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Submitted 28 Nov. 2022

What argument does Mill give for the central claim of utilitarianism that pleasure is the good.

Mill's core arguments revolves around the observation that human action that maximizes total pleasure should be the standard for morality. He clarifies that the utilitarian definition of pleasure is not only sensory but also includes the "higher forms" of pleasured—closer to an Epicurian definition. He points out our intrinsic drive for "higher forms" of pleasure in—for instance, appreciation of art—and that one would never voluntarily delve lower one. This person would, therefore, may be less content than a hedonistic beast but more happy, and thus preferable within the utilitarian standard.

Mill continues to detail on factors that determine this positive form of pleasure, including a balance of "tranquility and excitement," and developed through "mental cultivation and unselfishness." He also enumerates various misunderstandings; distinguishing character and action, intrinsic checks against deviation, or our intuitive understanding aligning with a hypothetical weighted utility calculation (to forgo lengthy moral calculus).

Mill additionally lays out how utilitarianism is self-sustainable through motivation extrinsic—fellow samaritans and God—and intrinsic—pure conscience, a "natural outgrowth" of our innate natures, cultivated around a certain moral standard, and become the "powerful force" in motivation to do what is moral.

Mill also points out the "binding force" of utilitarianism as the sense of "unity" we feel towards the whole of humanity, which would only increase "every step in political improvement." It is a universal trait to want to "harmonize with his fellow creatures," and he suggests that this is "the ultimate saction of [utilitarian] morality."

(242 words)