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OUTLINE – MUCH TO DO ABOUT SUFFERING

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PURPOSE: To show that there is a moral obligation on the part of society as a whole to alleviate the suffering of the citizens living in the society.

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustrative scene in which a person is depicted in a state of suffering.
- B. Pose the question as to whether or not the society this person lives in is obligated in any way to see to the welfare of this person.
- C. Brief overview of the paper.

II. THE NATURE AND MORAL WEIGHT OF SUFFERING

- A. The Nature of Suffering
 1. Mayerfeld's definition – suffering as a “bad overall feeling.”
 2. Objection to Mayerfeld
 3. Description of suffering as the blocking off of one or more of Maslow's hierarchical needs
- B. Why does suffering carry moral weight?
 1. Traditional view of suffering as being inherently bad (Utilitarian account shared by Mayerfeld.)
 2. The Kantian view – that by allowing person x to experience suffering, that person is being denied the possibility to pursue higher ends.
- C. Transition: Now that we have covered the nature of suffering and the moral weight involved with suffering, we will take a look at the moral theories involved.

III. RELATED MORAL THEORIES IN THE CONCEPT OF ALLEVIATING SUFFERING

- A. Utilitarianism
 1. Peter Singer's argument from “Famine, Affluence, and Morality.”
 2. Mayerfeld's argument from Suffering and Moral Responsibility
 3. Where these two fail in providing more than a subjective individual argument to assist in the alleviation of suffering and Hardin's objection to Singer.
 4. Transition from utilitarianism to Susan James.

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- B. Susan James' concept of duty towards those who are suffering.
 - 1. Why she thinks Singer has it wrong.
 - 2. Her proposed solution.
 - 3. Why this solution too isn't compelling enough to formulate the basis of societal obligations towards its citizens.
- C. The Kantian Approach towards Alleviation of Suffering
 - 1. O'Neill and Beneficence
 - 2. Why this formulates the strongest possible of the proposed claims and provides a promising foundation for group beneficence.
- D. Transition: Now that the moral basis for which group duty is to be derived, there will be examination of the Aspects of group responsibility towards citizens within a society.

IV. POLITICAL ASPECTS AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SOCIETY

- A. Feinberg and May's responses to the role group responsibility plays in formulation of duties.
- B. Waldron's plea for welfare, and why it is that welfare is important in societies.
- C. Otsuka's criticism of group beneficence or the problem of the imperceivable differences.
- D. Criticism of Otsuka's response
- E. How it is that Kantian duties could apply to a society.
- F. Transition: Now that we have the appropriate tools, we can answer the question proposed above.

V. AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION: DO SOCIETIES HAVE OBLIGATIONS TO THE SUFFERING?

- A. Yes, they do.
- B. These obligations are based in Kantian theories of Beneficence.
- C. Utilitarian theories are not adequate because they do not pose an appeal for all people to follow.

VI. CONCLUSION

- A. Recap of the main points shown in the thesis.
- B. Reinstatement of the obligation.
- C. An image to leave the reader with.