

From The "Golden Mean" to the "Summum Bonum" - Useful or Deceptive Frames of Reference?

Post by "Cassius" of February 15, 2022 at 7:21 AM

Yes we may be tilting windmills so I am not inclined to add much more at the moment, other than that I have never had a good feeling about the Tetrpharmakon and I would not accept its wording as being from Epicurus or authoritative. At very best it is a very loose version of the first PDs, and "God only knows" who wrote it and whether it was written as a good or bad example of Epicurean thought (I understand the associated fragments were substantially targeted at combatting errors, but I gather the context is so lost that it is impossible to tell in what sense the Tet was used.)

At the moment I am resting at the point that all these words are abstractions, with pleasure being the least abstract and most concrete as a feeling, which everyone can sense in themselves. The other words are much more abstract, with Good and Evil being the most abstract, and I suspect that is why Nietzsche wrote a book suggesting we need to go "Beyond" them.

Maybe we should look to the practical result of this:. The choice of a single word helps us debate with Plato and Aristotle, but it doesn't solve our moment by moment need to make decisions, and that is where we look to all forms of pleasure and pain which may result from our actions.

There is no tangible definition of "Good" to which we can refer to make any decision beyond referring to the resulting pleasures, and no tangible definition of evil other than the resulting pains.

Attempting to collapse all of the analysis into "Good" and "Evil" is likely unworkable except as a debating tool, and worse - it can easily serve as a cloak which obscures the natural fact that our only natural guides are pleasure and pain.