

How Would Epicurus Account For Depression? - A Wider Take

Post by "Cassius" of March 11, 2017 at 6:30 PM

[Cassius Amicus February 23 at 6:23pm](#)

I want to address the question in the attached graphic from a different perspective than most of the existing answers, so I am reposting it here. Before my answer, however, it first has to be said that depression for biological/chemical reasons is primarily a medical question. Putting the medical cases aside, what I want to emphasize in answer to the question "How would Epicurus account for depression?" is this:

An ancient Epicurean looking at today might well say, "Why the Hell SHOULDN'T so many people be depressed?"

- Everywhere you look people are raised from childhood to believe that they are puppets of gods who created them and determined their fate and play with them like cats toy with mice. Why WOULDN'T people who are taught that nonsense be depressed - they would be crazy NOT to be!

- Everywhere you look people are raised from childhood to believe that when they die they will be tormented in hell for disobeying the gods if they do not follow all sorts of ridiculous rules to get into an eternity of harp-playing and slavish devotions to angels with wings. Why WOULDN'T people who are taught that nonsense be depressed - they would be crazy NOT to be!

- Everywhere you look people are raised from childhood to believe that the the goal of life is to be "virtuous," and that seeking to live happily is an impossible and irrational goal because happy living has no rational limit and someone else might always be happier than they are. Why WOULDN'T people who are taught that nonsense be depressed - they would be crazy NOT to be!

- Everywhere you look people are raised from childhood to believe that avoiding pain is the most important thing in life and the best that anyone can hope for. They are even taught that Epicurus taught that the mere absence of pain without any other description of that existence is the goal of life. Why WOULDN'T people who are taught that nonsense be depressed - they would be crazy NOT to be!

- Everywhere you look people are raised from childhood to believe that virtue or "being good" is its own reward, and that we have to accept their rules and be "good" according to their standard regardless of how it works in our own lives. Why WOULDN'T people who are taught that nonsense be depressed - they would be crazy NOT to be!

- Everywhere you look people are raised from childhood to believe that "other people" are more important than they are, and that whatever other people want is good, and whatever they want themselves is bad, just because other people want it, and that the most important rule in life is to give in and get along with other people, no matter who they might be. Why WOULDN'T people who are taught that nonsense be depressed - they would be crazy NOT to be!

- Everywhere you look people are raised from childhood to believe that riches and power are bad in themselves, or that riches and power are good in themselves, but that no matter which of those two alternatives they accept the choice should never be judged by whether the choice has the practical effect of making them happy in their own circumstances. Why WOULDN'T people who are taught that nonsense be depressed - they would be crazy NOT to be!

- Everywhere you look people are raised from childhood to believe that pleasure - every pleasure - is intrinsically evil, and a bad thing in itself. Why WOULDN'T people who are taught that nonsense be depressed - they would be crazy NOT to be!

We could go on until we reached at least forty examples, but this should suffice. An ancient Epicurean taking all this in might well further say:

Thank "God" people today *ARE* depressed, because that shows that as hard as religion and the academic establishment have tried, those who are depressed have still retained at least enough sanity to see how much is so very wrong, and to see how sad it is that their children are corrupted so soon after birth and deprived of the life of happiness that Nature made available to them!

We can teach "coping skills" a/k/a "stoicism" or we can teach children from a young age the truth about life and the goal of living, and encourage them with Epicurean philosophy along the way.

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[Ilkka Vuoristo](#) Pleasure and Pain are innate senses that cannot be silenced by teaching people nonsense. Cognitive dissonance is a terrible thing.

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[Jimmy Daltrey](#) Who was it who said insanity is the logical outcome of living in an

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/166-how-would-epicurus-account-for-depression-a-wider-take/?postID=215#post215>

insane world? I don't think religion is that much of a factor, the religious appear to be blissfully ignorant, and I'm not sure what you mean by virtue, the overarching ethos I see is beauty, power and social status. The idea of being "good" is forgotten as soon as we stop talking to small children, success is what it is all about. The positive regard of others, which is a fruitless pursuit..

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[Jimmy Daltrey](#) I suppose it depends on where you live.

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[Elli Pensa](#) Jimmy Daltrey of course the main factor is the religion and the false philosophies. This is the General Picture !!

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[Elli Pensa](#) *Everywhere and at worst in the homeland of Epicurus, in which the whole constitution is based on the inconceivable of : "In the name of the Holy and Consubstantial and Indivisible Trinity".* [1f61b.png](#) Image not found or type unknown 😊

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