

Glossary - What is the Epicurean Definition of "Pleasure?"

Post by "Mike Anyayahan" of January 18, 2020 at 8:06 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

OK not to pick nits again but i think the "produced by" can be taken too far. Ultimately I don't think I would agree that pleasure is produced by absence of pain any more than it would be correct to say that atoms are produced by absence of void, would it? Yes the only way to remove a feeling of pain is to replace it with pleasure, because of the nature of the beast - if we feel anything, it is either pleasure or pain in the Epicurean scheme. But to say "produced by" adds another dimension with implications that cannot be sustained.

When you derived pleasure from smelling a rose, what pain did you remove to achieve that pleasure? So I think it is important not to carry "produced by" too far.

The production of pleasure by the removal of pain is not my personal opinion. It is how I understand what Torquatus said in the second paragraph of part XL of the Book 1 of On Ends. He said "For, as when hunger and thirst are driven away by meat and drink, the very removal of the annoyance brings with it the attainment of pleasure, so in every case, the removal of pain PRODUCES the succession of pleasure. And therefore Epicurus would not admit that there was any intermediate state between pleasure and pain;"

As I understand it, painlessness does not necessarily mean pleasure because painlessness is the end process of the removal of pain that produces pleasure. Therefore, there is only either pain and pleasure (not either pain or the absence of pain)

My point is that the absence or removal of pain does not define pleasure so it would be strange if I say that pleasure is the removal of pain. It says here that there is pleasure after the removal of pain. The process of removing pain is not a state but a process that turns pain into pleasure nor a state of painlessness that defines pleasure.