

What is the future of friendship? (Some random thoughts prompted by ChatGPT)

Post by "Cassius" of February 20, 2023 at 9:55 AM

[Quote from waterholic](#)

But to get back to my first post: a stoic take on it would be that there should be no anxiety, since by remaining true to virtue, one has nothing to fear irrespective of the environment (loss of job, shelter etc. - so all is good in the community).

Yes I think this is an important point, and we keep circling around the same issue: If we are going to indulge in the game of attempting to articulate clearly intermediate and ultimate goals, and if we are going to reduce that goal to one word, then the word is "Pleasure" and the reason that is the one word is that that is the single faculty that Nature has given us to decide what to choose.

We are essentially taking the position that we are good with Nature's choice, and we are going to follow Nature's choice, and individual speculations about other choices be damned -- damn the torpedos, we are on Nature's side, and we're not going to stray off onto another course.

"Tranquility" or any other specific type of pleasure is an individual matter of choice. Nature hasn't written "Tranquility" or "Fame" or "Riches" or "sex" or anything else as a single absolute goal for every person at every time.

This is where I think we have to parse Epicurean texts and look for the big picture, because there are specific texts that when read separately point in separate directions, and at times focus on certain aspects like tranquility, and at some times focus on concepts like "happiness" and all sorts of tools that are or can be pleasures themselves (friendship, philosophy, to name just two.)

As I see it the answer to most of the confusion is to realize that individuals like atoms have changing contexts and at times some types of pleasures are more important than others. The only thing that connects the pleasure of tranquility with the pleasure of skydiving is that our faculty of pleasure identifies both of them as pleasurable in some circumstances. Sometimes it's appropriate to seek safety with a few friends in a cave, and sometimes it's appropriate to jump out of an airplane and hope anxiously that the parachute is going to open.

The only rational way I can see to explain all this is to always go back to (1) "Pleasure" --the faculty given us by nature and then (2) the Epicurean worldview (no supernatural, no life after death, no eternal except the properties of atoms, etc). That's the tribunal to face in every situation, and then from those each individual has to evaluate their situation and follow the

guide of nature, which cannot be more abstractly defined than to "pursue pleasure."