

Episode Fifty-Five - Reason Is Dependent On The Senses (Part 2)

Post by “Don” of February 7, 2021 at 7:30 AM

We may be talking/writing past each other again on the first point, so I'll try and respond in more detail to that later.

The second point is that emotions are built on pleasure/pain but have a lot more going on. That's why it's important to "feel" pleasure/pain and know why you're feeling pleasure/pain and not just label it with an emotional description. Take anger [as discussed here in this conference abstract](#). According to this (and I've seen similar more detailed expositions in Tsouna's book), anger can stem from pain but be sustained by "the pleasure of revenge." One is acceptable and understandable, the other is "empty." Anger and most if not all of the emotional designations have culturally influenced definitions and connotations (as in Barrett). I think that's why Epicurus put so much emphasis on pleasure and pain. Strip things down to the bare essentials free of all indoctrination. Nature provides pleasure and pain. Period. That's why he can say that ataraxia, aponia, khara, and euphrosyne are different expressions of pleasure: they have the reaction of pleasure as their foundation.

To make choices about leading the pleasurable life, we have to really know what's motivating us, what's driving our choices. What are we really feeling? We need to be honest with ourselves and not overthink what we're feeling. Are we angry from real pain caused to us, or are we feeling pleasure at self-righteous indignation and thoughts of getting even? If the latter, choosing a path based on that could lead to more pain and could be a pleasure we should not choose. Humans are good at fooling ourselves. That's where reason gets the better of us. What are we *really* feeling? And is it pleasure or pain that motivates our decisions? And as I mentioned, I still think Dr. Barrett's work (of which I'm continuing to look into) has some interesting and potentially important light to shed on this topic.