

Can Emotions be Trusted?

Post by "Cassius" of October 7, 2020 at 12:31 PM

[Quote from Susan Hill](#)

About feelings being our best guide to truth.

Now wait, i did not say THAT did I? 😊

That would probably be going too far. As I read what Epicurus was saying, they are one of the three legs of the canon of truth (and I say with DeWitt that Epicurus was right, and there are only three, not four). So it is important that they function together and one not be elevated as primary over the others, always keeping in mind too that "truth" is something that has to be carefully defined.

[Quote from Susan Hill](#)

philosophy that Nature actively created the pleasure/pain faculty in us to guide us towards wise action (implying a kind of providence), or would Epicurus have actually seen it as modern evolutionary theory would: a byproduct of natural selection?

I go with DeWitt here and would say that it must be the latter -- that Nature did not "actively" or "intentionally" steer things in this direction for us. Nature as a whole has no consciousness or intent.

However, if you'd like to add a layer of "mystery" to this to compensate for the lack of "intent" by nature, I think that similar "mind-blowing" implications can be found in the doctrines of eternity/infinity. I do not think that Epicurus would say that there was ever a "first" intelligent life -- yes a first intelligent life on Earth, for example, but not in the universe as a whole. The implication is that intelligent life, like the universe itself, would have existed eternally in time. (And this is not even considering the category of "gods.") if so, I think it is entirely possible in fact likely that there are and have been and will be instances of intelligent life spreading through the universe from location to location, as we are about to do to the Moon, Mars, and hopefully beyond.

We always have to go on evidence rather than rank speculation, but I rule out nothing in that regard, and it's a pretty clear implication of the issues of isonomia and "nature never creates a single thing of a kind" which are noted in Lucretius and in the Epicurean part of Cicero's On The Nature of The Gods. But the main point is that I think we have to consider the implications of intelligent life being a category that has existed back infinitely in time, just like planets or star

systems or other combinations of matter that we know, by the fact that they exist here, are possible.