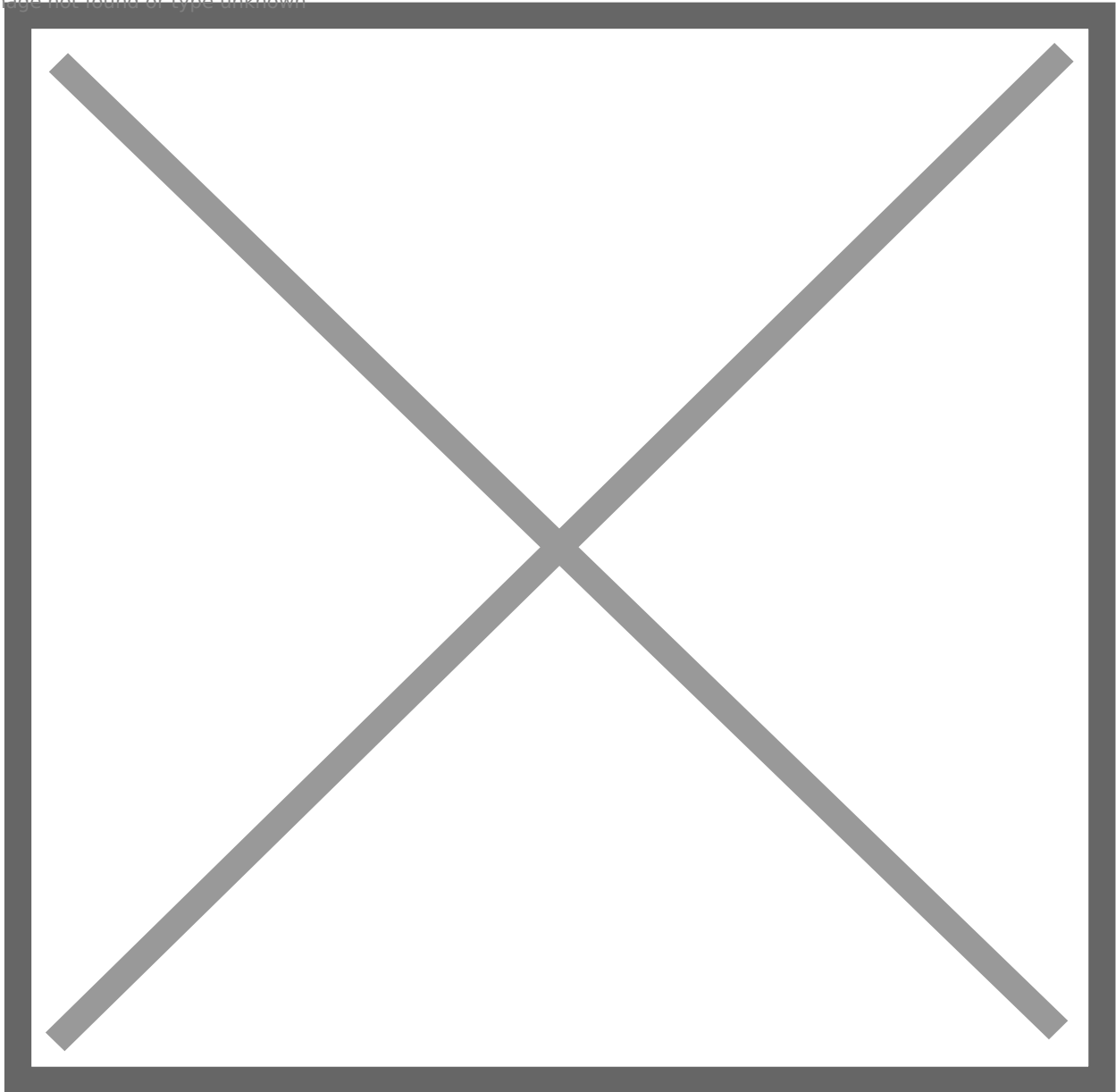


Major (In the Sense of Major Publication) Review of Emily Austin's "Living for Pleasure"

Post by "Cassius" of January 26, 2023 at 7:45 AM

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[Living for Pleasure by Emily A Austin - an Epicurean guide to happiness](#)

A timely guide to the Greek philosopher - and rival to the Stoics - who saw freedom from anxiety as the ultimate goal

www.theguardian.com

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2853-major-in-the-sense-of-major-publication-review-of-emily-austin-s-living-for-plea/?postID=22176#post22176>

I see it doesn't take the reviewer longer than four paragraphs to give the perennial "BUT" and make the common complaint about tranquility. But the fact that he gives three positive paragraphs first is good!

Quote

Epicurus's distinctive feature is his insistence that pleasure is the source of all happiness and is the only truly good thing. Hence the modern use of "epicurean" to mean gourmand. But Epicurus was no debauched hedonist. He thought the greatest pleasure was ataraxia: a state of tranquility in which we are free from anxiety. This raises the suspicion of false advertising - freedom from anxiety may be nice, but few would say it is positively pleasurable.

The conclusion is high praise for the book, even if the writer of the article sells Epicurus short:

Quote

The clarity and concision of Austin's prose means that she covers many more of the details of Epicurean thought in her 24 short chapters. Anyone seduced by the recent fashion for Stoicism should read her book to see why their biggest contemporary rival offers a better model for living. The Stoics tell us that the only thing that matters is virtue, we should be indifferent when loved ones die, and that the universe works providentially, so ultimately nothing in it is bad. Epicurus was realistic enough to accept that external circumstances can make life intolerable, grief is natural and real, and shit happens. He speaks to us all, but does not offer a universal prescription for the great life. Freedom from anxiety is good, all other things being equal, but many would say that a willingness to do without tranquility is what has enabled them to push themselves and live fuller lives. Austin ultimately shows that Epicurus is a pretty good guide on the journey of life, but you should let some other thinkers show you around too.

Seems to me that the Guardian has lots of readers so it is great to see this review! And generally I think the article is as positive as we have the right to expect given current attitudes.