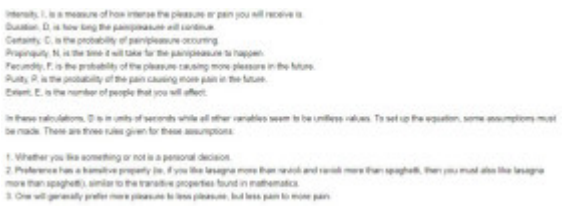
The Hedonistic Calculus - explained through an equation

Post by “Charles” of November 4, 2019 at 10:12 AM

$$U = \sum_{i=1}^{P_{total}} \int_{t=0}^{\infty} I_i(t)\ dt$$


Intensity, I, is a measure of how intense the pleasure or pain you will receive is.
Duration, D, is how long the pain/pleasure will continue.
Certainty, C, is the probability of pain/pleasure occurring.
Propinquity, N, is the time it will take for the pain/pleasure to happen.
Fecundity, F, is the probability of the pleasure causing more pleasure in the future.
Purity, P, is the probability of the pain causing more pain in the future.
Extent, E, is the number of people that you will affect.

In these calculations, D is in units of seconds while all other variables seem to be unitless values. To set up the equation, some assumptions must be made. There are three rules given for these assumptions:

1. Whether you like something or not is a personal decision.
2. Preference has a transitive property (ie. if you like lasagna more than ravioli and ravioli more than spaghetti, then you must also like lasagna more than spaghetti), similar to the transitive properties found in mathematics.
3. One will generally prefer more pleasure to less pleasure, but less pain to more pain.

http://ethicsatcbu1.blogspot.com/2015/10/felici...niz-beware.html

I came across this article a few weeks ago, and thought little of it at the time. But now it has my attention, I'll keep this short as I don't have much time before I head out for the day, but take a quick look at the graphic presented in the article and the variables below it.

What would be considered the Epicurean position on a more defined calculus such as this? While we may not endorse the formal logic & mathematics around Epicurus' time, this presents something different. As most of the variables are unitless, it still remains dependent for each individual according to his or her personal lives & dispositions.