

Against the stoics

Post by "Todd" of October 3, 2019 at 11:03 PM

Cassius - I haven't seen the thread on "long term pleasure" you refer to, so I apologize if I'm duplicating things that were pointed out there. If you could provide a link, I'd be interested in reviewing what was discussed there.

The Letter to Menoecus immediately came to my mind:

Quote

We must then bear in mind that the future is neither ours, nor yet wholly not ours, so that we may not altogether expect it as sure to come, nor abandon hope of it, as if it will certainly not come.

One risk in emphasizing "long term" pleasure, is that unexpected things can happen between now and the "long term". Future pleasures need to have an appropriate discount applied in our hedonic calculations to reflect that fact.

Also, if we're constantly referring to "long term pleasure", it can start to sound like we don't approve of pleasures that are immediately available. Like we have to earn our pleasures by suffering first or some such nonsense.

But we're not Cyrenaics either, and I think that's what most Epicureans mean when they use that expression. It's just a way of indicating that some consideration for the future is being taken into account.

It's interesting that plain old "pleasure" has so much psychological baggage attached that even Epicureans (myself included) are tempted to qualify it so often.