

Berlin Stoics

Stoicism and Epicureanism

Minutes

Date: Saturday, 12. December, 2020

Start Time: 16:00

Place: Online

End Time: 18:00+

Next meetup: Saturday, 02. January, 2021

Attendees: Elena, Eva, Philipp, Shacham, Steve

Forenote: most notes I tried to keep track according to the first person who brought up the idea, but this was not always possible

Notes

Epicureanism	Stoicism
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School was called “The Garden”; the garden was also a place of escape for Epicurus and his followers from the pain of living in society, to live ascetically• tranquility and asceticism• goal is minimizing pain (avoiding pain moreso than purely seeking pleasure); but this was more about avoiding pain in the mind than the body• ataraxia is the goal, and virtue is only an instrument to achieve ataraxia; are they ethically nihilistic?• They preferred to recede to a communalistic garden from any and all participation in society or politics• Epicureanism is highly deterministic, physicalist, and atomistic (originating from their alignment with Democritus) in their metaphysical understanding• introduced the idea of the “swerve”, random motion by atoms to explain free will (originated by Epicurus, explained further by Lucretius and later Epicureans)• they only trusted their senses, empiricism gave them knowledge• thus they were quite behaviorist, that people naturally seek out only those things which bring them pleasure, and they more primally naturally avoid anything which induces pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the means and ends of Epicureans are inverted: ataraxia is only a byproduct of achieving virtue, which is the goal of living• there is a cause and effect of everything, hence there is an inherent idea of providence or destiny; this web of cause and effect is called logos, the order of logic of things• Christianity backed it and took many principles and virtue ethics from the stoic philosophy• not as empiricist as Epicureans, more rationalist in coming to knowledge and truth; question: is stoicism anti-science?• cognitive, rational, constructivist, allows room in the cosmic order for free will, but still places a determinism (fate)• virtues have a basis in reality, they are not merely instruments, and they are ends in themselves

Below are the references to works, including books, podcasts, or other sources, participants made throughout the discussion:

Philipp

- *The Inner Citadel* by Pierre Hadot (dissertation on *The Meditations*) - https://books.google.de/books/about/The_Inner_Citadel.html?id=3dLVyyDE-vQC&redir_esc=y
- Philosophy This! (podcast), which also maintains an accompanying website here – <https://www.philosophizethis.org/>

Steve

- *The Ego and Its Own* by Max Stirner (19th century response to Hegel's spawning of German idealism as well as the reactionary philosophy based in materialism) – https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/416318.The_Ego_and_Its_Own and can be accessed for free here – <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/max-stirner-the-ego-and-his-own>

Shacham

- *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* by Stephen Greenblatt – <https://www.amazon.com/Swerve-How-World-Became-Modern/dp/0393343405>