

What Do You Take From The "Golden Mean" of Aristotle?

Post by "Cassius" of February 11, 2022 at 5:27 PM

"Even so, I don't find any fault in the idea that the virtue is the balance between two excesses; probably Epicurus would've agreed to that. So why not pleasure as well?"

I would say that this points out the problem and that Epicurus would not agree. Pleasure is a feeling that nature gives us as a canonical perception. We don't feel pain according to a set formula, and Aristotle is suggesting that there are extremes which can be identified prior to circumstances and experience, and these extremes give rise to the mean and therefore the optimum results. The problem is that these extremes are like Platonic ideals - they have no independent existence and to the extent we can estimate some kind of approximation, we do so based on the nature of the operation of the atoms and void involved, not on the basis of logical reasoning based on absolutes.

Someone can probably do better than that in piercing the issue but I am very appreciative of Nate finding that reference.

In all, I do think what we have here the difference between seeing virtue as something relative to the circumstances (the Epicurean perspective of identifying virtue by results that occur afterward), vs doing the reverse and trying to evaluate circumstances based on their adherence to some preset arbitrary standard of virtue that exists only in the human mind as a tool for prediction (the Atostotelian/Platonic perspective). Plato and Aristotle may look for their absolutes in different places, but in reality they are doing the same thing and Epicurus is in total opposition to both.