

Discussion of the thread - Against Katastematic Supremacy - Pleasure Is A Unified Whole And Not A House Divided - Forum Editorial Policy

Post by "Cassius" of July 30, 2026 at 3:10 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

*My statement here assumes anyone would even notice if I was quiet or not. 🤔 I apologize for the narcissism inherent in saying that.

It is a shame that i could hit only one reaction. I hit like but I would have liked to LOL at the same time.

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

The EpicureanFriends forum policy is intended to make sure that the clarity of the objective (the Epicurean summum bonum) as being pleasure, is not lost by substituting something else as the "supreme good."

Yes that's basically it.

Don is an invaluable member of the forum and his absence absolutely has been noticed.

I've said a lot about the general topic already and I'll have a lot more to say in the future, but at the moment here's what seems most appropriate:

This past weekend I and several of us here watched Christos Yapiyakis - *for whom I also have tremendous respect* - give a presentation on Thomas Jefferson and Epicurus to a ladies' American Hellenic Association. It caught my eye during the presentation, and afterward when I reviewed the slides that Christos sent me, that the focus words for the slides and the talk were almost entirely about "happiness" with only one or two minor uses of the word "pleasure" during the entire talk.

Jumping around here to make a connection, I saw in my email yesterday that Hiram Crespo - *for whom I also have a lot of respect* - [posted](#) the following quote from Michael Onfray:

Quote

Pleasure scares people. They are scared of the word and the actions, reality, and discourses around it. It either scares people or makes them hysterical. There are too

many private and personal issues, too many alienating, intimate, painful, wretched, and miserable details. There are secret and hidden deficiencies. There are too many things in the way of just being, living, and enjoying. Hence, people reject the word. They produce spiteful critique that is aggressive and in bad faith or that is simply evasive. Disrespect, discredit, contempt, and disdain are all means for avoiding the subject of pleasure. – Michel Onfray

What Onfray is talking about is essentially the reason there's a need for a "policy" for our educational/promotional work at EpicureanFriends.

Yes if and when I myself give a talk to a mature ladies' club i am going to lead with connections they are familiar with, such as Thomas Jefferson. We've done a lot of that here at the forum. And yes it's fully appropriate to talk about "tending gardens" and using other ways to get conversations going with people who view you with suspicion.

But for better or worse and not entirely by choice or forethought, EpicureanFriends has become the "fundamentalist Epicurean" platform on the internet. And that's where the message gets boiled down to its essentials.

When you start with the foundation that there are no supernatural gods and therefore no absolute foundations for morality, and no life of any kind after death, what you *immediately* have to face is being clear about what your standard for living is going to be, and in Epicurean terms that is *pleasure* and *pain*. Yes there there are all sorts of important things to be said about mental pleasure and bodily pleasure and the many types of pleasure and pain to be chosen from and avoided, but the only way you get to that discussion in the first place is to first identify that its *pleasure* that constitutes what is desirable, rather than piety or logic or any other definition of "the good."

We're all under the tremendous pressure that Onfray mentions to avoid using the term pleasure, and to find some other term that is more acceptable to those who totally reject Epicurus' worldview. And we all have very different circumstances -- age, sex, health, nationality, education level, and on and on -- that play into what each of us find to be the type of pleasure that we find to be most desirable. But in the Epicurean analysis all of those types fall under the single category of pleasure. Given the nature of the universe there's no single way to look at the "most pleasant" other than the target being "all pleasure and no pain." That's how you end up talking about absence of pain as a way of defining the goal, but if you don't explain that background, you end up playing right into the hands of those who want to eliminate "pleasure" from the discussion.

That substitution of "absence of pain" in the place of pleasure is exactly what [Hieronymus of Rhodes](#) did, but which it's amply clear that Epicurus refused to do.

Epicurus' logic in rejecting Hieronymus's view is easy to understand:

When you get to the limit of pleasure you haven't left behind all the bodily and mental pleasures you've accumulated to get there. You still have those pleasures -- it's just that you're

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/5179-discussion-of-the-thread-against-katastematic-supremacy-pleasure-is-a-unified-wh/?postID=40874#post40874>

now experiencing those same pleasures *without any mixture of pains*.