

Tranquility v Pleasure

Post by "Cassius" of February 24, 2020 at 9:49 PM

[Quote from Mike Anyayahan](#)

And if not any of them were true, who exactly is Epicurus then since he is not a minimalist, not a moderate, and not even an extreme hedonist?

I think he was someone who first and foremost knew that he had only one life to live, and that in a world in which there is no divine or ideal standard with which to comply, the best he or anyone else can do is to make the most out of life by experiencing as much pleasure, while at the same time experiencing as little "unnecessary" pain, as possible.

The trick seems to be that some people want to say that pain is so bad that it must be eliminated at all costs, including at the cost of pleasure. What is "necessary" in the estimation of one person is "unnecessary" in the estimation of another.

I think Epicurus was realistic in recognizing that a certain amount of pain is required in order to achieve pleasure. That calculation/estimate/feeling however is going to differ from individual to individual, as is the amount of pain involved in any particular activity. Some people are going to choose to accept less pleasure in order to suffer less pain, but some are going to deem that more pain is worth it if greater pleasure can be obtained, and the activities in which they choose to pursue and accept pain are going to differ too.

I am thinking that the real problem here is that people are looking for a "rule" that tells them how much pleasure is worth how much pain, and which activities they should choose to pursue. However it is the nature of an atomistic universe that such a rule does not and cannot exist.

Also, of the three terms you chose, I definitely do not believe that moderation or minimalism describes Epicurus. The problem with the third term, "extreme hedonism," is that the term "hedonism" is so polluted as to be unacceptable, but it is the closest of the three you gave. Part of the problem here too is that Epicurus' view is so foreign to us that we aren't used to describing in common words what we are talking about when we say that "pleasure" is the goal, even at the cost of some pain. Pleasure is an extremely wide term, covering every physical and mental experience in life, but we have been browbeaten into equating it with sex drugs and rock'n'roll so long that we are ashamed of the word, and that is a crime that has to be fought back against.