

Response to Daily Stoic Comparison of Epicurus vs the Stoics

Post by "Don" of April 21, 2023 at 10:12 PM

Just so I don't seem too critical of [Cassius](#) 's rebuttal to the Daily Stoic commentary:

[Quote from Cassius](#)

*** They believed in thermodynamic entropy (it's easier to destroy arrangements of atoms than for the arrangements to be made, thus the universe is ageing towards a state of complete disorganization). <<<< I don't believe this is correct from the texts. Yes decay takes place in parts of the universe, but in other parts the atoms are coming together, and this offsets the decay, so in total the different parts of the universe remain constantly cycling, not decaying overall.*

I fully agree with your response to that. Just because there is decay in one part of the universe don't necessitate decay in all parts of the universe.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

*** It's a certain medieval christian bias that led to the interpretation of Epicureanism as the pursuit of sensual pleasure. <<<< No, this is not true, because Epicurus DID advocate the pursuit of sensual pleasure. The inaccuracy is that he advocated the pursuit of ALL KINDS of pleasure, including mental / emotional, and not ONLY sensual.*

Fully agree again. This was Epicurus's big innovation, separating his philosophy from the Cyrenaics.

[Quote from Daily Stoic](#)

*** What is important is the Greek term Eudaimonia, which is often translated as happiness, but has little to do today with what we call happiness (the bubbly, pleasurable sensation that accompanies agreeable outcomes and events). Perhaps a better translation would be "Flourishing of life." <<<*

See above. Plus, I continue to advocate for a translation of "well-being" for eudaimonia. "Flourishing" doesn't strike me as conveying the right tone... it's hard to explain, but I'm sticking with "well-being."

[Quote from Cassius](#)

** Accordingly, the Epicureans advocated moderation in things, and a balanced, "agreeable" life that pursued the "higher pleasures" of fraternity, self improvement, and freedom from the fear of death, which they thought would result in the freedom of all fear. <<<< False in several respects. Again, "moderation" is Aristotle - there is no advocacy of "moderation" in Epicurus. In fact it is the opposite, pleasure is the goal, and it should be pursued with all the vigor possible, but that means prudently so that in fact the pleasure is maximized, not run amok and creating needless pain. Also, there are no "higher" pleasures ranked by Epicurus. Friendship is one of the greatest tools for achieving pleasure, but it is given no "ranking" as superior kind of pleasure - nor is any other type of pleasure-- pleasure is pleasure.

I would concur that moderation is Aristotle. [His doctrine of the mean did not impress me](#). On the other hand, I would contend that Epicurus advocates for a simple life, one in which one lives *within their means*, while at the same time taking pleasure in "extravagances" when they become available. And yes, there are not "higher" and "lower" pleasures; but I would contend that there *are* pleasures in which we can be more confident and less confident.