

Epicurean versus deceptive (“modern”) Stoic decision making

Post by “Julia” of August 13, 2024 at 4:16 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

If you're NOT careful, then you run into this trouble that plagues Epicurean philosophy today: "Absence of pain" can be confused as referring to a particular experience that nobody can adequately define outside of a particular context, and thus a great source of confusion, rather than being seen as a definition of the "limit of quantity of pleasure" in which context it is a very useful and helpful definition.

To me, the plainest statement of *a negative* implicitly refers to the *broadest* interpretation (any → not one).

Example: "There is an absence of food" means that my kitchen is entirely empty. It does not mean "I ran out of rice" or "I have no more soda." Instead, the "absence of food" means I have nothing whatsoever left at all.

The plainest statement of *a positive* implicitly refers to the *narrowest* interpretation (some → at least one).

Example: "There was a police presence" only asserts that there was one officer somewhere on the site. There *might* have been hundreds right on target, but the assertion is only made of one officer somewhere on site.

So maybe I'm just still not getting the point(?!), but I've never understood how "absence of pain" could possibly be referring to particulars? To me, "absence of pain" has always been "absence of *any* pain *whatsoever*". Otherwise it would have to be explicated via one of these three options: "absence of *a particular* pain", "absence of any pain *to some extent*", or "absence of *a particular* pain *to some extent*"...

I should probably revisit this thread after I'm more caught up with the podcast 😊

I might try following this convention

- the pleasures (definite, plural) refers to the category
- a pleasure (indefinite, singular) refers to one particular
- pleasures (indefinite, plural) refers to an undefined group of particulars
- these/those pleasures (determiner, plural) refers to a defined group of particulars

to see if that reduces the amount of confusion, in me, in others, or both 😊