

How Much Pleasure Is Needed For A Happy Life?

Post by "Cassius" of November 11, 2019 at 9:14 AM

One more thing I would add in addition to this is that it is useful, when thinking about quantity, to think about the analogy of a filling a vessel, as stated in the opening of Lucretius book 6 in the quote below. The point being made is that it is desirable to fill the vessel with pleasure, but in order to do so you must plug the holes that prevent it (the vessel / your mind / your life) from being filled to the top with pleasure. Primary among those holes in Epicurean doctrine are fear of the gods, fear of death, fear of pain, and confusion caused by the allegation that something besides pleasure has value in itself. An important corollary to all this is that once you have filled the vessel to the top, then adding more pleasure simply causes the vessel to overflow, which means it cannot be handled/experienced and therefore does not produce a situation that is any better than the vessel sitting calmly while filled to the brim with pleasures:

"For when he [Epicurus] saw how little would suffice for necessary use, and by what small provisions life might be preserved; that Nature had prepared every thing ready to support mankind; that men abounded with wealth, and were loaded with honor and applause, and happy in their private concerns, in the good character of their children, and yet their minds were restless at home, complaining and lamenting the misery of their condition; ***he perceived the vessel itself (the mind) was the cause of the calamity, and by the corruption of that, every thing, though ever so good, that was poured into it was tainted: it was full of holes, and run out, and so could never by any means by filled; and whatever it received within, it infected with a stinking smell.***"

<https://archive.org/stream/tlucret...e/n577/mode/2up>