

Epicurean versus deceptive (“modern”) Stoic decision making

Post by “Cassius” of August 11, 2024 at 6:36 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

We've given a lot of effort to understanding what Epicurus meant by "pleasure;" the same effort needs to be applied to understanding what he meant by "desire."

Yes I agree and for the reasons I have stated. Buddhism and Stoicism have introduced poisonous presumptions in ordinary communication that "desires" are all of a single class, and that that class is to be eliminated as bad or even evil. That may or may not have been the case in 300 BC, but it is the case today, so when we talk about desires today there is a huge difference between ordinary issues of "wanting to accomplish a goal (any goal)" vs "passionate intoxicating ardent longing" which most everyone will agree is a thing to be avoided. (At the very least, most of us would agree that the "intoxicating" part is bad. I would be willing to defend "passionate ardent longing" depending on the context of what is being discussed. But at some point most of us will agree that there is a red line where desire that is intoxicating and gives no regard to other realities is dangerous and self-destructive.)

But to repeat the poison in the air is the idea that Epicurus would agree with the Buddhists and Stoics and other ascetics and agree that all desire is to be eliminated, and I would say that is an implication that should never go unchallenged.