

Stoic view of passions / patheia vs the Epicurean view

Post by “Martin” of November 4, 2025 at 4:55 AM

Quote

When I understood Philodemus right, I think the Epicurean view would only match with the Stoic view when the Emotion

- 1) has harmful consequences (pleasure then is not choiceworthy for example)
- 2) is irrational, based on empty believe
- 3) is based on unnecessary desire

There seems to be a mix-up of two different usages of "irrational":

The usage in the quote seems to indicate that "irrational" is something "bad", against reason, to be avoided.

The other usage is neutral and refers to sensations, emotions, feelings being fundamentally, by definition, irrational, in contrast to something we have obtained with reasoning.

In cases 1) and 3) from the quote, the hedonic calculus may justify pursuing the concerned desire:

- 1) We sometimes willfully risk pain/harm to obtain greater pleasure or less pain in the future.
- 3) Epicurus' philosophy does not make us reject all unnecessary desires. Instead, we pursue some of the unnecessary desires when they are natural.

It seems that the Stoic and Epicurean views match far less than what the quote indicates. The Stoic vocabulary in the Wikipedia article is misleading from an Epicurean perspective.