

Creation Out of Nothing is Postbiblical Doctrine

Post by "Cassius" of May 15, 2024 at 11:27 AM

I can imagine a couple of questions here:

1. Do the terms "good" and "evil" even apply to elements/ atoms / void / matter, or are those things "neutral" in some way?
2. Does that answer differ among the Platonic, Peripatetic, Stoic, and Epicurean Schools?
3. Do we have specific quotes where this issue is specifically addressed?

It seems to me it's not necessarily obvious even in Epicurean terms how "good" and "evil" should be used. Pretty clearly Epicurus said that nature gives us only pleasure and pain in order to know what to choose and what to avoid, so are "good" and "evil" only "abstractions added on to the pleasure / pain base? Do we have specific quotes that show Epicurus talking about how pleasure and pain relate to good and evil?

In terms of the Platonists, Peripatetics, and Stoics, who are into "virtue" as an end in itself, then the terms "good" and "evil" seem much more natural and easy to apply. It seems to me that all three of them are essentially equating their god/prime mover/ divine fire as the ultimate source of "good," so they can slap that label onto something without all the contextual evaluation (evaluation in terms of pleasure and pain) that is involved in Epicurean philosophy.

i tend to question, along with the title of Nietzsche's book "Beyond Good and Evil," whether Epicurus was not either (1) rejecting the whole "good vs evil" paradigm that was common to the other schools, or (2) redefining those words (good and evil) in terms of pleasure and pain just as he was redefining "gods" and the meaning of "pleasure."

Precision here is probably of particular importance since the Stoics were apparently trying to rehabilitate matter themselves, and perhaps considered matter to be part of divine fire and perhaps therefore "good" in a way that may have distinguished them from Platonics/Peripatetics(?)