

# Wilson (Catherine) - "The Pleasure Principle"

**Post by "Cassius" of June 8, 2019 at 8:40 PM**

If I understand your points I think I agree with all you wrote. I realize as I think about things things that I am trying to take these issues to their logical conclusion.

IF there is nothing eternal except matter in motion through the void, and if the universe has no "center" and no "outside" from which a creating power looks on and says "THIS is good and THAT is bad" then we are truly left with the feelings of pleasure and pain as the motivation for all action.

We can set our sights on things that we think will please us (democracy, equality, capitalism, socialism, communism) but never can there be any "outside" justification for it other than ourselves and what we set as our goals. Presumably we set goals for some reason, and that reason ultimately is a function of our calculation of how our feelings of pain and pleasure will be impacted.

All of this might seem like the path to nihilism, but I think Epicurus probably saw it as the opposite: He presumably saw it as daring to cut away all illusions and getting right to the heart of the matter. Looking for justification "out there somewhere" is a dream - all justification must come to us in life, and ultimately through our feelings of pleasure and pain. Deprive us of all feeling, and we are dead, as per PD2. But rather than look at feeling as "all we have" and feel like we are deprived of something that we "ought" to have, such as gods might have, I think the point would be that since our feeling is ultimately our most important connection to reality, we have to guard it as rigorously and intensely as we can, because in very short order life is over and it is gone.

And in one of the phrases from DeWitt's commentary that I remember best, I think it's true that all these issues of morality and ethics and pain and pleasure have meaning ONLY to "the living."