

# Episode One Hundred Thirty Eight - Letter to Menoeceus 5 - Pleasure Part One

Post by "Cassius" of September 8, 2022 at 7:28 AM

Don't let me get this thread off track with this comment about Mill thinking some pleasures are better than others vs Bentham taking an opposing view. I started a new thread for it here: [John Stuart Mill on Epicurus](#)

But I think perhaps this witticism from John Stuart Mill is relevant as to the "satisfaction" issue. Probably this is a tangent to pursue in the other thread, but the tension between "happiness" and "contentment" if he developed the argument might be interesting and worth tracking down his full statement of it. I think it is a a very bad idea and dead end to consider any ranking of pleasures as "absolute" (for everyone all the time). But if we use "better" in the relative sense of "I prefer this pleasure right now because it is more pleasing to me than another X pleasure" then I would think the point is very obvious and very relevant to the discussion of whether desiring pleasures other than the ones we hold at the current moment is painful or pleasurable or simply the natural human condition or what. If we feel desires, then at least some desires seem to be pleasurable (they are natural and I can reasonably hope to achieve them) and others painful (they are impossible and yearning for them only brings unfulfillment and pain).

## [Quote from John Stuart Mill](#)

Mill's major contribution to utilitarianism is his argument for the qualitative separation of pleasures. Bentham treats all forms of happiness as equal, whereas Mill argues that intellectual and moral pleasures (higher pleasures) are superior to more physical forms of pleasure (lower pleasures). He distinguishes between happiness and contentment, claiming that the former is of higher value than the latter, a belief wittily encapsulated in the statement that, "**it is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question.**"[74]