

The Sweeping Nature Of The Word "Pleasure"

Post by "Don" of July 29, 2022 at 9:29 AM

Good questions, [Kalosyni](#) .

Broken record that I am, when anyone says something like "Not only do we need to understand the word pleasure, but also "virtues" and "happiness"" I immediately think "Back to the source material!" I agree with [Kalosyni](#) , so what words does Diogenes of Oenoanda (DO, for short) use that are translated as pleasure, virtue, and happiness. And how were the words DO used understood by him in the period he was writing. That's the rub from my perspective.

I'm using this resource:

[DCLP/Trismegistos 865216 = LDAB 865216 \(papyri.info\)](#)

Pleasure is the familiar hedone ἡδονῆς (which the Latin writers translated to voluptas)

Virtue is arete ἀρετή

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, ἀρετή \(tufts.edu\)](#)

Arete is a slippery word that's accumulated a LOT of baggage over the centuries. The more literal meaning is "excellence" as in displaying excellence in character or deed. It came to take on the idea of "virtue" due to this original meaning.

As for happiness...

the word DO uses is eudaimonia ευδαιμονία, and even more slippery word than arete!

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, ε , εὐγλάγ-ετος , εὐδαιμον-ία \(tufts.edu\)](#)

As anyone who's been around these parts for any time knows, eudaimonia has sparked any number of discussions on this board, with both pro and con advocates. I personally like the word, and my preferred translation is "well-being". To me, that's almost a pun on the literal eu "good/well" + daimonia "daemon, 'in-dwelling spirit'" (you could have a "good" spirit (eudaimon) or a "bad" spirit (kakodaimon)) Socrates talks about taking advice from his daemon. But enough about him.

So, I think [Kalosyni](#) 's "satisfaction" isn't too bad as a translation. Other translations include "well-being, prosperity, good fortune, true full happiness." Mr. Roger's theme song literally just popped into my head, especially the first few lines that, to me, describe eudaimonia. Never thought of Fred Rogers as an Epicurean 😊 hmmm:

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2610-the-sweeping-nature-of-the-word-pleasure/?postID=19105#post19105>

*It's such a good feeling,
To know you're alive,
It's such a happy feeling,
You're growing inside,
And when you wake up, ready to say,
"I think I'll make a snappy new day."
It's such a good feeling,
A very good feeling,
The feeling you know,
That I'll be back,
When the day is new,
And I'll have more ideas for you,
And you'll have things you'd want to talk about,
I will too.
You always make each day such a special day,
You know how, by just you being you,
There's only one person in the whole world
Exactly like you, and that's you yourself,
And people can like you exactly how you are,
It's such a good feeling,
A very good feeling,
The feeling you know,
That we're friends.*