

Why Tranquility Should Not Be the Main Goal for an Epicurean

Post by "Cassius" of November 29, 2021 at 10:13 PM

Yes that makes a lot of sense to express it that way. Alternative ways to consider the relationships would include:

- 1 Tranquility is a part of pleasure, but not pleasure itself.
- 2 Tranquility is a pleasure, but is not pleasure itself.
- 3 Tranquility is an aspect of pleasure, but not pleasure itself.

Of those I would endorse option 2.

Probably the trickier issue is the contention that some seem to make:

- 1 Tranquility is not only "a" pleasure, but among all pleasures it is the "best."
- 2 Tranquility is not only "a" pleasure, but it is the goal and purpose of all other pleasures.

I would reject both of those contentions and would say that (1) Epicurus did not say either one, and (2) that these contentions are not "true" in the sense of being generally established for everyone by nature. If someone in his or her individual circumstances decides to set "tranquility" as their ultimate goal in life I would not try too hard to argue them out of it, if they truly believe that to be warranted by their circumstances. But I would expect for most people in most circumstances "tranquility" would be an unnecessarily limited goal. In general if someone stated to me that their ultimate goal in life was "peace" or to escape pain I would start wondering what kind of doctor they might need. But in the end I think it's a choice each individual has to make at each moment of his or her life.