

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

**Post by “Little Rocker” of June 4, 2024 at 10:01 AM**

These are some half-baked thoughts, but I agree with Cassius that the worry about psychological hedonism is that it seems nearly unfalsifiable, and it's not going to convince the person who insists they act for reasons other than pleasure/advantage. If the point is convincing others, then asserting psychological hedonism is almost tantamount to begging the question, even if it turns out to be empirically correct.

I wonder sometimes whether the root question is whether people think duty and virtue should make them miserable or whether they hope to be pleased, or at least satisfied, to be a dutiful and virtuous person. And if they say, 'I want to be the sort of person for whom doing my duty makes me miserable,' then I would find that strange.

I've never quite known what to do with Epicurus' insistence that virtuous people will experience the greatest pleasure and that people who experience the greatest pleasure must be virtuous. But I'm not entirely sure it's all that different than the Stoic view that the virtuous person will enjoy their virtue. So in my mind, people might insist they are motivated by duty, and for all I know they are in their own cognitive economy, but it would be/should be a grave disappointment to them if that motivation did not terminate in some fashion in a sense of satisfaction with themselves. And I tend to think, as an Epicurean, and as reflected in the word 'terminate,' that people actually infer backwards from 'what will give me the feeling about myself and my aims that I want' to 'duty' or 'virtue.' Which means that the final aim is the feeling, and I'm with Don--it seems reasonable to call that feeling (at least a kind of) pleasure. And virtue is the instrument, not the aim.