

What If Anything Has Changed About Human Nature In the Last 2000 Years?

Post by "Godfrey" of January 6, 2024 at 5:52 PM

Getting back to the title of this thread, "What If Anything Has Changed About Human Nature In the Last 2000 Years?"....

It would seem to me that the best way to address this question, at least in this forum, is to examine it in terms of the Epicurean Canon: sensations, anticipations and feelings. First, are there any new faculties in addition to these three that have arisen in the last 2000 years? Second, have any of the three faculties changed significantly in the last 2000 years?

To my understanding, the answer to the first question is "no".

As to the second question, current science has helped to explain the canonic faculties in more detail but, as far as I know, hasn't discovered anything new that wasn't a part of the faculties 2000 years ago. For example, we now talk of more than just five senses, but these aren't something that didn't exist 2000 years ago: we're just aware of them now even though they were an integral part of how humans have previously functioned.

But, and correct me if I'm wrong [BrainToBeing](#) , this seems to be the central problem that you're concerned with, which is responding to a variety of existential threats:

[Quote from BrainToBeing](#)

But, now we need to have the whole population understand how to think with science, and be willing to work with "inconvenient science".

Epicurean philosophy is based on "the way things are", as Lucretius famously said. And the ethics, for the most part, arises out of the physics and the canonic. The physics isn't going to change in any way that will meaningfully affect human behavior, precisely due to the problem in the quote. The way that humans acquire knowledge (the canon) isn't going to change meaningfully either.

Of the three faculties of the canon, none to them are, to my mind, something that will change any time soon. Evolution, after all, occurs at a glacial pace.

Any ethical change occurs in the individual; only when the number of individuals changing reaches a critical mass can it be said that institutional or societal ethics has changed. The only way to speed this up, I think, is by exponentially increasing the number of individuals being reached. And they must be reached in a way that directly and repeatedly stimulates each of

their canonic faculties if the information is going to take hold. Unfortunately, the majority of those with the ability to do this are promoting the exact opposite of the point of view in the above quote.

So it is largely a political problem, which in order to avoid fracturing the community that we have here, we have agreed not to discuss. However it *is* an urgent problem. From an Epicurean point of view, this is pain and is therefore something that each of us needs to address in some way. This is what is meant by pleasure being the absence of pain: one must be aware of their pain. The feelings are two, pleasure and pain, and the goal of a healthy organism is pleasure. One must examine the pain and determine if it's leading to greater pleasure, or if it's something that needs to be rooted out. Then one can figure out the most effective way to remove the pain, or if the pain is determined to be incurable, to deal with it. Sometimes the solution will be individual and sometimes it will mean actively engaging the public sphere.