

Welcome Max Duboff

Post by “Max DuBoff” of July 5, 2026 at 3:11 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

Agreed. I like your approach. I may ramble here, but I'll try and respond to your points and see where we may differ and where it may end up we have the same interpretation but different words. Possibly?

Yes, it's been a great thread!

Ok, a few responses to your points:

Yes, pleasure for Epicurus is the summum bonum in terms of explaining all actions--everything we do points to pleasure. That part is totally fine, and Cicero is right when he attributes that claim to Epicurus.

The reason to understand "goal of nature" as katastematic pleasure is that otherwise it wouldn't be helpful at all. There are all kinds of pleasures that lead to lots of pain, so someone who looks only to pleasure won't be able to live well. To actually live well, you need to look to pleasure with an eye to minimizing pain--which is seeking katastematic pleasure. Plus, in Men. 131 he quite clearly says "pleasure is the goal" indicates katastematic pleasure, and what really seems to be katastematic pleasure is the "goal of a blessed life" in Men. 128.

Yeah, when I say tranquility or ataraxia I don't mean to exclude aponia. Epicurus clearly thinks they go together (though this creates problems for him). My speculative view is that aponia is a problem for ataraxia because bodily pain creates justified fear about the future, which is painful and thereby interrupts ataraxia. But the relationship between aponia and ataraxia is pretty vexed; a lot depends on your interpretation of KD 18 and of Plutarch, Non Posse 1089d. I have an unpublished paper dealing with some of these issues but not giving a full account of the problem.

The point about ice cream is that, if (this is impossible, but for the sake of argument) ice cream never started causing pain if we ate too much, it'd be good forever, always good to have more of it. And Epicurus thinks that that kind of good can't be the foundation for a blessed life. It's not clear why.

(By the way, unrelatedly, I usually use KD for Key Doctrines/Kuriai Doxai because I like that it's the same acronym in English and Greek; but I was using PD upthread and that's totally cool too. So I might just flit between them.)