

What Is An Example of a Natural But Not Necessary Desire?

Post by “Don” of March 14, 2021 at 12:37 PM

I think [Elayne](#) is onto something here.

It's important to note that Epicurus didn't say desires could be categorized into "natural" and "unnatural" although that's an easy dichotomy to make in English. He called the desires in the Letter to Menoikeus:

μέν εἰσι φυσικά, αἱ δὲ κενά

"On the one hand, (some are the) φυσικά; on the other hand, (others are) the κενά"

φυσικά (physikai - compare English physical, physics, etc) = natural, produced or caused by nature, inborn, native; physical, having to do with the study of the material world (Antonyms: διδακτός (didaktós), νομικός (nomikós))

κενά is our old familiar kenos = empty; vain, fruitless; exhausted, void, destitute (Antonyms: μεστός (mestós), πλήρης (plērēs))

I find it interesting that Epicurus didn't use a common set of antonyms: natural/unnatural; but emphasized the source of desires. Some derive from natural sources, some arise from fruitless sources that can never be quenched.