

John Mill (Reading notes)

- In sciences truths can have meaning even when we don't understand the principles
- In laws/ethics a statement that is founded on an accepted theory has little validity. An action exists for a particular end
 - ↳ in order to know what morality dictates, it's necessary to know by what human standard actions should be judged
- morality of an action is based on what brings the best general state of the world
- Utility: pleasure itself + the absence of pain (The Greatest happiness principle → actions are right as they promote happiness)
 - ↳ pleasure + absence of pain are only thing desirable as ends in themselves (inherently good)
- hierarchy of pleasures (quality and quantity)
- human pleasures are superior to animalistic ones → happiness is a sign we are exercising our higher faculties
 - ↳ people who use higher faculties are less content b/c they have a deeper sense of the limitations of the world
- greatest source of unhappiness is selfishness + lack of mental cultivation
- willingness to sacrifice one's own happiness for that of others is the highest virtue
- utilitarian judgement of an act is based on the happiness of all people (morality of an action is based on the goodness of the result only)
- On religion: if God wants the happiness of all his people, utilitarianism is more religious than any other doctrine
- individuals motives do not matter in morality

John Stuart Mill

• Qualitative Utilitarianism

↳ Similarities with Bentham

- accepts psychological and ethical hedonism
- Utility as a normal standard
- "Greatest Happiness principle" as the fundamental moral principle

↳ Differences with Bentham

- Values are heterogeneous: differ in kind and quality
 - some pleasures are more desirable and qualitatively superior to lower ones
 - Rational faculty gives mental pleasures (higher)
 - creation, divine, problematic, passive
 - Animal nature gives physical pleasure (lower)
 - sex, ecstasy, drugs, enhancers
- Pleasures do not aggregate
- Happiness is a distinctive human characteristic
 - content refers to satisfaction, happiness refers to having a good human life
 - better to be happy but unsatisfied than vice versa