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Post by "Pacatus" of October 1, 2022 at 6:07 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

We can do our best to construct "maps" and write down all sorts of definitions of "happiness" and "pleasure" and "joy" and eudaimonia and everything else, but in the end we have to be clear about the limits of words. Words are maps and they are highly useful, but elaborate definitions can only serve that "map" function -- they cannot be equated with or confused with the feelings themselves.

I think this whole "the map is not the territory" is of bedrock importance. And the point is always to measure the map against the (real/experiential) territory -- and not the other way around (which, it seems to me, a whole lot of religionists do). Objectively, empirical investigation can reveal the general territory -- but, in terms of sensual and emotional experience, we are each our own navigator.

Maps, as you say, are helpful -- but the map can only guide to the territory (like the Zen parable of fingers pointing to the moon); and that understanding in itself might separate Epicurus (and his writings) from his philosophical rivals. The Platonists and the Stoics (as I understand them) privilege their maps over the territory; maybe Aristotle, too.

It is so easy (at least for me) to get lost in this or that map. And to thereby lose sight of the territory right here ...