

Thoughts On Alain de Botton

Post by "Hiram" of July 1, 2019 at 11:25 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

My experience is that Alain is one of many who immediately jump to "pleasure is the absence of pain" so they can write normal feelings of pleasure out of the playbook and then forget about it as they pursue a minimalist / ascetic lifestyle. That minimalist lifestyle, which he has selected for reasons of his own, appears to me to be the true goal of his work.

I do think EP calls for a curriculum of control of desires and that consumerism is a very important target that is problematized by Epicurean ethical doctrine. More specifically the "runaway desires" that are encouraged by instant gratification and consumerism, which breed a constant anxiety and insatiable sense of wanting more. A solution to this need not lead to asceticism or minimalism as lifestyles, but to a sense of satiated gratitude and pleasure.

Uruguayan ex-president José Mujica also cites this as one of the important aspects of the Epicurean Gospel that is important to elevate now that Christianity has failed the West.

Do you remember this from Diogenes' Wall?

Quote

Well, what are the disturbing emotions? [They are] fears —of the gods, of death, and of [pains]— and, besides [these], desires that [outrun] the limits fixed by nature. These are the roots of all evils, and, [unless] we cut them off, [a multitude] of evils will grow [upon] us.

It was clear to Diogenes that "desires that outrun the limits fixed by nature" was one of the major roots of all evil that needed to be cut off at its root.