

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

ON KNOWLEDGE AND UNPLEASANTNESS

The article by Smets (1973) presents an interesting approach to the educational process. I feel, however, that a somewhat different interpretation can be given regarding the unpleasantness associated with education.

It is not the increase in  $Y$  which causes unpleasantness; it is the frustration associated with the inability to transfer an element in  $Y$  to an element in  $X$ . Increase in  $Y$  by itself may be a distinctly pleasant experience. Consider for example the excitement created when a new avenue of research is opened in molecular biology.

To avoid unpleasantness (if this is indeed always a desirable aim) care must be taken to place in  $Y$  those elements  $\bar{\omega}$  which the individual is capable of transferring to  $\omega \in X$ . Also, the size of  $Y$  plays an important role. If  $Y$  is "too large" transferal of elements in  $Y$  to elements in  $X$  may seem a hopeless task, leading to frustration and unpleasantness.

There are no doubt many other ways in which this problem can be viewed.

LITERATURE

Smets, Philippe. 1974. "A Note on Knowledge and Unpleasantness." *Bull. Math. Biology*, **35**, 313-317.

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