

Eudaimonia and Makariotēs in the Letter to Menoecus

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The question (or at least **a** question), I think, is the purpose of engaging, philosophically, with “the rest of the world” – or anyone for that matter. Perhaps some hints (and recognition of limits) –

As Epicurus has been said to have put it: “Vain is the word of that philosopher by which no malady of mankind is healed. *For just as there is no profit in medicine unless it expels the diseases of the body, so there is none in philosophy either, unless it expels the suffering of the soul.*” [My italics. I think there is some question as to that attribution, though DeWitt accepts it?] That seems to me to be a pretty clear expression of purpose and intention, beyond just defending a particular philosophical corpus (“beyond,” not “to the exclusion of”) ...

That does not mean compromise, as per [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 VS79: “The man who is serene causes no disturbance to himself or to another.” I know that **I** need to strive for a more “contagious” serenity in philosophical (and other) discourse – something that I have failed at too many times in the past, as my old argumentative tendencies rear their heads 😞 (from some self-defensive fear?).

And from MFS’s translation of Diogenes of Oinoanda:

“Moreover, we have set up this inscription **not for our own sake, but for your sake**, citizens, as a means of salvation for you, as we announced at the opening of the whole discourse. And we do not consider that it (i.e. the inscription) will be useful to certain people and not useful to certain people, but that it will be useful to all. ... [A]nd we contrived this in order that, even while [sitting] at home, [we might be able **to exhibit the] goods of philosophy**, not to all people here [indeed], but **to those of them who are civil-spoken**; and not least we did [this] for those who are called foreigners, although they are not really so.” [My bolds and italics]

And MFS in the preface: “Diogenes, *with his philanthropic and cosmopolitan attitudes and motives and his evident tranquillity in the face of illness, old age, and death, is himself a fine advertisement for the efficacy of the “medicines” he prescribes, and we should do well to pay attention to his message at this time when the pursuit of wealth and power is rampant in many quarters, while philanthropy and cosmopolitanism often seem in short supply.*” [My italics]