John Stuart Mill, 1806-1873

Utilitarianism

### Chapter 2

### What Utilitarianism Is.

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 [**pain]**. 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; in particular, what things it includes in the ideas of pain and pleasure; and to what extent this is left an open question. But these supplementary explanations do not affect the **theory of life** [**usually referred to as hedonism**] on which this theory of morality is grounded- namely, that **pleasure, and freedom from pain, are the only things desirable as ends**; and that **all desirable things** (which are as numerous in the utilitarian as in any other scheme) **are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves, or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain**.

Implications:

How does Mill’s view differ from your philosopy?

Assumptions:

Human Nature… hedonism

<http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/m/mill/john_stuart/m645u/util02.html>