

Can you seek happiness and be full of joy when there is a war in Europe? Wes Cecil podcast.

Post by "Cassius" of May 20, 2022 at 10:57 AM

Agree with Don - spot on, and a useful chart and description as well.

I would add as further explanation that your description ("*In the picture, the bright pink represents more intense or active pleasures and the pale pink represents passive pleasures, with white representing "neutral." Which circle is the most pink? Except for the first one, they are all at the limit of pinkness. Darker pink is not more or less pink than lighter pink. They're both pleasure, the difference is just the shade.*") is necessary for understanding the point of the chart.

I don't think that a person looking at the chart without explanation would conclude that "except for the first one, all are at the limit of pinkness." Without "explanation" (which comes through philosophy) I think most people would say that the top right circle is the "most pink" because they would be automatically be looking at the darkness (intensity) and fullness (purity) of the color in the circle as making it "most pink."

However, with the explanation, which I agree makes sense by explaining that "pink" includes all shades of pink, the chart conveys exactly the point which is intended: that the "limit of pleasure" does not mean "the most intense pleasure possible" but in fact means a state in which pleasure cannot be increased BY DEFINITION.

I would say that the essential point here is that you are showing the LOGIC of statements such as:

[PD03](#). The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal of all that is painful. Wherever pleasure is present, as long as it is there, there is neither pain of body, nor of mind, nor of both at once.

But even more importantly and helpfully, this helps with the explanation of 18, 19, and 20, because it is the logical /philosophical "reasoned understanding" and the "measuring, by reason, the limits of pleasure," and "the mind, having attained a reasoned understanding" which enable us to understand the point. There's the other citation to the point that not everyone is capable of figuring out the problem, and this is the reason we need Epicurean philosophy, because we can't "feel" our way to a reasoned understanding that full life does not require an infinite time:

[PD18](#). The pleasure in the flesh is not increased when once the pain due to want is removed, but is only varied: and the limit as regards pleasure in the mind is begotten by the reasoned understanding of these very pleasures, and of the emotions akin to them, which used to cause the greatest fear to the mind.

[PD19](#). Infinite time contains no greater pleasure than limited time, if one measures, by reason, the limits of pleasure.

[PD20](#). The flesh perceives the limits of pleasure as unlimited, and unlimited time is required to supply it. But the mind, having attained a reasoned understanding of the ultimate good of the flesh and its limits, and having dissipated the fears concerning the time to come, supplies us with the complete life, and we have no further need of infinite time; but neither does the mind shun pleasure, nor, when circumstances begin to bring about the departure from life, does it approach its end as though it fell short, in any way, of the best life.

So that takes us back to the point I will argue relentlessly, that PD3 and referring to the "limit of quantity of pleasure" the references in Menoecus to pleasure being equal to absence of pain are not a call to asceticism.

Instead, they are a call to a reasoned understanding of how in fact it does make sense to see "Pleasure" as the goal of life, in contrast to "virtue" or "piety" or "meaningfulness" or whatever else anyone wants to suggest. Unless those bring pleasure, they are worthless.