

Diogenes of Oinoanda And the Timing of Causes

Post by "Don" of October 12, 2022 at 8:25 AM

There's a lot of context we appear to be missing, but this struck me:

Quote from Diogenes

Examples of causes that precede are cautery and surgery saving life: in these cases extreme pain must be borne, and it is after this that pleasure quickly follows.

Examples of coincident causes are [solid] and liquid nourishment and, in addition to these, [sexual acts:] we do not eat [food] and experience pleasure afterwards, nor do we drink wine and experience pleasure afterwards, nor do we emit semen and experience pleasure afterwards; rather the action brings about these pleasures for us immediately, without awaiting the future

It seems to my reading that Diogenes is conflating cause/effect and pleasure/pain. Maybe it was a big deal at the time between schools about when pleasure and pain would initiate or motivate action. Surgery without anaesthesia would indeed be accompanied by extreme pain, then if you survive you'll feel pleasure. But is pain a "cause" of the pleasure of recovery? That seems to be where Diogenes is going.