

Thesis
Statement

Applied Philosophy Paper

Epicurus was a philosopher of Ancient Greece who is credited with establishing the school of thought known as Epicureanism. He thought that philosophy exists to make human beings happy by freeing them from their fears and allowing them to enjoy their life. According to his philosophy, nature itself has provided humans with the things that they need to remain happy and fulfilled. The things that are not provided to humans by Nature are the ones that human beings do not need at all. As such, he believes that if human beings can understand this concept then they will realize that the things provided to them by Nature are the ones that they need to nourish their body and their soul. These things provide them relief from the disturbances of the soul and thus makes them happy. As such, it can be said that Epicurus is correct about the role of nature in the life of human beings.

Establishing
the
connection

First of all, it is important to consider that nature does provide humans with everything that they need. In this case, one must distinguish between the words “want” and “need”. When a person says that they need something in their life, their statement is only true if they cannot live without these things. For example, human beings need food, water, clothing, and shelter to survive and thus these items are the need of a human. However, when a person says that they need a car, it must be noted that it is possible to survive without a car and thus this person does not need a car. Rather, they want a car because owning a car will make their life easier and improve their quality of life. Thus, Arandia mentions that “We are talking about eliminating all

Appropriate referencing
and evidence to back up
the claims

desires which do not involve satisfying the most basic needs of the human organism (hydration, nourishment, sleep, protection from the elements, etc.)” (Arandia). Analyzing Epicurus’s argument from this perspective, it can be seen that Nature provides a person with food and water for survival. As far as shelter is concerned, natural shelters such as caves, low-hanging limbs of trees, and small depressions on earth exist to provide shelter.

Secondly, the argument that anything not provided by nature is not needed must also be analyzed here. In the chapter Epicurus, Arandia has talked about the most basic needs of human beings as being food, water, shelter, and sleep. Thus, these factors are essential for a human being to survive. Yet, she has also mentioned that “Unhappiness comes either through fear or through vain and unbridled desire: but if a man curbs these, he can win for himself the blessedness of understanding” (Arandia). This means that the human desire for things that are not provided to humans by nature is what makes them unhappy. Thus, Epicurus argues that nature itself is designed in a way that allows human beings to live a fulfilling life but since human being run after the things that they want rather than the things that they need, they go against the will of nature which brings unhappiness into their life. For instance, the things not provided to human beings by nature including technological devices, vast skyscrapers, or weapons have only managed to make mankind unhappy and spread misery on earth. Thus, this misery makes it clear that the only thing that can make mankind happy is focusing on the things that nature has provided for us.

Lastly, it must be noted that it is nature that provides a person relief from disturbances while vain desires make them conflicted. Arandia says that vain desires such as “the possession of the greatest wealth or by honor and respect in the eyes of the mob” (Arandia) cannot provide human beings with the relief that they seek because it is these desires that have disturbed them in

the first place. Similarly, in his video *Epicurus on Happiness - Philosophy: A Guide to Happiness*, Botton mentions that “it is easy to imagine that money can solve everything” (Botton) but raises the question of whether or not this assumption is true. Botton says that a person’s wants and needs are often in conflict with one another and that what humans want is not always what they need. It is due to this very conflict that the soul of a person becomes disturbed as the soul recognizes the needs of humans but human beings themselves are not very good at recognizing those needs. Thus, when a person leads a simple but purposeful life, they remain far happier than they would be when they run after materialistic pursuits. Thus, Nature is what makes a person happy while man-made objects disturb the soul.

In conclusion, it can be stated that Epicurus was right about his philosophy of Nature and how it provides human beings with the ability to be happy. In this context, Epicurus mentions that Nature itself is designed in such a manner that it fulfills all the needs of human beings and thus provides humans with everything that they need to live a happy life. Secondly, it must be noted that when humans run after the things that are not provided to them by Nature, such as their vain desires for money and success, they only end up miserable which proves that anything not provided to humans by Nature is not necessary for them. Lastly, only Nature can help provide relief from the disturbances their soul experiences which is why Epicurus is right in pointing out that Nature makes a person happy.

Works Cited

Arandia, Mark. "Epicurus." *Philosophy and the Good Life*, Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, 2013.

Botton, Alain de. *Epicurus on Happiness - Philosophy: A Guide to Happiness*. 2012. *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iromIAQzQY>.

