

Wilson (Catherine) - "The Pleasure Principle"

Post by "Cassius" of June 8, 2019 at 11:18 AM

I now have my copy of the book but have only begun to go through it. My eye was caught, however, but this Stoic v Epicurean comparison chart near the end of the book. In particular, the description of the Epicurean "purpose of ethics" as "freedom from harm" and "happiness" as "freedom from anxiety and fear" strike me as grave distortions of Epicurus (but in accord with the modern majority view).

Much of the rest of the chart looks generally Ok to me, but the entire chart seems a little "loose" in meaning. For example, is the main concept "Orientation" clear enough to mean something?

Main Concepts	Stoics	Epicureans
Ontology	Pneuma	Atoms and void
Causality	Determinism, fate	Chance, free will
Purpose of ethics	Virtue	Freedom from harm
Source of moral authority	Natural law	Human agreement
Orientation	Universalist	Relativist
Emotions	Generally bad	Generally good
Family Life	Important	Inessential
Suicide	Recommended in difficult circumstances	Not recommended
Suffering	Inevitable	Minimisable
Pleasure	Generally bad	Generally good
Happiness	Freedom from all emotional disturbance	Freedom from anxiety and fear
Education	Develops human curiosity and capability	Undermines superstition
Warfare	Opportunity to display virtue	Motivated by greed and ambition