

Second Edition of Haris Dimitriadis' "Epicurus And the Pleasant Life" Now Released

Post by "Cassius" of December 15, 2022 at 12:57 PM

Another section of the updated preface worth highlighting:

Quote

A Comparison of Epicurean and Aristotelian Ethics

The root differences between the Epicurean views and those expressed by Aristotle concern the roles that reason and emotion play in decision-making and well-being. Epicurus, on the one hand, claims that the truth about happiness is revealed by nature because nature possesses the accumulated knowledge of existence.

Further, Epicurus asserts, human nature plainly shows that pleasure is the ultimate good in life, and the maximization of it is the purpose of one's life. Aristotle, on the other hand, declares that the truth about happiness is revealed by one's character and capacity for rational thinking.

Therefore, to be happy, one has to shape a virtuous character and excel in one's capacity for reasoning. The virtuous character reveals the purpose and actions that would make one happy, and reason finds the most effective ways to serve the purpose and accomplish the associated actions. Pleasure and happiness, says Aristotle, are simply the natural consequence of succeeding in those actions.

Epicurus rejected this theory on the grounds that virtues are mental concepts that derive meaning through the definitions, interpretations, and practices society attaches to them. Taking into account that the beliefs and habits of society are mostly corrupt, it is evident that people's desires and thoughts are likewise spoiled, with detrimental consequences to their well-being.