

Valueless Virtue in Modern Stoicism

Post by "Cassius" of January 14, 2019 at 5:19 PM

Thanks Condorcet and good to hear from you. I haven't changed my views much since then, and I continue to think of this in terms of an alternative to what I understand to be the false choice set up by most people.

I still think of this in terms of the attempt to make us choose between chaos and divine order. I think Epicurus points accurately to the universe being operational through the properties of the elements, which are in fact neither "chaotic" in the sense of truly random, nor ordered by a master-mind divine creator.

In the same way, as you say, people are human and their passions follow much the same river - the river has banks, and virtually everyone lives within those banks. But within the banks of the river there's a huge diversity of preferences, and different groups are going to form their own currents and desire to move in different directions within the banks, generally going in the same direction, but powerfully wanting to take different paths to get there.

So at one and the same time different currents can separate themselves and find their own passions with each other, while all the different currents still stay within the banks of the river. We don't need to choose between radical libertarian individualism and totalitarian authority that suppresses all individual feeling.

There's always going to be some friction, apparently, as currents scrape against each other and as individuals desire to move from one current to another, but the big picture seems to me that it's wrong to totally take sides and think that only the libertarian and authoritarian extremes are possible.

(It's been a long day here and I may have strayed off topic but I think I am addressing your comment.)