

PD19 And The Meaning Of No "Greater" Pleasure

Post by "Cassius" of August 13, 2022 at 10:51 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Yes, i don't want to imply that there's not value in reading Dewitt 's magnum opus. Dewitt does provide some insightful, helpful, and refreshing insights. It's just his use of references devoid of context, Epicurean-inspired Christianity notions, and similar dross that irks me. Someone needs to do a "Jefferson Bible" job on "Epicurus and his Philosophy."

Don has done a good job of placing his criticisms of DeWitt in context so the only thing I really want to say is to remind everyone that Don has been here a long time; he reads Greek very well; he's read tons of specialized academic articles, and he's far ahead of the curve in understanding the subtleties. He's an expert reader and researcher and he's far from being a novice.

On the other hand, if you are a "normal person" and come to the subject with only a general understanding of philosophy and where Epicurus stands in it, DeWitt's book is the single most valuable place you can start to get a quick and thorough overview of the subject. We can talk about other good books, and there are many, but I would contend that there are none anywhere in DeWitt's league for a through and sympathetic presentation of the whole of the philosophy.

I've seen it time and again and it will continue to happen. If you don't ground yourself in a thorough overview of DeWitt early in your reading, you'll spend a LOT of needless time nursing your former Buddhist or Stoic or Humanist or other positions that you will ultimately conclude (if you stay with the subject long enough) are ultimately incompatible with Epicurus.

Save yourself a lot of time and effort and even heartache and read DeWitt early in your reading process. Then you'll see the forest and you can play with the trees at your leisure for the rest of your life. I have yet to meet the person who, like Don, isn't able to see when DeWitt is going over the line drawing analogies to Christianity, and you can safely ignore those if you don't find them interesting or helpful. (And I do think that there are many people who are immersed in Christian families and friendships for whom is commentary, especially in [St Paul and Epicurus](#), is helpful.)