

# Contemporary Moral Problems

## Chapter: Utilitarianism

### Amazonlink:

<http://www.amazon.com/Contemporary-Moral-Problems-James-White/dp/0534517242>

### What I expect to learn:

- To learn more about what utilitarianism is
- To know the relationship between utilitarianism and morality

### Quote:

“I have dwelt on this point, as being necessary part of a perfectly just conception of Utility or Happiness, considered as the directive rule of human conduct. But it is by no means an indispensable condition to acceptance of utilitarian standard; for that standard is not the agent’s own greatest happiness, but the greatest amount of happiness altogether; and if it may possibly be doubted whether a noble character is always the happier for its nobleness, there can be no doubt that it makes other people happier, and that the world in general is immensely a gainer by it.”

### Book Review:

John Stuart Mill (May 20 1806 – May 8 1873), English philosopher, political theorist, political economist, civil servant and Member of Parliament, was an influential British Classical liberal thinker of the 19<sup>th</sup> century whose works on liberty justified freedom of the individual in opposition to unlimited state control. He was a proponent of utilitarianism, an ethical theory developed by Jeremy Bentham, although his conception of it was very different from Bentham’s. Hoping to remedy the problems found in an inductive approach to science, such as confirmation bias, he clearly set forth the premises of falsification as the key component in the scientific method.

On this chapter, the author, John Stuart Mill, discussed that morality depends on how much happiness we can bring out by doing something. But we should consider that happiness or pleasure should also give benefit to the many. The author also mentioned that to do as you would be done by and to love your neighbor as yourself, constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality. As the means of making the nearest approach to this ideal, utility would enjoin, first, that laws and social arrangements should place the happiness or the interest, of

every individual, as nearly as possible in harmony with the interest of the whole. Mill replied to an objection that Epicureanism is a doctrine worthy only of swine because he doesn't believe that everything is based on divine intervention. The higher pleasures in life according to Mill are the ones about intellect, imagination, and emotion. While the lower pleasures for example are the sexually related activities of human beings.

**What I have learned:**

- I learned that for us to give happiness and pleasure to anyone, we should start by thinking then acting for the benefit of others.

**Integrative Question:**

1. For you, what is happiness?
2. Then pain?
3. Is doing what is right, enough to give you pleasure?
4. What is utilitarian morality?
5. What is moral obligation?

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Stuart\\_Mill](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Stuart_Mill)