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WEAK DEMOCRITEAN EUDAIMONISM

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I. INTRODUCTION

When discussing the history of ancient Greek ethics, scholars usually begin with the figure of Socrates (469–399 BC). He is considered to be the first known ancient Greek thinker to systematically (i.e., with well-reasoned structure or method) engage in ethical inquiry,[1] in a manner that is neither purely conventional nor limited in scope (Meta A.6.987a35–987b3; B.4.1078b18–19; OM V.88).[2] [3]

1 When referring to Socrates in a philosophical context, scholars typically have in mind the character of Socrates as he is portrayed in Plato's dialogues, Plato (c. 429–347 BC) being a student of Socrates. Plato's seemingly early dialogues (e.g., *Euthydemus, Protagoras, Gorgias, Laches, Euthyphro, Apology,* and *Crito*) are often considered to be more or less accurate depictions of the historical Socrates. For discussion of Socratic ethical philosophy, see, e.g., Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith, "Socrates," in *The Blackwell Guide to Ancient Philosophy*, ed. Christopher Shields (Blackwell, 2003), 55–69; Jenny Bryan, "Socrates: Sources and Interpretations," in *The Routledge Companion to Ancient Philosophy*, ed. Frisbee Sheffield and James Warren (Routledge, 2013), 111–124, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315871363; John M. Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus* (Princeton University Press, 2012), ch. 2, https://doi.org/10.23943/princeton/9780691138602.001.0001; Terence Irwin, *Plato's Ethics* (Oxford University Press, 1995), ch. 2–4, https://doi.org/10.1093/0195086457.001.0001; and Andrew Mason, *Plato* (Routledge, 2016), ch. 2, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315711638.

2 "Meta" refers to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. All references to Aristotle's texts are taken from *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols. (Princeton University Press, 1984). "OM" refers to Cicero's *On Moral Ends*.

3 This is not to say that we find no discussion of ethics amongst Presocratic philosophers,

However, Democritus (c. 460–370 BC), a later Presocratic and contemporary of Socrates, also stands out in the realm of ethics at this time. The majority of fragments that represent the words of Democritus are in fact ethical in nature. Although the doxographical evidence is sparse concerning his ethical views, particularly when compared to his discussions of atomism and epistemology, there are nevertheless indications (as found in the writings of Stobaeus, Cicero, and Seneca) that Democritus offers a complete ethical theory. More precisely, there are reasons to think that he, like Socrates, offers an eudaimonistic ethical theory, that is, a framework aimed at happiness, flourishing, or living well (*eudaimonia*) as the highest good. On the other hand, it is possible that Democritus offers a variety of ethical ideas (possibly more than his Presocratic predecessors), but these ideas simply represent a practical list of more-or-less coherent maxims which lack sufficient unity, structure, or foundation to be considered systematic. In particular, we might wonder if Democritus' views on nature (namely, his commitment to atomism) and knowledge (namely, his position on the superiority of reason over sense perception) offer any necessary justification for his views on how we ought to live. As we will see in what follows, later ancient thinkers — such as Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Stoics — are eudaimonistic ethical theorists who necessarily draw on doctrines concerning reality, nature, knowledge, and psychology in defending their respective accounts of *eudaimonia*. With these points in mind, there are three central questions we should ask. First, do Democritus' ideas constitute a genuine ethical theory (the *Theory Question*)? Second, if there is an ethical system here, is it part of the eudaimonistic tradition of Democritus' contemporaries and successors, namely Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Stoics (the *Eudaimonism Question*)? Third, if we grant that Democritus offers a genuine eudaimonistic ethical theory, is there a necessary relationship between his ethics and the other areas of his philosophy, namely his metaphysics, physics, or epistemology (the *Strength Question*)?

In this paper I will offer answers to all three questions. Section two will outline four formal features that characterize an eudaimonistic ethical theory. Section three will establish what grounds we have for thinking Democritean ideas constitute an

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only that we either lack extant primary sources adequately attesting to their ethical thoughts or what we do have is too sparse to find anything more than a few disparate ethical ideas. For discussion of ethics amongst Presocratic philosophers, see, e.g., Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Routledge, 1982), ch. VII, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203007372; Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Harvard University Press, 1983); G. S. Kirk et al., eds. and trans., *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge University Press, 1983); and Richard McKirahan, "Presocratic Philosophy," i*n The Blackwell Guide to Ancient Philosophy* (Blackwell, 2003), 5–26. Barnes (*The Presocratic*, 96–106) argues that, while the Presocratics in general have little to offer in the realm of ethics, nevertheless Empedocles (through his assertion that we should not kill animals due to metempsychosis) and Heraclitus (through the apparent message of various fragments to live in harmony with the universal laws of the *Logos*) offer something noteworthy, if not well-reasoned, systematic, or complete.

eudaimonistic ethical theory in relation to these formal features. Section four will discuss reasons to doubt that Democritean ethics is eudaimonistic or an ethical theory at all, while section five will address these reasons for doubt, further arguing in favor of the eudaimonistic reading. Finally, section six will examine reasons in favor of and against reading a meaningful connection between the ethical and non-ethical doctrines in Democritus' philosophy. Ultimately, my position will be that Democritean ethics does indeed represent an eudaimonistic ethical theory, due to Democritus' conception of cheerfulness (*euthumia*) as a (i) partly objective (i.e., naturalistic), (ii) partly subjective (i.e., affective), (iii) structurally stable, and (iv) exclusively intrinsically valuable good. However, Democritus' ethical theory is weakly eudaimonistic, in the sense that his account of cheerfulness as the highest good is not necessarily or explicitly connected to his non-ethical (namely, metaphysical, physical, and epistemological) views.

II. THE FORMAL STRUCTURE OF EUDAIMONISM

In order to evaluate whether Democritus' ethical ideas constitute a theory, and a eudaimonistic one at that, we first need to establish more precisely what we mean by an "ethical theory" and "eudaimonism" in this context. According to Gosling and Taylor, an ethical theory is "a[n] [explicit] test or criterion to be applied in deciding questions of conduct."[4] It provides an explicit and stable foundation upon which to clearly evaluate the appropriateness (i.e., goodness) or inappropriateness (i.e., badness) of actions.

Eudaimonism is a particular kind of ethical theory — one which is focused primarily on well-being. The foundation of an eudaimonistic ethical theory is happiness, flourishing, or living well (*eudaimonia*). More precisely, eudaimonistic happiness consists of (at least) four basic features.[5] First, eudaimonists partly ground happiness (i) objectively in certain key features of human nature. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Stoics, for example, all conceive of happiness in terms of the well-being of the human soul (particularly the mind) and how the health of the soul impacts the health of the body and one's interactions with the world. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics argue that happiness consists in virtue as excellently rational dispositions or activities of

4 J. C. B. Gosling and C. C. W. Taylor, *The Greeks on Pleasure* (Oxford University Press, 1982), 29, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198246664.001.0001.

5 For comprehensive discussion of ancient moral theory, see, e.g., Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (Oxford University Press, 1993); Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom*; Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, translated by Michael Chase (Harvard University Press, 2002); Martha Craven Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton University Press, 1994), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt2tt8tt; A. W. Price, *Virtue and Reason in Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford University Press, 2011), https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199609611.001.0001. I also discuss these four formal features, and the reasoning behind them, in greater detail in Brandon Smith, *The Search for Mind-Body Flourishing in Spinoza's Eudaimonism* (Brill, forthcoming).

the soul (*Apology* 30b; *Euthydemus* 278e–282a; *Republic* IV–VII, IX; NE I; VI; X; DL VII.85–102, 125–126), while Epicurus argues that happiness is constituted by (with the instrumental assistance of virtue) the enjoyment of freedom from pain in the body and disturbance in the soul (LM §127–132).[6]

Second, eudaimonists partly ground happiness (ii) subjectively in the beliefs or feelings of a subject. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics agree that true virtue requires an individual to deliberately pursue and take pleasure in virtue for its own sake, and, in turn, that happiness is necessarily a pleasant state of being. Epicurus also considers happiness necessarily pleasant, but he instead argues that happiness is constituted by a certain form of pleasure. The beliefs/feelings of a subject therefore play a *necessary* role in eudaimonistic happiness, because I cannot be happy if I do not believe/feel I am happy. However, in light of the naturalistic foundation of happiness, beliefs and feelings are *not sufficient* for eudaimonistic happiness, because our beliefs can be false and we can misunderstand what our feelings truly represent relative to our nature. For example, Aristotle critiques sensual pleasure, wealth, and honor as traditional candidates for happiness as the highest good (NE I.4–5), Epicurus addresses different kinds of desire and pleasure that we fail to distinguish in our attempts to live happily (LM §127–132), and the Stoics criticize the traditional view that external things have any direct and necessary role in achieving or hindering happiness (HB 1.1–4; DL VII.102, 104).[7] In other words, just because I believe/feel I am happy does not entail that I am actually happy. Eudaimonism consequently is partly objective and partly subjective insofar as both human nature and the beliefs/feelings of the subject play a crucial role in happiness.

Third, eudaimonists are concerned with (iii) the overall structure of one's life. For them, true happiness is not something momentary or intermittent, but rather "something permanent and by no means easily changed" (NE I.10.1100b2–3). Eudaimonistic happiness is a stable state of being that determines the way in which one approaches and organizes their life overall. The priority here is the *structural quality* of one's life rather than its length — it is better to spend one day living in a manner harmonious with my natural flourishing than 60 years of instability, self-destruction, or suffering. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics structure life around the possession of virtue as a stable and excellent disposition of the soul (*Apology* 36b–d, 38a; NE I.10.1100b4–1101a6; DL VII.89), while Epicurus structures life around the stable pleasures of freedom from bodily and mental suffering instead of the transient pleasures of mere sensation or satisfaction of desire (LM §126–132).

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6 "NE" refers to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. "DL" refers to Diogenes *Laertius's Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. "LM" refers to Epicurus's *Letter to Menoeceus*. All references to Epicurus's texts can be found in *The Epicurus Reader: Selected Writings and Testimonia*, eds. and trans. Brad Inwood and L. P. Gerson (Hackett, 1994).

7 "HB" refers to Epictetus' *Handbook*.

Finally, and most famously, eudaimonists consider happiness (iv) the highest good. The highest good is that which is:

(1) Intrinsically valuable (NE I.2.1094a18–19);
(2) Only intrinsically, and not instrumentally, valuable (NE I.2.1097a34–1097b1; L&S §21A1, 63A);[8]
(3) The source of value for all other things (NE I.2.1094a19);
(4) The only ultimate end of value (NE I.2.1094a20); and
(5) Self-sufficient in the sense that it is always in itself desirable and fulfilling (NE I.2.1097b14–15; LM §122)

Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics all consider virtue to be this highest good, meaning that it is pursued purely for its own sake, and others things like pleasure, wealth, and social status ultimately derive their value from their role in promoting virtue (even if such things can also be intrinsically valuable). Epicurus, conversely, argues that the highest good is pleasure and that virtue and all other things derive their value from their role in promoting freedom from bodily/mental suffering (LM §127–132).

At this juncture, it is important to distinguish between the *form* and *content* of eudaimonistic accounts.[9] Form is the collection of features that all eudaimonists share in common that makes them eudaimonists. Content is those features that particular eudaimonists add to this general structure that distinguishes them from each other in their respective views on eudaimonistic happiness. The four aforementioned features are formal features of eudaimonism because they are foundational features shared by multiple eudaimonists — in this case Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Stoics.[10] Content-wise, however, these thinkers differ from each other in crucial ways. For

8 "L&S" refers to Long & Sedley's *The Hellenistic Philosophers*.

9 For further discussion of the distinction between form and content in eudaimonism, see Annas, *The Morality of Happiness*; and Jon Miller, "A Distinction Regarding Happiness in Ancient Philosophy," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 77, no. 2 (2010): 595–624, https://doi.org/10.1353/sor.2010.0075. Miller offers the following formal criteria for eudaimonistic happiness: (F1) the highest good, (F2) the ultimate end, (F3) the goal of ethics, (F4) a stable state of being, (F5) realized by a universal set of necessary and sufficient conditions, and (F6) not constituted by a transient feeling. Concerning my own formal criteria, (F1)–(F3) can be linked to (iv), (F4) to (ii) and (iii), and (F5) to (i)–(iv). Miller emphasizes the stability, objective intrinsic value, and overarching ethical status of eudaimonistic happiness. I seek to emphasize not only these features, but also to stress that eudaimonistic happiness combines both objective (i.e., naturalistic) and subjective (i.e., affective) considerations. I omit something akin to (F6) from my criteria to avoid creating the false impression that no kind of feeling can constitute eudaimonistic happiness. Epicurus, for example, will agree that happiness does not consist in a transient (kinetic) feeling, but he nevertheless argues that happiness is constituted by some sort of stable feeling, namely the (katastematic) enjoyment of freedom from mental and bodily suffering (LM §128, 131). Miller ("A Distinction," 607–608) also acknowledges this feature of Epicureanism.

10 Other ancient moral thinkers who are arguably eudaimonists are the Cynics DL VI.104–105; M. D. Usher, *How to Say No: An Ancient Guide to the Art of Cynicism* (Princeton University Press, 2022), 163–175, https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691229867) and Pyrrhonian

example, Aristotle argues that happiness consists of morally virtuous, practically wise, or theoretically wise activities aided by a multitude of external goods. The Stoics argue that happiness consists of mere virtuous dispositions with no necessary reliance on external things. Epicurus argues that happiness consists of certain kinds of pleasures with some necessary reliance on external goods.

In examining Democritus' ethical views, then, we want to evaluate more precisely whether he shares with Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Stoics the foundational view that happiness is (i) partly objective (i.e., naturalistic), (ii) partly subjective (i.e., affective), (iii) structurally stable, and (iv) exclusively intrinsically good. Within this foundation, there is room for Democritus to agree and disagree with these thinkers in various ways while still remaining an eudaimonist.

III. EVIDENCE FOR DEMOCRITEAN EUDAIMONISM

Now that we have established our key concepts, let us see if any potential foundation for an eudaimonistic theory can be found in Democritus' ethical ideas. Democritus is said by Clement to have written an ethical "work on the end."[11] Diogenes Laertius refers to this end as the "end of action" (DL IX.45) and Epiphanius refers to it as the "single end" of everything.[12] Clement indicates that Democritus gave serious philosophical thought to some kind of ethical foundation. Diogenes Laertius and Epiphanius indicate that this end may have served as the ultimate ethical goal or standard of evaluation for actions and other things (e.g., possessions or pursuits). This fits with Cicero's description of Democritus' ethical end as "the supreme good" and the "blessed [i.e., happiest] life."[13] Democritus' ultimate ethical end and supreme good is more precisely identified with *euesto* ("well-being") and *euthumia* ("cheerfulness" or "tranquility").[14] Cheerfulness is described as a healthy, untroubled, tranquil state of the soul that is "calm and strong" (DL IX.45), "good," and "stable."[15] Democritus is said to have written a book on this healthy state of the soul, titled *Peri Euthumias* (*On Cheerfulness*).[16] The doxographical

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Sceptics (L&S §1–3, 71–72). An example of ancient thinkers who are not eudaimonists are the Cyrenaics, who deny that happiness (understood as the mere totality of particular pleasures) is (iv) the highest good and do not conceive of the highest good (understood as pleasurable sensations in the present) as (iii) a structurally stable condition (DL VI.86ff., X.136–137).

11 C.C.W. Taylor, trans. *The Atomists: Leucippus and Democritus* (University of Toronto, 1999), §190, https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442671102. References to Taylor including the "§" symbol refer to those passages found in the "Testimonia" section of the text. Those without this symbol refer to page numbers in the "Commentary" section.

12 Ibid., §193.

13 Ibid., *The Atomists*, §188b.

14 Ibid., *The Atomists*, §188a–190; DL IX.45.

15 Ibid., *The Atomists*, §188b–188c.

16 Ibid., *The Atomists*, §188c; DL IX.45. It is not clear if the "work on the end" that Clement

evidence consequently points to Democritus offering an eudaimonistic ethical theory.

Moving to the ethical fragments which convey Democritus' own words, he tells us foundationally that "[b]lessedness [*eudaimonie*] and wretchedness belong to the soul" (D24) rather than to the body or external objects (D34, D25), because the "perfection of the soul puts right the bad state of the dwelling [i.e., the body, the dwelling-place of the soul], but strength of the dwelling without thought does not make the soul any better" (D52).[17] In line with the aforementioned doxographical reports, we find that Democritus is concerned with *eudaimonia*, which he says is based in the well-being of the soul. It should be noted that the well-being of the soul is described in terms of both *euthumia* and *eudaimonia*, making these terms equivalent in this context. Moreover, the soul is given ethical priority here on the grounds that the body can promote its own well-being but cannot in itself render the soul healthy, while the soul has the power to promote its own health as well as that of the body. If one is concerned with one's well-being overall, then, Democritus argues, their attention should focus on the soul. We are also told that "[t]he best thing for [the soul of] a man is to live his life as cheerfully [*euthumethenti*] as possible, and with the least distress" (D53), the cheerful (*euthumos*) person being "strong and free from care" (D39). The core of happiness is, in other words, a tranquil mind, with unhappiness (wretchedness) residing in mental distress.

This focus on the well-being of the soul and the tranquility of the mind leads to a discussion of character. The cheerful (*euthumos*) or happy (*eudaimon*) person is one who "undertakes right and lawful deeds," while the distressed or unhappy person "takes no heed of what is right and does not do what [they] should" (D39). The cheerful person possesses an untroubled mind and a virtuous character, while the distressed person's vicious character is troubled and immoral. For example, justice is linked to "an untroubled mind" (D79), while injustice is linked to envy, rivalry, selfishness, and a lack of personal shame that creates civil strife and distress for everyone (D109, D113, D128). We achieve and express this untroubled and virtuous character primarily through reason. According to Democritus, we suffer harm and ultimately distress through "blindness of mind and lack of judgment" (D40). A mind that fails to reason, or poorly reasons in making judgments, harms one's soul and overall well-being. This harm can manifest itself simply in the soul, or in both the soul and the body. The unwise tend to trouble their minds by focusing on the good fortune and flourishing of others, wishing they were in the same position (D55).

The unwise also focus on avoiding or delaying death and achieving a pleasant afterlife

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refers to is the same work as the book on cheerfulness, or if they refer to two distinct texts. Diogenes Laertius seemingly lists all the Democritean works, but does not refer to a text with an explicit title on the end (DL IX.46). Consequently, it seems likely that this work on the end is the work on cheerfulness.

17 "D" refers to those passages from "Fragments: Text and Translation" in Taylor, *The Atomists*.

as their ultimate goal (D67, D69–70, D149). As a result, they are less focused on the quality of their life in itself and more on simply escaping death and an unpleasant afterlife, leading to a fearful and overall distressing existence for their soul. Finally, when the body desires things that are unhealthy for it or that cannot easily or reliably be acquired, the fault is not with the body, but rather "a bad state of mind" through poor judgment (D87; see also D34). For Democritus, one who lacks wisdom (i.e., the distressed person) is passive in their life and thus lacks self-sufficiency. The quality of their life is subject to the circumstantial whims of fortune, instead of their own abilities through "the gifts of wisdom" (D61; see also D32, D41, D72–73, D75, D98).

The cheerful person is, in other words, wise. They possess "prudence" in the form of "intelligent clear-sightedness" (D29), and this wisdom, as medicine, "frees [their] soul from passions" that disrupt its stability, tranquility, and self-sufficiency (D30; see also D155). The core of their wisdom is understanding how to use things properly.[18] Democritus points out that "[f]rom the very same things as benefit us we may also get evils" (D37) and that "[e]vils [only] accrue to people from good things, when one does not know how to direct the good things or possess them advantageously" (D38). What Democritus wants to emphasize here is that the things we consider beneficial can be harmful if we use them improperly (e.g., food and money; see D93, D146). To use something improperly (i.e., harmfully) is to use it immoderately; conversely, to use it correctly (i.e., beneficially) is to use it moderately. Cheerfulness is acquired through "moderation in pleasure and by proportion in one's life; excess and deficiency are apt to fluctuate and cause great changes in the soul. And souls which change over great intervals are neither stable nor cheerful" (D55; see also D27).

Distress, and in turn unhappiness, results from poorly reasoned behaviour which disrupts (through excess or deficiency) not only the health of the body in many cases, but, more crucially, the health of the soul. The cheerful person, on the other hand, prudently reasons out the mean between these extremes to evaluate how to moderately make use of some valuable object to promote the health of the body and the soul. Take the obvious example of food: a distressed person fails to understand to what extent or in what sense what they eat is beneficial to their overall well-being, in which case they are led to excess. This can lead to bodily pain from overeating (D97) or mental distress and obsession from realizing how brief is the pleasure of satisfying one's hunger (D99). A cheerful person, conversely, understands precisely how to nourish themselves with various kinds of food, never under or over-valuing the health benefits of what they eat. They also do not trouble themselves with what others might have that they do not. Instead, they "set [their] mind on what is possible and [are] content with what [they]

18 Courage is also linked to wisdom: "he who acts rightly from understanding and knowledge proves to be at the same time courageous and right-minded" (D46).

ha[ve] . . . so that what [they] ha[ve] and [possess] will seem great and enviable'" (D55). This ultimately brings greater and more consistent pleasure (D75). The cheerful person knows how to be moderate and takes profound and stable pleasure in the moderate amount that they possess.

Pleasure, in fact, serves as the standard for prudently evaluating what is moderate and immoderate. Democritus tells us that "[j]oy and sorrow are the distinguishing mark of things beneficial and harmful," respectively (D26). What is beneficial will bring about pleasure and what is harmful will bring about pain.[19] However, Democritus clarifies that "[o]ne should choose, not every pleasure, but pleasure in what is fine" (D71). Thus, not all pleasures are equally good. As discussed above, the ethical priority is the soul over the body. The kind of pleasure that is valued most is the tranquility of mind that constitutes happiness. Democritus says that distress fundamentally comes from preoccupation with bodily pleasures (D34, D53).

In line with this sentiment, Taylor argues that Democritus draws a distinction between the localized pleasures of day-to-day life and the global pleasure of living a good life as a whole.[20] D71 refers to localized pleasure, which "may obviously be pleasant in itself and yet tend to make one's life as a whole unpleasant," while D26 refers to global pleasure, where the standard of usefulness is based on whether something "is likely to make one's life as a whole more or less pleasant." Many localized pleasures (e.g., the excessive bodily pleasure of overeating) may be genuinely pleasant in a given moment, but will not promote a good or cheerful life overall. Pleasure and pain here serve as a global standard for evaluating what is useful and what is harmful in promoting a cheerful life. Localized pleasures that cause pain or distress and disrupt the healthy, tranquil structure of one's life are judged to be bad, while localized pleasures that are harmonious with the cheerful life structure are judged to be good. Pleasure plays an important ethical role in promoting happiness for Democritus, but this fact does not mean that pleasures are ethically equal. In fact, unhappiness qua distress is considered the result of prioritizing localized bodily pleasures over the global pleasure of a healthy soul.

In light of these considerations about pleasure, the prudent person performs what Stobaeus refers to as a rational "distinction and discrimination of pleasures."[21] They recognize the ethical superiority of mental pleasure over localized bodily pleasure for the sake of the global pleasure of cheerfulness. Moderation is therefore beneficial because it brings to the body pleasures free from pain and to the mind a tranquil appreciation of what one has; this makes for a stably healthy, and thus happy, body and soul. Immod-

19 For further discussion of the relationship between pleasure and cheerfulness, and the potential tension between their respective roles, see Gosling and Taylor, *The Greeks*, ch. 2.

20 C. C. W. Taylor, "Pleasure, Knowledge and Sensation in Democritus," *Phronesis* 12, no. 1 (1967): 6–27, https://doi.org/10.1163/156852867x00020.

21 Taylor, *The Atomists*, §189.

erate behaviour, however, is deemed harmful because it brings (through poor reasoning about pleasures) pains of excess or deficiency to the body. With respect to the mind, immoderacy brings about distress in the form of an obsession with trying to excessively or deficiently appease one's various localized bodily desires or to obtain what others have.[22] Through a moderate state of character, one's global enjoyment of bodily and mental pleasures is self-sufficient in the sense that the health of their body and soul is stably dependent upon their own rational abilities instead of the instability of fortune. In summary, cheerfulness as mental tranquility is achieved through rational deliberation about the differing values of pleasures, which leads to moderation and self-sufficiency.

Ultimately, from this discussion of cheerfulness, we see significant evidence of Democritean ethics as an eudaimonistic ethical theory. First, Democritus (i) objectively grounds his ethical account of well-being (*euesto*), blessedness/happiness (*eudaimonia*), or cheerfulness (*euthumia*) in naturalistic discussion of the human body and soul, with a focus on promoting the health of the soul through virtue, which in turn brings out about health in the body, cheerfulness in the soul, and an overall state of well-being. Wretchedness or unhappiness (i.e., distress in the soul) is shown to be the result of an erroneous and vicious focus on the well-being and pleasures of the body over, or to the exclusion of, the well-being and pleasures of the soul. It is through appeal to the relationship between the human soul and body, then, that Democritus explains how we ought and ought not to live ethically.

Second, there is (ii) a subjective qua affective dimension to Democritean ethics insofar as the standard of goodness and badness is said to be pleasure and pain respectively and the ultimate good is argued to be a certain kind of pleasure in the soul: cheerfulness as mental tranquility. While human happiness is based on what is and is not in harmony with the well-being of the soul, Democritus is also clear that happiness is not possible if the subject does not consciously enjoy the flourishing of their soul through a virtuous character (i.e., healthy and beneficial dispositions with respect to thinking, feeling, and acting).

Third, Democritus' primary ethical concern is not with the day-to-day contingencies of life or localized pleasures, but instead (iii) one's life as a whole and the global pleasure of cheerfulness. Cheerfulness is considered the ultimate pleasure, good, and constituent of happiness because it is a stable and reliable state of the soul which is not easily impeded or destroyed by the contingencies of life. In fact, a life structured around the promotion of cheerfulness can be considered the best and happiest sort of life because it offers the most consistent enjoyment of bodily and mental health. A wretched life, in contrast, is the worst and unhappiest sort of life because it consists of fluctuating health

22 This moderation is also linked to courage: "The courageous man is he who overcomes, not only the enemy, but pleasures also" (D78).

and illness, pleasure and pain, in the soul and body, and thus the unstable enjoyment of the goods of life.

Finally, Democritus is clear that happiness as cheerfulness is (iv) the highest good or ultimate ethical end. (1) Cheerfulness is objectively intrinsically valuable, (2) neither the doxographical reports nor the fragments give us reason to think cheerfulness has any instrumental value, (3) we see that other things are pursued and valued based on their relationship to cheerfulness, (4) nothing else seems to have the same centrality as cheerfulness in what Democritus says, and (5) the cheerful life is in itself fulfilling because we lack nothing meaningful once we have stable mental tranquility.

The *Theory Question* and *Eudaimonism Question* can therefore be answered in the affirmative: Democritean ethics is an eudaimonistic ethical theory insofar as Democritus' account of cheerfulness adheres to all four formal features of eudaimonism.

IV. AGAINST THE EUDAIMONISTIC READING

Now that we have examined reasons for thinking of Democritean ethics as eudaimonistic, let us examine some noteworthy objections to this reading. Cyril Bailey, Charles H. Kahn, and Gisela Striker all deny that the aforementioned works of Democritus constitute a genuinely eudaimonistic ethical theory. The primary objection here is that many doxographers offer anachronistic descriptions of Democritean ethics. Because eudaimonistic ethical philosophers, such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, followed so closely after Democritus and doxographers found so many conceptual similarities between Democritus and Epicurus, they could not help but assume that Democritus must be an eudaimonist, as well.

Bailey thinks that the fragments provide us with a coherent collection of ideas and that cheerfulness functions as a central concept, but he argues that this collection merely represents a coherent practical guide to life, not a true ethical theory. The "detached aphorisms" of Democritus' fragments do not offer a "logically-worked out system."[23] We do not find in these fragments the kind of systematic reasoning present in Platonic dialogues like the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* or Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.[24] We simply have disparate ethical ideas that can be coherently arranged to serve as practical guidance to a cheerful (i.e., stably tranquil) life.

What about Democritus' reported work on cheerfulness? The existence of this text might point to more than just anachronism on the part of later writers. Striker, however, does not consider this convincing evidence. She argues that we have no reason to think

23 Cyril Bailey, *The Greek Atomists and Epicurus: A Study* (Russell & Russell, 1928), 191.

24 All references to Plato's works are taken from Plato, *Plato: Complete Works*, eds. John M. Cooper and D.S. Hutchison (Hackett, 1997).

On Cheerfulness was a systematic ethical analysis akin to the works of Plato or Aristotle.[25] The fragments, our main existing evidence, also do not provide a clear argument for *eudaimonia* or *euthumia* as the highest good, only assertions. Furthermore, Aristotle, well-known for addressing the views of his predecessors on a given topic, seems to consider only Socrates and Plato predecessors in the realm of ethics. We also do not find explicit discussion of any of the formal criteria for the highest good posited by Aristotle[26] and Striker claims that "cheerfulness or peace of mind could hardly be argued to meet the exacting standards that Aristotle sets up for the highest good."[27] In line with this point, while Cicero says that Democritus considered cheerfulness the "supreme good," he also describes what Democritus had to say about cheerfulness as "not altogether polished," particularly in elucidating the nature of virtue in relation to cheerfulness.[28] Cicero's dissatisfaction with Democritus' ethical outline of cheerfulness and virtue may imply that there is too little analysis of cheerfulness as the highest good to classify Democritus' ethical ideas as truly theoretical, systematic, or justified. Consequently, even if we grant that Democritus' text or his fragments contain ideas compatible with or reminiscent of eudaimonism, they may not represent clear and sufficient evidence for thinking that Democritus laid out an ethical theory at all, let alone one akin to eudaimonism.

According to Kahn, discussions of self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*) are just as prevalent as cheerfulness in the fragments, so it is not clear that cheerfulness even holds the central importance attributed to it by doxographers.[29] Explicit references to self-sufficiency are found in D41 ("Fortune gives great gifts, but is undependable, while nature is self-sufficient") and D74 ("Fortune provides a lavish table, self-control a sufficient one"). D41 and D74 provide us with an opposition between fortune and self-sufficiency. The former is an unstable condition prone to causing distress and the latter is a stable condition that comes from one's own rational abilities. Kahn argues that self-sufficiency is also implied in D29's assertion that "[p]eople fashioned an image of fortune as an excuse for their own folly . . . [and lack of] intelligent clear-sightedness" and Fr. 146: "The Reason within the soul, accustoming itself to derive its pleasures from itself."[30] Both passages emphasize the importance of reason in rendering one self-sufficient, with a focus on fortune imply-

25 Gisela Striker, "*Ataraxia*: Happiness as Tranquility," *The Monist* 73, no. 1 (1990): 98, https://doi.org/10.5840/monist199073121.

26 Julia Annas, "Democritus and Eudaimonism," in *Presocratic Philosophy: Essays in Honour of Alexander Mourelatos*, eds. Daniel W. Graham and Victor Caston (Routledge, 2017), 179–180, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315246123-21.

27 Striker, "*Ataraxia*," 98.

28 Taylor, *The Atomists*, §188b.

29 Charles H. Kahn, "Democritus and the Origins of Moral Psychology," *The American Journal of Philology* 106, no. 1 (1985): 26, https://doi.org/10.2307/295049.

30 Here "Fr." refers to those Democritean fragments collected in Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Harvard University Press, 1983).

ing a lack of independence or a failure to appreciate one's potential for self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency does not seem any less important than cheerfulness in the fragments. In Kahn's view, it is only when we interpret the fragments from a prejudiced, anachronistic standpoint that cheerfulness becomes the *supreme* good, instead of merely *a* good. It would then be equally plausible to say that the value of reason, moderation, and good conduct towards others is derived from self-sufficiency. Cheerfulness in this case could be seen as a mere positive effect of being self-sufficient or as a separate end altogether, since we are not here assuming Democritus posits a single ultimate end.

At the heart of this objection of anachronism is the suspicion that doxographers are conflating Epicurean and Democritean ethical ideas. It is possible that, because Epicurus considers mental tranquility (*ataraxia*) the highest good (LM §128) and Democritus similarly emphasizes the value of cheerfulness (*euthumia*) as mental tranquility, doxographers mistakenly assumed Democritus also considers tranquility the ultimate ethical end. It is true that Epicurus seems to have been heavily influenced by Democritus in his atomism, epistemology, psychology, and theology.[31] As a result, it would not be unreasonable to think that there is an ethical link between them as well, particularly because of this shared emphasis on tranquility. Stobaeus, in his description of Democritean ethics, in fact links cheerfulness (*euthumia*) to *ataraxia*.[32] Even Kahn thinks that Democritus greatly influenced Epicurus ethically.[33] His point, however, is that Epicurus did not receive the concept of an ultimate end from Democritus; such influences would have come from Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. In line with this view, Striker claims that Epicurus is "probably the first philosopher who tried to bring tranquility into the framework of an eudaimonist theory."[34] Epicurus could be understood, then, to have combined the Democritean concept of *euthumia* with the systematic eudaimonistic criteria of Aristotle. Furthermore, even Gosling and Taylor, who do read Democritean ethics as an eudaimonistic ethical theory, concede that Stobaeus' use of *ataraxia* in conjunction with *euthumia* is likely an Epicurean-influenced anachronism, since the Democritean fragments themselves never employ the term *ataraxia*.[35] In sum, there are compelling reasons to doubt that Democritean ethics is eudaimonistic or an ethical theory at all, and, further, to think that the eudaimonistic reading is motivated by anachronism.

V. FURTHER DEFENSE OF DEMOCRITEAN EUDAIMONISM

31 For comprehensive discussion of the links between Democritean philosophy and Epicurean philosophy, see, e.g., Bailey, *The Greek*; and David J. Furley, *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists* (Princeton University Press, 1967), https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400879458.

32 Taylor, *The Atomists*, §189.

33 Kahn, "Democritus," 3.

34 Striker, "*Ataraxia*," 99.

35 Gosling and Taylor, *The Greeks*, 30.

While these objections are thought-provoking, I do not think that they ultimately undermine an eudaimonistic reading of Democritus. Cicero may be correct when he describes Democritus' ethical ideas as lacking in sophistication. However, a lack of sophistication or overall "polish" in one's ethical ideas does not preclude those ideas from being theoretical. Cicero himself describes cheerfulness as the "supreme good" for Democritus. His criticism may not be that Democritus failed to be systematic at all, but rather that he was inadequately systematic compared to his ethical successors, like Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus. It would also be anachronistic to reject Democritus' ethical ideas as theoretical simply because they do not match the comprehensive analyses of someone like Aristotle. The question is not whether Democritus was equally as philosophically sophisticated as Plato or Aristotle, but, more conservatively, whether he had any kind of ethical or eudaimonistic theory at all.

With that said, Bailey is correct in that the Democritean fragments do not provide us with clear ethical arguments, particularly for cheerfulness as the ultimate ethical end, and, as Striker says, we cannot be certain that *On Cheerfulness* was a treatise in the traditional argumentative sense. Ancient doxographers may have read far too much structure into Democritus' ideas, particularly if they mistakenly imposed Epicurean ideas onto them. On the other hand, Annas says that:

> "[i]t is unclear why being in the same intellectual tradition as someone is [in itself] held to be a source of bias; it could equally well be argued that the testimony of the Hellenistic authors is especially reliable on this point, since they are in a better position than we are to recognize that a philosopher belongs to their own (eudaimonistic) tradition."[36]

It is important to keep in mind that ancient philosophers and doxographers had more to work with textually from Democritus than we do, and that they were far more intimately acquainted with the eudaimonistic tradition than we are. They were not drawing on mere fragments. Some of them may indeed have had access to parts, if not all, of *On Cheerfulness*. Seneca's praise of this text as "a splendid book" gives some indication that he at least had perused it.[37] Cicero is one of our greatest ancient sources for analysis of eudaimonistic frameworks. Admittedly, he does not give Democritus the degree of ethical attention given to the Peripatetics, Sceptics, Epicureans, and Stoics, but he does nevertheless feel the need to reference Democritus in this ethical context and to describe the latter's notion of the cheerful life as the "supreme good." Cicero's lack of robust analysis concerning Democritean ethics can be explained by the fact that there were no ethical followers of Democritus in his time (except Epicureans, by virtue of whatever

36 Annas, "Democritus," 171.

37 Taylor, *The Atomists*, §188c.

influences Epicurus drew from him), as well as the aforementioned point that Cicero found Democritean ethics comparatively less sophisticated than these other — currently active — moral philosophies.

However, what about Aristotle's apparent lack of engagement with Democritean ethics? Aristotle contended with past philosophers on various subjects. He was much closer in time to Democritus, and thus would have had greater access to texts and direct reports about the latter. Aristotle in fact provides rich discussion of Democritean atomism in *Physics* (I.2–6), *On the Heavens* (III.2, 4, 7), and *On Generation and Corruption* (I.2, 8; IV.6). However, we do not find the same engagement with Democritus in an ethical context in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (or even his potentially earlier text, the *Eudemian Ethics*). This may imply that Democritus had nothing philosophically relevant to say in the realm of ethics, especially when compared to his atomism. While noteworthy, this fact is not necessarily damning. More accurately, Aristotle's apparent lack of ethical engagement with Democritus only tells us that *Aristotle* may not have thought that Democritus had anything noteworthy to say as a moral philosopher, not that Democritus objectively lacked a genuine ethical theory. Possibly, Aristotle felt that Democritus had said nothing that was not said in a more sophisticated way by Socrates or Plato (in particular Plato), so he engaged with what he considered the superior authority on various issues.[38] Alternatively, the conclusion that Aristotle gave little attention to Democritean ethics may be premature. Taylor points out that Aristotle was reported to have written two lost works on Democritus[39] and we cannot rule out the possibility that at least one of those works may have engaged with Democritean ethics.[40]

Ultimately, the biggest issue here is lack of certainty, due to the sparsity of our Democritean sources. We do not know beyond reasonable doubt whether Democritus took the fragments we have to be part of a fully formed ethical theory or mere practical advice, or if *On Cheerfulness* was written either to formally defend an eudaimonistic ethical theory or simply to make certain ethical claims. Most of the evidence, as we have seen, can be read to support both views. I do not think it is constructive then, based on these considerations, to debate Democritus' intentions. Instead, we should ask a more straightforward question: can an eudaimonistic ethical theory be effectively drawn out of what Democritus says in the extant fragments? Would we, in principle, have a plausible (i) naturalistic and (ii) affective standard by which to (iv) evaluate our actions and (iii) stably structure our lives for the sake of living well? As Section three shows in terms of Democritus' conception of cheerfulness, the answer to this question is yes. Those actions

38 For discussion of Democritus' parallels with Socrates and Plato, see, e.g., Annas, "Democritus"; and Taylor, *The Atomists*, §189.

39 Taylor, *The Atomists*, 224.

40 Ibid., §44a.

and things that stably promote the health or tranquility of the soul would be considered good and thus worth pursuing, while those actions and things which were unreliable in promoting tranquility (either because they are circumstantially or inherently distressing) would be considered bad and thus worth either avoiding or using cautiously.

Recall that Kahn argues self-sufficiency has the same kind of centrality in the ethical fragments as cheerfulness. Democritus certainly emphasizes the ethical importance of self-sufficiency, and an ethical theory grounded in self-sufficiency would be plausible, but it is not clear that the emphasis on self-sufficiency in Democritus' fragments makes self-sufficiency ethically prior or equal to cheerfulness. A fragment on self-sufficiency that Kahn overlooks is Fr. 209: "For a self-sufficiency in food, there is never a 'short night.' (i.e. those who have independence of means do not suffer from insomnia)." Here, Democritus claims that self-sufficiency brings a tranquil sleep in the form of a long night, in contrast to a disturbed sleep represented by a short night. Democritus in other words indicates a connection between self-sufficiency and tranquility. This fragment suggests that tranquility is no less important than self-sufficiency and that the value of self-sufficiency partly derives from the tranquility that it brings to the soul. This point is further reinforced by Democritus' claims that (1) "[j]oy and sorrow are the distinguishing mark of things beneficial [i.e., good] and harmful [i.e., bad]" (D26) and (2) "[t]he best thing for [the soul of] a man is to live his life as cheerfully as possible" (D53). The foundation of value is pleasure and the most beneficial good is cheerfulness as a form of pleasure. Self-sufficiency is also beneficial for Democritus, but he does not describe it as the "best thing" and its role in promoting cheerfulness is obvious, whereas it is less clear that we pursue tranquility for the sake of being self-sufficient. These three passages give us good reason to think of cheerfulness then as the ultimate ethical end (i.e., the only exclusively intrinsically valuable good) for Democritus, despite his emphasis on the intrinsic value of self-sufficiency.

In sum, even though we cannot say with certainty that Democritus had theoretical or eudaimonistic intentions or that his ethical works truly argued for cheerfulness as the highest good, the fragments and doxographical reports do nevertheless enable us to effectively derive from them an eudaimonistic ethical theory — in line with (i)–(iv) — which conceives of the happy life as the life of a stably cheerful soul.

VI. WEAK EUDAIMONISM OR STRONG EUDAIMONISM?

Having answered the *Theory Question* and *Eudaimonism Question* in the affirmative, the final step is to answer the *Strength Question*: is there a necessary relationship between Democritus' eudaimonism and the other non-ethical areas of his philosophy, in particular his metaphysics, physics, and epistemology?

To begin, let us distinguish between *weak eudaimonism* and *strong eudaimonism*.

Weak eudaimonism is an ethical view that is simply concerned with happiness as the highest good, with no necessary reliance on any other fully developed areas of philosophical thought (e.g., metaphysics, physics, epistemology, psychology, etc.). Socrates (at least as he is portrayed by Plato in the latter's early dialogues; see note 1) is arguably a weak eudaimonist. He largely concerns himself with the discovery of ethical truths about the virtue and happiness of the human soul (*Apology* 29d–38a) with no attempt to arrive at definitive, robust conclusions about the cosmos, the natural world, or human nature (*Apology* 19b–c, 29a–c; *Phaedo* 96a–100a).[41] Strong eudaimonism, conversely, represents an ethical philosophy that is necessarily intertwined with other philosophical disciplines, in the sense that its conception of happiness cannot be adequately understood or justified without appealing to these other non-ethical disciplines.

Examples of strong eudaimonists are Plato and Aristotle.[42] In Plato, happiness is closely linked to his metaphysical theory of Forms through knowledge of the Form of the Good or Beauty (*Timaeus* 90b–d; *Republic* V–VII; *Symposium* 204a–205a, 210e–211e) and his tripartite conception of the human soul (*Republic* IV), in particular the importance of having a rationally balanced (just) soul (*Republic* IX). Aristotle argues that contemplation of scientific (i.e., eternal) truths about God, the celestial bodies, and the natural world constitutes the highest happiness (NE X.7–8). His account of *eudaimonia* also crucially draws on his theory of the rational and irrational aspects of the human soul (I.7, 13; see also *On the Soul*).

With this distinction in mind, the question becomes whether Democritus is a weak or strong eudaimonist, that is to say, the extent to which his various non-ethical doctrines may be compatible or deeply interconnected with his ethical views concerning how we ought to live a happy (*eudaimon*) life. In favour of strong eudaimonism, Democritean atomism is *prima facie* compatible with his material on cheerfulness because it can inform what a cheerful vs. distressed soul will look like. A cheerful soul can be said to have a stable, unimpeded relationship between its constituent atoms, which is representative of the soul's health and tranquility. A distressed soul, conversely, experiences massive changes (due to excessive or deficient actions) which impede and destabilize the relationship between its constituent atoms, causing the soul's unstable emotional state (D55).[43] Turning to Democritean epistemology and ethics, we see a shared hierarchical

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41 The Cynics are also arguably weak eudaimonists insofar as they "do away with the subjects of Logic and Physics and devote their whole attention to Ethics" (DL VI.103) in terms of living according to virtue as the ultimate end (VI.104; see also Usher *How to Say No*, 163–165).

42 Epicurus (*Letter to Pythocles* §85; *Letter to Herodotus* §38, 63–6, 76–77, 81; LM §128; *Principal Doctrines* §I) and the Stoics (DL VII.88, 110–111, 138; L&S §26–67) are arguably also strong eudaimonists.

43 Gregory Vlastos, "Ethics and Physics in Democritus," *The Philosophical Review* 55, no. 1 (1946): 63, https://doi.org/10.2307/2181570.

distinction between immediate sensory data and reason. Immediate sensory data are epistemologically and ethically inferior, because in themselves they cannot reliably bring about the main objective of either philosophical framework (i.e., truth and goodness, respectively). As a result, sensory perceptions in themselves are epistemologically and ethically unhelpful unless directed by reason (D22; Fr. 69).[44]

In favour of weak eudaimonism, neither the doxographical reports nor the fragments indicate that Democritus' conception of cheerfulness was derived from or dependent on his atomism,[45] and there may be tension between Democritus' deterministic atomism and his references to chance in his ethical fragments.[46] Moreover, Democritus seems to have given no thought as to how to reconcile his determinism with free will and moral responsibility, which might indicate that he did not dwell heavily on the relationship between his physics and ethics.[47] Finally, epistemologically, there are some fragments that point to a sceptical reading of Democritus (D15, D18, D21) which would apparently run counter to the dogmatic objectivity he relies on in his atomism and ethical framework.[48]

Although I cannot provide a complete analysis of this subject here, these details are nonetheless sufficient to point to Democritus as a weak eudaimonist. Even if the aforementioned tensions could be resolved, allowing us to see Democritean metaphysics, physics, epistemology, and ethics as a coherent overall system, section three illustrates that we can coherently understand and embrace Democritean eudaimonism without committing ourselves to Democritean atomism or epistemology. The same, arguably, could not be said for eudaimonists like Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Stoics for whom metaphysics, physics, epistemology, and psychology play a direct and necessary explanatory and justificatory role in their respective accounts of happiness.

VII. CONCLUSION

In this paper I have sought to answer three questions: the *Theory Question* (do Democritus' ethical ideas constitute a genuine ethical theory?), the *Eudaimonism Question* (if there is an ethical system here, is it part of the eudaimonistic tradition?), and the Strength Question (if we grant that Democritus offers a genuine eudaimonistic ethical theory, is there a necessary relationship between Democritus' ethics and the other areas of his philosophy?).

To both the *Theory Question* and *Eudaimonism Question* the answer is yes. From the available evidence we can effectively derive a coherent ethical theory structured around cheerfulness

44 Taylor, *The Atomists*, 179a; Taylor, "Pleasure," 19–25.

45 Taylor, *The Atomists*, 232.

46 Annas, "Democritus," 177.

47 Barnes, *The Presocratic*, 424–425.

48 Taylor, "Pleasure," 20.

as the ultimate ethical end insofar as it is a (i) partly naturalistic, (ii) partly affective, (iii) structurally stable, and (iv) exclusively intrinsically valuable good.[49] Democritus therefore likely deserves more credit than we tend to give him in the ethical domain. Like Socrates, he had meaningful and influential ethical ideas.[50] On the other hand, his ethical framework, while plausibly eudaimonistic, may not be equal to the precision and complexity of later eudaimonists, which can only be expected from an early proponent of an ethical tradition.

Concerning the *Strength Question*, in contrast, the answer is no. While Democritus' metaphysics, physics, and epistemology are in some meaningful sense compatible with his ethics, there are still possible tensions between them, the ethical fragments themselves do not explicitly or substantially appeal to these philosophical doctrines, and Democritean ethics is ultimately intelligible without knowledge of non-ethical Democritean doctrines.

This outcome should not, however, surprise or disappoint us. If my argument is correct, Democritus and Socrates represent the beginnings of eudaimonism — the first attempts to provide a systematic account of how to live a happy life as a whole. Socrates, while likely harboring certain metaphysical assumptions (e.g., concerning the distinction between soul and body; see *Apology* 30a–b), nonetheless did not concern himself with developing full-fledged non-ethical doctrines in his ethical inquiries. It is no surprise, then, that his contemporary Democritus, despite having explored other areas of philosophy in depth, also may not have been concerned fully (or at all) with bringing together the different parts of his own philosophy into an overall system of interconnected doctrines. Neither may have appreciated the need for fully developed theories of reality, nature, knowledge, and psychology to arrive at a complete and well-justified account of the happy life, leading to deficiencies in their respective moral philosophies from either a lack of positive ethical answers (Socrates) or insufficiently demonstrated ethical claims

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49 These four formal features of eudaimonism, as well as the distinction between weak and strong eudaimonism, are also valuable in examining the engagement of later non-Greek (or Roman) philosophers with eudaimonism. Medieval thinkers, such as Augustine, Aquinas, Avicenna, Averroes, and Maimonides, could be considered to continue and contribute to the eudaimonistic tradition insofar as they synthesize Platonic and/or Aristotelian doctrines with Christianity, Islam, or Judaism, respectively. Similarly, early modern philosophers like Pierre Gassendi, René Descartes, Benedict de Spinoza, and G.W. Leibniz might also be considered moral thinkers who contribute to the eudaimonistic tradition through new developments in metaphysics, physics, epistemology, psychology, and politics. I argue that Spinoza shows a consistent commitment to eudaimonism throughout his corpus by appeal to these four formal features, and the distinction between weak and strong eudaimonism, in Brandon Smith, "Spinoza's Strong Eudaimonism," *Journal of Modern Philosophy* 5, no. 3 (2023): 1–21, http://doi.org/10.32881/jomp.247. I discuss his commitment to the ontological and ethical equality of mind and body as a distinctive contribution to eudaimonism in Brandon Smith, "Spinoza's Early Modern Eudaimonism: Corporeal and Intellectual Flourishing," *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review*, First View (2023): 1–26, http://doi.org/10.1017/S0012217323000409. I explore his rich dialogue with Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Stoics with respect to eudaimonistic happiness in Smith, *The Search*.

50 I remain agnostic about whether Democritus influenced Socrates or vice versa (if there is influence at all), because there is too little evidence to say anything meaningful that is beyond speculation.

(Democritus). This is where Plato and Aristotle can be considered innovators, philosophically and ethically. With their Presocratic and Socratic influences, they took the extra steps to bring all the various disciplines of their respective philosophies together, and, in particular, to demonstrate clearly and precisely how metaphysics, physics, epistemology, and psychology necessarily contribute to the formation and justification of a true account of happiness. In other words, Democritean and Socratic (weak) eudaimonism walked, so that Platonic and Aristotelian (strong) eudaimonism could fly.[51]

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51 We might say that Democritean eudaimonism is stronger than Socratic eudaimonism, because Democritus offers more positive ethical and non-ethical doctrines than Socrates and his non-ethical doctrines can contribute meaningfully to his ethical doctrines (even if the former have no necessary connection to the latter). Democritus is therefore a stronger eudaimonist than Socrates, but a weaker eudaimonist than Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Stoics.

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