

EPICURUS ON PLEASURE, A COMPLETE LIFE, AND DEATH: A DEFENCE - ALEX VOORHOEVE

Post by "Cassius" of August 1, 2022 at 4:40 PM

I apologize I have not had time to read most of the linked articles so I should probably keep my mouth shut but at risk of saying something stupid:

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

I'm having a hard time wrapping my mind around this phrase: "the Epicurean who tries to force out and run from all forms of pleasure already in their life in their quest for that "greatest" pleasure that is ataraxia." I think that is a rare person, and certainly not an Epicurean -- Forgive me, I may have totally misunderstood the meaning here.

As this leaves out another option of seeking and making effort daily to have as much pleasure as one can (yet with wisdom to avoid incurring much worse pains). -- this would be the fullness of pleasure model of pleasure -- which is different than the ataraxia is the goal.

My interpretation of what Reneliza is saying is that she thinks it is a big error to obsess on ataraxia and thereby miss out on many pleasures that are available. Sort of like "don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good" -- especially since in what we are discussing the alleged "perfect" / "tranquility" is very difficult to grasp.

When Kalosyni says she thinks that is a rare person, I would agree that it is rare in fact, but in "theory" it is the alleged direction that many commentators assert was what Epicurus taught. The difficulties we are discussing are why I don't think that's what Epicurus taught -- and I assert the "error" is with the commentators, though with many of them I don't think it's "error" but intentional misrepresentation.

I doubt I will try to comment on the issue of whether some part of this has analogies in Buddhism, but if I had to guess I would suspect that Buddhist influences are part of why this "tranquility" issue is so mesmerizing to the commentators.

I want a life full of pleasures of all kind, mental and physical, and to such a degree that all pain is crowded out of my experience. And in the process of reaching that and continuing it, I don't want to be disturbed. I don't really think that the issues of aponia and ataraxia are significantly more complicated than that.

Cicero, In defense of Publius Sestius, 10.23: "He {Publius Clodius} praised those most who are said to be above all others the teachers and eulogists of pleasure {the Epicureans}. ... He added that these same men were quite right in saying that the wise do everything for their own interests; that no sane man should engage in public affairs; that nothing was preferable to a life of tranquility crammed full of pleasures.....

Publius Clodius doesn't have a very elegant or high-sounding name, but I doubt his understanding of Epicurus was very far off the mark.