

# On Malte Hossenfelder's book "Epikur"

Post by "Cassius" of November 13, 2021 at 9:00 AM

## [Quote from Don](#)

It seems people get hung up on the a- "not" prefix

Yes I am not primarily talking to you on this point, but to the external commentators who don't make your distinction of experiencing a positive feeling. It is my view that they are in fact either implicitly or explicitly trying to equate this particular statement "absence of pain" to "nothingness" and in so doing transmute Epicurean philosophy into Stoicism, Buddhism, or worse. What I plainly read in their material is that they are equating the particular experience of "calmness" or "tranquility to be the apex of human life and the goal of every human being. And to that I say "hogwash."

That is not the way the gods are described as spending their time, and it is not the way I want to spend mine. This is the way I understand to be the most accurate description of the best way of life, and therefore the goal to seek to be in line with at every point down that bowling alley:

***Again, the truth that pleasure is the supreme good can be most easily apprehended from the following consideration. Let us imagine an individual in the enjoyment of pleasures great, numerous and constant, both mental and bodily, with no pain to thwart or threaten them; I ask what circumstances can we describe as more excellent than these or more desirable? A man whose circumstances are such must needs possess, as well as other things, a robust mind subject to no fear of death or pain, because death is apart from sensation, and pain when lasting is usually slight, when oppressive is of short duration, so that its temporariness reconciles us to its intensity, and its slightness to its continuance. When in addition we suppose that such a man is in no awe of the influence of the gods, and does not allow his past pleasures to slip away, but takes delight in constantly recalling them, what circumstance is it possible to add to these, to make his condition better?***

I interpret the "with no pain to thwart or threaten them" as the ataraxia / aponia component of the description - as descriptors of various aspects of the goal, not as the goal itself. The advocates of ataraxia and/or aponia as of primary importance leave out everything else in that description, and it's my view that they do so intentionally to misrepresent the philosophy.

Not you or people here, of course, but the "commentators" I reference so often 😊