

Welcome Camotero!

Post by “Mathitis Kipouros” of June 14, 2020 at 2:14 AM

Please, as you read this post, bear in mind I'm playing a bit of devil's advocate as a way to help my understanding of the philosophy.

[Quote from Martin](#)

We feel empathy with the less fortunate and the downtrodden. If we did not care at all for them, we would feel pain. Helping some of them where we can with reasonable effort increases our pleasure.

Moreover, caring for the less fortunate and the downtrodden may make it less likely that our security and thereby pleasure is threatened by violent revolutions or crimes committed under the pretext of justice for the less fortunate and the downtrodden.

Yes. The hard part is being able to connect your lack of action with its **potential** consequences that far in the future. Is there anything said about immediate vs. long term pleasure?

Also, when you see a man begging for change in the street, old and tired, the pain you feel in your stomach and heart (which I think is a feeling inherent to us, and most animals; inherent as language is an *materially* inherent *faculty* of humans - as I understand from the little I've read/heard of Chomsky) will not go away if you give him change. Perhaps if you give him enough to stop begging for the day, or the week, you may feel a bit better; but perhaps you may even feel bad because you're taking the whole responsibility by yourself, to the detriment of your finances (assuming you decided to be his sponsor for the week). This opens two other ramifications:

1.- The problem is societal.

It becomes apparent that if you decide to address your pain, the solution is not to take it upon yourself to solve it by yourself. It is something that would be better solved as an organized society. This opens the possibility with more probability for a negative balance (a lot of work not necessarily aligned with what makes you flow, perhaps not that satisfactory in terms of the effectiveness of said work, time away from pleasurable things/experiences, political exposure, etc.) than a positive balance if you decide to solve it by yourself; so solving it as a group is the most pleasurable way for everybody; thus, involvement in state matters is something that could bring you more pleasure in the long run than not. What's the approach of Epicurean philosophy to this problem?

2.- The most pleasurable solution is to ignore it.

The second time you ignore it you start to become numb to the situation. And then the problem persists, but you're less aware of it. And then, when somebody even brings it up, you're probably so jaded you not only ignore the person but perhaps even think of him as a fool.

I guess, one expectation of somebody new to Epicurean philosophy would be to find that it comprised an extrapolation of the immediate pain/pleasure morality to something that would make it easier to find a well stated argument in favor of investing yourself in the formation of a society conducive to increasing the pleasure of everybody in the long term.

[Quote from Martin](#)

The swerve is not evidence for the existence of free will but a precondition for the existence of free will in the sense of agency. In a materialistic universe, some kind of swerve is necessary to avoid determinism. Pursuing pleasure as the goal makes only sense if we have agency to deviate from a deterministic path.

Could you please elaborate on how the swerve is a precondition for the existence of free will? Sorry again if this is basic stuff, feel free to redirect me to a source if it is, or please just say so.

Thanks Martin.