

Friday, November 22, 2019

Wade Williams, Journal Entry 6, *Strengths and Weaknesses of Utilitarianism*

There are certain elements I agree and disagree with about utilitarianism. I agree with the promotion of greater good, but I do not necessarily agree with giving up personal happiness or even our own life to promote the survival of others. Personally I feel like it would be a very tough decision to make if it came down to it. I think it would be a little easier to make the decision based upon the people I was saving if I had to give up my own life. If giving up my own life meant saving the lives of the friends and family I care about, then that decision would not be as hard to make. If giving up my life meant saving a group of strangers. In my personal opinion, I am able to do more good than a group of random strangers, so letting them die to save myself may promote more good in the world, as selfish as that view point is. Of course, if I actually become involved in a situation like that there are many other factors that may influence my decision, such as the group of strangers all being young children that have a potential for doing much more good with lives they are just starting.

Two examples I liked in the reading and in the “Utilitarianism: Crash Course Philosophy #36” video I watched on YouTube were the Jim in the jungle scenario, and the doctor with the five patients requiring organ transplants. If I was Jim, and I would probably choose to accept the proposal to shoot one native to save the rest of the village if one of the men sacrificed himself for me to shoot. If none of them sacrificed themselves, then picking a random person to shoot may just drive me to refuse the proposal, in fear of shooting someone that the community valued highly, or even someone that promoted more good than myself. In the situation where the doctor can choose to sacrifice one person to save five, I would say that saving five would be more important, but I also feel that if the people needing transplants have been naturally selected to suffer then perhaps they should. As harsh as that sounds, some cultures may use that mindset due to certain circumstances. How do we know that all of the people that receive the organs will fully recover? What if they get a deadly sickness from the donated organ or die during the surgery? What if all five people receive organs, but do not recover one hundred percent and together they are not capable of achieving more good than the one healthy person that was sacrificed to save them?