

Episode One Hundred Thirty Eight - Letter to Menoecus 5 - Pleasure Part One

Post by “reneliza” of September 10, 2022 at 9:24 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

[Quote from DavidN](#)

To me that sets the whole philosophy up to be a kind of psychological math problem. Which is why I like it so much, the idea that there's a formula for happiness.

Yes, I'd agree up to point but I don't think we need to go the whole Utilitarian way of adding hedons and dolors.

I think the variables proposed by Bentham were mostly pretty spot on (the only one I'd take slight issue with is intensity), but that it's pretty obviously absurd to suggest that you can quantify these things to any reasonable degree. To do so would require the ability to see the future, but even quantifying an episode of pleasure after the fact doesn't really make sense, considering how much tiny details and difference in your mental or physical state can affect your experience.

I do really like considering (some of) these variables though and just taking them to be kind of fuzzy in order to make an informed best guess for a course of action. It feels more practical than the way I see most people trying to chase happiness.

It seems to me that a lot of Bentham's work starts with something really cool, then goes a step (or more) too far with it. (Which I personally find very familiar...)

It is worth noting that my knowledge of Bentham's utilitarianism is very limited and a lot of my assessment is in reading his Wikipedia page and the one for the panopticon a few days ago.