

The Axiology of Pain and Pleasure (are they intrinsic good/bad ?)

Post by "Cassius" of June 4, 2024 at 6:48 AM

Confession: I have been distracted and not read each post in this thread thoroughly. However I did read Don's last post and had this immediate question:

[Quote from Don](#)

While we are the products of evolution, we don't make choices and rejections based on evolutionary considerations in the here and now in this one life that we have.

Would that not be better worded with some kind of caveat that "we need to be cautious in making choices based on evolutionary considerations..." rather than "we don't..." because:

- in fact many people often "do" make choices that way, even though it "may" be shortsighted.... and

- in an Epicurean perspective without fate or necessity or a providential god force, "sometimes" a decision to go against the generally-observable rule (*I gather we all agree that the general rule is to the effect that blindly following evolution in every case is generally a bad idea*) will in fact work out and be the proper choice in some circumstances?

I suspect Don's wording in context probably presumes that this is a "general rule" and not an "ironclad rule" but I tend to worry that there are too many people who think that Epicurus' observations about how behavior generally but not always leads to particular results are intended to be "ironclad" rules from which never to deviate, which I think would not be likely to be the way he intended them.

I also say this in context that I think Don and I sometimes come across as interpreting [PD10](#) differently on this very point I am bringing up here, even though I don't think our positions are actually very different. I see [PD10](#) as emphasizing the very point that I want to be sure is not misunderstood here.

Also, for those who were on the Zoom call last night, I raise this also because of the example we discussed about the current Boeing astronauts who are having difficulty getting launched into space. We "generally" don't undertake high-risk activities that could lead to death, but "sometimes" we consider the reward in pleasure / reduction of pain worth the risk, even of death.

I suspect Don and I here too are in full agreement, but we express the issue slightly differently.