

Questions Re PD 26 - PD30 From the 10/5/22 Zoom

Post by “Eikadistes” of October 9, 2022 at 11:28 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Don or Nate, what about the varying translations of "natural" vs "physical"?
What explains that variation and which do you think is best?

I'm interested to hear Nate's take.

Both are *generally* adequate, and, given the Greek (ΦΥΣΙΣ) and not Latin (NATVRA) source, “physical” works; *however*, “natural” in contemporary English vernacular expresses Epicurus’ nuance more appropriately than does “physical”. When we employ “natural”, we imply a contrast against the “supernatural”, which is an important criticism in Epicurean philosophy. Epicurus was responding to the supernatural propositions of metaphysicians, so invoking “nature” is appropriate. “Physical” *can* connote a contrast against “mental” or “spiritual” (within the context of contemporary English), which is inappropriate, because Epicurus sees “mental” and “spiritual” as being a subset of that which is “physical”, not an alternative to it. Additionally, there is an allusion with “physical” to Cartesian dualism, which implies that “the physical” is just one facet of reality. On top of that, it further reinforces the idea that contemporary “physics” is unable to deal with mental phenomena, and can only deal with actions between particles, whereas some “higher” knowledge is required to explain the complexities of a non-physical mind. I’ll take them both, but I *prefer* “nature”.