

Welcome Quiesco!

Post by “Godfrey” of April 7, 2023 at 7:25 PM

[Quote from Quiesco](#)

I wonder why one should accept that Nature gives you only pleasure and pain to judge with.

Welcome, [Quiesco](#) !

The idea that pleasure and pain are the guides (or judges) comes from observation. This seems to be getting confirmation in current neuroscience, but maybe the best way to examine the idea is to pay close attention to your own functioning. To understand pleasure and use it for a guide, one must really understand pain as well. When I looked at my feelings at any given time, my initial thought would often be that I was in a neutral state. But by paying closer attention I would notice some discomfort or perhaps very subtle enjoyment. The term is a bit loaded, but one could say that a principle Epicurean practice is mindfulness of one's Feelings. I capitalize Feelings as they are one of the three faculties in EP from which we can measure reality.

Personally, I would restate "accept that Nature gives you only..." as "our biology is such that" we have three basic faculties of understanding: Sensations, Feelings and Prolepsis.

[Quote from Quiesco](#)

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.

Exactly! This philosophy relies on understanding some science and following personal observations. And there is no universal god-bad dichotomy, there is only what we personally perceive. If you've not listened to the Lucretius Today podcast (you can access it on this site or various podcast apps), the latest episode or two have been discussing Epicurean physics and its ramifications. Basically, in a world in which everything is material and there is no omnipotent god or afterlife, Epicurus determined that the only thing that we can use to construct an ethical theory is our own faculties, which are called the Canon.

[Quote from Quiesco](#)

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.

Ah, that's the journey! It gets richer the farther one gets into it.