

Multiple Components Comprise the Epicurean Life

Post by "Cassius" of October 22, 2021 at 8:54 AM

I think we are seeing another exhibition of the slightly different approaches that Don and I are taking.

I agree with what Don has written, BUT:

We first have to have an understanding of the precise wording of what we are quoting from Kaolosyni, and in my view why she is struggling with it.

"Multiple components comprise the Epicurean life. There is more to laud in the "sweetest life" than just pleasure."

As I read the sentence, she is implicitly questioning the decision to define the goal of life (or the things in life to laud) as "pleasure."

We can take Don's answer that her question is easily resolvable by pointing out the myriad numerous experiences which compose the sweetest life, that's definitely fine to do, because it explains that pleasure is composed of many different individual experiences.

But I think what Kaolosyni, and a lot of people, struggle with is that they don't like Epicurus' definition of "pleasure" as including every desirable experience in life. And I do think that is what he is doing - he has by definition postulated that everything that affects us do so either as pleasure or pain. I can't stress that enough - he's doing that BY DEFINITION. He knows just as well as you and I do that there are multiple different kinds of pleasures, but for purposes of philosophical debate - for understanding the issue - he is defining every desirable experience in life as pleasure - because we feel it to be desirable.

Until we come to an agreement on that point with people everyone who fails to accept that this is what he is doing, those people who fail to accept that are going to squirm and struggle and kick back and they are going to insist that "there is more to life than just pleasure."

And the key to understanding why he defining the word pleasure in this way is not that he is perverse or unrealistic or that he is "academic" himself. He's defining the word in this way specifically for the purpose of pointing out the flaws in the dialectical argument that his opponents are using against the idea that pleasure is the ultimate guide.