

Why Minimizing All Desire Is Incorrect (And What To Do Instead)

Post by “Don” of December 6, 2024 at 11:11 PM

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

But, I would read that as a caution that needs to be seen through the lens of (contextualized by) [PD10](#):

[Pacatus](#) isn't the only one to bring up [PD10](#) et al, but I'm just using his quote as a jumping off point.

I continue to advocate for seeing [PD10](#), 11, and 12 as one body and not discrete "[principal doctrines](#)" (Saint-Andre translation, emphasis, bracketed additions, and re-arrangement mine)...

- ONE: IF the things that produce the delights of those who are decadent washed away the mind's fears about astronomical phenomena and death and suffering, and
- IF furthermore [*the delights of those who are decadent*] taught us the limits of our pains and desires,
- THEN we would have no complaints against them, since they would be filled with every joy and would contain not a single pain or distress (and that's what is bad).
- [Additionally] IF our suspicions about astronomical phenomena and about death were nothing to us and troubled us not at all, and
- IF this were also the case regarding our *ignorance* about the limits of our pains (of either mind or body) and desires,
- THEN we would have no need for studying what is natural.
- It is impossible for someone who is completely ignorant about nature to wash away his fears about the most important matters if he retains some suspicions about the myths. So it is impossible to experience undiluted enjoyment without studying what is natural.

LOTS of "if... then"s in those statements. I know [Cassius](#) and I have had this discussion *ad nauseum*, but I'll give him this (if I understand his position):

IF the *pleasures* (*NOT desires!*) of the [ἄσωτος](#) (asotos: one having no hope of safety, one in a desperate case, one who is lost, a profligate/prodigal - same word used in reference to the [Prodigal Son in the Bible](#)) washed away fears, then there would be no cause to blame, censure, find fault: μεμψαίμεθα. Where we differ (I believe) is that, to me, that is merely hypothetical and not born out in reality. That's *why* we have cause to blame, censure, find fault with the prodigal *not limiting* the pleasures that they decide to experience. There are natural limits for a reason, one we discover by studying nature.

This follows right along with the next section, that IF we had no suspicions (derived from same word in the 2nd line of the Tetracharmakos about death!) about death and were not ignorant of the limits of pains and desires, THEN we wouldn't have to study nature.

BUT we DO have to study nature and, to me, it then follows that we DO, in fact, have reason to find fault with the pleasures of the prodigal.