

Gosling & Taylor, The Greeks on Pleasure.

Post by "Cassius" of June 23, 2020 at 10:42 AM

Comments on The DL Book X:

Aristippus; and for this reason he has made Socrates direct against Aristippus the discourse in which he denounces pleasure.¹ Not but what Theodorus in his work *On Sects* abuses him, and so does Plato in the

1 - Hmm I do not know that I have read that discourse in Xenophon.... Looks to be here: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?do...1%3Asection%3D1> Edit: Yes I have read it because it leads to this memorable text on "liberty": ["Liberty" - As discussed by Socrates and Aristippus](#)

2 - There is so much "Wit" being reported that there's very little time for the "hard philosophy" - but he does get there in the end.

3 - "They laid down that there are two states, pleasure and pain, the former a smooth, the latter a rough motion, and that pleasure does not differ from pleasure nor is one pleasure more pleasant than another." << It's pretty much my view that this is EXACTLY what Epicurus taught and explains some of the issues about condensing and other aspects of pleasure. Which would have a lot of implications about how we discuss "measuring" pleasure. But still yet I don't think that means there is no difference whatsoever in being pleased with building a rocket to fly to the moon vs eating an ice cream cone.

4 - "However, the bodily pleasure which is the end is, according to Panaetius in his work *On the Sects*, not the

settled pleasure following the removal of pains, or the sort of freedom from discomfort which Epicurus

accepts and maintains to be the end." << I do not and can not accept this as a complete and accurate statement of Epicurean doctrine, so this is an example of questioning how far we should go in accepting DL's view of anything.

5 - They also hold that there is a difference between "end" and "happiness." Our end is particular pleasure, whereas happiness is the sum total of all particular pleasures, in which are included both past and future pleasures." < That sounds to me 100% consistent with Epicurus and consistent with his care as to abstractions in the canon of truth.

6 "Particular pleasure is desirable for its own sake, whereas happiness is desirable not for its own sake but for the sake of particular pleasures." << Probably the same point as 5, profoundly important, and I think Epicurus agreed with it and this is why it is so dangerous to talk about "happiness" as the goal of life.

7 - "Pleasure is good even if it proceed from the most unseemly conduct, as Hippobotus says in his work

On the Sects." << Obviously true and consistent with Epicurus' position.

8 -"The removal of pain, however, which is put forward in Epicurus, seems to them not to be pleasure at all, any more than the absence of pleasure is pain. For both pleasure and pain they hold to consist in motion, whereas absence of pleasure like absence of pain is not motion, since painlessness is the condition of one who is, as it were, asleep." << I think this is another example of DL misinterpreting Epicurus and pulling a logical argument out of context. I think that in fact this is a correct statement of the general rule as understood by normal people, and that Epicurus in fact agreed with it. The issue is that Epicurus was willing to dive into the logical arguments of Plato et al and deal with them by means of other logical arguments, which logical arguments are by nature limited to their context and cannot be lifted from that context without misunderstanding them. In fact DL has already reported that the Cyreniacs held that "They laid down that there are two states, pleasure and pain, the former a smooth, the latter a rough motion..." Does that not compel the logical conclusion embraced by Epicurus, which is helpful in dealing with logical arguments against pleasure being the ultimate guide? In fact, since the Cyreniacs held that there are only two states of feeling, I bet Aristippus did the same thing if we had his full writings, and not just his quips. It may be that Aristippus had less patience with diving into the Platonic word games than had Epicurus, or just that it appears that way due to the texts that survive to us.

Wow there is lots more and I am out of time for now.