

Utilitarianism and On Liberty

John Stuart Mill

Greatest Happiness Principle

- Rightness of an action is determined entirely by how much pleasure it creates or pain it prevents
- Wrongness of an action is determined entirely by how much pain it creates or pleasure it prevents

Greatest Happiness Principle

- The amount of pleasure and pain are determined by both quality and quantity
- What actions have a higher quality of pleasure can only be figured out by experience
- Individuals who have experienced different sorts of pleasures are the best judges

Greatest Happiness Principle

Most Happiness of the Highest Quality for the Most People

Act Utilitarianism

It is the amount of pleasure and pain **each individual action** causes that determines its rightness or wrongness

Rule Utilitarianism

There are certain **kinds of actions** that tend to produce more pleasure and less pain. These actions are what are right.

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Reflect

Of the Limits to the Authority of Society over the Individual

“To individuality should belong the part of life in which it is chiefly the individual that is interested; to society, the part which chiefly interests society.”

On Liberty, pp 147

Of the Limits to the Authority of Society over the Individual

Harm to Others

On Liberty, pp 152 - 3

Liberty and Morality

What is the connection between Mill’s conception of Liberty and his conception of Morality?

Liberty and Morality

- Morality aims at the greatest happiness for the greatest number
- Liberty aims at individual happiness
- For Mill, these are complementary

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Reflect