

Episode 196 - The Epicurean Arguments In Cicero's On Ends - Book Two - Part 06

Post by “Don” of October 16, 2023 at 10:48 PM

Due to the fact that I seem to be unable to not have an opinion on this thread 😊 and that y'all have added a lot of interesting and in depth content, I'm going to simply work my way through chronologically starting at [Cassius](#) 's post 46. So, I apologize if something got superceded in the interim. I'm looking forward to this! Here we go!

[Quote from Cassius](#)

"Rest" implies sitting around doing nothing.

To me, "rest" implies relaxation and rejuvenation. It implies taking a break to regroup. Saying it implies "Doing nothing" to me smacks of the Protestant maxim of "idle hands are the Devil's plaything."

[Quote from Cassius](#)

"kinetic" is going to evoke frenzy in English-speaking minds, "katastematic" is never going to evoke anything but "woo" or being "comatose" at best.

I have no problem not using the jargon, especially if you're thinking of how to evangelize. Kinetic and katastematic are in-house designations. But it behooves us to keep them in mind since the ancients evidently found them to be useful and important ways to define what they meant by pleasure, on several sides of the issue.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

why - if on a particular day we should reach 100% pleasure) we should want to live any longer.

That is a *really* unfortunate way of stating that question. A better way of looking at it is Fragment 490:

He who needs tomorrow least, most gladly greets the coming day.

It's not that someone doesn't *want* to live any longer; it has to do with gratitude for what you have. Being self-sufficient in yourself. Having the realization that "if this is it, I've lived well and

taken pleasure in my life." Then, when the new day comes, being grateful that you have more life to experience. Not clinging to life with worry and anxiety about how long you have. Having more life is good, because life is good, but acknowledging the fullness of pleasure with the health of the body and the tranquility of the mind can be satisfying. Many times we run around, frenzied, trying to fill our day with activities. We need to slow down, rest, breathe, take a break, tune in to what our bodies are telling us.

So then, the wise one neither begs nor craves for living nor fears not living: Neither to set oneself against living, nor to imagine that it is evil to not live. Just as the most food is not chosen but that which brings the greatest pleasure; choose as well not the longest time but that in which one enjoys the fruits of that which bring the greatest pleasure.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

That's like asking why, if we climb to the top of Mount Everest, we should want to continue to live at all. No one but a Stoic or other warped personality would conclude that meeting a goal like that "once" is "good enough for a lifetime."

It's not anything like that. Climbing to the top of Everest is a discrete goal, one activity. As you say, it's meeting a goal..once. Maybe it's a lifetime goal to be done once. Then on to the next thing.

If I ever fully eradicate my fears and anxieties (I'm getting there... Slowly!), if I can really have health of the body and the tranquility of the mind, that kind of perspective will change my outlook on my life as a whole. If I truly learn to savor the moment - to really pluck the pleasure from each breath - to internalize and really feel a deep gratitude for my life but not cling to it, grasp, fret when it's going to end, I will no longer be enjoying it. Experience pleasure now. Experience pleasure tomorrow if it comes. That paradigm shift that comes with studying Epicurean philosophy is a powerful antidote to the Fear of Missing Out FOMO and endless rat race hustle mentality pedalled by modern society (and even similar to what Cicero was advocating)

And, in conclusion on commenting on post 46, I fully agree that [Philebus](#) no doubt had an outsized influence on any debate about pleasure in the ancient world. Have I read it yet? No I have not. Am I slightly embarrassed admitting that? Yes, yes I am. On the ever growing reading list... And now I have to read that new Sedley article [Kalosyni](#) found! Thanks for that one!!

Thus ends random thoughts on post 46 above. Sorry, I appear to be more verbose than I anticipated!