

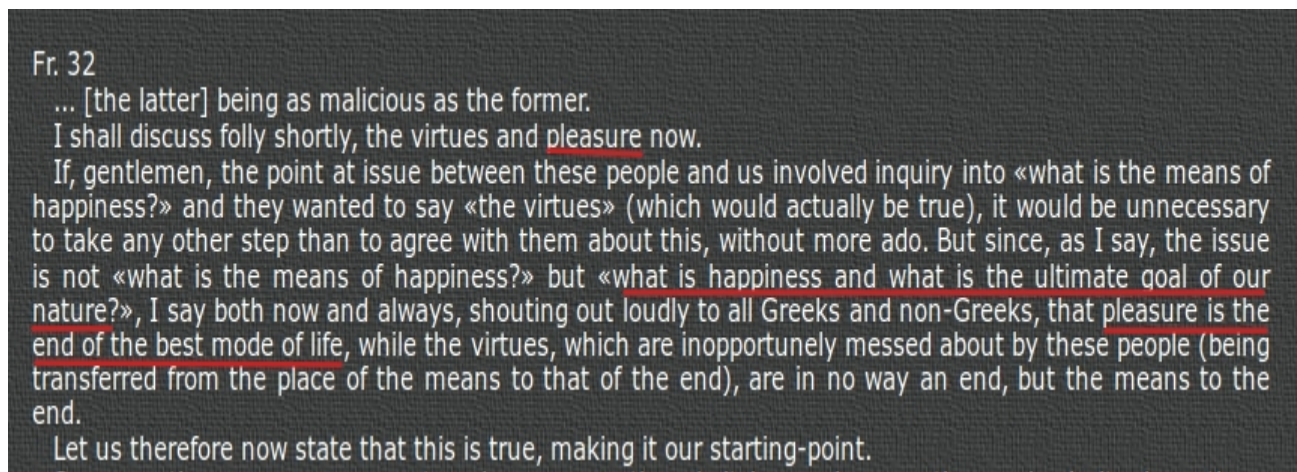
Pleasure vs Happiness (?) Discussion of Hiram's "In Defense of Eudaimonia"

Post by "Cassius" of October 20, 2019 at 12:08 PM

I see that Hiram has written an article ("In Defense of Eudaimonia") with which I strongly disagree, but which will provide a great platform for discussing the details of Epicurean philosophy.

First, I would point to a couple of sources that picked up on this precise point in meeting the arguments of Stoics and others in the years after Epicurus:

What is Happiness? Let's let Diogenes of Oinoanda explain:



Fr. 32
... [the latter] being as malicious as the former.
I shall discuss folly shortly, the virtues and pleasure now.
If, gentlemen, the point at issue between these people and us involved inquiry into «what is the means of happiness?» and they wanted to say «the virtues» (which would actually be true), it would be unnecessary to take any other step than to agree with them about this, without more ado. But since, as I say, the issue is not «what is the means of happiness?» but «what is happiness and what is the ultimate goal of our nature?», I say both now and always, shouting out loudly to all Greeks and non-Greeks, that pleasure is the end of the best mode of life, while the virtues, which are inopportunately messed about by these people (being transferred from the place of the means to that of the end), are in no way an end, but the means to the end.
Let us therefore now state that this is true, making it our starting-point.

What is the true end? Let's let Torquatus make the point very clear in "On Ends":

If then even the glory of the Virtues, on which all the other philosophers love to expatiate so eloquently, has in the last resort no meaning unless it be based on pleasure, whereas pleasure is the only thing that is intrinsically attractive and alluring, it cannot be doubted that pleasure is the one supreme and final Good and that a life of happiness is nothing else than a life of pleasure.

Given those statements, we need to be very careful in loose use of words that have become associated with anti-Epicurean philosophies, especially when we are talking with people who do not understand the ramifications of the issue:

Eudaimonia

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

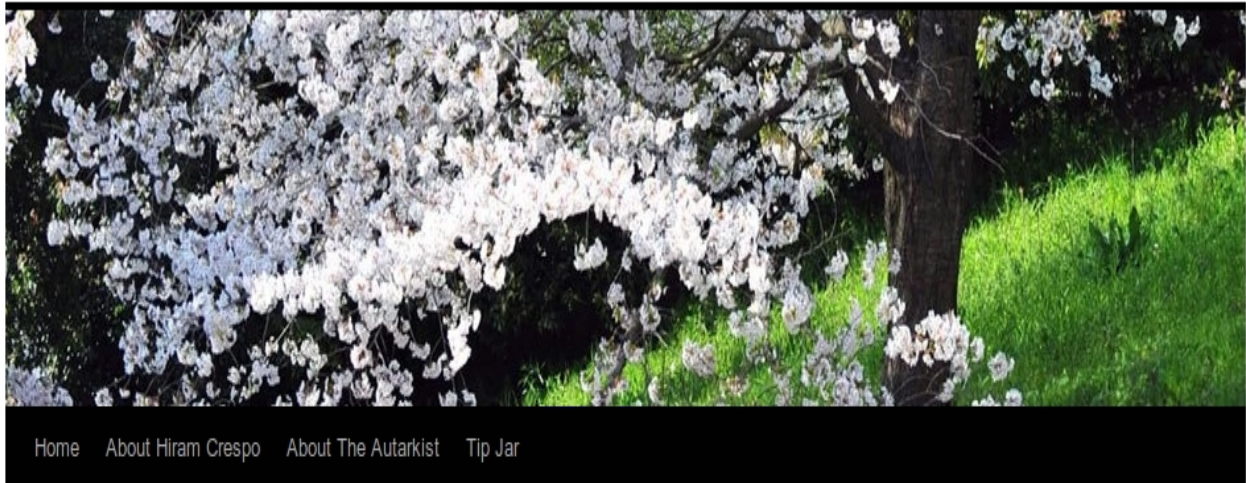
For the moth, see Eudaemonia (moth). For other uses, see Eudaemon (disambiguation).

Eudaimonia (Greek: εὐδαιμονία [eudajmonía:]), sometimes anglicized as **eudaemonia** or **eudemonia** /juːdɪˈmoʊniə/, is a Greek word commonly translated as happiness or welfare; however, "human flourishing or prosperity"^{[1][*better source needed*]} and "blessedness"^[2] have been proposed as more accurate translations.

Etymologically, it consists of the words "eu" ("good") and "daimōn" ("spirit"). It is a central concept in Aristotelian ethics and political philosophy, along with the terms "aretē", most often translated as "virtue" or "excellence", and "phronesis", often translated as "practical or ethical wisdom".^[3] In Aristotle's works, eudaimonia (based on older Greek tradition) was used as the term for the highest human good, and so it is the aim of practical philosophy, including ethics and political philosophy, to consider (and also experience) what it really is, and how it can be achieved.

Discussion of the links between virtue of character (*ēthikē aretē*) and happiness (*eudaimonia*) is one of the central concerns of ancient ethics, and a subject of much disagreement. As a result there are many varieties of eudaimonism. Two of the most influential forms are those of Aristotle^[4] and the Stoics. Aristotle takes virtue and its exercise to be the most important constituent in eudaimonia but acknowledges also the importance of external goods such as health, wealth, and beauty. By contrast, the Stoics make virtue necessary and sufficient for eudaimonia and thus deny the necessity of external goods.^[5]

Ok - here is [a link to Hiram's post](#):



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← [TBT: The Matrix](#)

Happy Twentieth! In Defense of Eudaimonia

Posted on [October 20, 2019](#)

Peace and Safety to all Epicureans, Neo-Epicureans and kindred spirits! Please don't forget to join our [Garden of Epicurus group on Facebook](#) if you'd like to study Epicurean philosophy with others.

On this day, I'd like to defend the concept of *eudaimonia*. In some Epicurean circles there appears to be a war against this word, and the corresponding word *happiness* in the insistence that the end is *pleasure*, as if they were somehow mutually exclusive. The truth is that:

1. Epicurus himself used the word *εὐδαιμονίαν* (*eudaimonian*),
2. The choice of words by the founders of EP was always very intentional and careful, and
3. *Eudaimonia* is a particularly important concept for therapeutic Hellenistic philosophy which relates to the health of the soul.

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I am attaching a full pdf of the article, but there is one clip I want to be sure to emphasize, because I think the writer cited is absolutely correct:

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/1233-pleasure-vs-happiness-discussion-of-hiram-s-in-defense-of-eudaimonia/>

Lampe thinks that Cyrenaics are eudaimonics (believed in happiness as the end, not just pleasure), but most scholars disagree. It's likely that a variety of views existed within the school regarding the end. One of the key arguments for hedonism (i.e. pleasure as the end) in its inception had to do with how pleasure is not the same thing as happiness. Pleasure is an instance, happiness is a collection of pleasures, and as such happiness is therefore an abstraction, a platonized alternative to the real experience of pleasure. This argument is interesting, and still generates debate and various opinions today.

We can of course cite the many instances in Epicurus' own texts, and in Lucretius, which precisely point to "pleasure" as the goal and guide of life, but I will add those here later.

You will also want to reread the arguments on this topic in Elayne's - [On Pain, Pleasure, and Happiness Second Draft](#)

This Epicureanfriends forum is no doubt the "some Epicurean circles" being referenced, so here is a thread to discuss it.

Post by "Elayne" of October 20, 2019 at 12:58 PM

Agree, Cassius, except that I do not see how Hiram can be talking about us, because we have never been at war with eudaimonia. Only at war with Aristotle's definition of eudaimonia, following Epicurus' lead. Unfortunately, modern dictionaries use Aristotle's definition. One day if we work hard enough, the dictionaries will have Epicurus' definition, that happiness is a life full of pleasure, instead! It is a shame Hiram chose to use the Aristotelian definition instead of the Epicurean one-- lots of people are going to be led astray by that.

Post by "Elayne" of October 20, 2019 at 1:24 PM

Also, whichever circles it is he is talking about think eudaimonia and pleasure are mutually exclusive. Definitely not us. We think eudaimonia is made of pleasure.

What I can definitely say is that Aristotle's definition of eudaimonia is mutually exclusive with a happy life though. Lol. Totally going with Epicurus on that!

Post by “Elli” of October 20, 2019 at 1:40 PM

I've been stuck to the word [daemon] that in this article is translated as "spirit". And then, maybe we will invoke the spirit of the great Pan or Zeus to save us in despair? What a tangle, sorry but I do not agree with all these. Our philosophy is not spiritual. It is physical, since it starts from the body and ends to the body that is sacred for Epicurus as the soul and body is one and the same thing.

For this Epicurus declares in this important saying that includes the greek word "eudeamonia" :

XXXIII.(33) Σαρκὸς φωνῆ τὸ μὴ πεινῆν, τὸ μὴ διψῆν, τὸ μὴ ῥίγουν ταῦτὰ γὰρ ἔχων τις καὶ ἐλπίζων ἔξειν κἂν <Διὶ> ὑπὲρ εὐδαιμονίας μαχέσαιο.

The flesh cries out to be saved from hunger, thirst, and cold. For if a man possess this safety and hope to possess it, he might rival even Zeus in eudaemonia.

A real hope to possess the safety gives us also the friendship that when we will be in a great need our trusted friends will help us, as we help them in the same way through self-sufficiency which means **generosity**.

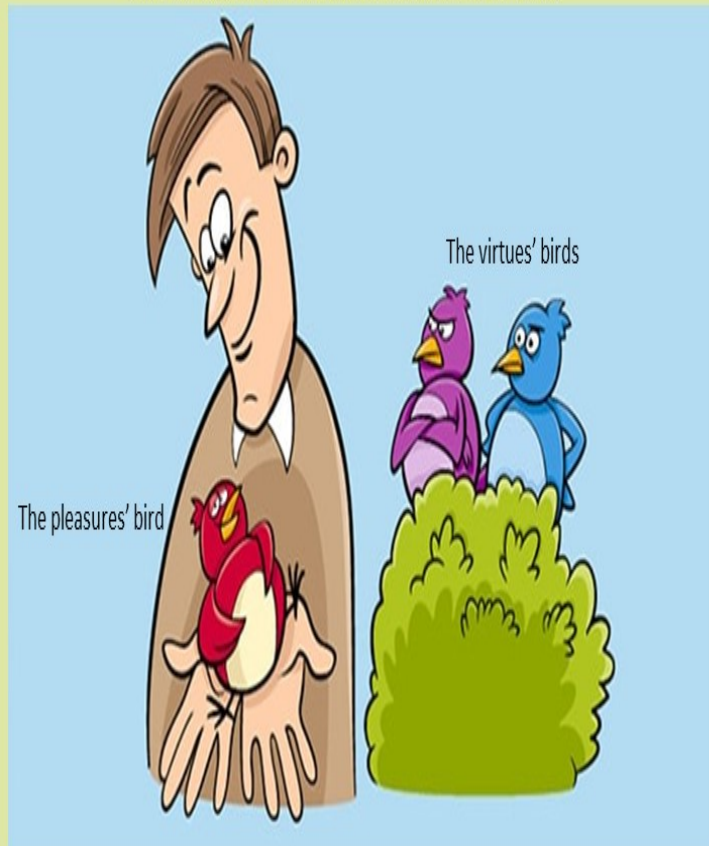
Since the basis and the first principles of friendship is the common benefit that leads the friends to the goal of “ἠδέως ζην» [hdeos zin] which means = **living pleasantly** and not to the “εὐ ζην» [eu zin] that means = **living well**.

Living well with the meaning of prosperity and flourishing are Aristotelean terms that are connected to political and economical definitions that we see with our own eyes where they led and still lead us. And of course, eudaemonia for Aristotle has the virtue as the goal, and above all the contemplation of God. But for us, the epicureans, virtue is not the goal is just a mean, and the contemplation of God is an issue for the querulous old women.

How many times we from those “epicurean circles” will declare all these ? I do not know. Do we use the Canon to realize that there is no any "happiness calculation" but **the hedonic calculation** with which a natural human being measures among natural main feelings **pleasure** and **pain** to lead to the positive of pleasure ? Finally, please when you use greek

words, you have to go and be in consistency of the Epicurean **Canon** <==> **Ethics** <==> **Physics**.

"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush"



And that means it is better to have something that is certain that take a risk to get more, where you might lose everything.

απ. 116 ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ἀνάξαρχον ἐπιστολῇ ταυτὶ γέγραφεν (Ἐπίκουρος): ἐγὼ δ' ἐφ' ἡδονὰς συνεχεῖς παρακαλῶ καὶ οὐκ ἐπ' ἀρετάς, κενὰς καὶ ματαίας καὶ ταραχώδεις ἐχούσας τῶν καρπῶν τὰς ἐλπίδας.

Και προς την επιστολή του προς Ἀνάξαρχο αὐτὰ εἶχε γράψει (ο Ἐπίκουρος) : ἐγὼ σε προσκαλῶ στις συνεχεῖς ἡδονές και ὄχι στις κενές, μάταιες και ταραχώδεις ἀρετές που ἔχουν τους καρπούς της ἐλπίδας.

fg 116 And to his letter to Anaxarchos (Epicurus) has written these : I summon you to the constant pleasures and not to the empty, trifling and agitated virtues that have the fruits of hope.

The hope for empty, trifling and agitated things and issues reminds me a greek idiom : "κάλλιο πέντε και στο χέρι παρά δέκα και καρτέρι". In english there is a similar idiom : "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush".

Post by "Joshua" of October 20, 2019 at 3:30 PM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/1233-pleasure-vs-happiness-discussion-of-hiram-s-in-defense-of-eudaimonia/>

Quote

[...] we need to be very careful in loose use of words that have become associated with anti-Epicurean philosophies [...]

Do I take your meaning, Cassius, to be that *Eudaimonia* becomes a problem only when removed from the Greek and set into English? I can certainly understand how the following sentences might be construed to have different meanings;

1. *Someone who says that the time to love and practice wisdom has not yet come or has passed is like someone who says that the time for happiness has not yet come or has passed.*
2. *Someone who says that the time to love and practice wisdom has not yet come or has passed is like someone who says that the time for Eudaimonia has not yet come or has passed.*

In other words, *Eudaimonia* takes on a separate connotative life and power when the word is carried through untranslated. So that *happiness* in an English sentence is ok, *εὐδαιμονία* in a Greek sentence is ok, but *Eudamonia* in an English sentence only invites trouble.

A question that comes to my mind is this; what if *eudaimonia* was the word of choice simply because the Greek language didn't offer a better one? I certainly won't be answerable to the accidents of etymology in every word I use.

When my mother says that "blood runs thicker than water", for example, she means that family is of utmost importance. What she likely doesn't know is that this phrase originally meant something quite different; "the blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb". Under this formulation, family relations are actually *less* important than relations forged by oath, shared faith, or the battlefield. An Arab saying expresses the same concept with slightly different maternal anatomy; "blood is thicker than milk".

Elli will be of better use than me, but I'll attach a dictionary reference with alternative words for happiness.

Post by "Cassius" of October 20, 2019 at 4:52 PM

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

Do I take your meaning, Cassius, to be that Eudaimonia becomes a problem only when removed from the Greek and set into English?

Joshua I think there are a couple of levels of problem here. Epicurus used the word eudaimonia himself, but had his own definition and context, just as he had for "gods." So there was potential dispute even when used in Greek among Greek-speakers, and we see that issue going on even today among the supporters of Epicurus in Greece. It is my understanding that even today there are factions within the Epicureans in Greece who engage on this very same issue, with some being much more comfortable with "eudaimonia" and "happiness" to the extent that they rarely if ever even mention pleasure, and spend little if any time examining what "happiness" really means, or how it is connected to pleasure, just as Hiram's article glides over that point.

I think that debating the meaning of the word even between and among the Greeks is implicit in Diogenes of Oinoanda's inscription, and also in the statement by Torquatus (which is of course Latin), in the examples given above.

I think the same issue arises when we discuss it in English in translating from the Greek. Pleasure is a feeling for which we need no explanation, as Epicurus held:

(Hence Epicurus refuses to admit any necessity for argument or discussion to prove that pleasure is desirable and pain to be avoided. These facts, he thinks, are perceived by the senses, as that fire is hot, snow white, honey sweet, none of which things need be proved by elaborate argument: it is enough merely to draw attention to them. (For there is a difference, he holds, between formal syllogistic proof of a thing and a mere notice or reminder: the former is the method for discovering abstruse and recondite truths, the latter for indicating facts that are obvious and evident.) Strip mankind of sensation, and nothing remains; it follows that Nature herself is the judge of that which is in accordance with or contrary to nature. What does Nature perceive or what does she judge of, beside pleasure and pain, to guide her actions of desire and of avoidance?)

... but "happiness" is a much broader concept which cries out for a precise definition. We generally use Aristotle's "flourishing" as an example of a compound concept that is not at all the same as the "life of pleasure" advocated by Epicurus. As the Wikipedia definition above indicates, it appears that Stoics and others pre and post Epicurus used the term eudaimonia to mean very different things, although I am not proficient in quoting Stoics so I am not able to provide any examples at the moment.

The ultimate issue in this discussion, as I see it, is the polemical issue of how to explain the ultimate goal of life as clearly as possible. Epicurus clearly held PLEASURE as the single term which fits that single word to describe the ultimate goal, but he also used eudaimonia within his own context, likely to indicate that a "happy" man will also experience some pains at time, and also that the happy man experiences many different types of pleasures -- in the Lampe's words above, "happiness is a collection of pleasures" which I think is correct - a combination of every kind of physical, mental, and emotional pleasure which we can possibly experience. If an experience is deemed by us to be desirable, it is solely because it is, or leads to, pleasure.

So the real issue is that those who disagree with Epicurus, and who want to appeal to real normal people (we can exclude the Stoics from this) realize that normal people feel instinctively the pull of Nature and therefore want to "be happy." The manipulation and deception game of other philosophers is to pull in an ambiguous concept like "happiness" and redefine it to suit their own tastes in virtue, in nobility, in worthiness, or in whatever other high-sounding word is calculated at the moment to persuade the unwary. That way they deprecate pleasure as the feeling which is the ultimate guide given us by Nature, which is exactly what Hiram's article leads toward in deprecating the role of "pleasure" even though he denies that that is his intent.

This is an issue that has been discussed at length in public and in private in the past, and that is what I read into the message of the article. Some people believe that "pleasure" is such a disreputable word that they cannot tolerate riding under its banner, and that is in my humble opinion a very huge mistake

Post by "Joshua" of October 20, 2019 at 5:24 PM

Excellent clarification! I think I now better understand your position.

To put the matter succinctly; not "eudaimonia", or "happiness", or "minimalism", or "freedom from pain", or "letting go", BUT

"Bold-stroke-capital-P-comically-oversized-cartoon-mallet-**PLEASURE**"

☐

Post by "Todd" of October 20, 2019 at 6:08 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Epicurus used the word eudaimonia himself, but had his own definition and context, just as he had for "gods."

How do you reconcile this with Epicurus' advocacy of clarity of language, and using words in the sense that immediately comes to mind?

(His refusal to even define pleasure is a wonderful example, by the way.)

I have no doubt that other Greek philosophers, and maybe even later Epicureans, were debating the definition of *eudaimonia*, but I suspect Epicurus would not have used it if his meaning was liable to be misunderstood by the average Greek of his day.

Now, possibly *eudaimonia* does not translate precisely to what we (modern non-academics) understand by "happiness", but given the usual contexts, that translation seems quite reasonable to me, and unobjectionable in relation to the rest of Epicurus' philosophy.

As for "gods"...yes, it does seem that he is using that term to mean something rather different than what the average person would have understood. But then, he also wrote entire books to explain his ideas. Also, I've noticed that in some places the translation is "immortal beings" rather than "gods". Could it be that he chose that phrase instead of "gods" deliberately?

Sorry if this is a bit of a side-track to this thread. I just couldn't let your statement pass without comment! 😊

Post by “Todd” of October 20, 2019 at 7:16 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

The ultimate issue in this discussion, as I see it, is the polemical issue

Well...

Here is a case where the situation is actually in our favor! Our understanding of happiness is actually very close to that of the average person.

We should be seizing that opportunity, and I feel like at least the title of Hiram's article is exactly on the right track there.

It's Stoicism, which despite its current (and hopefully fleeting) popularity, is at a disadvantage. Stoicism seems appealing, until you find out that this thing they call happiness, really isn't what you had in mind at all!

"Wait. Happiness is Virtue??? WTF?!?! Hey, I heard the Epicureans had some different ideas. (Thank you, Seneca!!!) Maybe I should check them out..."



Additional thoughts I'm having on this topic:

I can't help but think of Stoicism as the gateway drug to Epicureanism.

"Stoicism: Suffering is a Virtue. Happiness consists in Virtue. Therefore, Suffering = Happiness. Got it?"

The problem of leading with pleasure in our marketing efforts is that we've been so conditioned to think of pleasure as a vice, that there are many people it's just not going to appeal to. But everyone wants to be happy.

I'm not at all trying to suggest that we should de-emphasize pleasure. More like, "Want to be happy? Try Pleasure."

Post by "Cassius" of October 20, 2019 at 7:36 PM

[Quote from Todd](#)

How do you reconcile this with Epicurus' advocacy of clarity of language, and using words in the sense that immediately comes to mind?

I think that that answer is found in looking at the full context of the texts and seeing the many many references to "pleasure." I don't think that those foreclose the use of terms like "happiness" as well as long as the fundamental statements that "pleasure" is the only thing desirable in itself are kept in mind. I can easily imagine Epicurus believing that he had been so clear in laying down fundamentals that he could not be misunderstood by his own student (who presumably Menoeceus was, not an outsider or someone unfamiliar with the thrust of the philosophy.)

Your comments are not sidetrack at all 😊

And as you referenced I think this is similar to the "gods" issue. It is useful to have a term for beings which constitute what we would truthfully consider divine, and Epicurus would also have known that he could not enforce his own terminology on everyone.

But i don't think this comes down to questioning his use of "happiness" a few times in relation to the many times "pleasure" is clearly designated. It is a matter of starting at the basics, building consistently on them, and keeping the big picture consistent as he surely would have done himself.

And there's no better example that we need to take things into account than the sentence which reads "By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul."

That sentence is as counterintuitive and potentially contradictory to so much else that was written that it demands to be taken contextually and explained by reference to the whole. In that case the issue must be traced to the underlying premises of only two feelings (so therefore absence of one is presence of another by definition) and even further, tracing down why Epicurus was concerned about "only two" in the first place (which I think ties to Plato's arguments against pleasure).

The "happiness" question is much easier than that one. There are only two feelings, only pleasure is desirable in and of itself, and no one thinking in Epicurean terms is ever going to suggest that "happiness" is ultimately tied to any necessary requirement other than "pleasure."

All the other tools and alleged requirements of happiness with Aristotle and others alleged to be necessary would, if true, blow the theory of "pleasure as the ultimate good" out of the water. Because if something besides pleasure is required, how do we know what that is? Admit that the goal requires something other than pleasure and Plato will lead you down the primrose path that he led [Philebus](#), and you will end up admitting that knowledge/wisdom that enables you to identify and obtain this non-pleasure element is an essential part of the goal itself, and you will end up admitting Plato's ultimate aim - that "wisdom" is the most important thing in life.

Post by "Cassius" of October 20, 2019 at 7:42 PM

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

To put the matter succinctly; not "eudaimonia", or "happiness", or "minimalism", or "freedom from pain", or "letting go", BUT

"Bold-stroke-capital-P-comically-oversized-cartoon-mallet-PLEASURE"

And not just because I am a radical, or I think Epicurus was devoted to radicalism for the sake of radicalism, but for the reason I just summarized to Todd: admit that ANYTHING is a required component of the ultimate good, and you are left drowning without a life-preserver until you admit that REASON/LOGIC/WISDOM is required to identify that good, and probably (if you are Aristotle) money and other accoutrements of being a noble Athenian. You will quickly be led to find that this "art of slicing and dicing" the components of the good is really the essential thing, and you will ultimately (if you are persuaded by "reason") be forced to admit that Venus is held in too high an esteem by Epicurus, as Plato urged on [Philebus](#).

I wish I were more of an expert on [Philebus](#) myself, but I have read it several times and these arguments are indeed there.

And what we are reading in the letter to Menoecus is essentially a summary letter written to a student who would in all likelihood have been familiar with those Platonic arguments as the "gold standard" on discussing pleasure as a potential competitor for "the good."

Post by "Cassius" of October 20, 2019 at 7:49 PM

At risk of deviating off track I want to call in this suggestion / illustration. I think the opening items of the [Principal Doctrines](#) are best viewed in the same way we are discussing here: they tied to particular contexts, in which they are "antidotes" to popular misconceptions which Epicurus expected his readers to confront.

He expected them to confront all sorts of misconceptions about the gods, so instead of dealing with all of them separately he gave them the key to unwinding all of them - by referring to the nature of what a "true god" would certainly be like, and not be like.

He expected them to confront all sorts of threats and promises about life after death, so instead of dealing with all of them separately, he gave them the key to unwinding all of them -- that death is the end of all sensation, and therefore NOTHING can happen after death.

And then -- and here is the current issue --

He expected them to confront all of the Platonic and other arguments about why pleasure cannot be the goal of life, most all of which are based on some version of the "pleasure is insatiable" and "it can't be the best because it has no limit, and so he gave them the key to unwinding all those "logic traps" - he pointed out that human life gives us a limit of how much we can experience, and that the very most pleasure we can experience in life is the amount that we experience when all pain has been eliminated. THAT's the context and the reason for the entire "absence of pain" discussion, and it makes perfect sense when viewed in that context, but seems absolutely inscrutable to us - because we haven't read [Philebus](#), we don't know anything about Plato, and we've totally lost the common context that any educated person in ancient Athens would have learned from childhood!

Post by "Elayne" of October 20, 2019 at 8:00 PM

Although I was not around in ancient Greece, from reading, it sounds to me like things were similar to the current situation with the word happiness in English. If you say the word "what is

happiness?" to an ordinary person, they will have a feeling instantly, of pleasure. I have tried it, and people instantly smile. It is not whatsoever an abstract thing.

It's only idealists today who try to define away happiness into something confusing that doesn't mean pleasure. This leads to ridiculous articles with titles like "If you want to be happy, don't seek pleasure"-- and I always want to know, ok, please tell me how this happiness you talk about feels? Is it nice? Why do I want it? Isn't not seeking something in order to get it actually still a way to seek it, lol? Sometimes they have good specific advice, but the title should be "If you want a happy live, choose wisely, because some actions turn out more painful than pleasurable."

Anyway, if I had to put money on it, I would bet my condo that things were the same then. I betcha normal people knew perfectly well what eudaimonia was, and pleasure-- by their feelings.

Sometimes I wonder if the idealists go this direction because they don't really experience much pleasure in life? But that's a different issue.

Post by "Elli" of October 21, 2019 at 2:48 AM

Although Epicurus begins his letter to Meneoceus mentioning the greek word "eudaemonia" for which its accurate translation in english is "bliss" and has for its synonym word "makariotita", he continues describing this word so clearly like the clear water springs from a natural fountain on the mountain of Olympus. More high, more clear and more accurate meaning in this word "eudaemonia" that is bonded firmly with pleasure, no any other philosopher gave or will give it in all the eternities.

I insist our philosophy is not spiritual it is physical, as the body and soul is one and the same thing. And as Nietzsche who was influenced by Epicurus said it : "There is more wisdom in your body than in your deepest philosophy".

Lucretius in book III remarks : "The mind is a part of the body. It is not a harmony, but has a specific physical location". As he also says and unites the physics/science with ethics : "Mind and spirit are corporeal - they are also made up of atoms, but extremely smooth, round and small ones".

Yes, do not be amazing, in these passages Lucretius describes the molecules, the cells. And as in that article there is mentioning of health, in the near future Bio-genetics will offer many beneficial results/cures for the most of the diseases. I imagine the doctors of tomorrow who with their prescription with medicines they will offer the book by Norman DeWitt saying : Hey

men, read this book that is for Epicurus' philosophy. Do not fear god and death and enjoy the pleasures of life. These fears and your ignorance what is your ultimate goal in life led your molecules more quickly to cancers, to coronary artery disease, the prostate etc etc. 😄

Post by “Elli” of October 21, 2019 at 3:11 AM



Epicurean philosophy protects itself with consistency (of the Canon, Physics, and Ethics). This is its self-defense. If someone tries to change one piece with another piece from elsewhere, it will end up in nothing. If not something worse than nothing.

(An excerpt of paperwork entitled "Epicurean View", by George Kaplanis, founding member of the Garden in Thessaloniki).



Post by "Elli" of October 21, 2019 at 3:12 AM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/1233-pleasure-vs-happiness-discussion-of-hiram-s-in-defense-of-eudaimonia/>

“Every explanation without the core that exist in "Lathe Viosas" it is something just to talk about. Everything in epicurean philosophy has a fixed bond with the pleasure. “Lathe Viosas” serves the pleasure, and it has the pleasure in its foundation i.e. inside its core. If you follow the motto "Lathe Viosas" and you end up compromised and subordinated, then the pleasure is lost and "Lathe Viosas" loses its core and disappears“. by George Kaplanis founding member of the Garden in Thessaloniki.



in the mountain of Olympus for the event of "Promethea" 6th of July 2013.

Post by “Elli” of October 21, 2019 at 4:16 AM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/1233-pleasure-vs-happiness-discussion-of-hiram-s-in-defense-of-eudaimonia/>

And now the real truth what means to connect the word eudeamonia with Aristotelean terms.

Epicurus addressing to Aristotle :

Fg. 423. "What brings unsurpassed joy is the removal of a great evil; and this is the nature of the good, if you apply your mind rightly and then stand firm and do not stroll about chattering emptyly".

And now please simply connect the above fg 423 with the epicurean saying 42 and then read the next, in the list, sayings to realize what Epicurus means with the word eudaemonia :

Fg 423 <==> ES 42. The same span of time embraces both the beginning and the end of the greatest good.

...and Epicurus continues pulling out the mask and revealing what means Aristotle with his "eudaemonia" when he connects this word with "prosperity", "flourishing" and the like.

ES 43. : Hey Aristotle, the love of money, if unjustly gained, is impious, and, if justly gained, is shameful; for it is unseemly to be parsimonious even with justice on one's side.

ES 44. Hey Aristotle, the wise man, when he has accommodated himself to straits knows better how to give than to receive, so great is the treasure of self-sufficiency which he has discovered.

Do you see the clarity of the word **self-sufficiency** which means the generosity of a man?

Well guys, eudaemonia means the freedom to be **generous** sharing and feelings and things. Generous means also the **brave**. But when you are stingy and in feelings and in things you will never understand Epicurus' philosophy. And now, hide to your caves little and coward aristotelean kittens. You will never be the **pride, generous and brave** epicurean lions who know how to share their food. their feelings, and their ultimate goal in life !



Post by “Elayne” of October 21, 2019 at 8:46 AM

Here is what I posted from the admins on the Epicurean Philosophy page on Facebook, just now, regarding Hiram's article being discussed in this thread.

The War on Eudaimonia

The admins at Epicurean Philosophy have learned from an article by one of our members here, Hiram Crespo, that there are “some Epicurean circles” who are at “war” against the word eudaimonia! People who somehow think eudaimonia and pleasure are mutually exclusive. This is news to us, although we suppose we should not be surprised, considering how often Epicurus is misunderstood in the modern world. We do not know who these circles are, but we are glad to join with Hiram in roundly condemning such a ridiculous war.

In case any of our other members run across these circles, we'd like to give you some background. Eudaimonia, which in English is generally translated as “happiness”, was used by Aristotle in the way Hiram describes in his article—as “flourishing” or “blessedness”, not as pleasure. In fact, that is what you are still going to find today in all the online dictionaries: Aristotle's definition. Aristotle's definition should not be taken as the standard of Greeks for all time even though it persists in our dictionaries. This Aristotelian definition is used by many non-Epicurean groups to say that a “good life” is based on factors other than pleasure, such as virtues or ideals.

But Epicurus did not accept Aristotle's definition.

No one can understand Epicurean Philosophy who believes that Epicurus used the word eudaimonia in the same way Aristotle did. We encourage Hiram to consider an addendum to his article to make clear that the modern dictionary definitions follow Aristotle, not Epicurus.

Here, instead, is how Epicurus saw eudaimonia, as explained through the words of his spokesman Torquatus (from Cicero, On Ends 😞 **“it cannot be doubted that pleasure is the one supreme and final Good and that a life of happiness is nothing else than a life of pleasure.”**

Epicurus was proclaiming something truly radical in his time, and it is still radical today—that

we cannot define happiness or a “good life” with abstract or vague concepts but only as one filled with pleasure. The fact that he used two words, eudaimonia and hedone (pleasure) does not mean that he was accepting Aristotle’s definition. It does appear that he used eudaimonia in a more comprehensive, global way—a life filled with ongoing pleasures—rather than to specify a single moment or day of pleasure, but that should not be used to imply that there is some additional element in eudaimonia other than pleasure.

Epicurus “went to war” on Aristotle’s wrong definition of happiness and on the wrong definitions of other philosophers-- not on happiness itself!

Even the neo-Epicureans who have made serious errors by thinking Epicurus advised some sort of rarified tranquility which was not pleasure as we ordinarily understand it have not made the error of confusing Epicurus with Aristotle.

When an error like that occurs, we have to wonder if it was a deliberate mischaracterization, to create a straw man for debate?

In our group, we continue to be at war with Aristotelians and other conflicting philosophies. Why? Because they lead people away from pleasurable lives. You all have only one life each—to waste it missing out on pleasure would be a disaster, and anyone who tells you otherwise is no friend to you. While we join Hiram in wishing Peace and Safety to all Epicureans and kindred spirits, we do not wish the Neo-Epicureans, Aristotelians, Stoics or other misguided philosophers to continue in their errors, and we will not leave them in peace as long as they spread misinformation. We hope, for their sakes, that they will become Epicureans instead.

Today we still shout out loudly, as did Diogenes of Oinoanda, "But since, as I say, the issue is not 'what is the means of happiness?' but 'what is happiness and what is the ultimate goal of our nature?', I say both now and always, shouting out loudly to all Greeks and non-Greeks, that pleasure is the end of the best mode of life"!

If we continue to proclaim Epicurus’ actual philosophy, and if you will join us in doing so, perhaps one day we will find these words of Torquatus in the dictionary for both eudaimonia and happiness: “Let us imagine a man living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or the prospect of pain: what possible state of existence could we describe as being more excellent or more desirable? One so situated must possess in the first place a strength of mind that is proof against all fear of death or of pain; he will know that death means complete unconsciousness, and that pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity. Let such a man moreover have no

dread of any supernatural power; let him never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection, — and his lot will be one which will not admit of further improvement.”

This, my friends, is a happy human, possessing eudaimonia, a life full of pleasure, and this is what we want for you.

Post by “Hiram” of October 21, 2019 at 8:47 AM

This essay emerged as a result of controversies surrounding Alex’s expulsion from the EP group. It seemed from my conversation with him that this was a key issue. So it needs to be addressed.

I do not believe that at any point I used the “Aristotelian definition”, in the essay I attempted to apply Epicurus’ criterion from his sermon against empty words of attaching the first meaning that the mind evokes. Since Greek is not my language I looked at the semantic roots Eu (good) and daimon (spirit) and worked from there to deconstruct the word, following the clarity and conciseness guidelines given by the founders.

I’m happy Eudaimonia is being addressed. It’s in the sources.

Post by “Cassius” of October 21, 2019 at 8:55 AM

Hiram I agree that this "eudaimonia" issue is a great issue to discuss. As for issues relating to Alex and the Facebook group, there is a long history there which (at least for the moment) I don't think for many reasons would be appropriate for us to go into in public posts here. We can certainly cover all the philosophic issues of general concern, however.

Post by “Elayne” of October 21, 2019 at 9:12 AM

Well, Hiram, your first inclination was to arrive at Aristotle's definition, and it sounds like you used his methods as well, the logical ones. Whereas the instant feeling an ordinary person

gets from the words happiness and eudaimonia (as Elli has assured us strongly) is _pleasure_. Ask a regular person "what does happy mean?" and unless they are depressed, they will smile-- their face will show their meaning even more than their words. They do not have to go figuring out the root words to get a meaning.

So this was aimed at us, you have confirmed it. Hiram, how on earth could you misunderstand Epicurus on eudaimonia and choose Aristotle instead? I am sad. Wow. If this is aimed at us, you have completely mischaracterized both Epicurus AND our group.

Unlike you and Alex, we have attempted not to get into the "mean boys and girls" of philosophy mode and have avoided issuing personal criticisms. Our beef is on the philosophy itself, and that people who are learning are being misled.

With Alex, it was that he repeatedly violated our rules, was rude, and had been given multiple direct warnings, including on the day he was finally removed. He was behaving in a way which was malicious towards the goals of our group, which we had published in a clear way. It made us sad that he did this and that we had to remove him. It was not out of anger or personality. I had not planned to air that publicly, but you have done so now. The quotes you made from him at the end of your article? I agree with fully. But that is not whatsoever the type of thing he was posting. He wasn't even using Aristotle's definition of happiness. He was arguing that it is possible to remove pain and not have pleasure, repeatedly, despite having had this explained to him and having been asked to stop. At a certain point, that becomes unacceptable, and he crossed the line.

Hiram, I do not go on your webpage and debate with you. You have your perspective. We are trying to accomplish something here that is different.

Post by "Elayne" of October 21, 2019 at 9:18 AM

Further, you keep saying eudaimonia is "in the sources"-- nowhere have we disputed that, nor have we ever avoided discussing it. That is dishonest to accuse us of. On the morning Alex was removed, btw, he never said eudaimonia. I have the screenshots. He said happiness. But it wouldn't have mattered. It is the same thing.

If you go to the sources, instead of the dictionary that Epicurus didn't have, you will see clearly what Epicurus meant by eudaimonia.

If you are faced with a language that is not native to you, you cannot just go by root words. You must talk with a native speaker and get examples, to understand the context and the "feeling".

We've gotten the context and feeling from Epicurus, and in modern times, from Elli, whom we trust.

Post by “Hiram” of October 21, 2019 at 9:55 AM

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

Do I take your meaning, Cassius, to be that *Eudaimonia* becomes a problem only when removed from the Greek and set into English? I can certainly understand how the following sentences might be construed to have different meanings;

I don't think it does, but I believe Cassius does. Elli has also said eudaimonia is a perfectly good Greek word. But the bottom line is that Epicurus used the word, and we should apply the guidelines offered in his sermon against the use of empty words. This would not have been a frivolous choice, and we do not see a trace of anger or hostility against Aristotle in the Letter to Menoecus. We see a formulation of Epicurus' and his friends' ideas. So eudaimonia / happiness is a legitimate Epicurean philosophical inquiry.

Post by “Hiram” of October 21, 2019 at 10:03 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

That way they deprecate pleasure as the feeling which is the ultimate guide given us by Nature, which is exactly what Hiram's article leads toward in deprecating the role of "pleasure" even though he denies that that is his intent.

Can you explain in what way one deprecates pleasure by rescuing the meaning of eudaimonia?

Post by “Cassius” of October 21, 2019 at 10:18 AM

[Quote from Hiram](#)

So eudaimonia / happiness is a legitimate Epicurean philosophical inquiry.

[Quote from Hiram](#)

Can you explain in what way one deprecates pleasure by rescuing the meaning of eudaimonia?

Exactly in the way that the Lampe quote that you included implies - in the great majority of modern conversations, "happiness" is an abstraction, a platonized alternative to the real experience of pleasure."

Eudaimonia is a Greek word that means nothing to most people not schooled in ancient Greek, and it has all the hazards of confusion in using an untranslated words. But even "Happiness" has the same ambiguities: it is often used to mean totally different things to different people, even though the only real commonality that is going on in that discussion is the issue of finding it pleasurable.

But if someone means "pleasure" then why don't they SAY pleasure? Is it not because the word has been so slandered and despised by the mainline religions and philosophies (both before and after the time of Epicurus) that it is a word that is shied away from in "polite company"? This is exactly what Cicero said when he wrote that you could not appeal to pleasure in the Senate or in the legionary camps, and it is exactly the issue.

Anti-Epicurean philosophies prevail over Epicurus largely because they have convinced people that "pleasure" is disreputable. Using a non-translated word just papers over the problem, and this is similar with "ataraxia," which is also a term that has no well-defined meaning, but people throw around with a wink and a nod as if it is the answer to every question.

So the answer to your question is that using a term like "happiness" and "edaimonia" is perfectly acceptable, just like using the term "gods" is acceptable, if you are explicit in your definition. And just as with "gods" we have a context today in which no one understands "gods" in the Epicurean way, and no one understands "happiness" or "eudaimonia" in the Epicurean way either.

Use of happiness/eudaimonia without full contextual definition introduces the same ambiguities and issues that use of "absence of pain" ataraxia / aponia does, and I would reply to that in the same way. Used without definition in standard discussions among people who cannot be expected to know the full context is a prescription for disaster, just like Ataraxia / absence of pain has led commentary on Epicurus down the road of asceticism and minimalism, which is why Epicurus has been kicked to the curb throughout the world. And Epicurean philosophy won't come off the curb so long as we follow along in the standard discussion which conveys to the minds of most normal people that Epicurus isn't worth the time of day to discuss.

Post by “Elayne” of October 21, 2019 at 10:20 AM

By reverting to Aristotle's meaning of eudaimonia, which you call rescuing, Hiram, one places pleasure in a lower position than the abstract concepts of flourishing and so on. Whereas by using the word as Epicurus did, the way an average person who is not Aristotelian or Stoic or whatever would, it is clear that happiness is made of pleasures, and then everything works together to support that goal.

Post by “Elayne” of October 21, 2019 at 10:21 AM

It is nearly surreal that we are having to defend Epicurus' philosophy against someone who calls himself Epicurean but is taking one of the exact positions Epicurus argued against.

Post by “Cassius” of October 21, 2019 at 10:32 AM

Aside: I think we are seeing close-up the hazards that arise from not taking the DeWitt approach and pointing out early and often how Epicurus was in revolt against his predecessors, and how the war with Stoicism was very real.

A lot of people seem to think that Epicurus was right in line with the rest of the Greeks and just decided to embrace atomism and applied a word twist on pleasure/absence of pain - but that otherwise he was substantially similar. And that's where a lot of this Stoicism-love comes from that we see so often among people who come to the forums for the first time.

What I am calling the DeWitt approach was to point out how profoundly Epicurus was rejecting Platonism, and that includes Aristotle before Epicurus and the Stoics afterwards.

It's hard for us today to appreciate the depth of that difference because most of us are not well versed in Plato (especially [Philebus](#)) or the details of Aristotle on the meaning of "happiness."

But it's worse than that we are not well versed. The truth is the modern world, religious AND secular, has fully embraced the heart of the non-Epicurean viewpoint, and they recognize that it is an enemy that they think needs to be stamped out, so they demonize discussion of

"pleasure" and the Epicurean view of non-absolute virtues. I think most of us sense that that is how they play their mind-control games, because they know that the Epicurean view strikes at the heart of their intellectual and civil power structure. That means we face more than just educating ourselves about the ancient context and determining what Epicurus meant.

It means that at the end of the day, when we find out what Epicurus really did mean, we are going to find that we are a very small minority in a very hostile world, and that we had better stick together on core issues if we ever hope to be more than isolated gnats waiting to be swatted by the organized opposition,

Post by "Hiram" of October 21, 2019 at 11:26 AM

[Quote from Elayne](#)

It is nearly surreal that we are having to defend Epicurus' philosophy against someone who calls himself Epicurean but is taking one of the exact positions Epicurus argued against.

Huh?!

Post by "Todd" of October 21, 2019 at 12:27 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

no one understands "happiness" or "eudaimonia" in the Epicurean way

You paint a bleak picture, Cassius, but I don't think things are quite as bad as that.

I think most people DO understand happiness in the Epicurean way, although they may not articulate it in the same terms.

I'm sure you know this, but I'll say it for the benefit of others who may come across this thread. Many of Epicurus' ideas on pleasure can be understood as *descriptive*, not normative. It's not that we *should* pursue pleasure. We *do* pursue pleasure. We almost can't help it. But when we're not conscious of that, it's easy to be misled as to the appropriate means for achieving the end. And that, to me, is the great value of Epicurus' philosophy. (To give credit where it's due, I

probably read this in DeWitt, but I can't recall).

Don't be so pessimistic! 😊

Post by “Cassius” of October 21, 2019 at 1:12 PM

I will turn to you whenever I need optimism Todd -- in the meantime I have to go battle some Stoics! 😊

Post by “Cassius” of October 21, 2019 at 1:18 PM

Todd can you remind me of your background? You've read DeWitt recently? Have you also read any of the Cambridge or other books recently, such as for example Catherine Wilson? What do you consider to be your main source of Epicurean reading? Lucretius? What translation?

Don't worry if it takes too much time to respond; no problem, but i do think it is interesting and helps analysis to get a fix on the main sources in a person's reading. Of course some here for all I know could be professors and read in the original Greek or Latin! 😊 And you may have read far more than I have!

And how much Plato or Aristotle or Stoicism have you read?

I may have to set up some kind of general profile question because I really think this is interesting data.

Post by “Todd” of October 21, 2019 at 2:39 PM

Cassius,

I've read and re-read DeWitt a few times over the last ~5 years, or so. That was my introduction to Epicurus, and I keep coming back to EAHP, just to make sure I stay mostly on the right track.

I've read Lampe, and some others (academic and non-academic). I read a lot, so you'll have to forgive me if I can't name too many names off the top of my head. I usually only remember the ones I liked.

I have not read anything by Wilson. I was intrigued when I saw she had a new book coming out, but a quick skim of the Amazon preview turned me off. (I have to say, though, that I was pleasantly surprised by the video of her talk that you posted here. Maybe I'll give her a second chance.)

Lucretius...I've tried, but I just can't make myself do it. I don't know...it seems like a lot of words to explain (or confuse?) a simple concept. I guess I'm just not a fan of didactic poetry.

In the past, I've read some Aristotle (and Scholastic analysis), Plato, and the Roman Stoics. All in translation, of course.

I've spent a lot of the last 25 years or so studying and thinking about economics, ethics and politics. I'm continuously surprised by the overlap between Epicurean philosophy and my economic and political views, which developed long before I had any interest in Epicurus. (At least I feel like there is a lot of overlap, but I realize other Epicureans may not agree!)

Edit: I neglected to mention that I discovered DeWitt via NewEpicurean.com, so I have you to thank for that!

Post by “Cassius” of October 21, 2019 at 3:09 PM

[Quote from Todd](#)

Edit: I neglected to mention that I discovered DeWitt via NewEpicurean.com, so I have you to thank for that!

Excellent!

Thanks for taking the time to write the description. That tells me that I need to focus on aspect of the "survey" on how much of the "original sources" people have read.

For example, have you read Diogenes Laertius from start to finish? Have you read any of "On Ends"? I have only recently discovered myself that while the Epicurean sections are of tremendous interest, the entire rest of the book too gives great insight. It is as if - and I did not realize this - Cicero was really setting out to cover all the bases from all the schools and give a good grounding in each. So there is a LOT to be learned even from the other chapters.

I am totally with you on the difficulty of Lucretius. I started and stopped reading it so many times over 50 years that I can hardly remember. But I finally got past my problems, and now I see it as a true gold mine. That is why i'm getting interested in a book review series on that -- I think if we can make that more accessible we can really add something to the discussion.

I am thinking that I need to set up some kind of spreadsheet with these core books.

How about Frances Wright? Did you read "A Few Days In Athens?"

Post by “Todd” of October 21, 2019 at 3:27 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

have you read Diogenes Laertius from start to finish?

The biography of Epicurus, yes. If you literally mean all of it, then no.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Have you read any of "On Ends"?

Yes. I may have read the whole thing long ago, but I've certainly read the parts related to Epicurus.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

How about Frances Wright? Did you read "A Few Days In Athens?"

Yes. I remember enjoying it the first time I read it, but I started re-reading it recently, and it seems to have lost some of its appeal for me.

I think the difference is that I know more about Epicurus' philosophy now, and Wright sometimes has Epicurus saying things that I seem not quite consistent. Probably she was trusting Cicero to give a fair presentation.

I have no trouble with people expressing their own views on Epicurus, though I may disagree. But to have the words coming from Epicurus' own mouth is...jarring.

Post by “Cassius” of October 21, 2019 at 3:34 PM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/1233-pleasure-vs-happiness-discussion-of-hiram-s-in-defense-of-eudaimonia/>

I agree on all points Todd, even on "A Few Days in Athens." Your comment on DL reminds me that in the last couple of years I did read (listen) to the full set of 12 books in his series, and yes that was extremely helpful, especially on the Stoics and Plato, and interesting too that he kind of downplays Aristotle (if I recall).

I am now late in life seeing that reading the full set of Diogenes Laertius plus Cicero's On Ends would be a tremendous grounding for anyone interested in ancient Greek philosophy. had I read those early on my path would have been a lot easier. And now that i have read them I see that they aren't really "work" to read either -- DL especially can be fairly fun, as he likes to tell a lot of amusing anecdotes about each philosopher.

Those two are easily accessible and yet sit on shelves everywhere unread.

Post by "Cassius" of October 28, 2019 at 1:22 PM

This thread has pretty much expired but I came across this today from a professor who has written on Epicurus and I want to preserve this so I can find it later:

<https://pages.wustl.edu/ericbrown/research>

Second Research Project: Eudaimonism

Ancient Greek philosophy, at least after Socrates, is first and last obsessed with the question of how one should live. I began taking the ancient Greeks more and more seriously because I thought that what they said about how one should live is more plausible and interesting than modern moral philosophy. So my research and teaching constantly return to the question of how Greek philosophical ethics serves as an *alibi* to modern moral philosophy. In recent years, I have come to be dissatisfied with the standard answer to this question, and much of my research is now focused on redefining Greek ethics as an alternative to modern moral philosophy.

On the standard view, Greek ethics is "eudaimonist," according to which one should act always for the sake of one's own success or happiness (*eudaimonia*). As this dictum is usually understood, one should act always so as to bring about one's own success. So eudaimonism is an egoistic version of consequentialism. Unfortunately, this construal encourages debates about whether this or that Greek really was a eudaimonist, and it discourages the thought that the Greeks have a plausible alternative to modern moral philosophy. But fortunately, it is a misconstrual of most Greek philosophers' views. Only a few Greeks, Epicurus and some misguided Peripatetics being the plainest examples, subscribed to consequentialist eudaimonism. Most, including Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, followed Plato's Socrates and argued that because success is nothing but virtuous activity, one should act for the sake of success simply by acting virtuously.

From the same professor's page:

First Research Project: Cosmopolitanism

Ancient Stoics claim that the world as a whole (the cosmos) is like a city (a polis) and that one should live as a citizen of the cosmos. I first became puzzled about these claims as a graduate student, when I was doing a directed study of Cicero's *De Officiis* one summer with Martha Nussbaum. I wrote an essay on the apparent tension between cosmopolitanism and patriotism in that book, which prompted Nussbaum to share with me the draft of an essay she was writing on Stoic cosmopolitanism. She encouraged me to investigate the Stoics' cosmopolitan claims for my dissertation, and I have been investigating them, off and on, ever since.

I maintain that the Stoics' cosmopolitan claims have three layers of meaning. First, to live as a citizen of the cosmos is a metaphor for living a good human life. Traditionally, a Greek lives well by living up to the norms of his polis. Chrysippus argues that one should live up to the norms of nature by living in agreement with right reason, which is, as rational coherence, the same as the right reason that governs the cosmos. Later Stoics deflate this metaphor. On their view, citizenship in the cosmos is not earned by agreeing with right reason but is conferred automatically to all human beings, by virtue of our rational nature. Second, the Stoics maintain that living as a citizen of the cosmos is not a mere metaphor because it requires showing what I call "cosmopolitan concern," which is the thought that every human being is worthy of special ethical concern. Stoics differ among themselves about what sorts of feelings and actions cosmopolitan concern requires, and about whether these or those special people (friends, family, compatriots in a local community) deserve special concern beyond cosmopolitan concern. But third, the Stoics argue that cosmopolitan concern entails that one should work to benefit human beings as such, at least in some circumstances. The most interesting evidence for this cosmopolitan beneficence emerges in Stoic discussions of what career a person should take up. They favor political engagement because it can benefit more people, and they typically urge that one could emigrate to engage politically and benefit people more readily. But, again, the Stoics disagree among themselves on whether the consideration to benefit humans as such by a political career needs to be balanced against special considerations to benefit these particular humans because they are compatriots in a local community. I argue that the Stoic texts that urge special obligations to compatriots (Cicero's *De Officiis* and various works by Seneca) are problematic, and that the Stoic texts that take a stricter line on benefiting humans as such (fragments of Chrysippus, Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*) are more promising than most current discussions of cosmopolitanism would seem to predict.