

Confusion: "The feelings are only two"

Post by "Don" of May 27, 2025 at 8:20 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

(2) whether it is appropriate to consider the mind as generating pleasure and pain. I am in general agreement with Don's post, but I think how we choose to use our minds does generate pleasure or pain.

I'm rethinking that a little, in the sense of "what does generate mean?" Feelings, I suppose, do arise from our minds, so maybe "generate" in *some* sense is correct.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Also, while I think it is very reasonable and justifiable to divide all feelings between pleasure and pain, and to insist that there is no neutral state, I am not prepared to say that Epicurus' categorization plan is the only one that can be proposed and discussed. Cicero and Plato have a different definition of pleasure than does Epicurus, and they call absence of stimulation 'neutral.'

Anything can certainly be proposed and discussed. The question, to me, is "Does the idea correlate to reality or not?" Epicurus' categorization, to my current understanding, correlates to reality while Cicero, Plato, "St." Paul, etc. do not. I think some ideas in Buddhism are interesting, but overall it has too much other baggage. But that was why I considered myself a Buddhist for a number of years. It made the most sense to me and conformed to my understanding of reality *at the time* in contrast to all the other philosophies and religions I had studied up to that point. Then I discovered Epicurus.

Cicero and Plato redefine pleasure for their own purposes, but Epicurus' all-encompassing concept of pleasure and pain just makes sense to me. Could he have chosen a "better" word than pleasure? Maybe? But he was going for maximum impact. He was engaging in philosophical battle with the other schools, and fighting on the same field with them. He engaged with those ideas, took a hold of them, and used the terms of the day to explain reality better than the other schools.

[Quote from Rolf](#)

it is normal to feel aches, pains, and other discomforts when focusing on the body?

I would even leave off that last "when focusing..." It is normal - natural - to feel aches, pains, etc as it is to feel pleasure.

[Quote from Rolf](#)

If a body without pain and an untroubled mind is the essential foundation, I'm unsure if I'll ever reach such a state. This supposed "healthy functioning body, free from pain" sounds almost mythical to me. Do people really feel this way, beyond some scattered moments?

An untroubled mind (ataraxia) to me - and this may be just me - is about doing away with unnecessary fears, anxieties, that clog up our experience of the world as it is. Dispelling those fears and anxieties provides a base of operations from which to experience life. I'm thinking primarily of the fear of death, of divine retribution, of fate, and so on. I'm still working through some of these myself! It's not some numbness that comes over someone, it's a confidence in one's place in the universe and one's agency in it.

I'm still working on aponia, but it doesn't -again, to me - mean total absence of pain. It's being in a body that does its thing without effort, without struggle, and there are degrees of this - again, to my understanding. Like I said, I'm still working on this!

I agree with [Cassius](#) . Keep asking great questions! This really helps me question my own positions and to ask myself again some of these same things. Enjoying the conversation!!