

Week 2 Review Sheet

Vocabulary

You ought to be comfortable with the following terminology:

1. First Principle
2. Greatest Happiness Principle/Principle of Utility
3. Happiness (according to Mill)
4. Unhappiness (according to Mill)
5. Hedonism
6. Intrinsic good
7. Extrinsic good
8. Higher and lower pleasures
9. Contentment (according to Mill)
10. Asceticism
11. Tranquility
12. Excitement
13. Total happiness
14. Average happiness
15. Actual outcomes
16. Expected outcomes
17. Act Utilitarianism
18. Rule Utilitarianism
19. Secondary Principle
20. Fallacy of Composition

Study Questions

You ought to be able to answer the following questions:

1. How does the Principle of Utility determine the rightness or wrongness of an action according to the happiness and unhappiness it produces?
2. Why is exercise an extrinsic good? How is it related to intrinsic goods, according to Utilitarianism?
3. Why does Mill say we can't give a direct proof about what is intrinsically good?
4. What is the "Swine" Objection to Hedonism? How does Mill use the distinction between higher and lower pleasures to answer the objection?
5. By what principle does Mill distinguish the higher and lower pleasures?
6. How does the Objection from Infirmity attempt to undermine the distinction between higher and lower pleasures? How does Mill respond?
7. Explain how Mill uses the distinction between happiness and contentment to argue that a human life is better than the life of a lower animal. Under what circumstances would an animal life be preferable to a human life?
8. Mill says that even if the higher pleasures differ from the lower only in quantity of pleasure and not quality, they are still more worthy of being pursued. Why does he say this?
9. Mill thinks Utilitarianism would still be a good philosophy even if pleasure is unattainable for most people. Why does he think this?
10. How does Mill describe a happy life? What roles to tranquility and excitement play in this life?
11. What explanation does Mill give for dissatisfaction with a life of relative comfort? What remedies does he propose?
12. Under what conditions does Mill take self-sacrifice to be a worthy pursuit? What does he say about people who renounce their own happiness for its own sake?
13. What three claims does Mill offer in support of the Greatest Happiness Principle?
14. What support does Mill offer for the claim that we all desire happiness?
15. How does Mill argue that happiness, in general, is desirable? Does he commit the fallacy of composition?
16. Mill says that we desire many things for their own sake. How does he square this with the claim that we only desire happiness for its own sake?