

Episode One Hundred Thirty-Seven - The Letter to Menoecus 04 - On Death (Part Two)

Post by "Don" of August 29, 2022 at 8:25 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

We do not disagree - that is why I said "full description."



I didn't think we did, but I wanted to enter my current position/understanding into the record with regard specifically to tranquility's place in Epicurean philosophy and practice and to encourage discussion from others.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

But there are others out there in the world who insist that "tranquility" IS a sufficient description of the Epicurean goal, and that is my reason for the rhetorical question.

The rhetorical question isn't always best left unanswered. 😊 In fact, the way you posed that question - from my perspective - is a perfect jumping off point to make the argument for pleasure as the goal.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Pleasure as defined by normal definitions includes both joy and delight and tranquility. The reverse is not the case in normal or academic discourse - tranquility is not considered to include joy and delight.

I agree. Academic commentators who elevate ataraxia and aponia at the expense of [khara](#) and [euphrosyne](#) do seem disingenuous or even dishonest. Those four are given together in the infamous katastematic/kinetic categorization. Epicurus included all four of these in his definition of pleasure. That is one of the fundamental doctrines that distinguished his philosophy from the Cyrenaics. He recognized the pleasures of sex, pleasant sights, etc. in the moment like them but also recognized the pleasure of calm, equanimity, and tranquility when a person returns to balance and (to use the modern term) homeostasis.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

As I see it if we want to convey that we value both goals in the online world of discussing Epicurus, the global word which must be emphasized is Pleasure.

👍 👍 No argument there.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Pleasure is clearly communicated to be the goal, and we can all pursue Pleasure in whatever form we find pleasurable.

I push back on (or clarify) that statement a little as it's stated to say that not *everything* one finds pleasurable should *necessarily* be pursued. All pleasures are good but not all pleasures should be chosen if a pleasurable life is the goal . We must choose wisely.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

That's exactly what the elevation of "katastematic pleasure" has done in many cases - dilute and demote the sweeping nature of the word "pleasure." And whether we like it or not, people who focus on "tranquility" and "katastematic pleasure" as replacements for "pleasure" are everywhere in modern online discussion of Epicurus, so this is an issue to keep constantly in mind.

👍 Yes, I don't think "katastematic pleasure" should stand alone at the expense of "kinetic pleasure." But, in regards to my post #10, I also contend that we shouldn't denigrate or dilute the role tranquility can play in an Epicurean life and practice. Note: I don't think you're doing that, [Cassius](#) , but I think it needs to be stated explicitly and to be kept in mind (no pun necessarily intended).