




An Anti-Epicurean Article - "The Meaning of Life Is Not Happiness" (For Future Reference)

Post by "Don" of November 18, 2024 at 10:59 PM

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

Don, You and I have disagreed on this before. I have thought of eudaimonia as "happy well-being." I continue to do so, as I still think they are related. A disagreement among friends  : and one that itself may depend on context.

Maybe disagreement is a little strong 

I had to go back and see where we discussed this previously (Nothing dies on the internet ) and found one of our threads:

Post

[RE: Fundamental Issues In Hedonism](#)

[...]

Whilst I agree about the semantic difficulties with the word "happy/happiness," I think that eudaimonia cannot be a strictly objective state - such that, say, you might claim that Pacatus is clearly in a state of eudaimonia/well-being, even though Pacatus might not be aware of that at all. So, I think there has to be a subjective element - such that I **feel** that state of well-being, which is a feeling of pleasure/pleasantness. And, semantic difficulties aside, I know when I **feel** happy, just...



Pacatus

December 11, 2023 at 6:02 PM

So, I do agree with you that everything is contextual. I do think it is nigh impossible to look at someone and say "Well there goes a happy person!" Without having access to their inner life, we can't objectively say if someone's happy or not... or experiencing well-being, for that matter. Feelings and emotions are, by definition, subjective to the individual.

And I would agree that the Venn diagrams of "happiness" (writ large) and "well-being" intersect. I'm still not quite ready to completely embrace an expansive "definition" of happiness, but depending on how we're defining it or - maybe better - using it, I can accept talking about happiness as a sense of well-being which both equate to feeling pleasure about your life and

the direction it's headed.

And, just to be clear, we're talking about a 2,300 year old philosophy originally taught in a language other than English which had its own semantic issues... evidenced by the fact that the people of Epicurus' and Philodemus' time argued with them about the Epicureans' use of the word ἡδονή (hedone) to encompass the full spectrum of what Epicurus saw as "pleasure."