

Episode 216 - Cicero's On Ends - Book Two - Part 23 - Why Does Epicurus Say Length Of Time Does Not Contribute To Pleasure?

Post by “Godfrey” of February 28, 2024 at 3:47 PM

Excellent discussion of the issue in the podcast! One thing that you discussed (maybe not explicitly) which I think is key, is that the argument of limited v unlimited time is in many ways a matter of materialism v idealism.

In the materialist view a lifespan is limited. In the idealist view there may be a soul which exists for an unlimited time. This to me is the sticking point with Cicero (who I would call a strident idealist). For an Epicurean it's somewhat ludicrous to discuss pleasure without the limit of time, since a limited lifespan is inherent in being alive.

In the same vein, virtue and similar concepts are strictly that: *concepts*. They are idealist, not materialist. Being untethered to physical reality, they can extend forever or do whatever else one wants them to do: they're all imaginary. Epicurean pleasure, on the other hand, is strictly material. It's a real, physical element of living creatures, not an idealist concept.

So one's goal is to prudently maximize one's pleasure, which is limited by one's lifespan. Cicero's argument is about the larger issue of materialism v idealism.