

The Axiology of Pain and Pleasure (are they intrinsic good/bad ?)

Post by “Little Rocker” of June 3, 2024 at 5:41 PM

Sorry to blunder into this late and quite possibly confuse things further, but here's a quote from the original Pigliucci piece:

Quote

Evolutionarily speaking, for instance, pain is there to alert us to injuries that, if unattended, could cause long-term disability or death. Pleasure is there to entice us to do things we otherwise might not do, like engaging in the biologically all-important activities of courtship and sex (which are otherwise expensive in terms of time and resources). Put this way, it is clear what the only ultimate goods that nature set for us (and for all living organisms) are: survival and reproduction.

I'm taking this to be at least one of the reasons the naturalistic fallacy occurred to Onenski because Pigliucci is offering what might appear to be a textbook case.

So maybe another example would capture the relevant worry: Imagine an evolutionary biologist says, 'Men are naturally prone to infidelity because it's not evolutionarily advantageous for them to be monogamous. Men are just cheaters, and that's a good thing from the perspective of survival and reproduction, which are the ends nature sets for us. So we should just expect men to cheat.' That leaves a person who contends that men should aim for fidelity two options-- show that cheating is not actually adaptive (i.e. challenge the scientist's empirical claim) or decide that what is good for us/right for us is not governed by what is evolutionarily advantageous.