

"Absence Of Pain Is Pleasure" - How Would You Articulate That To Someone?

Post by "Cassius" of November 17, 2023 at 2:36 PM

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

The niggling concern I would have with stopping there, though, is that without the kind of "fleshing out" in Don 's post #21 (which I've also bookmarked), especially the part I quote below, your post #16 could almost have been written by an Aristippian Cyrenaic* (even with your opening point that "tranquility and ataraxia are fully contained within the word pleasure, but 'pleasure' is not fully contained within tranquility or ataraxia"). Unless I glossed over something in my reading (not enough coffee yet 😞) ...

I think what you're observing there is the issue of how context affects the presentation of detailed issues. I perceive Eoghan's post as referring more to "non-specialists in 2023 who speak English who want to get started understanding what Epicurus stands for." In that context I would say you want to explain the differing aspects of "Pleasure" as fully as possible in understandable everyday English without use of foreign or very technical words.

The context where the people you are talking to are familiar with the controversies regarding kinetic and katastematic labels, and are wondering why there is so much discussion about those terms in some quarters, is different. For them, I think you want to then move to Don's passages and explain to them how "katastematic" and "kinetic" map pretty neatly onto "stimulating pleasures" and "other kinds of pleasure which don't necessarily result from stimulation."

Only the most advanced in reading are really going to be interested in the controversy as to whether these labels derive from Diogenes Laertius mapping later developments (such as Carneades) on top of Epicurus, or whether they derive from years of interactions with the Stoics, or whether Epicurus himself held those these labels to be extremely important.

What's clear from any perspective is that just as Epicurus was narrowing his definition of "Gods" to exclude supernatural implications, he was expanding his definition of "pleasure" to include not only "sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll" but "pleasures of normal daily living which derive from the mind's appreciation of the normal healthy state as something that is desirable in itself." In both cases the majority of people are using these words in a significantly different way, so explanations are necessary to avoid both innocent misunderstandings and intentional misrepresentations. (I use scare quotes just to indicate that the formulations are tentative, not that I'm quoting anyone.)

[VS29](#). For I would certainly prefer, as I study Nature, to announce frankly what is beneficial to all people, even if none agrees with me, rather than to compromise with common opinions, and thus reap the frequent praise of the many. [\[12\]](#)