

Episode One Hundred Thirty Eight - Letter to Menoecus 5 - Pleasure Part One

Post by "Joshua" of September 6, 2022 at 4:28 PM

Quote

I think I can work up a good head of steam to argue that desire is at the root of what it means to be alive, which is why advocacy of suppression of all desire strikes me as so "evil."

Yes, but that's not my position either.

Quote

I think an argument can readily be made that these feelings of desire are not problems, but the healthy functioning we should wish to occur, and that we find these spurs to action pleasurable rather than painful.

But that's exactly what pain is--a healthfully functioning signal that something is wrong and needs to change.

Quote

When we lose all desire, we die. In a very real sense life IS at root the desire for pleasure. Robots and the dead cannot feel or desire. Is not in a very real sense life the ability to desire?

This is true also for pain.

Quote

Would the [Epicurean gods](#) feel pleasure in their blessedness if they did not desire that pleasure?

It's not clear to me how desire for a thing and the experience of a thing can reside together--the pleasure fulfills the desire. I'm no longer thirsty after I've drunk...

If the gods desire what they already have, this sounds more to me like they're jealous of what they have, which seems to imply a fear that they could lose it.

Quote

The question remains whether they are feelings, sensations, thoughts, or something else....

This is really what we need to figure out. I could be convinced (maybe) that desire is not necessarily a kind of pain, but I really reject including it among pleasures. The very existence of desire indicates a lack of satisfaction.