

"Medicine" of Epicurus: Removing Fear and Finding Freedom

Post by "Cassius" of June 1, 2022 at 9:08 AM

I see this on that page:

Now, some Googling revealed to me that there are different views of what this story is intended to teach us. Live in the moment is a common interpretation. A contrary perspective is *don't be distracted by pleasure*.

I'm much more in favor of *live in the moment* than *don't be distracted by pleasure*.

If indulging in the strawberry in fact distracts us from finding our way out of the cliffhanging, then indeed it's a bad thing to do even more so from an Epicurean perspective than from any other.

Seems to me the key here - and this is why Don and most of us don't care for hypotheticals is that your choice of contextual facts says as much about you as it does anything else.

To presume that there's no way out of problems becomes an attitude as much as the opposite "can-do" attitude -- the well-known "Captain Kirk" alternative of changing the rules of the game rather than giving in to defeat without every last possible exertion.

So i can see why the quote includes the "don't be distracted" alternative.

Do we see life as suffering where we bounce from one life-threatening dilemma and we have to scrap every little bit of happiness we can before we are devoured by tigers?

Or are we in charge of our lives and moving as aggressively as possible to experience pleasure and avoid pain?

For those who haven't seen it before this portrays the alternative views better than anything else I've seen. While I would say Epicurus wouldn't embrace either alternative exactly as portrayed here, I see the Epicurean view as much closer to that of the Cavell / Raymond Massey (the tall guy who is excited about the moonshot and wants to explore the universe), with Buddhist views as much closer to Parsworthy (the shorter guy who says the moonshot is "monstrous" and calls humanity "so fragile, so weak - little animals" and asks for an "age of happiness" and "rest"):

"it is this, orthat, *all the universe*, or nothing. Which shall it be?"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRRXtymX50U>