

Welcome Max Duboff

Post by “Don” of July 2, 2026 at 7:21 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Tranquility/Ataraxia/Ascetic construction

I think it's a jump to *always* immediately go from discussion of the importance of tranquility/ataraxia to seeing this as an endorsement of asceticism. I don't *necessarily* see people who write "tranquility is the ultimate pleasure" or "tranquility is the goal" to also always be saying "Epicurus said that it is vital to live like an ascetic hermit in a cave and never experience any source of pain ever." I also don't always see this same implication by those who talk of absence of pain but that's another thread.

I deeply respect your passion and think I understand the reasons you see this as a slippery slope, but ataraxia/tranquility IS fundamental to Epicurus' philosophy. Freedom from anxiety is absolutely foundational to Epicurus' philosophy. I would prefer Dr. Austin not use "*ultimate* pleasure" to describe tranquility. I'd prefer "foundational pleasure" or some other adjective, but she does an excellent job in putting that in context throughout her book.

Epicurus himself writes to Herodotus that "mental tranquillity *means* being *released* from all these troubles and *cherishing* a continual remembrance of the highest and most important truths." And "we must not suppose that our treatment of these matters fails of accuracy, so far as it is *needful* to *ensure* our tranquillity (ataraxia) and blessedness (makarios)." To Pythocles, he writes "if you fight against clear evidence, *you never can enjoy* genuine tranquility (ataraxia)." So, tranquility, peace of mind, freedom from anxiety IS foundational. Yes, it's foundational because it is pleasurable to experience tranquility, but it is also foundational because it sets the stage for every other aspect of the blessed life as well.