

The Full Cup / Fullness of Pleasure Model

Post by "Cassius" of July 31, 2019 at 10:22 AM

Here is an argument from David Sedley's "Epicurus On Dialectic" that is relevant to this dispute. It seems to me that this is related to the issue of whether the good has a limit, or whether it is among those things which have a "more or less" quality. Here, Epicurus is using the argument that just because honey can be "more or less" sweet, that doesn't mean that we should say honey is not sweet. The argument could be applied to pleasure -- just because a particular pleasure can be more or less pleasing, that does not mean that we should say that pleasure is

Another method of refutation deserves a brief mention here. Alexinus, appropriately nicknamed 'Elenxinus' ('refuter'), and a contemporary of Epicurus, was at least loosely associated with the Megaric school, although his formal allegiance, if any, is unknown.²⁴ He came to be especially associated with the method of refutation known as *parabolé*, which purports to show that, if the target argument is accepted as sound, other arguments with patently false conclusions will also have to be considered sound. Alexinus is well known for deploying such *parabolai* against the theological arguments of the contemporary Stoic Zeno of Citium,²⁵ but another user of them was, remarkably, none other than Epicurus, in a critique of Plato's *Phaedo*. In that dialogue (93a14–e6) Socrates argues against the theory that soul is an attunement on the grounds that there are degrees of attunement but no degrees of soul. Epicurus' parodic equivalent was to argue that in that case honey is not (or not essentially?) sweet, on the grounds that there are degrees of sweetness but not of honey (Philoponus, in *Arist. de an.* 143.3–6).
