

Problems in Frances Wright's "A Few Days in Athens"

Post by "Cassius" of October 22, 2020 at 4:33 PM

[Quote from Elayne](#)

To me, virtue is any deliberate behavior that leads to more pleasure than pain, for the individual. The actual behavior may not always be pleasurable at the time, but the overall results are, or we would not label it virtue. It's because of the pleasure that we have come up with this whole conceptual category "virtue"-- but there isn't any freestanding thing such as virtue.

I agree with you, but I think this is where we have a huge road ahead to articulate this in a firm way. I don't think people really even hear us when we contend that "virtue" is relative to pleasure rather than absolute. Possibly the best text material we have is the discussion in "On Ends" where the virtues are discussed as desirable because they produce pleasure, but that probably doesn't make it clear enough that it isn't virtue at all unless it produces pleasure. That's the next step in the chain reasoning that's essential to take and needs a lot more articulation.

[Quote from Elayne](#)

This is the kind of talk that leads people to imagine Epicureans as vacuously grinning Moonies, handing out flowers to each other in the airport.

That's a great line, and exactly accurate I think! 😊

[Quote from Elayne](#)

In the last section, about the morality of the "involved" model of gods, her failure to clearly incorporate the nature of the "good" as subjective (not universal) pleasure has again led to a big muddle. That is probably worth a separate post.

Yes I would definitely like to see you expand that. Are you talking about the last chapter where he gives a speech denouncing religion? I really don't remember the details of that too well, and maybe the reason is because it is more a muddle than I remember. I remember it being a strong denunciation of religion, but I don't remember much more than that.