

A Short Thought About Applying the Reasoning of "Justice" to "Pleasure"

Post by "Cassius" of November 20, 2023 at 9:41 AM

This is likely to be a short thread because after thinking about it I am not sure the thought is very useful. However it might spur some thought that will be more productive.

We find justice pleasurable, do we not? So justice is a pleasure (?) What if we applied the reasoning about justice in [PD33-38](#) to pleasure by substituting "pleasure" for "justice" and making just enough modification in the rest of the text to make sense. Would we see any useful parallels in terms of how both justice and pleasure are valuable and desirable but not measurable in absolute terms that apply across numbers of people?

I am not really satisfied with the following construction but this is a first draft of such an attempt:

33. Pleasure never is anything in itself, but in the experience of men, alone or with one another, in any place whatever, and at any time, it is a kind of agreeable feeling.

34. Pain is not an evil in itself, but only in consequence of the fear which attaches to the apprehension of being unable to escape unendurable pain.

35. It is not possible for one who disregards the nature of pain (that pain is light if long, short if sharp, and escapable by death) to be confident of living pleurably, even if, at present, he escapes unendurable pain a thousand times. For up to the time of death he cannot be certain that he will indeed escape unendurable pain.

36. In its general aspect, pleasure is the same for all, for it is a kind of agreeable feeling in the experience of men; but with reference to the individual peculiarities of a man, or a country, or any other circumstances, the same thing does not turn out to be pleasurable for all.

37. Among actions which are sanctioned by the feeling of pleasure, that which is proved, on examination, to lead to more pleasure than pain has the guarantee of pleasure, whether it is the same for all or not. But if a man chooses an action, and it does not turn out to lead to more pleasure than pain, then it no longer has the essential nature of pleasure. And even if the dominance of pleasurable result over painful result shifts from one side to the other, but for a while accords with the dominance of pleasure, it is nonetheless pleasurable for that period, in the eyes of those who do not confound themselves with empty sounds, but look to the actual facts.

38. Where, provided the circumstances have not been altered, actions which were considered pleasurable have been shown not to lead to more pleasure than pain in actual practice, then

they are not to be chosen. But where, when circumstances have changed, the same actions which produced more pleasure than pain no longer lead to that result, those actions were to be chosen at the time, when they were of advantage in producing more pleasure than pain, but subsequently they are no longer to be chosen, when no longer productive of more pain than pleasure.

Does the analogy hold up at all? If so what might it help clarify? If it doesn't hold up, why not? -- Seeing why it does or does not hold up might itself lead to a helpful observations about both justice and pleasure.