

Martin Gives Us A Great Example of Epicurean "Avoidance of Pain"

Post by "Cassius" of June 17, 2019 at 8:10 AM

DB: The term "feeling" is perhaps a bit vague. The view seems most plausible if it means simple "sensation", though normal touch and proprioception would appear in some cases to be neither.

If "feeling" includes "emotion" then as well as pleasure and pain we also feel relief, fear, longing, boredom, ennui, bemusement, anger, discomfort, hunger, elation, grief, love, satisfaction, etc.

You could use "pleasure" for all the positive ones and "pain" for all the negative ones, but then "pleasure" surely does not name a single feeling. Consider also emotions of questionable valence, such as surprise.

Cassius Amicus: "If "feeling" includes "emotion" then as well as pleasure and pain we also feel relief, fear, longing, boredom, ennui, bemusement, anger, discomfort, hunger, elation, grief, love, satisfaction, etc."

That's just as saying that if feeling includes taste, then it includes the pleasures of fish and ice cream and wine and cake and pies and on and on an on as well.

I think what we are talking about in more general terms is the "faculty of feeling" -- especially since Epicurus was focused on this faculty given to us by nature as the only ultimate guide in life to what is desirable and undesirable - a faculty which stands fully self-sufficient without reference or subordination to divinities or to ideal forms.

I think the true frame of reference here is not a matter of placing "sex drugs and rock'n'roll" or "cakes and pies" against supernatural religion and idealism. The real frame of reference is that Epicurus' is asserting the placement of "the natural faculty of feeling" against supernatural religion and idealism.