

Epicurean Worldview, Personal Identity, and Creating Community

Post by “smoothiekiwi” of January 19, 2022 at 10:08 AM

I'm a little late here, but gonna jump right into the party 😊

[Quote from Cassius](#)

But I am glad you wrote that because again it focuses the issue: Yes we can choose to be "tranquil" as we accept our existing situations (which rings of Stoicism even as I write it). Or we can choose to use the insights of Epicurean philosophy to focus with intensity on pleasure as the goal, the shortness of life as a spur, and the eternity of nothing after death as good reason to "make hay while the sun shines."

Yep, absolutely agree. I think that Epicurus would most certainly agree that tranquility is a major factor in the pursuit of pleasure- but if I want complete tranquility, I would simply kill myself. When I interact with people, there's a disturbance- different opinions and worldviews collide and influence one another. When I go out into the nature, there isn't any tranquility- nature is extremely dynamic and always changing. To sum it up: if you want to find tranquility, then you go into an isolation cell in a prison. But that won't be a life worth living. Thus, we need some sort of impulses or disturbances in order to have pleasure. Nowadays, I think that we have too many disturbances- but that doesn't mean that total tranquility is really better than our current state.

[Quote from SimonC](#)

For now I try not to teach my kids any nonsense. Perhaps one day Epicureanism will come back in a big way - maybe on the tail of some new neuroscience finding - but idealism is so very very deeply ingrained in our whole culture and institutions.

Well yes, but I as a kid always understood when my parents said to me "well, work now hard and be happy later". I think that as soon as your children develop the concept of "sometimes its necessary to sacrifice the now in order to be happy later on", then you can teach them to listen to themselves and to what their nature says them. Because thats in essence what Epicureanism is- to listen to your body and your mind, and detecting pleasure and pain 😊

By the way, regarding idealism. I've caught myself admiring students who e.g. work on school stuff during their lunch time. Although I've many opposite arguments why my way of spending time is far better- I talk with people and have pleasure, I don't need to study during my free time in order to get good grades, I simply study during another time than them, etc.-, I still

doubt if it'd better to pursue "fulfilling your potential" in an Aristotelian manner. Yet I also recognize that I'm far too young to judge it, because I simply can't see the implication of studying during your lunch time in the long run. What do you think on that?

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

The main difficulty would be to convey: "pleasure as the highest good".

Respectfully disagree! As soon as you truly convince someone that there isn't any Platonic ideal out there, the step to recognize pleasure as the only goal is extremely simple: that's the only thing we can rely on. The Platonic ideals are far more difficult, as far as I can judge.

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

As I recall, the Stoics use "Physics, Logic, Ethics" as their basic structure. And for me that's where Stoicism fell apart: the moderns try to sidestep the physics and its emphasis on logos, the logic was baffling, and therefore the ethics had no grounding. On the contrary, the strength of EP is that it holds together as a complete worldview and it seems most effective to present it in this way.

Well, but the theory that "the world only consists of atoms and void" is false (waves), that the "universe is infinite" (it only expands really fast, but it has a border), that the multitude of atoms is infinite (we've only a few types of quarks and bosons), etc..... so I wouldn't call EP coherent by today's standards. Sadly.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I am thinking also that if I were to convene a meeting this weekend at some convention, I would have one of those large standup posters made with the quote that is currently on the top of the home page as a verbal summary of how things all fit together and what to expect in the discussion over time.

Sounds great!