

An Epicurean Understanding of Pleasure

Post by "Cassius" of October 9, 2021 at 8:44 AM

Our target, here, I think - at the end of the day - will include that we have a cogent and potent response to criticism that Epicureans would limit our ambition in life to "grazing in the grass" -- otherwise known as the "animality objection" - from Cicero and Aristotle and of course others:

I. The Animality Objection

The target (Egoistic) Ethical Hedonism: One should act always for the sake of one's own pleasure.

The objection Humans and nonhumans animals should not have the same ultimate end (an ultimate end is that for the sake which one should do everything one does).

T1 Cicero, Fin. 2.109

Quare aliud aliquod, Torquate, hominis summum bonum reperiendum est, voluptatem bestiis concedamus.

Therefore, Torquatus, some other supreme good must be found for a human being. Let us leave pleasure to the nonhuman animals.

Mere Rhetoric? I. A tradition of anthropocentric and classist dismissal of hedonism

T2 Cicero, Fin. 2.111

Nec tamen ullo modo summum pecudis bonum et hominis idem mihi videri potest.

I cannot in any way think that humans and livestock have the same supreme good.

T3 Aristotle, EN 1.5 1095b19-20 (Cf. Heraclitus fr. 4 and 29, and Plato, Rep. 586a-b)
οἱ μὲν οὖν πολλοὶ παντελῶς ἀνθραποδώδεις φαίνονται βοσκημάτων βίον προαιρούμενοι...

Most entirely slavish people clearly choose the life of cattle...