**Final Assessment**

Name: Shihab Muhtasim

ID: 21301610

Section: 16

Department of Computer Science and Engineering

HUM103: Ethics & Culture

Faculty: Riaz Partha Khan

Spring 2022

**Answer to the Question No 1**

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was a great German philosopher born in Konigsberg which is today a part of Russia known as Kaliningrad. He combined early modern rationalism and empiricism, established the terms for most of nineteenth and twentieth-century philosophy, and continues to have an impact today in many other fields (Rohlf & Michael, 2020).

In order to identify the moral rule, Kant distinguishes between two types of imperatives which are commands that apply to specific human activities and deeds. It includes instructions on what one ought to do and ought not to do in accordance with rational reasons behind it. For example, going to the store to buy food or helping the poor, etc. There are two forms of imperatives, hypothetical imperative and categorical imperative (Khan, 2020). Now, the hypothetical imperative follows an if condition in its command. So if someone wants to achieve something then they have to do or not do certain deeds. The actions taken in accordance with the hypothetical instructions, decide on the consequences faced by rational beings. So when someone wants to buy a fridge they have to save up money, it is an example of a hypothetical command as it includes the condition of saving up money in order to buy a fridge. On the other hand, categorical imperative gives clear injunctions to do or not do something without any conditions. It can represent moral laws which are rational decisions taken by rational creatures in certain situations. The categorical imperative follows no condition to achieve something rather gives clear instructions that someone has to follow no matter what. For instance, one can not steal, tell a lie, or conduct criminal activities that harm society under any circumstances are examples of the categorical imperative. Here, it includes no conditions but rather gives clear laws of what to do and what not to do by imposing them to follow certain injunctions whereas the hypothetical imperative does not bind rational beings to any actions as they can only follow the instructions if they want to achieve a certain purpose.

Kant regards the categorical imperative as a “good without qualification” as it requires a person to do certain actions regardless of any qualification or conditions. The commands in categorical imperative are needed to be followed without any option or exceptions as it doesn’t require any qualifications and concerns everyone in the universe. Good without qualification is the idea that certain actions will be taken without worrying about the consequences followed by one's goodwill. Accordingly, the person conducting the activity has to have goodwill in order to perform ‘good without qualification’ and it has to be done regardless of the thought of any other interest except for the interest of the act itself. For instance, doing charity for the sake of fame cannot be considered as unqualified good as the intention of charity is unwise. However, when someone gives charity for the sake of this activity with wise intentions of helping the poor, it will be considered as good without qualification regardless of the outcome that it provides. Hence, unqualified good focuses on the actions taken with goodwill and it implies to everyone equally. Accordingly, the categorical imperative includes everyone following certain laws without any conditions or concern for the outcomes and focuses only on the actions conducted. For instance, helping a dying person would be a categorical imperative as everyone must follow it under all circumstances. Again, it is good without qualification since one is helping someone out with the wise intention of saving a life whether or not the dying person is a criminal or not. Evidently, that is why Kant regards categorical imperative as ‘good without qualification.

Kant defined categorical imperative based on four formulations. However, all four of the paths lead to the same solution yet he decided to divide his categorical imperative key question notions into four formulations. In his first formulation of the categorical imperative Kant says to act only on that maxim which we can will that it should become a universal law (Khan, 2020). Accordingly, defining the maxim is the first step to Kant’s first formulation of the categorical imperative. Maxim defines actions taken by someone under certain commands that he would approve of for anyone else to do. For example, if one likes to destroy forests and believes that it is normal to do it for anyone else as well, destroying forests is a maxim. The second step is to make the defined maxim universalized. After one has identified the maxim he has to think in a broad sense by making the maxim mandatory to follow for everyone in the universe. In this case, one has to universalize the act of destroying forests considering everyone is bound by this act and has to do it no matter what. Thirdly, one has to analyze if there is any contradiction in the world due to his universalizing of the maxim. If there is any conflict, then the maxim will be immoral since it can not be universalized for everyone. However, if there is no conflict of the maxim and everyone in the world can not live in a world following this maxim, that will be an immoral act as well according to the first formulation of Kant. To illustrate, if deforestation is normalized and everyone starts cutting down trees, at a point, starting up a law like this would create huge chaos and contradiction since planting trees for their betterment and breathing to stay alive. In such a world, cutting down trees and destroying them would not make sense for which it can not be considered to be a moral law. Again, if there will be no trees and all human living beings will eventually die so people in the world can not live with this violation. However, always telling the truth, and returning anything that doesn’t belong to someone are some maxims that can be universalized without any contradictions and established as moral laws.

Kant derives two types of duties from the third step of the first formulation of the categorical imperative. According to Kant, there are two types of duties such as perfect and imperfect duties (Khan, 2020). Perfect duties are activities that must be performed under all circumstances in order to avoid contradiction in the world. To elaborate, when we universalize that maxim and find a contradiction in the world, that stands for being a violation to perfect duty. So doing the opposite of our maxim is our perfect duty and we ought to follow that path no matter what. For example, if one wants to universalize the maxim of stealing or taking something from someone that doesn’t belong to them, it would create chaos in the world since no one would have any ownership to anything and everyone would be taking things from one another which wouldn’t make any sense. In this case, stealing is a violation of the perfect duty which is not stealing things from others. Again, deforestation that we encountered earlier will be a violation of both perfect and imperfect duty since it will create contradictions in the world. On the other hand, imperfect duties are obligations that one can decide on how and when to do considering the circumstances as the violation of this creates no contradiction initially yet raises an unwillingness in the world of human living if the violation is completely universalized. Even though imperfect duties are not mandatory to be followed by everyone yet everyone on earth not following it can create mass issues in the community. For instance, if everyone is in a position to help others stop helping them, it won’t create a contradiction initially because it is their choice of action. However, when we try answering the second question of the third step of the first formulation of the categorical imperative which is if people will be willing to live in a world where it is normalized to not help anyone, we will see a crisis in that world for which it will be falling apart. Again, developing someone’s talent to become successful is an imperfect duty, and not doing it is their own choice. However, even though this violation does not create any contradiction, universalizing it establishes a very slowly improving world where no one is passionate about anything.

The first formulation of Kant's categorical imperative requires three steps to find the results which can be used to show why cheating in an examination would be a violation of perfect duty. To begin with, we have to identify the maxim which in this case is the activity of cheating in exams. Secondly, we have to universalize the maxim that it is acceptable for everyone in the world to follow our maxim in their actions. In this case, we have to universalize cheating in exams so everyone in the world will be cheating in exams. Thirdly, we have to see if universalizing our maxim creates any contradiction to prove that our maxim is a violation of a perfect duty. To emphasize, the examination system is created in the world to educate people and judge them based on their learnings to give them the raise that they deserve to create a balance of people from different races in the world. However, if everyone starts cheating in exams it would mean that no one’s learning is being evaluated anymore as they are not giving exams on their own knowledge. Also, there would be no meaning in inspecting their exams. So the whole exam system would lose its meaning and there would be no differences between people from different races which would lead to chaos in society and create a huge contradiction. Since our maxim will create contradictions in the world, not cheating in exams is a perfect duty, and cheating in exams is a violation of this perfect duty.

**Answer to the Question No 4**

Jermy Bentham was an English philosopher and considered to be the founder of modern utilitarianism (Khan,2020). In his theory of utilitarianism, he tries to find the justification of an action based on how much pleasure it provides. His protege John Stuart Mill who is a proponent of this theory also provides his own version of this theory known as rule utilitarianism.

Jermy Bentham believed that the moral justification of an action being good or bad depends on the consequences that it may or may not bring (Khan, 2020). Accordingly, the morally justified good activities are the ones that have useful outcomes. Soany action that we conduct can be classified as morally right or wrong based on whether the utility provided by our acts is good or bad. Again, utility or being useful is defined by serving the purpose of gaining pleasure. So in utilitarianism, the actions taken by rational beings have to bring pleasure in order to be considered as morally good. Again, the utility principle follows the greatest happiness concept. So, the concern of utilitarian ethics is to promote actions that serve the greatest number of happiness for the greatest number of sentient beings unlike egoism where one only thinks about their own self-interest without thinking about others. In utilitarianism, the notion is to rationally think about generating utility for the greatest number of all beings that can feel pleasure. For example, one can attain to spread happiness by doing charity to famine victims. This act will be morally good by the utility principal because the motive of the person doing charity is to ensure happiness so he is doing it for the sake of the outcome rather than for the sake of the act itself which is doing charity. To conclude based on the principle of utility, an action can be defined as right or wrong depending on whether it promotes happiness or pain. This principal does not focus on the will or intentions behind the action rather prioritizes the consequences led by the action.

Hedon is a unit of measuring pair or happiness by which Bentham calculates the amount of happiness or pain in total that a certain activity can lead to and acts accordingly (Khan, 2020). This notion of calculating pleasure or pain is known as hedonic or felicific calculus. He distingues seven categories to calculate the consequences of certain actions and find the answers to the questions that arise regarding the outcome which are intensity, duration, certainty, propinquity, fecundity, purity, and extent. Firstly, intensity of a pleasure measures how great the happiness would be. The more intense it is, the more precious the action becomes. Secondly, the duration of happiness defines how long the happiness gained by certain activity lasts depending on which the actions leading to long lasting pleasure are prioritized. Thirdly, the certainty of a pleasure ensures the possibility of gaining a certain amount of pleasure. The more probability of gaining pleasure certain actions can provide the better it is to conduct. Fourthly, the propinquity of an action shows how soon certain pleasure will be gained. Certain acts can be given importance based on the sooner need of happiness. Furthermore, fecundity shows if certain actions would lead to additional happiness or not. For example, fecundity defines if making one person happy would give pleasure to someone else or not based on which those acts would be more impactful. Moreover, purity identifies if pleasure obtained from certain acts also brings pain with it or not. In certain cases, the lesser the pain the better it is according to the principle of utility. Although all these categories of hedon can be applied to individuals as well in terms of egoism to find the best action to follow, the last category of hedon distingues from egoism and serves one of the main purposes of utilitarianism which is the extent. It measures how many people will be gaining pleasure from pain through certain activities. This is important to determine how many people will be affected and how it will affect them. So actions can be chosen based on the extent in order to bring happiness to a greater number of people. Hence, the hedonic calculus can be used to decide which actions to take to ensure maximum happiness for the maximum number of people. For instance, if one tries to measure between donating a thousand bucks to an orphanage for poor children and giving it to his children who already live a decent life, he can identify using the units of hedons that giving it to the orphanage would more certainly serve greater happiness to more people so he ought to donate if according to utilitarianism.

Bentham’s godson John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) was a strong proponent of utilitarianism which is said that he learnt directly from his godfather. He was one of the most influential philosophers at his time in the 19th century (Khan, 2020). He not just expanded the concept of utilitarianism of bentham but also gave an elegant version of it. Bentham defined all sentient beings to be the same when measuring the pleasure that they get. According to his version of utilitarianism, if there was a very depressed human being who will not achieve much happiness from a certain action and another sentient being such as a pig which would have greater pleasure than the human, the happiness of the pig has to be prioritized even if the action leads to the concept of killing either one of these beings, the Bentham's theory would support killing of the human which John did not agree to. John thought that human beings had something special about themselves as they were rational beings for which they can calculate, analyze. Although computers can also do that, human beings have some special features that distinguish them from all other beings. He defines two orders of pleasure such as higher order and lower order. Higher order is the pleasure derived from intellectual, aesthetic and literary factors which only human beings can achieve. Their experience of pleasure is different from every other being which are produced by intellectual factors. A human can experience pleasure from an art that he made, or a video game that he won, inventing something new, winning a competition on something such as dancing, singing, racing etc. Mill thinks it is better to be a human being leading a miserable life rather than being a satisfied creature or animal as human beings have a rational and intellectual faculty which is worth more than anything. The pleasure of human beings matters more than that of the other animals which separates humans from all other creatures and prioritizes them. Again, lower order of pleasure are the pleasure that are sensuals and physical like eating, sleeping etc. Mill distinguishes between these two types of pleasure and prioritizes higher order of pleasure as he says it is better to be a very dissatisfied intellectual person than a satisfied fool. By proposing this concept Mill sought to rescue the theory of utilitarianism from the charge of a “pig philosophy” as it was being called at that time due to the theory of bentham. Again, Mill's utilitarianism holds that the proper action is one that respects those moral standards that, if followed by everyone, will create more joy and less pain (Velasquez, 2010). For example, Bentham’s theory focuses on the outcome that produces the maximum happiness for maximum people. So if killing a person would give pleasure to maximum people it would be in support of that action. This is the concept of act utilitarianism where the outcome of certain activity defines the moral justification of it. However, Mill’s concept would say that everyone would be killing everyone in the world which would create more pain and less joy in the world so it would reject that action. Mill proposes rule utilitarianism. Here, the focus is on a certain activity being followed by everyone in existence and whether or not everyone attempting it would cause pain or pleasure. These are the main differences of utilitarianism between John and bentham.

As mentioned above, the act utilitarian theory supports the actions that provide the maximum pleasure for the maximum number of people focusing on the outcome more than the action’s moral justification itself. So, whichever act gives pleasure to the greater number of people is more morally justified to be a good act. In the scenario mentioned, the doctor’s act is morally right by act utilitarianism since he focused on pleasure for the greater number of people regardless of the justification of the action taken. He decided to take the body organs from a person who is healthy but has no relatives or friends and give those to help save the lives of three other patients of his who have families who are dependent on them. So by taking the organs from the healthy man the doctor tries to generate greater pleasure for the greater number of people and less pain as not only the dying man would get pleasure from getting their lives saved, but also their family members would also be happy which is more compared to only one person encountering pain. On the other hand, rule utilitarianism would not support this act of the doctor. An action has to be universalized and analyzed if it creates more happiness or pain if everyone starts doing it. In this case, if everyone starts taking organs from healthy people and killing healthy people, then it will be a world without any healthy person and everyone will be killing almost everyone only on the basis of the amount of people that they are close with. For instance, if one person is killed to save another person who has more relatives, then that person is compared with some with more relatives than him and he is also killed. Hence, this situation will lead to immense pain and sadness over the world as there will be killing everywhere.

To conclude, Bentham as the founder of modern utilitarianism introduced his notion to the world which John improvised more and saved the concept of utilitarianism by amending it for the betterment of mankind.

**Ans to the Question No 5**

In today’s world media is a huge part of our lives which influences us in various ways and it is important to be aware of the consequences of certain actions we take using media. So the media ethics the fairness and accuracy of presented information in the media as well as the proper ways to use it by critically analyzing the right thing to do.

Jermey Bentham's concept of utilitarianism which is known as act utilitarianism identifies if an action is morally right or wrong based on how much pleasure it brings to what extent. So, if an act generates greater pleasure for a greater number of people and generates pain for a smaller number of people, it is morally right to do so. In the scenario, if the journalist publishes the pictures of the young boy, it will make a lot of people conscious about the danger of swimming in a lake without any supervision for young children which will generate happiness for a vast audience since they are being saved by a danger and they can protect their loved ones from the threats. However, by publishing it the journalist would break the trust of the family who he promised that he would not publish the pictures. So he will be generating pain for that family. Now, act militarism would say that it is morally right to publish the pictures as it will generate pleasure for the greater number of people. However, John Mill’s proposed concept of rule militarism would say it is not the right thing to do. According to his theory, if the journalist publishes pictures without the consent of the boy’s family, it will have to be normalized that everyone will be posting pictures without anyone's consent so it will lead to a world where no one respects anyone's privacy so it will ultimately generate more pain than pleasure. So rule utilitarianism will be against this act of posting the pictures.

Kant defines moral laws based on his notion of categorical imperative where a maxim or action has to be universalized for everyone to follow and see if it creates contradiction in the world or creates a world where everyone is willing to live or not. In this scenario, if the journalist publishes the pictures of the boy we have to take the action of publishing pictures without one’s consent to be our maxim and normalize it for everyone else to follow so everyone else in the world starts posting pictures this way. At this step, this creates a contradiction in the world since there will be no meaning of respecting privacy if everyone starts publishing pictures without one's consent and it will lead to contradiction in the world. This act is a violation of Kant's notion of perfect duty. Hence, from a Kantian point of view, the journalist should not publish the pictures of that boy since it can create contradictions in the world when everyone starts doing it.

Egoism is a teleological viewpoint that focuses on protecting and fulfilling one's own self-interests. Egoist ethics only focuses on providing maximum benefits for individuals through certain actions which does not require the knowledge of whether or not it will create contradiction in the world or benefit other people than the individual. In the case, when the journalist did not get the consent to post the pictures of the boy the editor of the newspaper argues to publish the pictures in order to win a prize for the journalist and newspaper. So, if the journalist listens to him and posts the pictures to win the prize, it will be based on their self-interest. They will be concerned about the privacy of the boy or hurting them but will only be thinking about securing their own benefits which makes it a right thing to do in egoist ethics.

I agree with the Kantian point of view in this scenario since it concerns everyone to be doing the same rather than making an exception for oneself. If the act of the journalist publishing the pictures without permission is to be morally right, it will have to be normalized for everyone to do so as well which will create contradictions in world science there will be no meaning of privacy. Also this act is causing pain to the family of the boy which will also be created throughout the world if everyone starts following this maxim resulting in immense amounts of pain in mankind. Thus, it is a violation of the perfect duty of categorical imp[erative for which it is morally wrong. For this reason, I would like to agree with the Kantian perspective of categorical imperative in this scenario.

To conclude, the scenario presented by the moral dilemma from the utilitarian, Kantian, and egoist perspective generates different justifications. From my perspective , the Kantian viewpoint is best to justify the act of the journalist.

***Reference***

Khan, R., P.( 2020, November 16). Bentham & His Hedonic Calculus. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbqflX7Ccbg>

Khan, R., P. ( 2020, November 16). Hypothetical & Categorical Imperatives. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4psPsMKxZFE>

Khan, R., P. ( 2020, November 16). The Categorical Imperative. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPwWYlRba5g>

Khan, R., P. (2020, November 16). Kant's Examples. <https://youtu.be/k2MeCkNtRAc>

Khan, R., P. (2020, November 16). Bentham & His Hedonic Calculas.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbqflX7Ccbg>

Khan, R., P. (2020, November 16). John Stuart Mill: Distinction between Pleasures.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiMuo-xFF4g>

Khan, R., P. (2020, November 16). John Stuart Mill: Distinction between Pleasures.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiMuo-xFF4g>

Rohlf, & Michael. (2020). Immanuel Kant (Fall 2020 ed.). Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant/>

Velasquez, M. (2010). Philosophy. A Text with Readings. (11th ed.) <https://drive.google.com/file/d/13Y65N34juWxAlhzB5uW_GbtoEy3IhQUO/view>