

# "Setting Before the Eyes"

Post by "Godfrey" of January 31, 2022 at 7:44 PM

Kalloysyni, here are some notes from the beginning of the book, all based on one short passage that I had highlighted when I read the book some time ago:

Quote

*Page 15*

Philodemus follows Epicurus' general theory of pleasure. However by the 1st century BCE the nature of pleasure was debated both inside and outside of the school and Philodemus responded accordingly. One subject of controversy regards the definition of the moral end both as pleasure and as the absence of pain.

- It's counterintuitive that the highest pleasure is absence of pain.
- Pleasure having several distinct aspects may conflict with the presumed unity of the supreme good.
- Some first generation Epicureans held that *aponia* is not a part of the moral end.
- (from footnote: Demetrius Laco, a teacher of Philodemus, insists that Epicurus considers the *telos*, pleasure, as the removal of pain)
- Zeno and Philodemus, his student, interpret both absence of physical pain (*aponia*) and absence of mental suffering (*ataraxia*) as being in the Canon and as parts of the highest good.

*(My thoughts:*

- *virtue has several aspects as well [the cardinal virtues] so similarly could not be the telos under the unity argument [re the telos argument among schools]*
- *how do you recognize that you are acting virtuously? Through reason or by experiencing pleasure? [re the telos argument among schools]*
- *absence of pain = pleasure by definition. Could another way to look at it be that absence of pain produces pleasure?)*

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This probably belongs in another thread and I hesitate to even post this, but in any case it doesn't do her argument justice. She continues to develop this for a couple of pages. My apologies: I'm realizing that trying to put my highlights in a useful form is a project that

wouldn't do the book justice and in any case is beyond what I can tackle at the moment. But the book is definitely worth reading. Just looking through it makes me wish that I had the time to re-read it! As [Don](#) said, "so many books, so little time!"