

# Welcome Quiesco!

Post by "Quiesco" of April 7, 2023 at 5:21 PM

## [Quote from Cassius](#)

This post from the Torquatus section of On Ends is directed to the point about pleasure being the only good. If you accept that Nature gives us only pleasure and pain by which to judge, then everything good resolves to "pleasure" and vice versa:

## [Quote from Cicero On Ends](#)

The problem before us then is, what is the climax and standard of things good, and this in the opinion of all philosophers must needs be such that we are bound to test all things by it, but the standard itself by nothing. Epicurus places this standard in pleasure, which he lays down to be the supreme good, while pain is the supreme evil; and he founds his proof of this on the following considerations.

[30] Every creature, as soon as it is born, seeks after pleasure and delights therein as in its supreme good, while it recoils from pain as its supreme evil, and banishes that, so far as it can, from its own presence, and this it does while still uncorrupted, and while nature herself prompts unbiased and unaffected decisions. So he says we need no reasoning or debate to shew why pleasure is matter for desire, pain for aversion. These facts he thinks are simply perceived, just as the fact that fire is hot, snow is white, and honey sweet, no one of which facts are we bound to support by elaborate arguments; it is enough merely to draw attention to the fact; and there is a difference between proof and formal argument on the one hand and a slight hint and direction of the attention on the other; the one process reveals to us mysteries and things under a veil, so to speak; the other enables us to pronounce upon patent and evident facts. Moreover, seeing that if you deprive a man of his senses there is nothing left to him, it is inevitable that nature herself should be the arbiter of what is in accord with or opposed to nature. Now what facts does she grasp or with what facts is her decision to seek or avoid any particular thing concerned, unless the facts of pleasure and pain?

Which doesn't mean that there aren't lots of individual pleasures but that the unifying common element of all pleasures is the feeling that is given by nature.

I think that's a pretty interesting point, I wonder why one should accept that Nature gives you only pleasure and pain to judge with. I find the argument that Cicero outlines quite similar to the Stoic one, where whether someone lives according to Nature is not something to discuss but you simply know it, whether that be the Stoic version (living in accordance with the force that guides everything into a more perfect form, apparently by living by the virtues) or the Epicurean version (living in accordance with the self-evident attractive force of pleasure). If you simply point to it and it should be self-evident, then Stoics and Epicureans can't use that same argument and come to different conclusions. Perhaps I'm misunderstanding the argument though.

Of course fire is only hot because that is my sense experience, fire in principle just is, if it even really exists in the way that I experience it. My subjective experience is the only thing that is real to me and it does not have a self-evident good-bad dichotomy.

So then I arrive at the fact I can choose to live according to whatever principle, and the most obvious one is pleasure because it is in itself fulfilling. But that is simply my own personal experience and I can not extrapolate that any further. I can only know that I exist since it is self-evident, pleasure is the guiding principle for all that I know exists.

I hope that made any sense to you, it's quite hard to put it into words :) And from there it is of course a question of what pleasure really is so I can live to it to the best of my abilities, which is what made me stumble upon Epicureanism.

Thanks for the welcome!