

The General Question - Dealing with Vulcans and Ayn Rand - "Emotions are not tools of Cognition"

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In the world of science fiction it has been suggested to generations of fans that beings which do not have emotion (e.g., Vulcans) should be accepted (or at least entertained) to be superior to humans that do. In the world of Ayn Rand / Objectivism, much ink has been spilled on one of Rand's more famous slogans: "Emotions are not tools of cognition." Whether or not Rand correctly traces her argument to Aristotle, it seems that this issue goes back to Greece and was a key aspect of the Epicurean canon. If indeed "feelings / passions / emotions" are the proper name of the second leg of the Epicurean canon of how we ascertain truth, then we have a huge divergence of opinion which students of Epicurus ought to explore. This is a topic for articles, series of articles, books, series of books, etc., and probably ought to be one of the most commonly discussed issues. I don't believe anyone would suggest that we *always* "trust our feelings" anymore than we *always* trust what we see or hear. Lucretius preserved a lot of discussion about how we test what we observe from the five senses. We need to reconstruct (the hedonic calculus?) how Epicurus would advise that we observe what we gather from our feelings. The raw material is there for us to package this into a whole that is much more coherent than wikipedia and the like.