

Welcome ReiWolfWoman!

Post by “Cassius” of April 20, 2026 at 7:00 PM

I think that's a very good question and the answer isn't obvious at all.

To me, some of what you're commentin on is a variation of the "psychological hedonism" argument which goes - everyone does what they think brings them pleasure, even pursuing virtue as a stoic, so in essence we're all hedonists and we should just all go have a beer because everyone acts for what they think is their own pleasure.

I personally don't like to argue that way and don't think it's a very attractive or persuasive position to take, but we have differing opinions about it here on the forum. If I recall correctly it appears in the "Living for Pleasure" book too.

To the extent that's what Socrates is talking about, he's seeing through that argument and saying that you shouldn't pursue virtue for the sake of pleasure, because virtue is itself its own reward and any consideration of pleasure tarnishes virtue.

As to this specifically

[Quote from ReiWolfWoman](#)

The philosopher's virtue has to do with the heart and mind, with transcending and mastering fear and desire"

I think that's an accurate statement of the true stoic virtue-based position. They do in fact wish to suppress emotion and desire, and of course I think Epicurus would say to that view that it is against nature and not a good idea to do at all. But the stoics are being consistent - they don't want anything to do with pleasure, even as a reward for being virtuous.

Those are preliminary comments and you may be thinking in a different direction, but part of your comment does remind me of those issues.

[Quote from ReiWolfWoman](#)

Or perhaps an argument to be made that Epicurus's own philosophy does value a higher good in its definition of pleasure, primacy of friendship and his own time spent in self-awareness and philosophical analysis?

Here i think your question and the answer is pretty clear. Epicurus values nothing higher than "pleasure," but the key to the analysis is that he has a very wide definition of what pleasure means, to include anything whatsoever that we find desirable. So the words that people like to use such as nobility and meaningfulness all come within the term "pleasure." If we feel that

something is desirable in body or mind then we do so because it brings us the feeling of pleasure.