

Prolepsis / Anticipations As Epicurus' Answer to the MENO Problem

Post by "Don" of November 1, 2024 at 8:06 AM

I'm going to start my response/rebuttal/reaction by saying that we do not sense things through the impact of *eidola* on our sense organs. Our bodies - all bodies - are not casting off "films of atoms" that travel through space. Yes, our eyes interact with photons. Our noses interact with molecules in the air. Our tongues interact with chemicals. And so on. Is it interesting to understand how Epicurus was reacting to his contemporaries' philosophical ideas? Sure. No argument there. However, Epicurus called his students to study nature and "how things work" in the material world. On that track, I think it behooves Epicureans living in the 21st century to understand how sensations and the brain work to their best of our ability in the here and now as well.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Also, I think we can consider that concepts like "good," or "the good" or "the highest good" or "pleasure" (when viewed as a concept) or "the highest pleasure," or "gods" are, like virtue, good examples of the issue.

Determining what these things at the start of our quest is not an easy thing.

Those are different concepts from my understanding:

"good" is used by Epicurus to simply mean "that which brings pleasure." There is no other meter by which to determine "good" or "bad" other than the feelings of pleasure and pain.

"the good" or "the highest good" is simply "that to which all other actions/things point." Why do we do anything? We do it for our pleasure. Whether one agrees with this statement or not is irrelevant, because I have come to believe that it is simply a statement of fact. At the end of all questions of "Why?" the final answer is going to be "because it makes me feel pleasure." Substitute "satisfaction, well-being, etc." as the penultimate answer before saying "pleasure" but I believe that's the final answer you're going to have to give if one truthfully and honestly answers the question.

The "zarkoflex" example in the first video does nothing to alleviate my contention that this is all sophistry. If I tell you to go out into the world and find a lehmä, you won't know what that is. Where do I look? As the speaker said, maybe you google it. Maybe it doesn't come up. You keep looking. Eventually, you find out it's the Finnish word for "cow." So you go to the farmer's field and point to the lehmä. You had heard about cows and seen cows and pictures of cows, you just didn't know the word lehmä. Same with a zarkoflex. If it exists in the world, it can still exist

without your knowing the word for it.

This seems to be one reason Epicurus was teaching that we need to look at the most basic definition of things and why he didn't like Socrates'/Plato's obfuscation and redefining terms willy-nilly.

More later....