

Chapter 1 : SparkNotes: Utilitarianism: Chapter 2: What Utilitarianism Is (Part 1)

John Stuart Mill, who has been called the most influential English-speaking philosopher of the 19th century, was a British philosopher, economist, and moral and political theorist.

It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do. By the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever according to the tendency it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question: I say of every action whatsoever, and therefore not only of every action of a private individual, but of every measure of government. In Chapter IV, Bentham introduces a method of calculating the value of pleasures and pains, which has come to be known as the hedonic calculus. Finally, it is necessary to consider the extent, or the number of people affected by the action. Mill " and can be more "a crude version of act utilitarianism conceived in the twentieth century as a straw man to be attacked and rejected. His seminal work is concerned with the principles of legislation and the hedonic calculus is introduced with the words "Pleasures then, and the avoidance of pains, are the ends that the legislator has in view. This is considered in *The Theory of Legislation*, where Bentham distinguishes between evils of the first and second orders. Those of the first order are the more immediate consequences; those of the second are when the consequences spread through the community causing "alarm" and "danger". It is true there are cases in which, if we confine ourselves to the effects of the first order, the good will have an incontestable preponderance over the evil. Were the offence considered only under this point of view, it would not be easy to assign any good reasons to justify the rigour of the laws. Every thing depends upon the evil of the second order; it is this which gives to such actions the character of crime, and which makes punishment necessary. Let us take, for example, the physical desire of satisfying hunger. John Stuart Mill was brought up as a Benthamite with the explicit intention that he would carry on the cause of utilitarianism. It would be absurd that while, in estimating all other things, quality is considered as well as quantity, the estimation of pleasures should be supposed to depend on quantity alone. Utility, within the context of utilitarianism, refers to people performing actions for social utility. With social utility, he means the well-being of many people. Thus, an action that results in the greatest pleasure for the utility of society is the best action, or as Jeremy Bentham, the founder of early Utilitarianism put it, as the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Mill not only viewed actions as a core part of utility, but as the directive rule of moral human conduct. The rule being that we should only be committing actions that provide pleasure to society. This view of pleasure was hedonistic, as it pursued the thought that pleasure is the highest good in life. This concept was adopted by Jeremy Bentham, the founder of Utilitarianism, and can be seen in his works. According to Mill, good actions result in pleasure, and that there is no higher end than pleasure. Mill says that good actions lead to pleasure and define good character. Better put, the justification of character, and whether an action is good or not, is based on how the person contributes to the concept of social utility. In the long run the best proof of a good character is good actions; and resolutely refuse to consider any mental disposition as good, of which the predominant tendency is to produce bad conduct. In the last chapter of *Utilitarianism*, Mill concludes that justice, as a classifying factor of our actions being just or unjust is one of the certain moral requirements, and when the requirements are all regarded collectively, they are viewed as greater according to this scale of "social utility" as Mill puts it. He also notes that, contrary to what its critics might say, there is "no known Epicurean theory of life which does not assign to the pleasures of the intellect a much higher value as pleasures than to those of mere sensation. The accusation that hedonism is "doctrine worthy only of swine" has a long history. In *Nicomachean Ethics* Book 1 Chapter 5, Aristotle says that identifying the good with pleasure is to prefer a life suitable for beasts. The theological utilitarians had the option of grounding their pursuit of happiness in the will of God; the hedonistic utilitarians needed a different defence. And if the fool, or the pig, are of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. [29] Mill argues that if people who are "competently acquainted" with two pleasures show a decided preference for one even if it be accompanied by more discontent and "would not resign it for any quantity of the other", then it is legitimate to regard that pleasure as being superior in quality. Mill recognizes that these "competent judges"

will not always agree, and states that, in cases of disagreement, the judgment of the majority is to be accepted as final. Mill also acknowledges that "many who are capable of the higher pleasures, occasionally, under the influence of temptation, postpone them to the lower. But this is quite compatible with a full appreciation of the intrinsic superiority of the higher. We will become bored and depressed. Whereas, intellectual pursuits give long term happiness because provide the individual with constant opportunities throughout the years to improve his life, by benefiting from accruing knowledge. The only proof that a sound is audible, is that people hear it In like manner, I apprehend, the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable, is that people do actually desire itâ€. No reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable, except that each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happinessâ€. we have not only all the proof which the case admits of, but all which it is possible to require, that happiness is a good: It is usual [35] to say that Mill is committing a number of fallacies. He is accused of committing the naturalistic fallacy , because he is trying to deduce what people ought to do from what they in fact do; the fallacy of equivocation , because he moves from the fact that 1 something is desirable, i. This is the first, and remains the only, book-length treatment of the subject matter. Yet the alleged fallacies in the proof continue to attract scholarly attention in journal articles and book chapters. Hall [36] and Popkin [37] defend Mill against this accusation pointing out that he begins Chapter Four by asserting that "questions of ultimate ends do not admit of proof, in the ordinary acceptance of the term" and that this is "common to all first principles. Mill anticipates the objection that people desire other things such as virtue. The principle of utility does not mean that any given pleasure, as music, for instance, or any given exemption from pain, as for example health, are to be looked upon as means to a collective something termed happiness, and to be desired on that account. They are desired and desirable in and for themselves; besides being means, they are a part of the end. Virtue, according to the utilitarian doctrine, is not naturally and originally part of the end, but it is capable of becoming so; and in those who love it disinterestedly it has become so, and is desired and cherished, not as a means to happiness, but as a part of their happiness. In *Ethics* , Moore rejected a purely hedonistic utilitarianism and argued that there is a range of values that might be maximized. He says that such an assumption: It involves our saying that, even if the total quantity of pleasure in each was exactly equal, yet the fact that all the beings in the one possessed, in addition knowledge of many different kinds and a full appreciation of all that was beautiful or worthy of love in their world, whereas none of the beings in the other possessed any of these things, would give us no reason whatever for preferring the former to the latter. Moore admits that it is impossible to prove the case either way, but he believed that it was intuitively obvious that even if the amount of pleasure stayed the same a world that contained such things as beauty and love would be a better world. He adds that, if a person was to take the contrary view, then "I think it is self-evident that he would be wrong. Paley had justified the use of rules and Mill says: Being rational creatures, they go to sea with it ready calculated; and all rational creatures go out upon the sea of life with their minds made up on the common questions of right and wrong. However, rule utilitarianism proposes a more central role for rules that was thought to rescue the theory from some of its more devastating criticisms, particularly problems to do with justice and promise keeping. Throughout the s and s, articles were published both for and against the new form of utilitarianism, and through this debate the theory we now call rule utilitarianism was created. In an introduction to an anthology of these articles, the editor was able to say: The essential difference is in what determines whether or not an action is the right action. Act utilitarianism maintains that an action is right if it maximizes utility; rule utilitarianism maintains that an action is right if it conforms to a rule that maximizes utility. In , Urmson published an influential article [46] arguing that Mill justified rules on utilitarian principles. From then on, articles have debated this interpretation of Mill. In all probability, it was not a distinction that Mill was particularly trying to make and so the evidence in his writing is inevitably mixed. But, for the most part, the consideration of what would happen if everyone did the same, is the only means we have of discovering the tendency of the act in the particular case. This seems to tip the balance in favour of saying that Mill is best classified as an act utilitarian. Some school level textbooks and at least one UK examination board [48] make a further distinction between strong and weak rule utilitarianism. However, it is not clear that this distinction is made in the academic literature. It has been argued that rule utilitarianism collapses into act utilitarianism, because for any given

rule, in the case where breaking the rule produces more utility, the rule can be refined by the addition of a sub-rule that handles cases like the exception. Two-level utilitarianism In *Principles*, [51] R. Hare accepts that rule utilitarianism collapses into act utilitarianism but claims that this is a result of allowing the rules to be "as specific and un-general as we please. When we are "playing God or the ideal observer", we use the specific form, and we will need to do this when we are deciding what general principles to teach and follow. When we are "inculcating" or in situations where the biases of our human nature are likely to prevent us doing the calculations properly, then we should use the more general rule utilitarianism. Hare argues that in practice, most of the time, we should be following the general principles: In *Moral Thinking*, Hare illustrated the two extremes. The "archangel" is the hypothetical person who has perfect knowledge of the situation and no personal biases or weaknesses and always uses critical moral thinking to decide the right thing to do; the "prole" is the hypothetical person who is completely incapable of critical thinking and uses nothing but intuitive moral thinking and, of necessity, has to follow the general moral rules they have been taught or learned through imitation. However, the critical moral thinking underpins and informs the more intuitive moral thinking. It is responsible for formulating and, if necessary, reformulating the general moral rules. We also switch to critical thinking when trying to deal with unusual situations or in cases where the intuitive moral rules give conflicting advice.

Preference utilitarianism The concept of preference utilitarianism was first proposed in by John Harsanyi in *Morality and the theory of rational behaviour*, [53] but preference utilitarianism is more commonly associated with R. Hare, [52] Peter Singer [54] and Richard Brandt. By this I mean the principle that, in deciding what is good and what is bad for a given individual, the ultimate criterion can only be his own wants and his own preferences. People sometimes have irrational preferences. To deal with this, Harsanyi distinguishes between "manifest" preferences and "true" preferences. The former are those "manifested by his observed behaviour, including preferences possibly based on erroneous factual beliefs[clarification needed], or on careless logical analysis, or on strong emotions that at the moment greatly hinder rational choice" whereas the latter are "the preferences he would have if he had all the relevant factual information, always reasoned with the greatest possible care, and were in a state of mind most conducive to rational choice. The second caveat is that antisocial preferences, such as sadism, envy and resentment, have to be excluded. Harsanyi achieves this by claiming that such preferences partially exclude those people from the moral community: Utilitarian ethics makes all of us members of the same moral community. A person displaying ill will toward others does remain a member of this community, but not with his whole personality. That part of his personality that harbours these hostile antisocial feelings must be excluded from membership, and has no claim for a hearing when it comes to defining our concept of social utility.

Negative utilitarianism In *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Karl Popper argued that the principle "maximize pleasure" should be replaced by "minimize pain". He thought "it is not only impossible but very dangerous to attempt to maximize the pleasure or the happiness of the people, since such an attempt must lead to totalitarianism. A further criticism of the Utilitarian formula "Maximize pleasure" is that it assumes a continuous pleasure-pain scale that lets us treat degrees of pain as negative degrees of pleasure. Instead of the greatest happiness for the greatest number, one should demand, more modestly, the least amount of avoidable suffering for all The actual term negative utilitarianism was introduced by R. Smart as the title to his reply to Popper [58] in which he argued that the principle would entail seeking the quickest and least painful method of killing the entirety of humanity. Negative total utilitarianism, in contrast, tolerates suffering that can be compensated within the same person. Applying carefully selected rules at the social level and encouraging appropriate motives at the personal level is, so it is argued, likely to lead to a better overall outcome even if on some individual occasions it leads to the wrong action when assessed according to act utilitarian standards.

Criticisms[edit] Because utilitarianism is not a single theory but a cluster of related theories that have been developed over two hundred years, criticisms can be made for different reasons and have different targets. Quantifying utility[edit] A common objection to utilitarianism is the inability to quantify, compare, or measure happiness or well-being. Ray Briggs writes in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:

Chapter 2 : Mill's Moral and Political Philosophy (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

John Stuart Mill, (born May 20, , London, England—died May 8, , Avignon, France), English philosopher, economist, and exponent of utilitarianism. He was prominent as a publicist in the reforming age of the 19th century, and remains of lasting interest as a logician and an ethical theorist.

However Mill is clear that his concern for liberty does not extend to all individuals and all societies. He states that "Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians". He also argues that individuals should be prevented from doing lasting, serious harm to themselves or their property by the harm principle. Because no one exists in isolation, harm done to oneself may also harm others, and destroying property deprives the community as well as oneself. Though this principle seems clear, there are a number of complications. For example, Mill explicitly states that "harms" may include acts of omission as well as acts of commission. Thus, failing to rescue a drowning child counts as a harmful act, as does failing to pay taxes, or failing to appear as a witness in court. All such harmful omissions may be regulated, according to Mill. By contrast, it does not count as harming someone if "without force or fraud" the affected individual consents to assume the risk: Mill does, however, recognise one limit to consent: In these and other cases, it is important to bear in mind that the arguments in *On Liberty* are grounded on the principle of Utility, and not on appeals to natural rights. The question of what counts as a self-regarding action and what actions, whether of omission or commission, constitute harmful actions subject to regulation, continues to exercise interpreters of Mill. It is important to emphasise that Mill did not consider giving offence to constitute "harm"; an action could not be restricted because it violated the conventions or morals of a given society. *On Liberty* involves an impassioned defense of free speech. Mill argues that free discourse is a necessary condition for intellectual and social progress. We can never be sure, he contends, that a silenced opinion does not contain some element of the truth. He also argues that allowing people to air false opinions is productive for two reasons. First, individuals are more likely to abandon erroneous beliefs if they are engaged in an open exchange of ideas. Second, by forcing other individuals to re-examine and re-affirm their beliefs in the process of debate, these beliefs are kept from declining into mere dogma. It is not enough for Mill that one simply has an unexamined belief that happens to be true; one must understand why the belief in question is the true one. Along those same lines Mill wrote, "unmeasured vituperation, employed on the side of prevailing opinion, really does deter people from expressing contrary opinions, and from listening to those who express them. Social liberty and tyranny of majority[edit] This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. April Learn how and when to remove this template message

Mill believed that "the struggle between Liberty and Authority is the most conspicuous feature in the portions of history". He introduced a number of different concepts of the form tyranny can take, referred to as social tyranny, and tyranny of the majority. He said that social liberty was "the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual". It was attempted in two ways: He stated, "Society can and does execute its own mandates: Individuals are rational enough to make decisions about their well being. Government should interfere when it is for the protection of society. The sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not sufficient warrant. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will be better for him to do so, because it will make him happier, because, in the opinion of others, to do so would be wise, or even right The only part of the conduct of anyone, for which he is amenable to society, is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns him, his independence is, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign. I choose, by preference the cases which are least favourable to me " In which the argument opposing freedom of opinion, both on truth and that of utility, is considered the strongest. Let the opinions impugned be the belief of God and in a future state, or any of the commonly received doctrines of morality But I must be

permitted to observe that it is not the feeling sure of a doctrine be it what it may which I call an assumption of infallibility. It is the undertaking to decide that question for others, without allowing them to hear what can be said on the contrary side. And I denounce and reprobate this pretension not the less if it is put forth on the side of my most solemn convictions. And so far from the assumption being less objectionable or less dangerous because the opinion is called immoral or impious, this is the case of all others in which it is most fatal. He argued that even if an opinion is false, the truth can be better understood by refuting the error. And as most opinions are neither completely true nor completely false, he points out that allowing free expression allows the airing of competing views as a way to preserve partial truth in various opinions. He repeatedly said that eccentricity was preferable to uniformity and stagnation. If any argument is really wrong or harmful, the public will judge it as wrong or harmful, and then those arguments cannot be sustained and will be excluded. According to him, if rebellion is really necessary, people should rebel; if murder is truly proper, it should be allowed. But, the way to express those arguments should be a public speech or writing, not in a way that causes actual harm to others. This is the harm principle. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. In the majority opinion, Holmes writes: The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent. For example, in American law some exceptions limit free speech such as obscenity, defamation, breach of peace, and "fighting words". To characterize any conduct whatever towards a barbarous people as a violation of the law of nations, only shows that he who so speaks has never considered the subject.

Chapter 3 : John Stuart Mill Biography, Life, Interesting Facts

Brilliant biography of John Stuart Mill, tracing his life from a precocious childhood through a legendary career. Although the book provides a masterly analysis of Mill's chief writings, it is with Mill the human being that the book is mainly concerned.

His father James Mill was a Scottish philosopher, historian, and economist. John was the eldest child of his parents James and Harriet. Mill was educated by his father, with the assistance of philosopher and jurist Jeremy Bentham and social reformer Francis Place. He aimed to create a genius intellect to carry the cause of utilitarianism. John Stuart Mill had learned Greek by the time he was three years old. He was also taught English history, arithmetic, physics, and astronomy. When he was eight years old, Mill began to study Latin and algebra and began to work as a schoolmaster to his younger siblings. His father also emphasized the importance of studying and composing poetry. He also began studying political economy. Mill and his father completed their classic view on the economy of factors and production, and he helped his father to write the Elements of Political Economy. During his time in France, Mill developed a love for the mountain landscapes and was deeply impressed by way of the French living. He attended courses on chemistry, zoology, and logic at the Faculty of Sciences in Montpellier. When John Stuart Mill was 20 years old, he experienced several months of sadness and depression and thought about suicide. He lost his beliefs in the creation of a just society and stopped striving towards this objective. He came out of this period of his life by studying the poetry of William Wordsworth, which showed him that beauty generates compassion and stimulates joy. This thought became one of the main differences between him and his father. Around this time, Mill also began to correspond with Auguste Comte, who was the founder of positivism movement. He worked as a colonial administrator from until , when the company was abolished. He legitimized the British rule since it provided the barbarians with improvement. In , he began serving as the Lord Rector at the University of St. Andrews, where he worked until At the same time, he was also serving as the Member of Parliament for the City of Westminster. As MP, he advocated easing the burdens on Ireland. In , he became the first person in the history of British Parliament, to call for the right to vote to be given to women. He was also an advocate of many social reforms, such as labor unions and farm cooperatives. In , he debated for the retention of capital punishment for crimes, such as aggravated murder. At the time of their first meet, she was married. It is believed that Taylor and Mill did not engage in a sexual relationship until the death of her first husband. Taylor died in from lung congestion. John Stuart Mill died in of skin infection.

Chapter 4 : John Stuart Mill Facts

The second video in Genius: The Series. Mill, a pivotal and complex figure in the history of political thought, is arguably the most influential philosopher of the 19th century.

James Mill, a Scotsman, had been educated at Edinburgh University—taught by, amongst others, Dugald Stewart—and had moved to London in 1792, where he was to become a friend and prominent ally of Jeremy Bentham and the Philosophical Radicals. For this, at least, it prepared him well. Starting with Greek at age three and Latin at age eight, Mill had absorbed most of the classical canon by age twelve—along with algebra, Euclid, and the major Scottish and English historians. In his early teenage years, he studied political economy, logic, and calculus, utilising his spare time to digest treatises on experimental science as an amusement. At age fifteen—upon returning from a year-long trip to France, a nation he would eventually call home—he started work on the major treatises of philosophy, psychology and government. All this was conducted under the strict daily supervision of his father—with young John holding primary responsibility for the education of his siblings Reeves. The intensity of study and weight of expectation took its toll. But he quickly found that his education had not prepared him for life. Though such episodes were to recur throughout his life, his initial recovery was found in the poetry of the Romantics. Mill particularly valued Wordsworth during this period—though his new interests quickly led him to the work of Coleridge, Carlyle, and Goethe. His primary philosophic goal became, and would throughout his life remain, to integrate and reconcile these opposing schools of philosophy. This new-found eclecticism also led to productive engagement with, amongst others, Francois Guizot, Auguste Comte, and Tocqueville. Harriet Taylor Kinzer. Mill met Harriet at a dinner party in 1830, and the two quickly fell in love. John Taylor died in 1830, with Harriet and Mill marrying in 1831—though not before the perceived scandal had caused a rift between Mill and many of his friends. Mill felt first-hand the stifling effect of Victorian judgmentalism and oppressive norms of propriety—a subject he would later take up in *On Liberty*. Mill idolized Harriet, and credited her with virtual co-authorship of many of his works. She died, however, in 1831, while Mill and she were travelling through France. Harriet was buried in Avignon, where Mill subsequently purchased a house close by the cemetery, and lived for the rest of his life. Mill inscribed on her grave that [s]he was the sole earthly delight of those who had the happiness to belong to her. Mill had taken a position as a junior clerk at aged seventeen, working directly under his father, who had received the post on the basis of his authorship of *A History of British India*. John rose through the ranks, eventually holding the position of Chief Examiner of Correspondence—a position roughly equivalent to Undersecretary of State, involving managing dispatches for colonial administration Zastoupil. The job, Mill noted, provided the stability of income needed for an author without independent means, and was not so taxing as to prevent him exerting the majority of his time and mental energy on his philosophical pursuits. In keeping with his views on distinction between representation and delegation, Mill declined to actively canvass for the seat—indeed, he remained, for most of the campaign, at his home in Avignon. While in the Commons, he championed what he perceived as unpopular but important causes: He did not win a second term, being defeated by Kinzer, Robson, and Robson. He died in Avignon on 7 May 1836, and was buried next to his wife. It is not easy, however, to get a foothold on this naturalism. His account of knowledge, however, draws upon his general picture of mind, world, and their relation—and therefore depends on a theory of what there is. Relevant contrasts are, for instance, theists who hold that our minds have been given to us by an omnipotent and benevolent God for the purpose of comprehension, and idealists who hold that the mind has a formative role in constructing the world. For such thinkers, a basic harmony between the architecture of mind and world might seem to be a given—as such, if our experience could be found to take a certain form, then we could infer facts about how the world must be composed. Mill rejects this move. Such an inference would only be warrantable, if we could know a priori that we must have been created capable of conceiving whatever is capable of existing: Mill holds, therefore, that there can be no genuine a priori knowledge of objective facts. Whewell on Moral Philosophy, X: Mill adds to it a psychological account of the underlying mechanism by which we form ideas. All of our ideas and beliefs, Mill holds, have their origins in sense impressions.

Apparently a priori beliefs are subject to a similar undermining analysis. There are innumerable cases of Belief for which no cause can be assigned, except that something has created so strong an association between two ideas that the person cannot separate them in thought. We have never perceived any object, or any portion of space, which had not other space beyond it. And we have been perceiving objects and portions of space from the moment of birth. How then could the idea of an object, or of a portion of space, escape becoming inseparably associated with the idea of additional space beyond? Every instant of our lives helps to rivet this association, and we never have had a single experience tending to disjoin it. But, an association, however close, between two ideas, is not a sufficient ground of belief; it is not evidence that the corresponding facts are united in external nature. Words denote the objects which they are true of; they connote specific attributes of those objects. Connotation determines denotation in the following sense: Not all words have connotation. Mill notes that words can be singular or general. The proposition S is P can be understood, in the case that P is a connoting term, as the claim that the object denoted by S has the attribute connoted by P. The proposition S is P, where P is a non-connoting term, can be understood as the claim that the object denoted by S is the same object as that denoted by P. The difference is key. Such propositions are key to understanding the uninformative nature of a priori propositions and a priori reasoning. But he does argue that such propositions share the feature of conveying no genuine information about the world. Deductive or a priori reasoning, Mill thinks, is similarly empty. Predating the revolution in logic that the late nineteenth-century ushered in, Mill thinks of deductive reasoning primarily in terms of the syllogism. Syllogistic reasoning, he argues can elicit no new truths about how the world is: All men are mortal, Premise 2: Socrates is a man, Conclusion: In standard syllogistic inferences, he argues, for arguments to be valid, the conclusion must already have been asserted in the premises. By way of example, in the above argument, the conclusion must already have been asserted in the Premise 1 – the proposition that all men are mortal must be said to include the proposition that Socrates is mortal if the argument is to be valid. No new knowledge is therefore acquired in reasoning from premises to conclusion. The claim is perhaps more difficult to support than Mill appreciates, depending, as it does, upon equating of the meaning of a universal statement with the meaning of a conjunction of singular statement Fumerton The suggestion that deductive reasoning cannot lead us to any new knowledge prompts two questions. Firstly, if not the advancement of knowledge, what is the function of syllogistic reasoning? And, secondly, what are we to say about apparently deductive reasoning which manifestly does lead us to new knowledge? In making arguments such as the one above, we cannot acquire new knowledge: But the implications of holding a general premise are more clearly displayed by the syllogistic reasoning, and this, in certain instances, may cause us to re-evaluate our commitment to that premise. To the second question, Mill holds that where we do gain genuinely new knowledge – in cases of mathematics and geometry, for instance – we must, at some level, be reasoning inductively. Mill, that is to say, attempts to account for the genuine informativeness of mathematical and geometric reasoning by denying that they are in any real sense a priori. Mill holds that knowledge can be obtained only by empirical observation, and by reasoning which takes place on the ground of such observations. This principle stands at the heart of his radical empiricism. And, as we shall see, Mill grants the validity of only one kind of inference. Induction properly so called [–] may [–] be summarily defined as Generalization from Experience. It consists in inferring from some individual instances in which a phenomenon is observed to occur, that it occurs in all instances of a certain class; namely, in all which resemble the former, in what are regarded as the material circumstances. Upon seeing ten swans, all white, for instance, we tend to believe that an eleventh unseen swan is also white. But, Mill holds, such inferences are not something we are merely disposed to believe, but something we have reason to believe – inferences of this general form are warranted. The question arises, of course, how it is that we can be warranted in believing the results of induction prior to their confirmation or disconfirmation – how it comes to be that we can be justified in believing an inductively suggested conclusion. Mill offers two answers to this question. The first, we might term his iterative validation of induction. We know, in other words, by an act of induction, that inductive generalizations tend to be true, and that induction is therefore a good way of reasoning. Induction is, in this sense, self-supporting. Of course, this justification is circular, as Mill realizes. If we are warranted in believing that induction is in general a good way of reasoning only to the extent that our

past inductions are themselves taken to have been good inferences, then the question remains how those inductions can be warranted forms of inference cf. Many of the uniformities existing among phenomena are so constant, and so open to observation, as to force themselves upon involuntary recognition. We are naturally inclined to desire pleasure, and such desires, when we attend to them, strike us as reasonable—“as being desire-worthy. Similarly, we are naturally disposed to believe in inductive generalisations, and such beliefs, when we attend to them, strike us as reasonable—“being belief-worthy. In each case, there is no further initial justification of our natural reasoning propensities beyond the fact that, upon critical inspection, they strike us as sound. Indeed, that valid principles of reason—“practical and theoretical—“are established by casting a critical eye upon how we in fact do reason should be of no surprise: But the justification provided is real nevertheless. And from here, iterative validation can increase our confidence that we are warranted in reasoning inductively: As noted above, Mill claims not only that enumerative induction is a valid principle, but that it is the sole principle by which we are justified in inferring unobserved facts about the world. We are not entitled, that is to say, to believe in something unobserved solely on the basis that it explains the observed facts Skorupski A hypothesis is not to be received probably true because it accounts for all the known phenomena; since this is a condition sometimes fulfilled tolerably well by two conflicting hypotheses. Mill claims that hypotheses about unobserved entities made in an effort to explain empirical observations can provide useful suggestions, but that entitlement to believe can only be provided by reasoning based on the principle of enumerative induction. The reasoning that takes place in our scientific engagement with the world, Mill holds, is simply the application of a particularly refined version of such enumerative induction. Experience testifies, that among the uniformities which it exhibits or seems to exhibit, some are more to be relied on than others [—] This mode of correcting one generalization by means of another, a narrower generalization by a wider, which common sense suggests and adopts in practice, is the real type of scientific Induction. As we learn more about the world, induction becomes more and more established, and with this it becomes self-critical and systematic. Mill claims that, as science has progressed, four methods have emerged as successful in isolating causes of observed phenomena System, VII: Firstly, the Method of Agreement:

Chapter 5 : John Stuart Mill (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Early Life of John Stuart Mill John Stuart Mill was born in London on May 20, He was the son of James Mill, a philosopher and economist who contributed to the early education of his son.

He is known for his writings on logic and scientific methodology and his voluminous essays on social and political life. His father, originally trained as a minister, had emigrated from Scotland to take up a career as a freelance journalist. In James Mill began his lifelong association with Jeremy Bentham, the utilitarian philosopher and legalist. Mill shared the common belief of 19th-century psychologists that the mind is at birth a tabula rasa and that character and performance are the result of experienced associations. With this view, he attempted to make his son into a philosopher by exclusively supervising his education. John Stuart Mill never attended a school or university. He began the study of Greek at the age of 3 and took up Latin between his seventh and eighth years. From six to ten each morning the boy recited his lessons, and by the age of 12 he had mastered material that was the equivalent of a university degree in classics. He then took up the study of logic, mathematics, and political economy with the same rigor. In addition to his own studies, John also tutored his brothers and sisters for 3 hours daily. Only later did Mill realize that he never had a childhood. The only tempering experiences he recalled from his boyhood were walks, music, reading Robinson Crusoe, and a year he spent in France. Before going abroad John had never associated with anyone his own age. When he was 16, Mill began a debating society of utilitarians to examine and promote the ideas of his father, Bentham, Ricardo, and Thomas Malthus. He also began to publish on various issues, and he had written nearly 50 articles and reviews before he was 16. His speaking, writing, and political activity contributed to the passage of the Parliamentary Reform Bill in 1832, which culminated the efforts of the first generation of utilitarians, especially Bentham and James Mill. He perceived that the realization of all the social reforms for which he had been trained and for which he had worked would bring him no personal satisfaction. He thought that his intellectual training had left him emotionally starved and feared that he lacked any capacity for feeling or caring deeply. Mill eventually overcame his melancholia by opening himself to the romantic reaction against rationalism on both an intellectual and personal level. He assimilated the ideas and poetry of English, French, and German thought. When he was 25 he met Harriet Taylor, and she became the dominant influence of his life. He argued for the constructive dimension of experience as an antidote to the negative and skeptical aspects emphasized by David Hume and also as an alternative to rationalistic dogmatism. His *System of Logic* was well received both as a university text and by the general public. Assuming that all propositions are of a subject-predicate form, Mill began with an analysis of words that constitute statements. From this Mill described propositions as either "verbal" and analytic or "real" and synthetic. With these preliminaries in hand, Mill began a rather traditional attack on pure mathematics and deductive reasoning. A consistent empiricism demanded that all knowledge be derived from experience. Thus, no appeal to universal principles or a priori intuitions was allowable. In effect, Mill reduced pure to applied mathematics and deductive reasoning to "apparent" inferences or premises which, in reality, are generalizations from previous experience. The utility of syllogistic reasoning is found to be a training in logical consistency—that is, a correct method for deciding if a particular instance fits under a general rule—but not to be a source of discovering new knowledge. By elimination, then, logic was understood by Mill as induction, or knowledge by inference. His famous canons of induction were an attempt to show that general knowledge is derived from the observation of particular instances. Causal laws are established by observations of agreement and difference, residues and concomitant variations of the relations between A as the cause of B. The law of causation is merely a generalization of the truths reached by these experimental methods. By the strict application of these methods man is justified in extending his inferences beyond his immediate experience to discover highly probable, though not demonstrable, empirical and scientific laws. The proper method of the social sciences is a mixture: In several works Mill attempted without great success to trace connections between the generalizations derived from associationist psychology and the social and historical law of three stages theological, metaphysical, and positivist or scientific established by Auguste Comte. He denied the necessity and scientific validity of positing transcendent realities

except as an object of belief or guide for conduct. He avoided the abstruse difficulties of the metaphysical status of the external world and the self by defining matter, as it is experienced, as "a permanent possibility of sensation," and the mind as the series of affective and cognitive activities that is aware of itself as a conscious unity of past and future through memory and imagination. His own mental crises led Mill to modify the calculative aspect of utilitarianism. In theory he maintained that men are determined by their expectation of the pleasure and pain produced by action. But his conception of the range of personal motives and institutional attempts to ensure the good are much broader than those suggested by Bentham. For example, Mill explained that he overcame a mechanical notion of determinism when he realized that men are capable of being the cause of their own conduct through motives of self-improvement. In a more important sense, he attempted to introduce a qualitative dimension to utility. Mill suggested that there are higher pleasures and that men should be educated to these higher aspirations. For a democratic government based on consensus is only as good as the education and tolerance of its citizenry. This argument received its classic formulation in the justly famous essay, "On Liberty." He took a house in Avignon, France, in order to be near her grave and divided his time between there and London. He won election to the House of Commons in 1832, although he refused to campaign. He died on May 8, 1836. Their Correspondence, edited by F. Biographies of Mill are M. Encyclopedia of World Biography. Copyright The Gale Group, Inc.

Chapter 6 : John Stuart Mill Biography - Facts, Childhood, Family Life & Achievements of British Philosoph

The life of John Stuart Mill Paperback - by M St John Packe (Author) out of 5 stars 1 customer review. See all 9 formats and editions Hide other formats.

For its publication he brought old manuscripts into form and added some new material. Mill planned from the beginning a separate book publication, which came to light in One must not forget that since his first reading of Bentham in the winter of , the time to which Mill dates his conversion to utilitarianism, forty years had passed. Taken this way, Utilitarianism was anything but a philosophical accessory, and instead the programmatic text of a thinker who for decades had understood himself as a utilitarian and who was profoundly familiar with popular objections to the principle of utility in moral theory. Almost ten years earlier Mill had defended utilitarianism against the intuitionistic philosopher William Whewell Whewell on Moral Philosophy. The priority of the text was to popularize the fundamental thoughts of utilitarianism within influential circles. This goal explains the composition of the work. After some general introductory comments, the text defends utilitarianism from common criticisms "What Utilitarianism Is". After this Mill turns to the question concerning moral motivation "Of the Ultimate Sanction of the Principle of Utility". What makes utilitarianism peculiar, according to Mill, is its hedonistic theory of the good CW 10, Utilitarians are, by definition, hedonists. For this reason, Mill sees no need to differentiate between the utilitarian and the hedonistic aspect of his moral theory. Today we routinely differentiate between hedonism as a theory of the good and utilitarianism as a consequentialist theory of the right. Utilitarians are, for him, consequentialists who believe that pleasure is the only intrinsic value. Mill counts as one of the great classics of utilitarian thought; but this moral theory deviates from what many contemporary philosophers consider core features of utilitarianism. This explains why the question whether Mill is a utilitarian is more serious than it may appear on first inspection see Coope One may respond that this problem results from an anachronistic understanding of utilitarianism, and that it disappears if one abstains from imputing modern philosophical concepts on a philosopher of the nineteenth century. However, this response would oversimplify matters. As mentioned before, Mill maintains that hedonism is the *differentia specifica* of utilitarianism; if he were not a hedonist, he would be no utilitarian by his own definition. His view of theory of life was monistic: There is one thing, and one thing only, that is intrinsically desirable, namely pleasure. In contrast to a form of hedonism that conceives pleasure as a homogeneous matter, Mill was convinced that some types of pleasure are more valuable than others in virtue of their inherent qualities. Many philosophers hold that qualitative hedonism is no consistent position. Hedonism asserts that pleasure is the only intrinsic value. Under this assumption, the critics argue, there can be no evaluative basis for the distinction between higher and lower pleasures. Probably the first ones to raise this common objection were the British idealists F. Which inherent qualities make one kind of pleasure better than another, according to Mill? These enjoyments make use of highly developed capacities, like judgment and empathy. This seems to be a surprising thing to say for a hedonist. However, Mill thought that we have a solid empirical basis for this view. According to him, the best obtainable evidence for value claims consists in what all or almost all people judge as valuable across a vast variety of cases and cultures. This partly explains why he put such great emphasis on education. Until the s, the significance of the chapter had been largely overlooked. It then became one of the bridgeheads of a revisionist interpretation of Mill, which is associated with the work of David Lyons, John Skorupski and others. Mill worked very hard to hammer the fifth chapter into shape and his success has great meaning for him. In contrast to Kant who grounds his ethical theory on self-imposed rules, so-called maxims, Mill thinks that morality builds on social rules. But what makes social rules moral rules? He maintains that we name a type of action morally wrong if we think that it should be sanctioned either through formal punishment, public disapproval external sanctions or through a bad conscience internal sanctions. Wrong or inexpedient actions are those that we cannot recommend to a person, like harming oneself. But in contrast to immoral actions, inexpedient actions are not worthy of being sanctioned. Mill differentiates various spheres of action. The principle of utility governs not only morality, but also prudence and taste CW 8, It is not a moral principle but a meta-principle of practical

reason Skorupski , But there are also fields of action, in which sanctions for wrong behavior would be inappropriate. One of them is the sphere of self-regarding acts with which Mill deals in *On Liberty*. In this private sphere we can act at our convenience and indulge in inexpedient and utterly useless behavior as long as we do not harm others. It is fundamental to keep in mind that Mill looks into morality as a social practice and not as autonomous self-determination by reason, like Kant. For Kantians, moral deliberation determines those actions which we have the most reason to perform. According to Mill, our moral obligations result from the justified part of the moral code of our society; and the task of moral philosophy consists in bringing the moral code of a society in better accordance with the principle of utility. In the first step the actor should examine which of the rules secondary principles in the moral code of his or her society are pertinent in the given situation. If in a given situation moral rules secondary principles conflict, then and only then can the second step invoke the formula of utility CW 10, as a first principle. Pointedly one could say: It serves the validation of rightness for our moral system and allows "as a meta-rule" the decision of conflicting norms. The tacit influence of the principle of utility made sure that a considerable part of the moral code of our society is justified promotes general well-being. But other parts are clearly unjustified. One case that worried Mill deeply was the role of women in Victorian Britain. Moral rules are also critical for Mill because he takes human action in essence as to be guided by dispositions. A virtuous person has the disposition to follow moral rules. He repeats this point in his *System of Logic and Utilitarianism*: CW 10, and 8, It is one thing to say that it could have optimal consequences and thus be objectively better to break a moral rule in a concrete singular case. Another is the question as to whether it would facilitate happiness to educate humans such that they would have the disposition to maximize situational utility. Mill answers the latter in the negative. Again, the upshot is that education matters. Humans are guided by acquired dispositions. This makes moral degeneration, but also moral progress possible. Rule or Act Utilitarianism? There is considerable disagreement as to whether Mill should be read as a rule utilitarian or an indirect act utilitarian. Many philosophers look upon rule utilitarianism as an untenable position and favor an act utilitarian reading of Mill Crisp Under the pressure of many contradicting passages, however, a straightforward act utilitarian interpretation is difficult to sustain. In *Utilitarianism* he seems to give two different formulations of the utilitarian standard. The first points in an act utilitarian, the second in a rule utilitarian direction. Since act and rule utilitarianism are incompatible claims about what makes actions morally right, the formulations open up the fundamental question concerning what style of utilitarianism Mill wants to advocate and whether his moral theory forms a consistent whole. Thus Mill is not to blame for failing to make explicit which of the two approaches he advocates. In the first and more famous formulation of the utilitarian standard First Formula Mill states: The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure. To give a clear view of the moral standard set up by the theory, much more requires to be said. But these supplementary explanations do not affect the theory of life on which this theory of morality is grounded. According to the Greatest Happiness Principle the ultimate end is an existence exempt as far as possible from pain, and as rich as possible in enjoyments, both in point of quantity and quality. This, being, according to the utilitarian opinion, the end of human action, is necessarily also the standard of morality; which may accordingly be defined, the rules and precepts for human conduct, by the observance of which an existence such as has been described might be, to the greatest extent possible, secured to all mankind; and not to them only, but, so far as the nature of things admits, to the whole sentient creation. CW, , emphasis mine The Second Formula relates the principle of utility to rules and precepts and not to actions. It seems to say that an act is correct when it corresponds to rules whose preservation increases the mass of happiness in the world. And this appears to be a rule-utilitarian conception. In the light of these passages, it is not surprising that the question whether Mill is an act- or a rule-utilitarian has been intensely debated. In order to understand his position it is important to differentiate between two ways of defining act and rule utilitarianism. An action is objectively right if it is the thing which the agent has most reason to do. Act utilitarianism would say that an action is objectively right, if it actually promotes happiness. For rule utilitarianism, in contrast, an action

would be objectively right, if it actually corresponds to rules that promote happiness. Act utilitarianism requires us to aim for the maximization of happiness; rule utilitarianism, in contrast, requires us to observe rules that facilitate happiness. Understood as a theory about moral obligation, act utilitarianism postulates: Act in a way that promotes happiness the most. Rule utilitarianism claims, on the other hand: Follow a rule whose general observance promotes happiness the most. Mill is in regard to i an act utilitarian and in regard to ii a rule utilitarian. This way the seeming contradiction between the First and the Second Formula can be resolved. The First Formula states what is right and what an agent has most reason to do. In contrast, the Second Formula tells us what our moral obligations are. We are morally obliged to follow those social rules and precepts the observance of which promotes happiness in the greatest extent possible.

Chapter 7 : Mill, John Stuart | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

Articles on John Stuart Mill. The Story of the First Country to Grant Women the Vote In the late 19th century the women's suffrage movement was widespread in Europe, America, Britain and its colonies.

Bio, Life and Political Ideas Article shared by: After reading this article you will learn about John Stuart Mill: Life and Works of John Stuart Mill 2. Political Ideas of John Stuart Mill 3. Life and Works of John Stuart Mill: Three persons built up the structure of utilitarianism. James Mill was the friend of Bentham and father of J. James Mill was born in and John Stuart Mill died in There was a gap of a century. It is not debated or thoroughly discussed. Though it was the joint product of Bentham and the two Mills, it was the product of Bentham and J. The contribution of James Mill is very insignificant. Again, there are wide differences between Bentham and J. Mill so far as the basic tenets of the theory are concerned. Bentham was interested only in utilitarianism while J. The theory of utilitarianism was one of them. Mill is remembered not simply for utilitarianism but for many others. John Stuart Mill was born in At the age of three, John began to learn Greek and at seven Latin. The acquaintance with Greek enabled him to know the Greek philosophy. He also learned history and arithmetic. Mill went thoroughly in Latin literature. He started his study of political economy at the age of thirteen and completed Adam Smith, David Ricardo. He died in By , Mill earned a good command over different subjects and he came to be acquainted with the academic circles of Britain. He also succeeded in establishing himself as a scholar. Mill joined the East India Company as an ordinary clerk. Two years later he retired. Most of his academic output was produced by that time. Mill was requested by the voters of Westminster to contest the parliamentary seat and he kept their request and won the election. Next term he contested and was defeated. Victory was more surprising to him than his defeat. Mill was in his teens he published a number of articles on philosophy and politics. Westminster Review was the official organ of Philosophical Radicalism and he contributed to it. At the age of twenty-eight his first major work and still classic work on philosophy was published. This is the System of Logic. In , the same year Manifesto was published, he brought out Political Economy. Thus, two principal works on economics and philosophy were published long before his retirement. But his works on politics and morality were the results of his mature intelligence and thought. He completed his essay on Liberty before his retirement and the death of his wife delayed the publication. It was published in His Utilitarianism and Representative Government both were published in Bad health and protracted illness stood like a big mountain on the way of his achievement in academic affairs. He was really a genius. Plamenatz says that the three essays On Liberty, Utilitarianism and Representative Government exhibit all his defects as a thinker, because these were written by him when he was sick. Lacks of clarity and inconsistency have characterized these three essays. According to the same critic the most defective is the Utilitarianism in which Mill seems to lose control of his argument at every turn. But it is the product of an intelligent and honest but an exhausted mind. Liberty and Representative Government are comparatively much better, but still are not free from defects. The younger Mill could not accept many of the ideas of Bentham and his father. He thought their views irrelevant and incomplete. But his illness prevented him from contributing to politics and philosophy. Though Plamenatz says that his major works suffer from several drawbacks, we think that these three books are still classic in the whole gamut of political science. The students of political science still read his books with a lot of interest. Even he is regarded as progenitor of feminism which was a burning issue in the sixties, seventies and eighties of the last century. Political Ideas of John Stuart Mill: Towards the fag-end of his life, Bentham was convinced that in the English society the sinister interests were extremely active and they were eating into the vital of democracy. So, with the help of all strength and energy, democracy could be established and safeguarded. This was one of the main objectives of Bentham. His utilitarian friend James Mill shared this view. The Industrial Revolution in England failed to make the foundation of democracy solid and broad-based. Rather, the American democratic system drew, at the time, attention of every serious thinker of the first half of the nineteenth century. It is to be noted here that from the s the British government embarked upon certain reforms to strengthen the basis and periphery of democracy. The credit of this should go to Bentham. However, it was admitted on all hands that

democracy in all its manifestations should be the ruling concept. But John Stuart Mill began to look at it from a quite different angle. But he was also a great realist. He did not think in terms of avoiding democracy. His objective was always to rectify it. John Stuart Mill says that in the present form of democracy the rule of all does not mean the rule of each man by himself. Some people rule the others. Again, what is commonly known as the will of the people is, in practice, the will of the majority. The will of the minority is neglected. Mill calls this rule of the majority the oppression or dictatorship or despotism of majority which, according to Mill, is anathema of democracy. This shortcoming of democracy is deplorable but it is a fact and democracy must be saved from this. Besides the oppression of majority there is the tyranny of opinion which is equally condemnable. But here he cautioned by saying that majority rule does not mean the suppression of minority opinion. The view of the minority must be given due importance. Both the majority rule and the domination of a powerful class are enemies of real democracy which he denounced in clear language. Democracy does not mean the rule of all; but real democracy will give credence to the opinion of all. John Stuart Mill was the first thinker of England who doubted the love for freedom of the English people. His cogent argument is it is not the love for freedom that is a great feature of Englishmen; rather they are very suspicious of the encroachment of organized power over the individual freedom. The same mentality encouraged the Americans to revolt against England. But Mill admits that tyranny of opinion is perhaps stronger among them than elsewhere. In the essay *On Liberty* Mill states that the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That is, for the protection of the members of the community power can be rightly exercised by the authority, and in that case the particular will of any individual cannot be a hindrance. This is compatible with the concept of utilitarianism. In the second chapter of the essay Mill discusses liberty of thought and expression. He assumes that it is to the advantage of mankind that knowledge should increase among and should be possessed by as many of them as possible. In the last two chapters Mill analyses the proper limits to the authority of society over the individuals. He did not approve of the dictatorship of the majority or the social stigma the purpose of which is to curtail the freedom of man. In the essay *On Liberty* Mill asserts that liberty is not simply a way of pursuing happiness or avoiding pain. If anybody treats liberty in that light he will be quite unjustified. For the development of personality, liberty is indispensable. It is necessary both for the individual and for the society as a whole. For the maximisation of happiness, Mill contended, men should have maximum liberty. In this way utility and liberty are combined together. John Stuart Mill was the greatest champion of human liberty and he could not tolerate its curtailment. It is said the he was inspired by the Greek ideal of self-government.

Chapter 8 : Mill, John Stuart: Ethics | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

John Stuart Mill () was the most influential English language philosopher of the nineteenth century. He was a naturalist, a utilitarian, and a liberal, whose work explores the consequences of a thoroughgoing empiricist outlook.

What Utilitarianism Is Part 1 Summary Mill attempts to reply to misconceptions about utilitarianism, and thereby delineate the theory. Mill observes that many people misunderstand utilitarianism by interpreting utility as in opposition to pleasure. In reality, utility is defined as pleasure itself, and the absence of pain. Thus another name for utility is the Greatest Happiness Principle. This principle holds that "actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure. The next criticism Mill takes on is the claim that it is base and demeaning to reduce the meaning of life to pleasure. To this Mill replies that human pleasures are much superior animalistic ones: It is true that some pleasures may be "base"; however, this does not mean that all of them are: When making a moral judgment on an action, utilitarianism thus takes into account not just the quantity, but also the quality of the pleasures resulting from it. Mill delineates how to differentiate between higher- and lower-quality pleasures: A pleasure is of higher quality if people would choose it over a different pleasure even if it is accompanied by discomfort, and if they would not trade it for a greater amount of the other pleasure. Moreover, Mill contends, it is an "unquestionable fact" that, given equal access to all kinds of pleasures, people will prefer those that appeal to their "higher" faculties. A person will not choose to become an animal, an educated person will not choose to become ignorant, and so on. Even though a person who uses higher faculties often suffers more in life hence the common dictum "ignorance is bliss" , he would never choose a lower existence, preferring instead to maintain his dignity. Another misconception about utilitarianism stems from a confusion of happiness with contentment. People who employ higher faculties are often less content, because they have a deeper sense of the limitations of the world. However, their pleasure is of a higher character than that of an animal or a base human. Mill writes, "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are of a different opinion, it is because they only know their side of the question. Furthermore, Mill observes that even if the possession of a "noble character" brought less happiness to the individual, society would still benefit. Thus, because the greatest happiness principle considers the total amount of happiness, a noble character, even if it is less desirable for the individual, is still desirable by a utilitarian standard. Commentary This chapter provides the definition of utilitarianism. There are a few important aspects of this definition. First, it presents utility, or the existence of pleasure and the absence of pain, as both the basis of everything that people desire, and as the foundation of morality. However, utilitarianism does not say that it is moral for people simply to pursue what makes them personally happy. Rather, morality is dictated by the greatest happiness principle; moral action is that which increases the total amount of utility in the world.

Chapter 9 : John Stuart Mill - Wikipedia

John Stuart Mill (20 May - 8 May), usually cited as J. S. Mill, was a British philosopher, political economist, and civil servant. One of the most influential thinkers in the history of liberalism, he contributed widely to social theory, political theory, and political economy.

Avignon, France English philosopher and economist The English philosopher and economist someone who studies the buying and selling of goods and services John Stuart Mill was the most influential British thinker of the nineteenth century. He is known for his writings on logic and scientific method and for his many essays on social and political life. His father, originally trained as a minister, had come from Scotland to take up a career as a journalist. With this view, he attempted to make his son into a philosopher by totally supervising his education. John began the study of Greek at the age of three and took up Latin between his seventh and eighth years. From six to ten each morning the boy recited his lessons, and by the age of twelve he had mastered material that was equal to a university degree in classics. He then took up the study of logic, mathematics, and political economy with the same energy. In addition to his own studies, Mill also tutored his brothers and sisters for three hours daily. Only later did Mill realize that he never had a childhood. The most satisfying experiences he recalled from his boyhood were walks, music, reading Robinson Crusoe, and a year he spent in France. Before going abroad, Mill had never associated with anyone his own age. When he was sixteen, Mill began a debating society of utilitarians to discuss and make popular the ideas of his father, Bentham, and others. He also began to publish on various issues, writing nearly fifty articles and reviews before he was twenty. He felt empty of satisfaction even with all of his knowledge. Mill eventually overcame his depression by opening himself to poetry. When he was twenty-five, he met Harriet Taylor, and she became the most important influence of his life. He overcame much of the confusion of Locke by distinguishing between the connotation, or understood meaning, of terms and the denotation, or real meaning. Mill understood logic as knowledge by inference the act of transferring a meaning from one thing to another. However, the variety of conditioning factors and the lack of control and repeatability of experiments weaken the effectiveness of both the experimental method and deductive coming to a conclusion by reasoning attempts. The proper method of the social sciences is a mixture: He took a house in Avignon, France, in order to be near her grave and divided his time between there and London. He won election to the House of Commons in , although he refused to campaign. He died on May 8, *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill*. Columbia University Press, [Comment about this article](#), [ask questions](#), or [add new information](#) about this topic: