

Compassion in Epicurean Philosophy

Post by "Cassius" of February 9, 2022 at 3:21 AM

I think Don is coming from the perspective I assumed to be true, that pity and compassion mean pretty much exactly the same thing.

I need to read the etymology of pity

But after reading some of the Nietzsche material and hearing Scott and Kalosyni say that they consider them to be different as informed by their Buddhist reading, there seems to be more going on than I understood.

We're probably going to have a situation where our goal of articulating the proper view of compassion, or the role of compassion in Epicurus, requires some careful explanation.

Lest it sound like a word game, the reason for the discussion is making sure that suffering is understood as something to work to eliminate, not something to nurse along as a pet doe improper motives, such as excusing us from taking action to seek pleasure or eliminate the pain that can be eliminated.

I get the sense that in that direction is where the criticism of pity lies, and it is justified, but that there is an entirely different and proper role for compassion.

And on this score, as in several others we will definitely run into, we may need to be careful against reading too much into Frances Wright's interpretation.

Last comment would be that it seems to me that in modern usage pretty much everyone sees "compassion" as a virtue. However that does not seem to be the case with "pity" which seems to carry other and varying meaning.