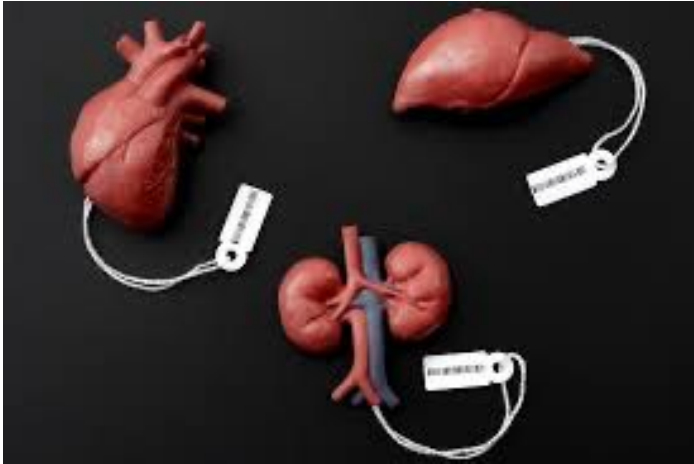

Utilitarianism

8.4 - 8.6: Utilitarianism and Consequences

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Types of Utilitarianism



Act Utilitarianism:

Actions should be judged directly and individually according to whether the consequences give greater happiness

Rule Utilitarianism:

Actions should be judged according to rules chosen such that the consequences generally have greater happiness



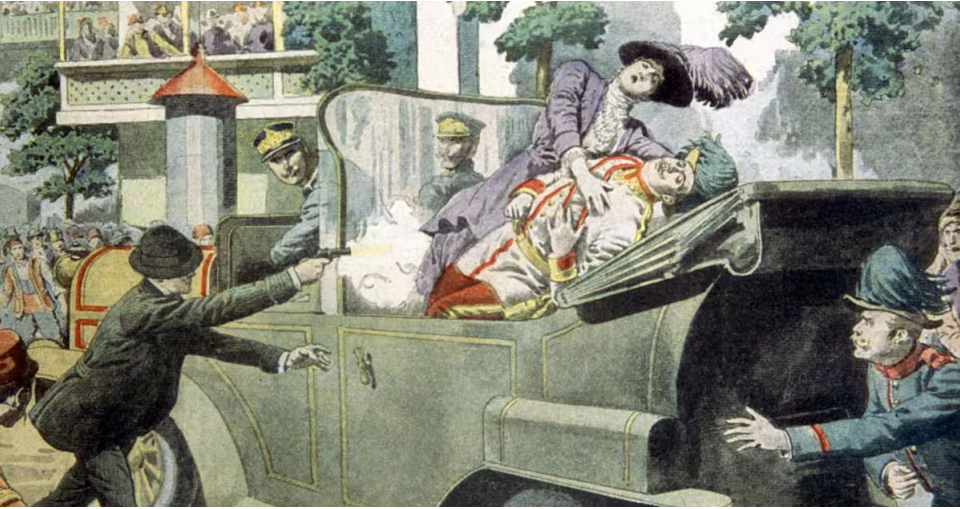
Utilitarianism Ethics: Two Important Aspects

The hedonic: focus on pleasure and happiness as ultimate good

The consequentialist: focused on the consequences of the actions when evaluating morality

- Consequentialism \neq Utilitarianism
 - Consequentialist theories do not have to focus on happiness
 - Hypothetical example: actions resulting in most economic activity are best
 - Criticism of Utilitarianism can focus on either category: too much focus on either the happiness aspect alone or solely relying on consequences

On Consequences



Unlike the ripples of a pebble in a pond, consequences of an action are impossible to precisely define.

I.e. Archduke Ferdinand's driver making a wrong turn would, by its consequences alone, be the worst action in history.

Counters:

1. "It was just an accident" – wrong to assess right/wrong solely on consequence.
 2. Chain of consequences \neq Chain of responsibility
 3. If we attempt to trace consequences back, we will never arrive at a definite guilty party (everything has a cause)
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Transparency



- Is a secretive government justified in the name of efficiency?
 - Do people have a right to know about the inner workings of government?
- What does Utilitarianism say? Kantianism? Existentialism?



Act v. Rule Utilitarianism

- Act
 - Evaluate each action's consequences; choose what maximizes immediate overall happiness.
 - Rule
 - Considers rules whose universal adoption would maximize happiness for everyone.
 - One-off or a general rule—which yields more net good? Co-measurable?
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