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I found that the three topics I engaged in that were most interesting to me were the ethics of Contractarianism, the discussion board on the Facebook and Cambridge Analytical scandal, and the ethics of Consequentialism/Utilitarianism. Examining the ideology of Contractarianism started with me reading a short story by Octavia Butler titled “The Evening and the Morning and the Night” following the lifestyle of a community having a drug that will cure most forms of cancer. The drawback was that there was a side effect to the drug called Duryea-Gode Disease (DGD) making those who took the drug to feel trapped in their skin forcing them to claw at themselves or someone else with DGD to be released from themselves. This would cause many murders and suicides lowering life expectancy to only forty years of age. The overall story itself was very interesting, but the question I was tasked with answering was “If you don't know who you are in either society, would you want to be in a society that had the cure or not?”. This question could be very controversial for others because the story does have a method for dealing with DGD but not a full-on cure for it. The decision was easy for me because we have methods to aid in cancer treatment, even if they are not cures and do not always prevent the loss of life, it is better than lowering life expectancy and increasing death rates of all ages. The only logical answer in my opinion is to not live in that society and stay in the one we have now whether I contracted DGD or not.

The Facebook and Cambridge Analytical Scandal was that Facebook had its ad purchasing algorithm exploited to aid in the 2016 presidential election in favor of Donald Trump. Facebook is a social media platform with billions of users accumulating a net worth of 538 billion that makes money through selling ad space for anyone to purchase. A Russian-American

researcher attending Cambridge University named Aleksandr Kogan created a Facebook quiz app exposing a loophole in the Facebook API that allowed the data of the 270,000 quiz takers to be accessed and also the data of their friends resulting in 87 million users having their data exploited. The two controversial problems with this are that those under the Trump campaign took to unethical tactics to aid in Trump's presidential election and that Facebook had such terrible security methods that their way of making money was exploited and used against them and their users. Cambridge Analytical is being shut down because of its involvement and constant negative publicity while Facebook is still up and running and still having hacker issues occur. Facebook overall needs better security and needs to start prioritizing this because it will also show that they will be prioritizing the safety and privacy of their users.

The ethical theory behind Consequentialism/Utilitarianism was in a way like seeing the good and the worth in people's actions though they came with some kind of drawback. The two terms are very similar but also quite different. Consequentialism follows the belief that an action is right if the consequences of that action were good, and wrong if the consequences of that action were bad. This is the simple surface of everyday life, for example, a student seeking help in a class and then passing the said class is the right action with good consequences.

Utilitarianism follows the belief that the right action is the one that maximizes the amount of happiness and minimizes the amount of suffering. The example given was "Imagine that you are at a junction in a train track, where you can switch the direction of a train. You suddenly notice that a train is approaching, and, if it continues down the track it is currently on, it will hit and kill five people. But you have the lever to change its direction! Just as you are going to pull it, you notice that there is one person trapped on the other track, so if you pull the switch, that person will be hit and killed." A Utilitarian would pull the switch and save the five people over the one

person because saving five lives and killing one will do more good and provide less suffering than saving one life and killing five. This caught my attention for the extremely graphic example, but it is a real-life example still and I would have to agree with the reasoning. Naturally, if the situation was altered where either five strangers were killed or your mother then almost anyone would immediately save their mother. Doing so would go against the Utilitarian ideology and be the morally incorrect choice and that is where I would be fine with being morally incorrect.

A takeaway from not only these three topics but the class as a whole was that it opened up my mind to different forms of ideology and really pushed my brain to the highest point of critical thinking when answering such controversial questions and discussing such intense scenarios. I would advise my future self to really hold onto some of these ideals and apply them to everyday life as they are very insightful and can possibly be useful in my own personally tough situations and even aid in my life goals.