

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

Post by "Little Rocker" of June 4, 2024 at 4:36 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

And if I were an Epicurus or a Diogenes of Oinoanda seeking to etch "in stone" a summary of my message to all future generations, and to point out why virtually everyone else has things upside down, I'd find at least as much reason to come at this from a "grand philosophical point" perspective as I would from a "here's my personal observation, your mileage may vary" perspective.

I think I've gotten a bit turned around here because you and Don have a history and I feel slow on the uptake today. Cassius, can you perhaps restate the 'grand philosophical point'?

[Quote from Don](#)

I'm using "psychological hedonism" as an expedient shorthand for "pleasure is the guide, goal, and end of all our actions."

From my perspective...

People are dutiful, because it ultimately brings them pleasure.

People are pious because it ultimately brings them pleasure.

Continually asking "Why do you do that?" will, if the person is honest, ultimately result in the answer "Because it makes me feel good." Otherwise, I believe people are fooling themselves... Sometimes quite effectively and thoroughly, but fooling themselves nonetheless.

Yes, and I think Epicurus *is* a psychological hedonist of the sort you articulate here. I just find myself sympathetic to what I take to be Cassius' point that arguing about the empirical truth of psychological hedonism might not be the best dialectical strategy for convincing people to be Epicureans. I admit that I feel like I've reached a point where every time I hear a passionate argument about altruism I cry a little on the inside, even though I recognize that the possibility of altruism really matters to a lot of people. I think I've just lost sight of why it does.