

Continuous Pleasure / Sustained Pleasure

Post by "Charles" of September 7, 2020 at 6:11 PM

USENER 146

(Same page from 116)

Plutarch, *Against Colotes*, 17, p. 1117A: But what epithet do they deserve - with your "roars" of ecstasy and "cries of thanksgiving" and tumultuous "bursts of applause" and "reverential demonstrations," and the whole apparatus of adoration that you people resort to in supplicating and hymning the man who summons you to sustained and frequent pleasures?

USENER 431

Plutarch, *That Epicurus actually makes a pleasant life impossible*, 5, p. 1089D: Now first observe their conduct here, how they keep decanting this "pleasure" or "painlessness" or "stable condition" of theirs back and forth, from body to mind and then once more from mind to body, compelled, since pleasure is not retained in the mind but leaks and slips away, to attach it to its source, shoring up "the pleasure of the body with the delight of the soul," as Epicurus puts it, but in the end passing once more by anticipation from the delight to the pleasure

USENER 439

Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, V.34.95: The whole teaching of [Epicurus] about pleasure is that pleasure is, he thinks, always to be wished and sought for in and for itself because it is pleasure, and that on the same principle pain is always to be avoided for the simple reason that it is pain, and so the wise man will employ a system of counter-balancing which enables him both to avoid pleasure, should it be likely to ensure greater pain, and submit to pain where it ensures greater pleasure; and all pleasurable things, although judged of by the bodily senses, are notwithstanding transmitted on again to the soul; and for this reason while the body feels delight for the time that it has the sensation of present pleasure, it is the soul which has both the realization of present pleasure conjointly with the body and anticipates coming pleasure, and does not suffer past pleasure to slip away: thus the wise man will always have a perpetual continuation of pleasures, as the expectation of pleasures hoped for is combined with the recollection of pleasures already realized.

USENER 446

Cf. Zeno the Epicurean (Zeno of Sidon), by way of Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, III.17.38: "Blessed is he who has the enjoyment of present pleasure and the assurance that he would have enjoyment either throughout life or for a great part of life without the intervention

of pain, or should pain come, that it would be short-lived if extreme, but if prolonged it would still allow more that was pleasant than evil."

Something I've always maintained when discussing continuous and anticipated pleasure, is that an example of its practice it can be seen from Epicurus himself in his letter to Idomeneus, on his last day on Earth.

"On this blissful day, which is also the last of my life, I write this to you. My continual sufferings from strangury and dysentery are so great that nothing could increase them; but I set above them all the gladness of mind at the memory of our past conversations. But I would have you, as becomes your lifelong attitude to me and to philosophy, watch over the children of Metrodorus."

Which I sometimes contrast with Usener 21 from Plutarch (That Epicurus makes... 1094E)

*"Now it has not escaped Epicurus that bodily pleasures, like the Etesian winds, after reaching their full force, slacken and fail; thus he raises the **Problem** whether the Sage when old and impotent still delights in touching and fingering the fair. In this he is not of the same mind as Sophocles, who was as glad to have got beyond reach of this pleasure as of a savage and furious master."*

While in most circumstances, pleasure arises from a movement, motion, or will to satiate a given desire. It can later be recollected with fondness in a very static manner. But we know that not all pleasures stem from desire itself, as we can think of the replenishment theory, where the passing scent of bouquet of roses is pleasant to the sense which did not require any prior desire. Further, in that freedom from any stress or pain, something generally (and all too often) regarded as a pleasure reserved for the mind or soul which is elevated from the body.

However, it would not be like an Epicurean to abandon the pleasures of the body or those involving motion to achieve, in favor of the calm and sober pleasures of the mind. As Cicero puts it well in his Tusculan Disputations (U439), we do well to employ a balance between our choices and selections of pleasure, to that end we select our pleasures to the fullest extent while avoiding pain or minimizing how often we endure it by means of the canon. It's only natural that we expect ourselves to both fully enjoy pleasure in the present, and ensure that our pleasures persist into the future, so that when it comes we may continue to enjoy the present as we always have.