

Criticisms against Principle of Maximal Utility

Post by "Hiram" of May 15, 2018 at 10:30 AM

[Quote from Daniel Van Orman](#)

Hedonism

Pleasure and pain are the only good and evil in life. They motivate every decision one makes and it is everyone's moral responsibility to increase their pleasure while relieving their pain. Utilitarian philosophers extend this with the Principle of Maximal Utility, saying it is everyone's duty to increase the pleasure and decrease the pain of all others.

Yes, pleasure motivates every decision we make, but I do not think that we have a "moral responsibility" or "duty" to increase it or decrease our own or others' pain. We are free. Duties are only born from the contracts we sign, willingly. Epicurus' ethics are descriptive of human nature, and what he was saying is that it is in our self-interest and better for us if we follow or go along with nature, rather than against it.