

# Hedonism II

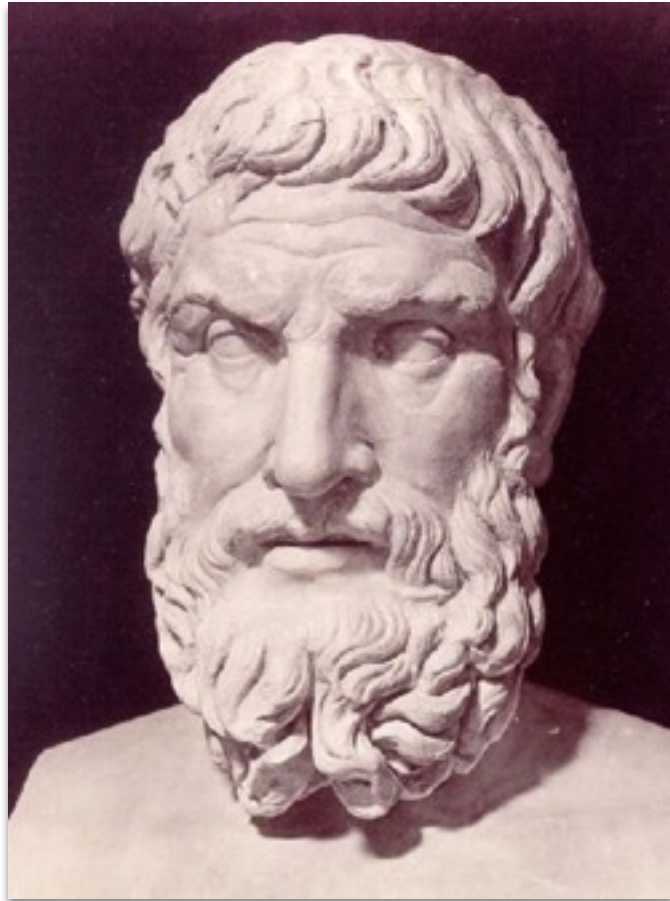
## Objectives:

By the end of this lecture you should be able to:

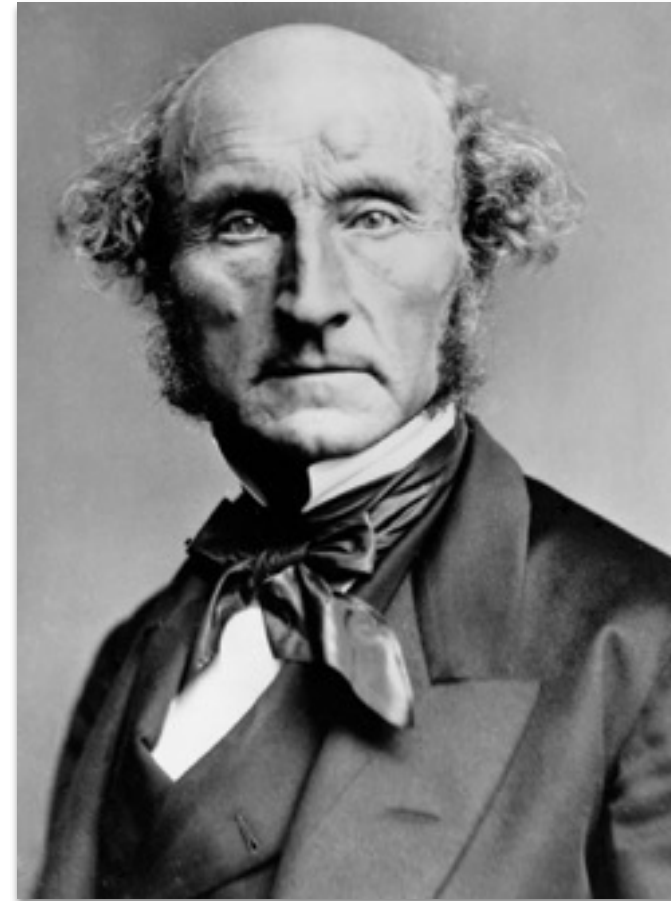
- Demonstrate how to reason with modus tollens
- Analyze the criticisms of hedonism

What's one positive thing about Hedonism?

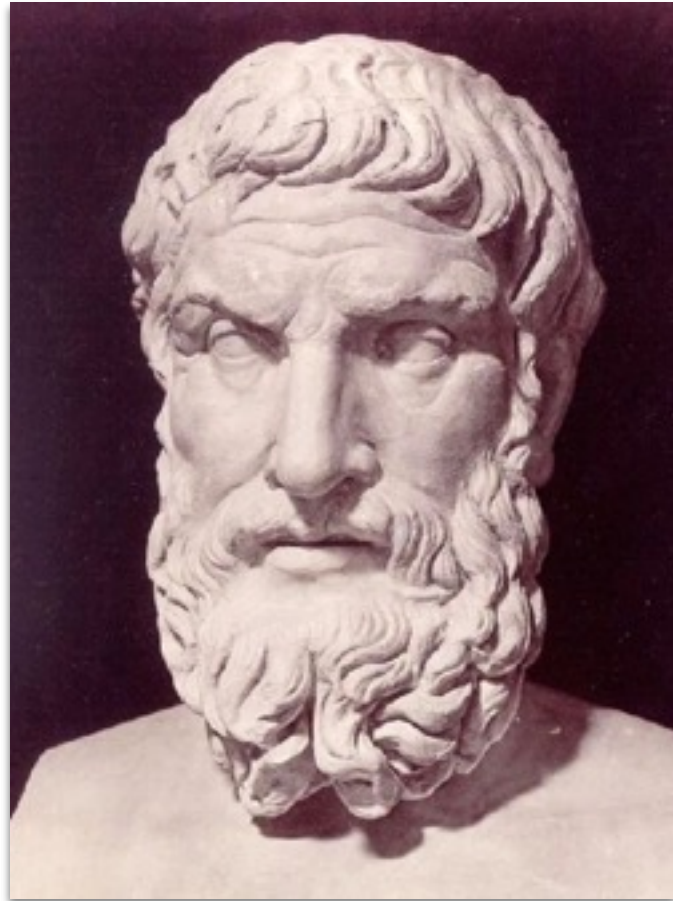
What's one problem with Hedonism?



Epicurus (341-270 BCE)



J.S. Mill (1806-1873)



Epicurus (341-270 BCE)

Pursue that which is truly important



Russ Shafer-Landau

“

Philosophy is the path to such clarity. Philosophy can reveal the false beliefs that cause so much unhappiness—specifically our beliefs that death is bad for us, that the gods are mean-spirited and easily angered...

- Text, p. 25

”





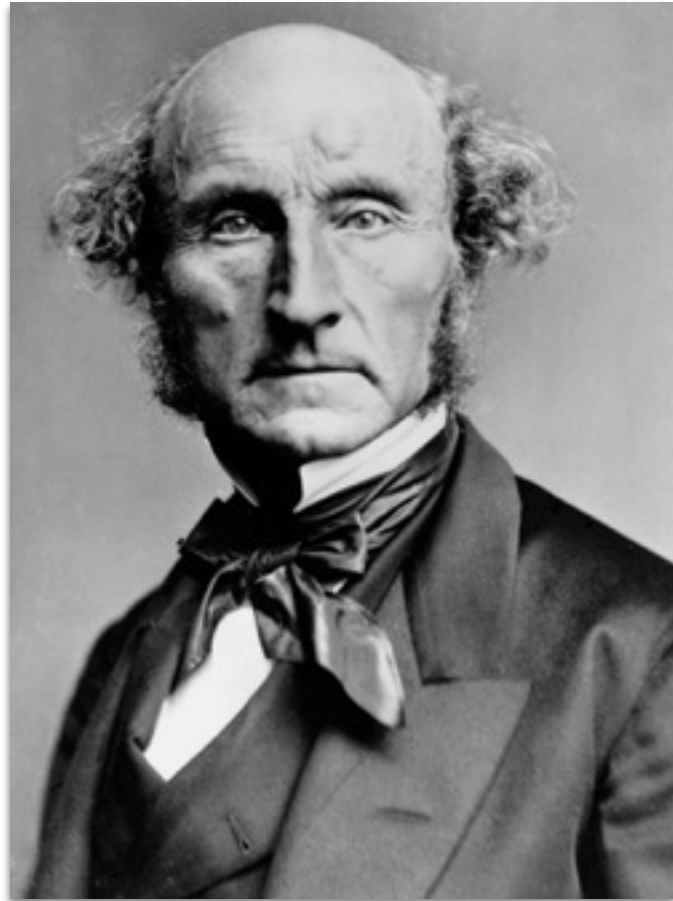
Russ Shafer-Landau

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...and that sex and money are key ingredients in the good life. Philosophy can help explain the error of such popular ways of thinking, and thereby ease us along the path to happiness.

- Text, p. 25

”



J.S. Mill (1806-1873)

Pursue Intellectual pleasures





Russ Shafer-Landau

“

Mill argued that pleasures come in different levels of quality, and that the best pleasures for human beings were those that come only through hard work...

- Text, p. 26

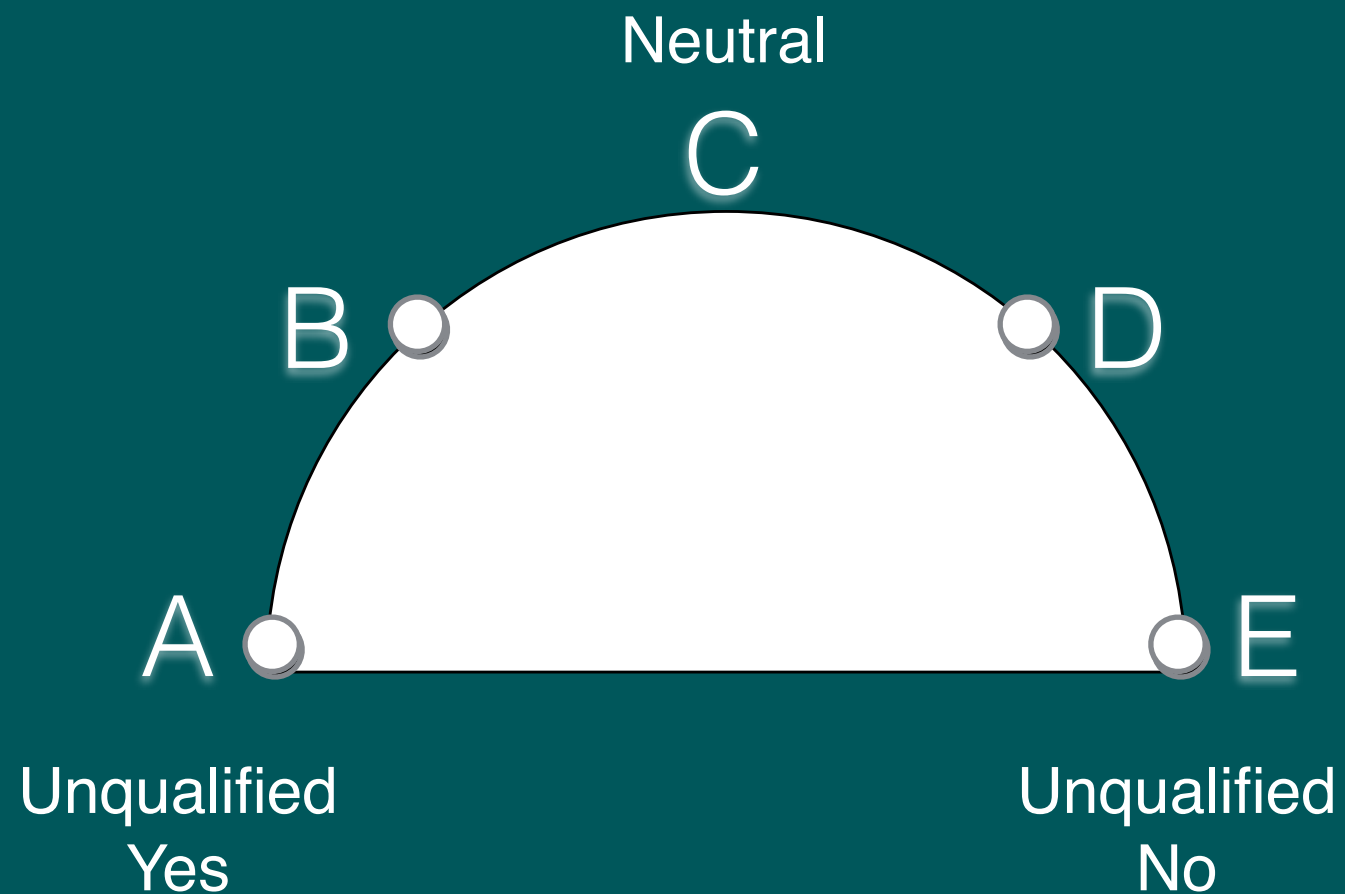
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# Poll

## Question

Do you find hedonism compelling?



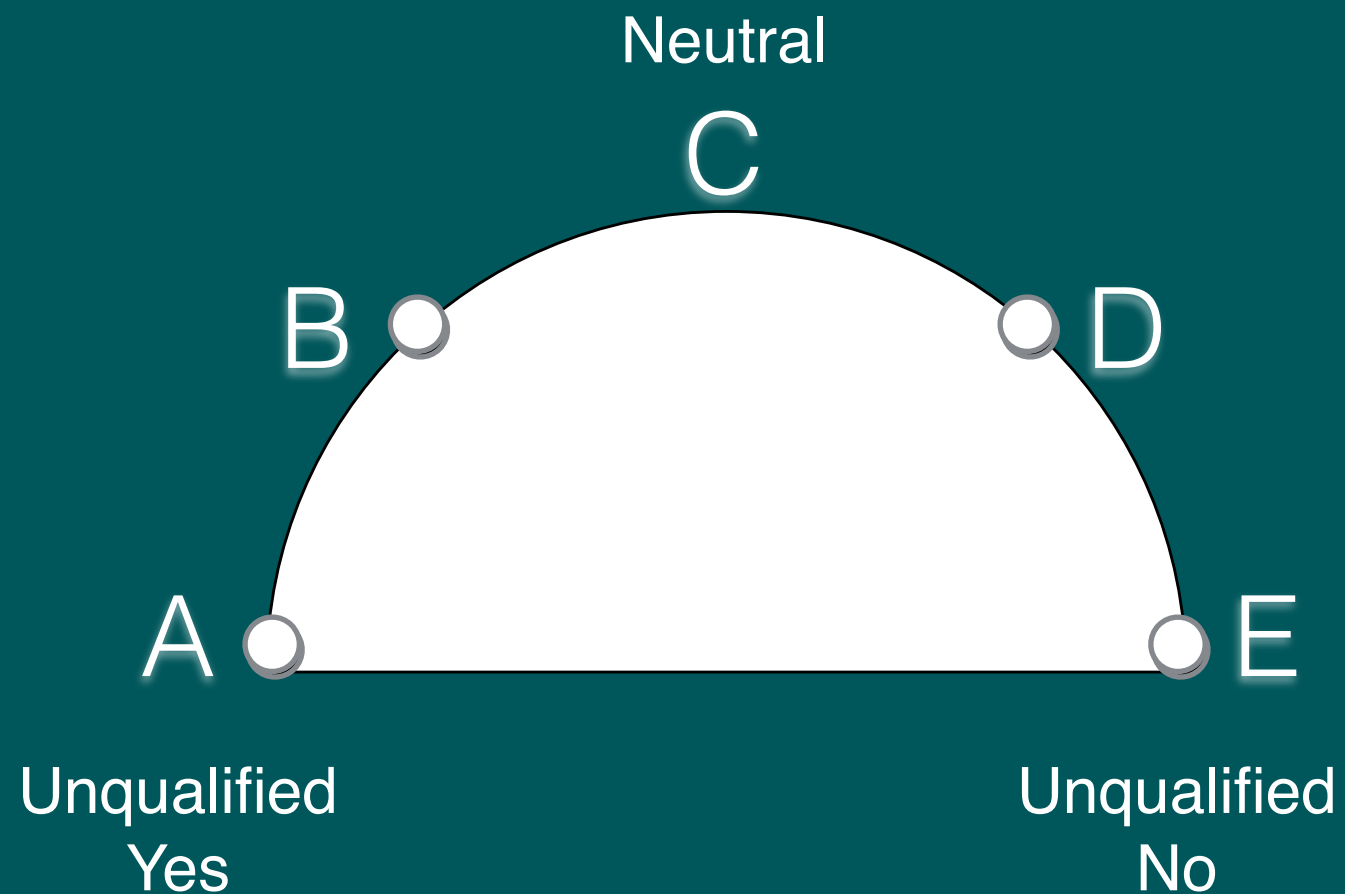
1. It allows for personal autonomy
2. It can explain common sense
3. It can explain the many rules for living a good life
4. It can explain the exceptions to the rules



# Poll

## Question

Can construction workers live the good life?







Russ Shafer-Landau

“

...what makes me happy needn't make you happy. So my recipe for the good life may be very different from yours....This diversity of good lives has an interesting implication: hedonists provide each of us with a substantial say in what the good life looks like.

- Text, p. 26

”





Russ Shafer-Landau

“

So long as we really do know what will make us happy, hedonism supports the resistance we feel when others try to tell us how to live our lives.

- Text, p. 27

”

1. It allows for personal autonomy
2. It can explain common sense
3. It can explain the many rules for living a good life
4. It can explain the exceptions to the rules

- A. sadness
- B. embarrassment
- C. humiliation
- D. physical pain
- E. meet up with a friend



Russ Shafer-Landau

“

...the point is that hedonism can explain why common sense says what it does. Certain things reliably damage our welfare, because they almost always bring misery in their wake...

- Text, p. 28

”

“



Russ Shafer-Landau

...other things just as reliably improve our quality of life, because they are a source of enjoyment.

- Text, p. 28

”

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What rules?

1. Promote pleasure
2. Avoid pain

1. It allows for personal autonomy
2. It can explain common sense
3. It can explain the many rules for living a good life
4. It can explain the exceptions to the rules



Russ Shafer-Landau

“

Hedonism can also explain why there are exceptions to these rules. Some people enjoy being humiliated...Others...delight in experiencing various kinds of physical pain.

- Text, p. 29

”

Hedonism doesn't say that all pleasures enhance our lives... only enjoyment does that

Which test is the test for hedonism?

- (A) If someone knows you very well, loves you, and for your own sake wants you to have X, then X makes you better off.
- (B) If something makes you happier, then it promotes your well-being; if something fails to make you happier, then it fails to promote your well-being.

1. Paradox of hedonism
2. False happiness
3. The importance of autonomy
4. Life's trajectory



First...a bit of logic

P1. If Boots is a cat, Boots is an animal

P2. Boots is not an animal

C. Hence, Boots is not a cat

If the premises are true, the conclusion **MUST** be true



## Modus Tollens

P1. If P then Q

P2. Not-Q

C. Hence not-P

If the premises are true, the conclusion **MUST** be true

If the conclusion is false, at least one of the premises **MUST** be false...

## The Paradox of Happiness

- P1. - If happiness is the only thing that directly makes us better off, then it is rational to single-mindedly pursue it.
- P2. - It isn't rational to do that
- C. - Hence happiness isn't the only thing that directly makes us better off



Russ Shafer-Landau

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[the paradox] does not pose a serious threat to hedonism. It doesn't challenge the idea that happiness is the only thing of intrinsic value. It just tells us that aiming directly for happiness is not a smart way to get it.

- Text, p. 33

”

## False Happiness

- P1. - If hedonism is true, then our lives go well to the extent that we are happy.
- P2. - It's not the case that our lives go well to the extent that we are happy. Happiness based on false beliefs is worse than happiness based on true beliefs.
- C. - Hence hedonism is false.



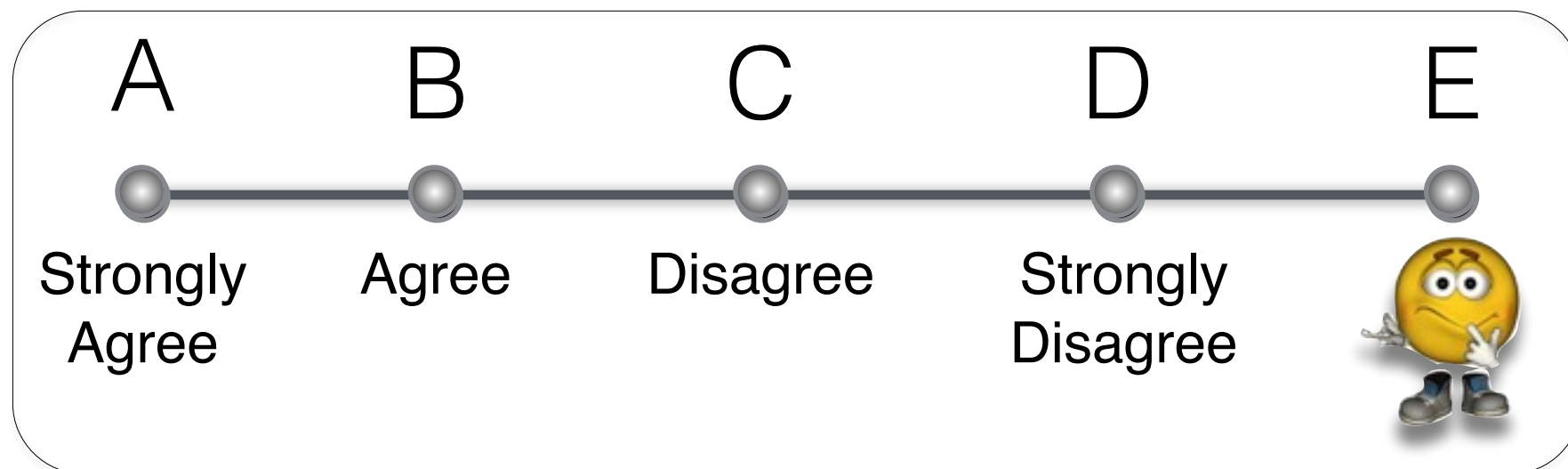


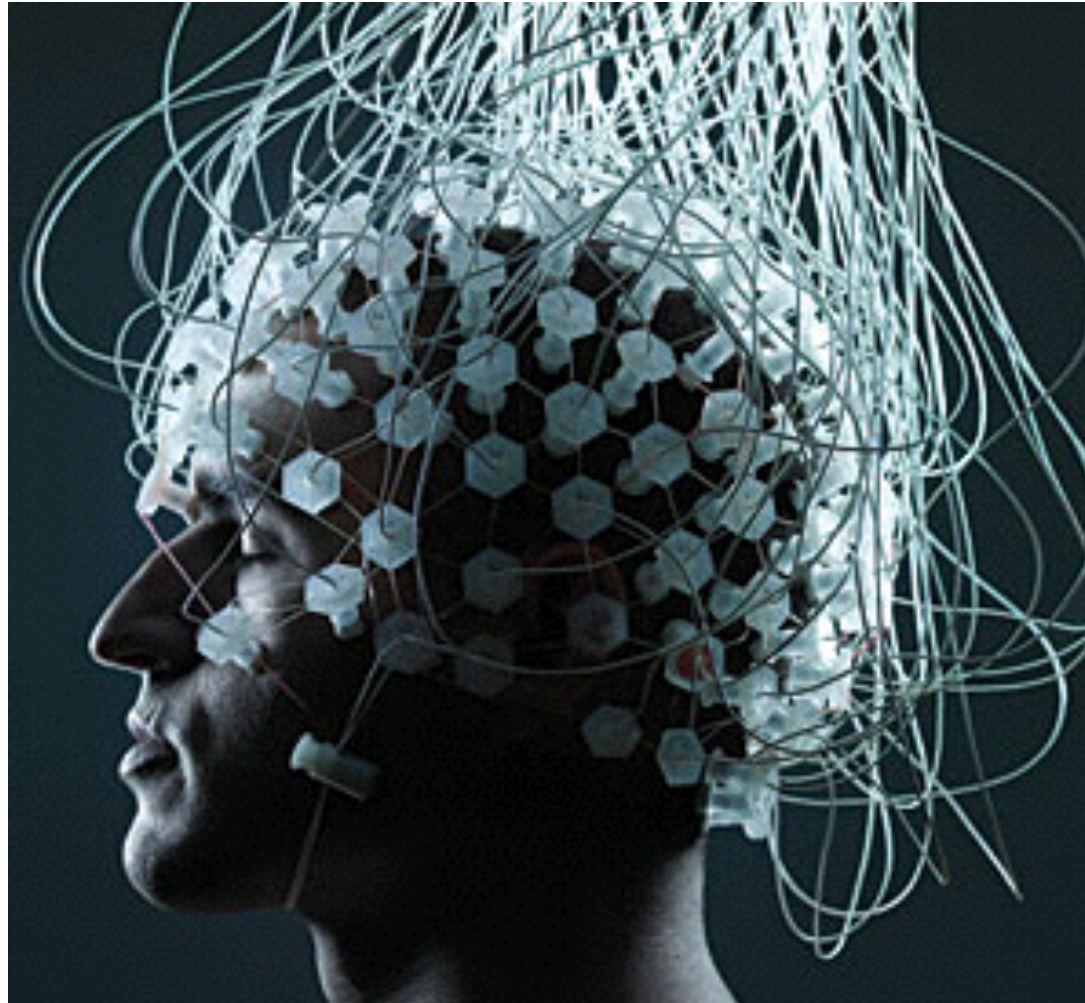


# Poll

## Claim

Happiness based on lies is less valuable than happiness based on truth





## False Happiness

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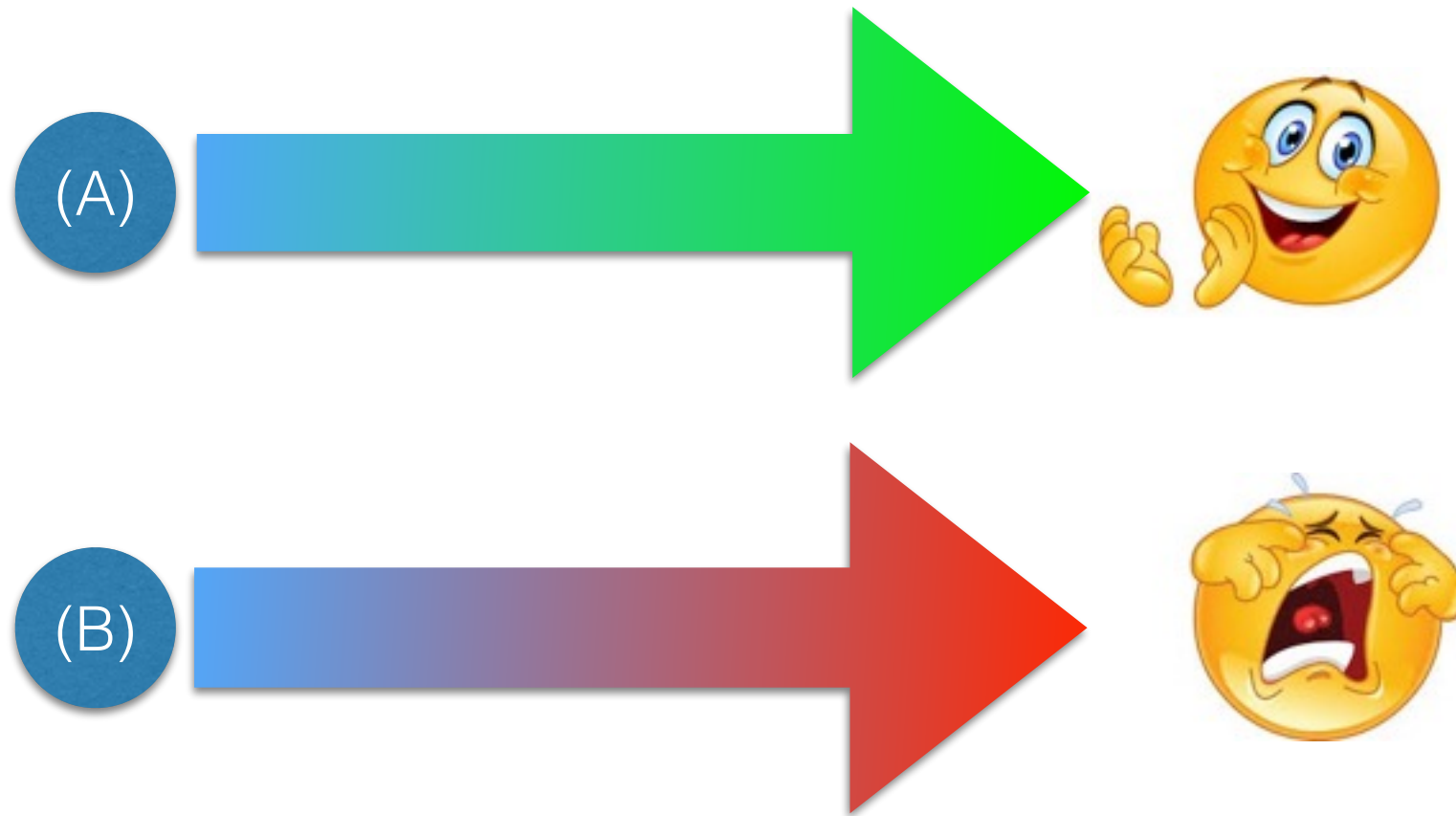
Lies!

## The Importance of Autonomy

- P1. - If hedonism is true, then autonomy contributes to a good life only insofar as it makes us happy
- P2. - Autonomy sometimes directly contributes to a good life, even when it fails to make us happy.
- C. - Hence hedonism is false.

## Life's Trajectory

- P1. - If hedonism is true, then the overall quality of a life depends entirely on the amount of happiness it contains.
- P2. - The overall quality of life depends on at least one other factor...and that is its trajectory.
- C. - Hence hedonism is false.





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Do you find anything about hedonism attractive? How does happiness fit into the good life?