

# Epicurean Philosophy Vs. Humanism

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## [Quote from Titus](#)

The lecture was quite interesting as it reminded me of a popular stance on Epicurus which is predominant in modern German literature. Epicurus is understood as a philosopher who reaches for inner independence while also granting enjoyment of pleasure as long as the enjoyment doesn't collide with freedom from pain.

Just for clarity sake, wanted to point out this ( [Titus](#) you likely already know this) from the Letter to Menoeceus:

"And because this is the primary and inborn good, we do not choose every pleasure. Instead, we pass up many pleasures when we will gain more of what we need from doing so. And we consider many pains to be better than pleasures, if we experience a greater pleasure for a long time from having endured those pains. So every pleasure is a good thing because its nature is favorable to us, yet not every pleasure is to be chosen — just as every pain is a bad thing, yet not every pain is always to be shunned. It is proper to make all these decisions through measuring things side by side and looking at both the advantages and disadvantages, for sometimes we treat a good thing as bad and a bad thing as good."

## [Quote from Titus](#)

I would definitely see them as allies, but I also recognise them as focused more on societal tasks than promoting the personal transformation through philosophy which I regard as the key point.

This is definitely a key difference between Epicureanism and Humanism. Within Humanism, I think there is nothing wrong with the attempt of societal transformation, but there is only so much time in life -- and it is quite a difficult task to actual do something rather than just talk about it (plus potentially more pain than pleasure). And ever since Epicurus, perhaps this is an issue (and virtue not being the goal) that detractors brought against Epicureanism.