

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

Post by “Don” of June 5, 2024 at 8:31 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

This statement helps clarify the difference in perspective, because i do not see this as a "discovery" at all

Okay, I think I'll agree that "discovery" is maybe not the right word to use in this case. His "discovery" is definitely a reaction against his contemporary philosophical schools' position on that "neutral state." Maybe assertion? Epicurus asserted that "You're all wrong. There is no 'neutral' state. If you all are going to say there's *pleasure*, there's *pain*, and there's some '*neutral*' state between them, I'm not okay with that. When we're alive, we feel pleasure and we feel pain. Period." So, that's why he was constrained in the terms he could use within the philosophical discussions taking place at the time. He could have used different words, but his rivals would just then say "Epicurus is just renaming the neutral state." He had to make a hard break with the rival schools and decided to use the words they used to beat them at their own game, so to speak.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Now that one I doubt we'll be able to bridge very easily, because I cannot see Epicurus holding a "virtue" (such as wisdom) to be "what society feels is the excellent/noble thing to do." I would think that Epicurus would have deferred to "society" in defining the attributes of "virtue" exactly as much as he deferred to "society" in defining the attributes of a "god."

I was just trying to go back to the meaning of virtue/arete/virtus of "[something that shows/exhibits excellence of character; a person or thing's 'full realization of potential or inherent function'](#)." That "society" inclusion was a clumsy way of putting it. The arete of a knife is if it cuts well. The arete of a human is... well, I guess, fill in the blank depending on the situation?

[Quote from Cassius](#)

But yes regardless of where we end up this discussion is extremely helpful toward bringing clarity to the questions!

