules are made for more general situations which create the greatest happiness. The rules should always make the greatest happiness and apply to any situation. In rule utilitarianism we should aim to make rules if one is not already established. E.g., the general rule of "always keep your promises" would be looked at in a world where that was a general rule. Since the consequences of this are good it should be made a moral rule. If we go back to the red light situation a rule utilitarian may differ from an act utilitarian in many ways. It wouldn't matter whether the roads were clear or busy, a general rule of "don't run a red light as it could harm others" would be applied, because this rule works we should aim to use it in any given situation. It wouldnt be tolerated in a rule utilitarian perspective to run this red light because it is a genral rule for all that its bad to run a red light so we should aim to follo this on a wider spectrum, as a consequence for it being bad for everyone to run a red light. However, soft and hard utilitarianism can allow for some actions to be allowed in rule utilitarianism. Hard utilitarianism is when you always follow rules and they are never broken, soft utilitarianism is when you can soemtimes break rules depending on the situation you are in. This effectively reduces the whole concept rule utilitarianism as it is bascially dissolved into act utilitarianism because you are judging each action individually. There is also weaknesses that come with act and rule utilitarianism. People could argue that at utilitarianism is simply to difficult to apply in real-life situations because simillarily to th hedonic calculus we just dont have the time to do all these caclcuations, deciding which avtinos bring about the greatest happiness. On the other hand, rule utilarianism has the problem of too many rules. Everytime we were in a situation and a pre-established rule wasnt there we would have to make one. For example "murder is wrong" nut murder is not wrong unless you are havign an abortion creating the rule "murder is not wrong if you are havfing an abortion" and so on, until we have created so many rules that its effectively been decreased down to act utilitarianism instead of establishing moral rules of conduct in given situations that we dshould always follow. Act and rule utilarianism doesnt seem liek it can be appled to real life situtations as they are cleary just too impersonal.</p>	

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<p>Moving on to Mills side of things, the main differences in his utilitarianism is the distinctions between pleasures and how he believes in quality over quantity unlike Benham. Higher pleasures are pleasures that are more intellectual and can include reading, listening to classical music, going on a walk. Lower pleasure can include more physical pleasure such as eating, sleeping and procreating. With this in mind, many people like that a distinction between pleasures can be made and it avoids the accusation of all pleasure being the same which is more possible to apply to real life situation. Mill also made competent judges to support his theory of higher and lower pleasures. He says that anyone who is a competent judge can judge each type of pleasure. A competent judge would always pick the higher pleasure as they are of greater quality than lower pleasures. Only intelligent beings like us can experience them so they are of great quality compared to say a pig who can only have physical pleasures. Mill famously quotes "its better to be a Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied". The distinction between pleasures being of a qualitative difference really pulls up utilitarianism because it means we can distinguish between the greatest happiness in a more up to date way rather than just trying to create the most we can which is arguably more primitive.</p>	
<p>With every theory comes criticisms. There is the problem of local vs global consequences. Local consequences are within our immediate society, ones we know of. For example, a consequence of buying clothing from the supermarket could mean your local tailor goes out of business. But a global consequence is ones we don't know of and happen externally from us.. for example, you buying clothing from a supermarket may mean that there is child labour and low pay going on in 3rd world country. Utilitarianism doesn't make it clear on which consequence we should focus on which is a huge problem for applying it to real life as we wouldn't really know which one to use as Bentham nor Mill doesn't specify. There is also the issue with special obligations. Utilitarians say that we should try to produce the most amount of pleasure and try to maximise it but could there be times where we could let it slip?</p>	
<p>For example, imagine you are stranded on a boat with 10 random strangers. However you have your child with you on that boat. There is not enough food so you would have to share it out between these people. However, naturally you may feel inclined to give your child more as you have special obligations to them rather than random strangers, this wouldn't create the most happiness but no one would blame you for having special needs to your child. Utilitarianism wouldn't allow this to happen though and it doesn't create the greatest happiness for all. This can make utilitarianism sound lacking of humanity and of people you care about, this can make the theory sound critical and harsh, making it uneasy to apply to in real life. In conclusion, I don't think utilitarianism is actually possible to apply to real life and think it's a fair criticism to make. The theory makes some excellent points on how to establish happiness and the making of the Hedonic calculus which is intelligent in theory but but just very difficult to apply in real life. It would take too much time. Consequentialism is also smart in theory but the likelihood of predicting outcomes is next to impossible. How can we make decisions knowing exactly how they are going to happen. I believe utilitarianism should be looked at again and updated as it could be seen as too simple a way to do actions which are morally praised and applied to real life situations in today's world.</p>	

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<p>In Hume's enquiries of section 2, he discovers how we come to have knowledge, he believes its founded by cause and effect. He thinks this is how we come to have faith in facts that go beyond our immediate sensory experience. However, he comes to explore that cause and effect cant ever be certain and believes its our habits of thinking and constant conjunctions that leads us to thinking we know cause and effect. In this essay, I will explain how convincing Hume's arguments are for his theory of causation.</p>	
<p>Hume explores how knowledge can be split up into 2 categories relation of ideas and matters of fact. A relation of ideas i knowledge that we come to a know a priori. For example, a triangle is a shape which has 3 angles. Hume says this type of knowledge is either intuitively certain or demonstratively certain. If its intuitively certain we can know it just by looking at it e.g., anything yhat has a shape also has a size. If its demonstratively certain it is knowledge we have just by thinking about it e.g., pythagoras theorem/geometry. Another feature of a relation fo ideas is that it is necessarily true (always true or never true), they are also self-evidently true. Futhermore, the contrary is impossible (a triangle without 3 angles).</p>	
<p>On the contrary, matters of fact is knowledge that relies on observation ofthe world to have the knowledge. It is a posteriori (knowledge that needs experience). You cannot know it just by thinking about it. Another defining feature of a matters of fact is that the contrary is possible to imagine. For example, Its possibe to imagine a world where grass is green but its also logically possible to imagine a world where grass is blue and pink. It isnt illogical to imagine this its just highly unlikely. Further more a matters of a fact is a contingent truth (sometimes the case sometimes not). Having established this, Hume goes on to talk about how we can have faith in factsd that ho beyond our own experiences.</p>	
<p>Hume believes cause and effect is how we come to have faith in facts that we dont have direct experience from. For example, Imagine you have a friend who hastold you they are in France. You believe this is true because your friend either told you they were going to France, or you have received a letter with your friend telling you they are in France. Knowing this you only believe this because of a chain of events that started of with your friend being in France and sending the letter. The next example Humegives is the desert island watch. Imagine you were on a desert island and you found a watch. The assumption is that someone had been there before you as watches are worn by people. So you believe this is the cause of the watching being there now. Hume moves on to talk about how he believes cause and effect is not known through reason.</p>	
<p>Hume believes we cannot know cause and effect just by reason for a number of reasons. He states that if someone were to be introduced to something they had never experienced before they would not knothe cause and effect of it just by looking at it. He gives the example of how if you had never seen a match before, you would not know that strikingit against a box would lght it. He also gives the example of Adam from the bible. Adam would not know that water could drown him jsut by looking at its clear colourless properties nor would he know fire would burn him just by looking at it. He also explains how if we had no experienced something unusual, we would not the cause or effect of it. For example, you wouldnt know that 2 marble blocks would need to be slid apart rather than pulled if you had not experienced this before. He also explains whe events are unusual in nature e.g., how gunpowder works. Lastly he gives the example of bread nourishing humans and not nourishing tigers. We wouldnt know this unless we experienced bread nourishing us before hand and not nourishing tigers. However Hume goes onto to look at when people might not readily except cause and effect cant be worked out through reason alone.</p>	

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<p>People may believe cause and effect can be worked out through reason when we see events similar to other events in nature. Hume says this is not possible and gives the example of billiard balls to support the claim cause and effect cannot be known priori more than he already has. He says when we strike the white ball the red ball will move. He makes 2 observations about this claim. They both have to occupy a relation in space and time (the white ball must strike before the red and they must be on the same billiard table). If they weren't on the same billiard table and the white strikes after the red, we would not then say the white caused the red to move. Hume then goes on to say that they need to have a necessary connection, however this isn't actual possible. Just because the white ball hits the red doesn't necessarily mean the red has to move. He that causal connections cannot exist as events happen in isolation of each other and it's our habit of thinking that makes us think we can predict cause and effect but we cannot. He also says cause and effect cannot be a relation of ideas because we can imagine the contrary (the ball not moving), cause and effect is not a necessary truth. Hume then goes on to look at the problem of induction.</p>	
<p>The problem of induction happens when we look at past events in order to form a conclusion about future events. For example, the sun has always risen in the past. So it will tomorrow. However, this isn't a reliable form of knowledge Hume says because it means we can't ever really know it for certain. If we are always looking at the past to predict the future it's merely an assumption and doesn't provide any certainty. This means Hume believes cause and effect cannot be certain or reliable, he then goes on to look at circular reasoning.</p>	
<p>Circular reason happens when you have to rely on your premise for your conclusion to be true and rely on conclusion for premise to be true. For example premise- an object has had such and such effect in the past. Conclusion- similar objects will have similar effects in the future. Hume says this form of reasoning is unreliable as there is always the possibility they might not have that effect, so it cannot provide any reasoning to be certain in the conclusion which is unreliable. This is the problem of induction (relying on past events in order to form conclusions about future events). We can't rely on cause and effect as there it relies on the uniformity of nature and the reliability of our past experience. There is always the possibility it might not be the way it was in the past.</p>	
<p>So in saying this, can we ever really have certain knowledge? Hume understands and acknowledges that we need to have faith in cause and effect to live our daily life. He is only pointing out that this may not be a reliable source of knowledge as we have the problem of induction and circular reasoning to deal with. He said that there could be a possible way to justify cause and effect but it's just too limited as human beings, but he challenges his reader to do so. However, he feels this is unlikely as if we did have the justification, it would be simple to understand as even babies and animals seem to have the notion of cause and effect.</p>	

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<p>Moving on, Hume has opened himself up to various criticisms, regarding is reasoning behind cause and effect. He divided knowledge up into 2 categories- relation of ideas and matters of fact. However,Philosophers have challenged Hume on whether Hume's fork has actually passed its own criteria has being either a relations of ideas or a matters of fact. Furthermore, Kant has disagreed with Hume that all a priori knowledge is analytic. He gives the example of scientists begin able to predict the date and time of a solar eclipse through calculation and mathematics. They claim they now when it will happen, despite having experienced it yet. It is also possible to imagine hte contrary of th date and time of the solar eclsipe happening. This creates a problem because it then means that a "synthetic relation of ideas" has been created which is something Hume didn't account for in his theory of causation.</p>	
<p>Furthermore, Hume undermining inductive reasoning makes him unable to rely on anything for certain. Hume says that inductive reasoning is not a reliable source of reasoning and is an irrational process. Sciences like physics, biology all rely on inductive reasoning, so does Hume if Hume thinks science is an irrational process than how can he create the "laws of man" which Hume himself is engaged in. He wanted to creating psychological laws for a basis for his philosophy like how Isaac Newton made laws of science. But how can Hume does this if he doesnt except that inductive reasoning is a reliable source knowledge? However, Karl Popper aims to overcome this criticism. He says that Hume has misunderstood science. Even though inductive reasoning in science, its more about trail and error. Once new information is discovered we may have adapt and change as this occurs. Although Popper hasnt offered an alternative to overcome inductive reasoning, he realised Hume may have just misunderstood the scientific process and has allowed him to not completely undermine science.</p>	
<p>Hume is also criticized for his view on causation and correlation. Hume thinks that if we assume causation, correlation must occur too. However, there are many times were people have causation and constant conjunctions but dont assume correlation. For example, the compulsive gambler may not connect her addiction to her misery. There is also the example of milk. We all start off drinking milk throughout our lives but we dont assume that the milk kills us. Moreover, there are times were people do the exact opposite. A person who assumes correlation on only the first exposure of causation. For example, someone avoiding shrimp after one case of food poisoning.</p>	
<p>How convincing were Hume's arguments then? I think Hume's arguments could be seen as convincing for when we cannot know cause and effect a priori. He gives persuasive examples on the billiard balls example where he proves to us cause and effect cannot be known through reason. This claim is probable and believable, Sn alternative approach could be to say he has taken the wrong position from the start. There is the possibility of causation being an innate idea, but Hume's strong empirical views wouldnt allow this to be true as it would open the door to rationalism which is something Hume is against in his studied. Also, Hume isnt particularly clear on whether he is saying there is no necessary connection in the world, or those that are, are limited to us in our sensory experience. Additionally, if Hume overcomes that the problem of induction could be seen as reliable he is pretty much just left in the position of no certain knowledge. He therefore, cannot do what Issac Newton did for science if he cannot accept inductive reasoning as strong. He will not be able to create these "psychological laws of man".</p>	

