

"Absence of Pain" Discussion in Cicero's Criticism of Epicurus in On Ends

Post by "Cassius" of September 24, 2016 at 3:20 PM

[Cassius Amicus](#)

[September 17 at 8:47pm](#)

In one of the nearby threads there is an ongoing discussion of "absence of pain." Thanks to [Eric Sherman](#) I was recently rereading Cicero's On Ends, and there is a passage there that those interested in this topic ought to know about. In this criticism of Epicurus by Cicero I think we can see that there is more going on than what meets the eye when people pull out a line that is translated as "By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul" and elevate it to imply that the ordinary definition of pleasure has been eradicated. Had this been true, Cicero could not have written the following (note particularly ****as he in fact does****):

Cicero: "Had Epicurus cleared up the meaning of pleasure, he would not have fallen into such confusion. Either he would have upheld pleasure in the same sense as Aristippus, that is, an agreeable and delightful excitation of the sense, which is what even dumb cattle, if they could speak, would call pleasure; or, if he preferred to use an idiom of his own, instead of speaking the language of the Danaans one and all, men of Mycenae, Scions of Athens, and the rest of the Greeks invoked in these anapaests, he might have confined the name of pleasure to this state of freedom from pain, and despised pleasure as Aristippus understands it; or else, if he approved of both sorts of pleasure, as in fact he does, then he ought to combine together pleasure and absence of pain, and profess two ultimate Goods. Many distinguished philosophers have as a matter of fact thus interpreted the ultimate good as composite. For instance, Aristotle combined the exercise of virtue with well-being lasting throughout a complete lifetime; Callipho united pleasure with moral worth; Diodorus to moral worth added freedom from pain. Epicurus would have followed their example, had he coupled the view we are now discussing, which as it is belongs to Hieronymus, with the old doctrine of Aristippus. For there is a real difference of opinion between them, and accordingly each sets up his own separate End; and as both speak unimpeachable Greek, Aristippus, who calls pleasure the Chief Good, does not count absence of pain as pleasure, while Hieronymus, who makes the Chief Good absence of pain, never employs the name pleasure to denote this negation of pain, and in fact does not reckon pleasure among things desirable at all."

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Whether or not you agree with my "full cup" argument as presented on my newepicurean.com page, it is clear from this passage that Cicero understood Epicurus to have embraced pleasure as ordinarily understood by all men, including Aristippus. It's a very important point also to see that Epicurus had rejected the position of Hieronymus, who according to Cicero had in fact

erected "absence of pain" as the goal and specifically rejected ordinary pleasure in so doing. This passage shows that Epicurus would have been fully aware of this different arguments, and he clearly rejected the archtypical "absence of pain" argument, or Cicero would have explained how Epicurus and Hieronymus were the same.

So while we have to make an educated guess at the truth, in the absence of Epicurus' own words explaining this, whatever theory we follow cannot eject "ordinary pleasure" from the good / end of life, or else we end up embracing Hieronymus, who Epicurus rejected.

Personally, I think the key to unlocking this is to realize that Epicurus was dealing with an existing battlefield of ideas that included not only Hieronymus and Aristippus but Plato and others who employed the "limits" argument to argue that pleasure could not be the goal of life as it (in their view) has no limit. In order to meet this argument, Epicurus had to show that pleasure **does** have a limit, so he pointed out that the pleasures of life cannot be increased beyond our capacity to experience them, and our capacity to experience more pleasure is gone when we fill our experience with pleasure and succeed in ejecting all pain from our experience. There's nothing extraordinary about this state of pure pleasure that results - no new or unusual type of pleasure is involved - but being able to identify this theoretical state as possible essential for meeting the Platonic argument that the highest good must have a limit. {Note: In Epicurean theory this state is not only possible, but actual -- at least for "gods." One way of stating our goal in life is that we work toward the goal of becoming "gods among men."}

It seems to me that is why the "absence of pain" passage is there, and this also explains the similar reference that we have no need of [further] pleasure when all pain has been eliminated. But I readily confess that the letter to Menoecus can appear to us to be confusing. But I also suggest that the letter as written was **not** confusing to Menoecus, because any student of Epicurus in 300 BC would have been fully familiar with the existing anti-pleasure majority position. Any educated Epicurean reading the letter would instantly have understood it as a complete refutation of the anti-pleasure/pain position, and an explanation of why the other philosophers were wrong. Our disability is that we no longer have the instant recognition of the anti-pleasure arguments. But that is something that those of us in this group and elsewhere who support Epicurean philosophy can work to remedy. 😊

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[Eric Sherman](#) "The pleasure we pursue is not that kind alone which directly affects our physical being with a delightful feeling,—a positively agreeable perception of the senses; on the contrary, the greatest pleasure according to us is that which is experienced as a result of the complete removal of pain. When we are released from pain, the mere sensation of complete emancipation and relief from uneasiness is in itself a source of gratification. But everything that causes gratification is a pleasure (just as everything that causes annoyance is a pain). Therefore the complete removal of pain has correctly been termed a pleasure. For example, when hunger and thirst are banished by food and drink, the mere fact of getting rid of

uneasiness brings a resultant pleasure in its train. So generally, the removal of pain causes pleasure to take its place. Epicurus consequently maintained that there is no such thing as a neutral state of feeling intermediate between pleasure and pain; for the state supposed by some thinkers to be neutral, being characterized as it is by entire absence of pain, is itself, he held, a pleasure, and, what is more, a pleasure of the highest order. A man who is conscious of his condition at all must necessarily feel either pleasure or pain. But complete absence of pain Epicurus considers to be the limit and highest point of pleasure; beyond this point pleasure may vary in kind, but it cannot vary in intensity or degree."

-Torquatus

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[Cassius Amicus](#) Yes, that's the passage in issue. No doubt it was written by Epicurus for an important purpose, but that purpose could not reasonably have been to upend and invert everything else he had previously taught about pleasure. Just like a contract in a court of law, or interpretation of a statute, if there is a way to harmonize the totality to give effect to every provision of what is written, that is the way to the preferred conclusion - at least as long as we think that the writer was a consistent thinker!

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[Cassius Amicus](#) And that is exactly what Cicero, lawyer that he is, refuses to do - which is the technique of a lawyer seeking victory over his opponent, not someone who is trying to harmonize words that may seem to conflict, but do not in fact conflict when read in a certain way.

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[Eric Sherman](#) So are you arguing that the pleasure in which Epicurus promoted was something more or different than absence of emotional and physical pain? If so how is pleasure different and why is it important and can you show me textual evidence please.

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[Ekshesh Bekele](#) Pleasure is not the absence of pain. However, absence of pain is the highest limit of pleasure.

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[Ekshesh Bekele](#) In my understanding of Epicurus

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[Eric Sherman](#) I'm sorry that just doesn't make sense to me.

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[Eric Sherman](#) I'd also like to point out that pleasure as I understand Epicurus is predominantly absence of EMOTIONAL Pain. It's apparent that tetracharmakon is about easing all forms of anxiety-gods, death, sustenance and pain

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[Ekshesh Bekele](#) I meant that there are different forms of pleasure. To say pleasure is the absence of pain would mean there aren't other forms of pleasure that aren't the absence of pain, which would be false. The distinguishing characteristic of pleasure as an absence of pain is that it doesn't get better than that.

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[Cassius Amicus](#) I agree with this statement largely, but the "it" in "it doesn't get any better than that" still leaves a little wiggle room for ambiguity."

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[Eric Sherman](#) Right, but I'd like to see where Epicurus defines it as such

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[Eric Sherman](#) I think I have far weightier evidence

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[Ekshesh Bekele](#) When we say, then, that pleasure is the end and aim, we do not mean the pleasures of the prodigal or the pleasures of sensuality, as we are understood to do by some through ignorance, prejudice, or willful misrepresentation. By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul. It is not an unbroken succession of drinking-bouts and of revelry, not sexual lust, not the enjoyment of the fish and other delicacies of a luxurious table, which produce a pleasant life; it is sober reasoning, searching out the grounds of every choice and avoidance, and banishing those beliefs through which the greatest tumults take possession of the soul.

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[Ekshesh Bekele](#) " By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul."

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[Eric Sherman](#) Yes and even more that it is sober reasoning that BANISHES beliefs that cause anxiety !

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[Eric Sherman](#) What are those false beliefs? Superstitions, religion, Malevolent and intervening gods, that life and basic goods are hard to procure and that pain is difficult to bear.

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[Cassius Amicus](#) I think this is well stated [Ekshesh Bekele](#): "I meant that there are different forms of pleasure. To say pleasure is the absence of pain would mean there aren't other forms of pleasure that aren't the absence of pain, which would be false." Even in philosophy classes the "replenishment theory is acknowledged to be incomplete. Were we in pain from not

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smelling a rose before we smelled the rose? Was that smelling not a substantive pleasure? Yes, removal of pain is pleasurable, and provides space for pleasure as we ordinarily understand all its mental and physical variations, to fill in. But just like matter and void are opposites with real properties of their own, pleasure has a real existence with real positive properties, and these are not described by saying "absence of pain" any more than matter is sufficiently described as "absence of void."

Also, Eric, while mental pleasures and pains are held to be more intense than physical ones, I think there is no reason to think that Epicurus was focused on one at the expense of the other

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[Cassius Amicus](#) Eric what is a positive description of what you think is being described as "absence of pain." in this case, simply saying "that's pleasure" would be thought by most people (in my view) to be playing a word game, so what positive substantive definition would you give of that experience?

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[Eric Sherman](#) I'm not disagreeing that pleasure is varied and positive. I'm just arguing that Epicurus defined it as an absence of emotional pain. I'd like to see textual evidence that Epicurus meant something more than what he said

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[Ilkka Vuoristo](#) Menoecus 131:

"By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul."

Both the body and mind need to be pain-free for there to be a total lack of pain. If either one is in pain, the absence isn't complete.

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[Elli Pensa Cassius](#), [Ilkka](#), [Hiram](#) and friends, Epicurus is so clear to understand what he is saying and means in Menoecus 131 : <<When we say that pleasure is the goal of life we mean ..."AND TO NOT" [=in greek he uses the word "μήτε"] ACHING THE BODY "AND TO NO...[See More](#)[See Translation](#)

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[Elli Pensa](#) Yes, Epicurus tried to give a description what is "pleasure", because it is well known this word , as the goal of life, WAS, IS AND WILL BE misinterpreted and misunderstood TOTALLY. I am sorry but we realize Epicurus was forced to describe the BIG PIC...[See More](#)

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[Ekshesh Bekele](#) I believe part of the reason absence of pain was very important for Epicurus was that it set the limit to the good we called "pleasure." If pleasure was just some positive thing, then adding more pleasure would always be possible, but by saying pleasure is the absence of pain it is implied that the limit exists. And during that time the great good was expected to have some limit.

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[Cassius Amicus](#) "It is observed too that in his treatise On the Ethical End he writes in these terms : "I know not how to conceive the good, apart from the pleasures of taste, of sex, of sound, and the pleasures of beautiful form."

- Diogenes Laertius, Book X

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[Eric Sherman](#) That's fine. I find that acceptable. We can say that Epicurus defined pleasure as an absence of emotional and physical pain and additive and positive experiences mitigated by hedonic calculus

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[Cassius Amicus](#) Well Eric here I think Ekshesh is focusing on a distinction that is very important. "Absence of ..." is not a substantive description of anything - it is a "limit" of something, but it is not a description of anything. So I cannot say that i agree that pleasure IS an "absence of pain" in any respect but in that of "measurement." Measurement of quantity or quality is of course significant, but it is far from a complete description of the thing being measured.

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[Cassius Amicus](#) So in the end if someone is going to suggest that "pleasure" means something that we all experience ordinarily through our mind and senses, and that all of us recognize, then I would really like to know how that experience is to be defined. Because any description I can think of about a mental or physical state , even "wellbeing" is something I would say, well OK that is what everyone understands by pleasure and you are saying nothing new. It's only if someone could describe something totally out of the ordinary that we can't all immediately understand through experience that I would say would be cause for acknowledging that something unusual is being discussed.

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[Cassius Amicus](#) And what really is at stake here, as I think many of us realize, is that stoicism and other philosophies are accused (rightly or wrongly) of seeking to suppress all emotion. And Epicurus is said to specifically have stated that the wise man feels emotion MORE deeply than others, not less, which is not tranquility in the stoic sense..

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[Eric Sherman](#) The experience is defined by tranquility

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[Eric Sherman](#) And I acquiesce that there are additive pleasures

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[Eric Sherman](#) You would be in gross error to not understand that much of Epicurus is helping mankind be freed from anxieties

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[Cassius Amicus](#) Oh I completely agree with that! I do agree that banishing anxiety is one of the huge aspects of the philosophy which is made necessary by many reasons, not the least of which is false religion and other philosophies. We are totally agreed there!

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[Eric Sherman](#) [Cassius Amicus](#) tranquility is the absence of mental pain

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[Eric Sherman](#) If we agree there id be happy

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[Eric Sherman](#) I just feel that both Stoics and Epicureans seem to dismiss or minimize this to detriment

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[Cassius Amicus](#) [Eric Sherman](#) I am not so sure of that 😊 Why do you believe it is so? Cannot an ocean be both powerful and calm at the same time?

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[Eric Sherman](#) You're not sure that Epicurus has anxieties in mind in much of what he addresses???

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[Cassius Amicus](#) While we are discussing let me emphasize that I do consider calmness to be desirable! I am just not sure of all of the implications when people use the word tranquility, as

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/111-absence-of-pain-discussion-in-cicero-s-criticism-of-epicurus-in-ends/?postID=154#post154>

that sounds too much like getting hit with a tranquilizer dart for me! 😊

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[Eric Sherman](#) No no I understand your concern...

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[Eric Sherman](#) Epicurus again in his tetrapharmakon ****IS**** addressing anxieties and is aiming at peace of mind/tranquility/ataraxia

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[Cassius Amicus](#) Yes I agree that relief from anxiety is a key goal, but I worry that relief from anxiety should never be read to be a complete statement of the goal, because I do believe life requires exertion to attain pleasure in the short time we are alive

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[Eric Sherman](#) Fair enough. I believe my reformulation in an earlier point entails both our concerns

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[Cassius Amicus](#) Also while we are discussing this I need to emphasize that I acknowledge that there are many people in many situations for whom unloading mental anxieties is such an immense task that it seems like all that is needed, and I greatly sympathize and understand that - been there myself.

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[Cassius Amicus](#) Without necessarily tagging anyone as the problem (well ok, I will tag many religions, but just not call any philosopher's names) I just always want to be aware of the ongoing campaign against pleasure as something that is dirty and disreputable and against

gods will. That is a huge issue that will not go away as long as we live, unfortunately.....

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[Ekshesh Bekele](#) I have 1 question thought. If the limit of pleasure is the absence of pain. If we have two people x and y. and both experience no physical pain nor trouble of the soul, but y indulges in sex, listens to pleasurable music, eats tasty food, is it a folly to claim Y's life is more pleasurable than x's?

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[Ilkka Vuoristo](#) The absolute absence of pain cannot be more pain-free with additional pleasures. At that point the pleasures only vary. For example, person x will also eat food, and if it's nutritious it will be tasty.

Menoceus 130: "Plain fare gives as much pleasure as a costly diet, when once the pain of want has been removed,[...]"

The goal of life is Happiness (painlessness), not ever increasing mountains of indulgent pleasures. Epicurus defined happiness as the lack of pain most likely because he saw that other hedonists were in fact over_doing some pleasures. It's very easy to over-eat, for example, which will lead to obesity and metabolic syndrome (pain, in other words).

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[Ekshesh Bekele](#) Happiness is a tricky word here though. One could experience much pain and still claim to have lived a happy life, according to the Stoics at least. Would that be a happy life for Epicurus?

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[Hiram Crespo](#) [Ekshesh Bekele](#), Epicurus was not a masochist. He was no Mother Theresa or John Paul II, who self-flaggellated because they thought pain was good. If Epicurus was unfairly

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attacked physically, he would have raised grievances and made real-world efforts to stop himself (and probably others) from unfairly suffering unnecessary physical attacks in the future.

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[Ilkka Vuoristo](#) In Epicurean Philosophy happiness is defined as painlessness in the body (aponia) and in the mind (ataraxia). So no "much pain" is not a state of happiness.

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[Ekshesh Bekele](#) I just wanted to make a distinction between happiness and pleasure. I believe pleasure involves direct experience by the senses and the mind more so than happiness does.

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[Hiram Crespo](#) [Ekshesh Bekele](#) here, under the "Ethics" section, you will see that we have been philosophizing about the distinctions between pleasure and happiness for more than 2,500 years, with many diverging opinions

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[Cassius Amicus](#) A good question and this gets to the purity arguments. An experience of pure pleasure once pure can only be varied, but is not variation desirable when it is possible without pain? I think the answer here is related to how we would judge living 10 days as a "god among men" vs living 100 days. Given the choice I think it is clear that we would prefer to live 100 days, but the reason is not necessarily that the 100 days was "more pleasurable" in EVERY

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respect. The reason for the preference has to be carefully considered.

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[Cassius Amicus](#) This is an excellent question Ekshesh Bekele and I can't "remember that we have discussed it recently. I think I will tag some of our other regulars like [Hiram Crespo](#) and [AH](#) and [Ilkka Vuoristo](#) and [Elli Pensa](#) to be sure they see this on and have a chance to comment if they like. "I have 1 question though. If the limit of pleasure is the absence of pain. If we have two people x and y. and both experience no physical pain nor trouble of the soul, but y indulges in sex, listens to pleasurable music, eats tasty food, is it a folly to claim Y's life is more pleasurable than x's?"

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[Ronald Warrick](#) OK, if a neutral state is the absence of both pain and pleasure, and Epicurus denies the possibility of such a state, then the mere absence of pain is not sufficient for pleasure. There must be actual positive pleasure. But it is also true that pleasure must follow from removal of pain, because, again, there is no neutral state. I think this becomes clear when we look at how we actually go about removing pain - by eating, by drinking, having sex, etc., positive pleasures all.

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[Ilkka Vuoristo](#) Menoecus 128.

"He who has a clear and certain understanding of these things will direct every preference and aversion toward securing health of body and tranquillity of mind, seeing that this is the sum and end of a blessed life. For the end of all o...[See More](#)

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[Ronald Warrick](#) I guess what we are both saying is that absence of pain and presence of pleasure are not a dichotomy. They go hand in hand. So to say that one or the other or both are THE goal is rather unnecessary. They are just two ways of describing the same phenomenon.

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[AH](#) Another way to understand this, "limit of pleasure is the absence of pain" bit is to get back to particle physics.

Analogy....[See More](#)

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[Elli Pensa AH](#) my friend, you left me astonished and speechless !

Can we assume that "the surface area" is our body and soul ?...[See More](#)

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[AH](#) Almost. Not exactly right. Lucretius spells it out correctly. I have to travel now. Will be back in five or six hours...

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[AH](#) The sensors are connected to the nervous system (the soul). The soul consists of the nerves and the brain (the mind). The sensors transmits images that are "true to proportion", and the brain receives those, interprets those, and adds biases (opinions) that have been naturally selected and/or learned and/or mis-learned.

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[Cassius Amicus AH](#) I agree that there is a good analogy here between pleasure/pain and the space relationship between bodies and void. However I suppose there are limits to the analogy in the same way that we see the trouble with saying that pleasure "is" the absence of pain - we are looking at pleasure and pain, and bodies and void, in only one respect, which I think is "quantity." Of course pleasure and pain and bodies and void (at least bodies) have many other qualities besides "quantity." Is that not the real problem we are running into, that "X is absence of Y" is in one respect only (quantity)? And that the stumbling block is that people are not recognizing that we are talking only in one respect, and not even attempting to give a full overview of the topic?

When we say the word "orange" in the context of describing the fruit, we know what we are talking about because we know the orange-colored fruit that grows on trees. But if we did not know what that fruit was, the word "orange" would tell us about it only in respect to its color, and leave us totally in the dark as to its other qualities.

That's what we seem to be doing here. Epicurus is concerned about quantity and quality because the existing philosophical discussion about the goal of life requires that discussion (the goal is thought to be something that cannot be increased or purified). And the "X is absence of Y" or "we only need X when Y is present" is terminology that derives from that quantity/quality context, presuming that we understand that the pleasures and pains involved are real and have many other attributes BESIDES their quantity and quality.

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[AH](#) I have to travel now. I will come back in about five hours.

In short I took a quantitative experiment/observe approach because Epicurus told us that was the method he used.

"Nature requires that we resolve all these matters by measuring and reasoning..."

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[Daniel Bachmann](#) Thank you [Cassius Amicus](#) I only read the initial text you wrote and it is exactly what I believe too, that pleasure cannot just be confined to the absence of pain. I read the letter to Menoecus many times and if I read the document as a whole, broadly construed, without focussing on narrow literal interpretation of individual sentences I arrive at the same conclusions. If anybody is in doubt, just think about the welcome sign above the school which clearly states that here our greatest good is pleasure otherwise it would say the absence of pain is our greatest good.

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[Eric Sherman](#) 'Absence of pain' entails an absence of anxiety and if epicureans don't understand that most of Epicurus', Lucretius' and Lucians' attempts are exactly to free man of his anxieties then I fear that much here is of little value. Yes, active pleasures are also much of Epicureanism. I'm harping on this issue because it is so much of Epicurean that to not understand it is to not understand much of Epicurus' program

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[Hiram Crespo](#) I think part of the issue is that (in my view) philosophy requires certain training, and part of the idea is that we should TRAIN OUR MINDS to be in pleasant abiding when not experiencing active pleasures. A non Epicurean will most easily experience these as neutral states, but there is an art of living, a regimen, that we apply to being aware of katastematic pleasure. This includes the practice of gratitude and (controversially) may have included religious techniques in antiquity, because E said that through piety we can train ourselves to constantly experience "unalloyed, effortless pleasure"..

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[Eric Sherman](#) Why free man from death, religion, superstitions, and false beliefs --primarily what Epicurus, Lucretius and Lucian spend countless pages doing if it were not to free man of anxiety?

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[Cassius Amicus](#) And we would not have that either I don't understand why you think we cannot have both! ??

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[Eric Sherman](#) That 'mental training' in my view is to apply wisdom and sober reasoning to the things that cause man terror. Take Lucretius, what is his aim? To provide a natural account of phenomena that man is prone to supernaturalize which causes terror, angst, fear, control, etc.

Sober reasoning is not for itself. It is to provide mankind freedom from fear. Is that not pleasurable? It is.

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[Elli Pensa to Epicurean Philosophy](#) September 18 at 2:23pm ·

So, send us some offering for the care of our SACRED BODY, on your own behalf and that of the children. (Epicurus)

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4: The Despisers of the Body - Thus spake Zarathustra, by Friedrich Nietzsche

To the despisers of the body I speak my word. I wish them neither to learn afresh, nor teach anew, but only to bid farewell to their own bodies, -- and thus become silent.

"Body am I, and soul" -- so says the child. And why should one not speak like children?

But the awakened one, the knowing one, says: "Body am I entirely, and nothing more; and soul is only the name of something about the body."

The body is a great wisdom, a plurality with one sense, a war and a peace, a flock and a shepherd.

An instrument of your body is also your small wisdom, my brother, which you call "mind"-- a little instrument and toy of your great wisdom.

"I," you say, and are proud of that word. But the greater thing -- in which you are unwilling to believe -- is your body with its great wisdom; that does not say "I," but does "I."

What the sense feels, what the mind knows, never has its end in itself. But sense and mind would rather persuade you that they are the end of all things: so vain are they.

Instruments and toys are sense and mind: behind them there is still the Self. The Self seeks with the eyes of the senses, it listens also with the ears of the mind.

Always the Self listens and seeks; it compares, masters, conquers, and destroys. It rules, and is also the mind's ruler.

Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, there is a mighty lord, an unknown sage -- it is called Self; it dwells in your body, it is your body.

There is more wisdom in your body than in your best wisdom. And who then knows why your body needs precisely your best wisdom?

Your Self laughs at your mind, and its bold leaps. "What are these leaps and flights of thought to me?" it says to itself. "A detour to my end. I hold the puppet-strings of the mind, and am the prompter of its notions."

The Self says to the mind: "Feel pain!" Then the mind suffers, and thinks how it may put an end to its suffering -- and that is why it is made to think.

The Self says to the mind: "Feel pleasure!" Then the mind is pleased, and thinks how it may be pleased again -- and that is why it is made to think.

I want to speak to the despisers of the body. Their contempt is caused by their respect. What is it that created respect and contempt and worth and will?

The creating Self created for itself respect and contempt, it created for itself pleasure and pain. The creative body created the mind as a hand for its will.

Even in your folly and contempt you each serve your Self, you despisers of the body. I tell you, your very Self wants to die, and turns away from life.

No longer can your Self do that which it desires most: -- create beyond itself. That is what it desires most; that is its fervent wish.

But it is now too late to do so: -- so your Self wishes to perish, you despisers of the body.

To perish -- so wishes your Self; and therefore you have become despisers of the body. For you

can no longer create beyond yourselves.

And that is why you are angry with life and the earth. An unconscious envy is in the sidelong glance of your contempt.

I do not go your way, you despisers of the body! You are no bridges to the Overman!

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[Elli Pensa](#) Sober reasoning IS NOT A SITUATION TO EMPTY THE CUP OF PLEASURES!

Sober reasoning HAS FEELINGS too !

First the body feels and then the mind decides what the heck the body has felt....[See More](#)

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[Ronald Warrick](#) I believe it is well established that an anxious mind senses pain more intensely, to the point where a tranquil mind can tolerate much pain, as Epicurus did in his last days.

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[Elli Pensa](#) [Ronald](#) hi ! 😊 Please, do you agree with the above argument that there is any possibility to empty the cup of pleasures (feelings) ? Give me the meaning of the words "anxious mind" in accordance to this VS 33 "The flesh cries out to be saved from hunger, thirst, and cold. For if a man possess this safety and hope to possess it, he might rival even Zeus in bliss". I think also that in accordance to the algorithm of the desires by Epicurus the mind won't be so anxious for living.

You said, and I agree with you that "an anxious mind senses pain more intensely, to the point where a tranquil mind can tolerate much pain, as Epicurus did in his last days". But it is well established too that Epicurus tolerate much pain since he remembered the PLEASURABLE moments of the discussions that had had with his friends.

Our issue was to empty that cup, if I am not mistaken.