

The Axiology of Pain and Pleasure (are they intrinsic good/bad ?)

Post by “Little Rocker” of June 6, 2024 at 12:05 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

What was stated instead, is that if you *think* about life correctly (correctly meaning that there are no supernatural gods, platonic "good," or life after death), then you see that "life" allows you to participate in an unlimited number of mental and physical activities which are rewarding in all sorts of ways. With this attitude toward life it is much easier to experience all sorts of agreeable mental and physical activities.

I think this is entirely correct, and that's why I think the ascetic interpretation of Epicureanism goes almost as far astray as the 'sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll' interpretation. That's also why, at least if you ask me this morning, I think Epicurus would not be opposed to going to the moon if that's your particular desire. (Maybe that's in part because an hour ago I watched a black wolf chase a deer up a river in the wilderness and thought, for not the first time this week, 'I could get killed doing this' at the same time as I thought, 'this is one of the most amazing things I've ever seen.')

To me, once you believe that pleasure is good and that you shouldn't feel ashamed of enjoying your life, and once you free yourself from the idea that death is the worst thing that can happen, some risks for the most sublime and memorable pleasures of life actually become worth it.

I make this joke sometimes that sort of unnerves my friends, which is that if I die, I can at least say 'I've had a good run.' I tend to think Epicurus thinks we choose our pleasures for ourselves (within certain constraints, of course), and he's more interested in clearing our heads of the impediments to pursuing and enjoying the pleasures that give us that feeling of living life largely as we please. And the most significant impediments to doing that are shame, fear, ignorance, limitless desires, and superstition. But maybe I've now come too close to the sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll interpretation.