

What Do You Take From The "Golden Mean" of Aristotle?

Post by "Kalosyni" of February 9, 2022 at 1:35 PM

The "golden mean" implies some kind of perfection, yet perfection is an artificial and abstract idea that doesn't exist in the real world "messiness" of humans. Humans are not mathematical equations.

[Quote from Nate](#)

Epicurus' pursuit of pleasure is distinguished from Aristotle's pursuit of excellence. Aristotle thought that an excellent person would necessarily enjoy happiness, whereas Epicurus recognized that an excellent person is only "happy" when enjoying the fruits of their excellence. Excellence, itself, is not the motivating goal. Pleasure is the goal.

There is something so liberating in Epicurus teaching, because being liberated from the "pursuit of excellence" opens one up to true freedom. But still one would wonder...do we still admire people in their pursuit of excellence?

What makes the world "messy" is that things are in flux, and exist in a state of continual change, though some things change so slowly we can't easily see the changes happening. And this messiness is also why we can't make absolute rules about things.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

And taken on that broad level, I don't think there is a way under the Epicuran view of nature that such a mechanism could function. As "golden mean" is frequently used, the result is a word game implying that it is generally possible to solve problems by looking for extremes, and (so to speak) adding them together and dividing by two. I don't think Epicurus would say that the world works that way in regard to pleasure or anything else either.

So we have to instead function in an intuitive way, using our senses to re-access a given situation, prodded by the feeling of wanting what is enjoyable, and combined with a "prudent-calculus" as to what will lead to long-term well-being.