

# The Ethics of Epicurus and its Relation to Contemporary Doctrines by Jean-Marie Guyau. Edited by Testa and Ansell-Pearson, translated by Testa

Post by "Cassius" of May 2, 2023 at 9:09 PM

Godfrey I missed your long excerpt in post 4 earlier. Just to repeat some of it:

## [Quote from Godfrey](#)

"To summarize, the good according to Aristippus consists in moving, in changing oneself, running from pleasure to pleasure, enhancing past enjoyment with a new enjoyment. In contrast, to possess the good, Epicurus says, is to rest immobile in oneself. Instead of concerning oneself with gaining [new enjoyments] we need to make every effort not to lose anything. It is to restrain and restrict all the fugacious and superficial enjoyments to just one, an indestructible and profound one, which is an enjoyment of life itself. The good, then, is serenity."

Yeah I guess if this is reflective of his views then I doubt I can climb aboard. I will give him credit for looking for something positive in stillness and immobility, and in fact it seems clear that that is the best face that one can put on an ascetic interpretation.

But I don't buy it at all. Thank Zeus Diogenes Laertius preserved clearly that Epicurus embraced BOTH the pleasures of rest and of motion. That Epicurus did so is to me obvious from many other texts, but there is no doubt that one can read portions of the letter to Menoecus in isolation and conclude that preservation and immobility are viable interpretations of some kind of ultimate goal. Even I can stretch those words to seem acceptable, but in the end we can't dance around it.

I think it's highly valuable to have these discussions so we can confront them. It's also essential that we make clear that someone whose number one priority in life is immobility and fear of pain has profoundly misinterpreted Epicurus.

There's no way to avoid this controversy. It exists and people will always be confronted by it. I think Epicurus would expect us to stand tall and point out the errors as clearly as possible.