

Response to Pain; Positive Thinking ? Comparision with Cynics and (modern) Stoics

Post by "Cassius" of August 23, 2022 at 5:01 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

(I do not know how Cassius can go from not having read the article to having long, thoughtful passages in a couple hours! That's genuinely impressive!)

It's not a talent - you'll eventually do the same thing when you've read several of their articles. Their train of reasoning is remarkably similar from article to article. That's probably one of the main reasons you and I have a different reaction to the "tranquility" word. Not that I am an expert on Stoicism by any means, but you'll see the same argument over and over and over. The stoics try to defend their ancient views by dissassociating themselves from anything implying "apathy" or even "indifference" by calling Epicurus to their defense and arguing that the two schools are essentially the same. I predict with confidence that the more of their articles you read, the more you'll see the pattern.

[Quote from Matteng](#)

2. Modern Stoicism tries to become more natural and borrows parts of Epicurean ideas.

The Modern Stoics would probably be much better off if they would just drop the "Stoic" history and name and admit that they are an "ultra-passivist" or even a "Buddhist" form of Epicureanism. And that is why the interpretation of Epicurus' views is so controversial. That's exactly what they are trying to allege - that their stoic-lite / buddhist-lite is what Epicurus taught. And in defense of my position I would call to the witness stand the ancient stoics themselves, as they would be the first to denounce the muddying of the goal of life away from "virtue" (and they would also object to the essential "passivism" that the modern stoics are promoting). The ancient stoics may have been hypocrites in what they said they were pursuing, but at least they tried to pursue their goals with energy and vigor and even "hard work."

It almost makes me a little sympathetic to some of the modern stoics. They are trapped in the contradiction that they really don't believe in "virtue" as the ultimate good, yet they cannot come to admit that "pleasure" is the ultimate good. So they are left like wandering shades in the underworld that we've been discussing lately, unable to come to terms with what they really are, because they are aghast at the word "pleasure" and they want to be so much "better" than that.

That Nietzsche "fraud of words" passage I keep quoting is really spot on.