

Episode Fifty-Five - Reason Is Dependent On The Senses (Part 2)

Post by "Don" of February 6, 2021 at 11:27 PM

[Quote from Elayne](#)

We would be wise to always remember that our sense data is obtained subjectively, through the perspective of a particular subject, and although it is real it is never experienced as an absolute, objective point of view, there being no such thing.

I thought the reason for the senses (the [αἰσθήσεις](#)) being a criterion of the Canon was that they were a direct connection with reality without any intermediary. Our opinions and beliefs are then constructed on that "real" authentic reflection of objective reality "out there." While each perceiver - the one who senses - will have a subjective and culturally influenced reaction to the senses, I don't think it's accurate to say "our senses are also subjective." That sounds like a Skeptical position as if our senses can't be trusted and nobody could agree on what their senses are telling them. We sense a real reality, we react to that sensation with pleasure or pain, and our prolepses then compare it to previous sensations. We then form concepts, beliefs, and opinions in keeping with the choice that will provide the path to the most sustained pleasurable life to the best of our ability.

[Quote from Elayne](#)

For almost all of us, emotions like contentment, gratitude, or affection for others-- are pleasurable, and those words wouldn't be accurate communication with the feeling of pleasure removed.

To be clear, I'm not implying that pleasure or pain can be removed from the emotions. But the initial reaction - pain or pleasure - is what gives rise to the emotions. You can't construct the emotion without the initial reaction. Pleasure and pain are part of [affect](#) (as I understand that concept in [Dr. Barrett's work](#)) and the emotions are constructed based on that interoception. I believe what Epicurus felt intuitively was this separation of affect and emotion which was why he placed pleasure/pain in the Canon (the pathē are two). One of the most important criterion in our Canonical decision-making process in choice and avoidance is the initial interoception of pain and pleasure. I believe you touched on this when you talked about sensing unease about someone. Don't stick around. The interoception of unpleasantness/pain gives rise to unease, fear, anxiety.

I'm intentionally leaving out a discussion of the "feeling of knowing" since I just got that book and don't feel I've studied that enough to have an opinion on that.