

---

# Hedonism

## 4.4 – Higher and Lower Pleasures

---

Team 6:

Angela Zhou, Derrick Li, Jose Romero, Koey Chan, William Barber

# Egoism → Hedonism



## **Egoism**

Q: “What should I do?”

A: “You should do what you want to do.”



## **Hedonism**

Q: “What do I want to do?”

A: “You want to do pleasurable things, and not painful things.”

# John Stuart Mills: Hedonism

- 1800s philosopher known for his advocacy for utilitarianism
- Argued that not all pleasures are equal in quality
- Higher pleasures: derived from mental activities like enjoying art, literature, fine dining in moderation, etc.
- Lower pleasures: satisfying basic needs like eating and other bodily sensations



# What Makes Something a Higher vs Lower Pleasure?

- Refinement?
  - Artistic merit
  - Intellectual value
- Moderation?
  - “Too much of a good thing”
- Intent? Mood?
- A combination of these?
- None of these?



vs.



Mills' response:

- Ask informed individuals which they believe is a higher pleasure.
- However, he also thought that he intuitively knew what high/low pleasures were, without this test.



# Intent



- Does intent make the same act a higher pleasure in some cases, and a lower pleasure in others?
- Even if two people perform the same action, their reasons may place the act on different scales of pleasure
  - Gambling for the sake of gambling (money) vs. socializing
  - Indulging in food purely out of boredom vs. exploring cuisines as a form of art




# Higher vs Lower Pleasures: Morality?

- Is the morality of an action related to whether it's a higher or lower pleasure?
    - i.e. Gambling could be immoral, whereas card games could be moral
  - Counter: There are examples of lower pleasures that aren't generally regarded as immoral
    - i.e. Eating a large meal
  - Maybe it's a factor, but not sufficient itself
- 
- 



# Inherent Value of Pleasure?

- *Are higher pleasures inherently higher quality?*
  - *Should we always aim for higher pleasure over lower pleasure, or is the ideal a balance of the two?*
    - Is a life of listening to Mozart superior than a life of rampant marijuana usage, even if both individuals experience the same amount of pleasure?
- 
- 