

Welcome Max Duboff

Post by "Max DuBoff" of July 7, 2026 at 5:03 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

The vacation example is useful to discuss. You've told us that on your own reading that small ordinary statistically real risks taken for an "unnecessary" pleasure can't be justified. You admit that this troubles you, but that you can't find another way to read PD3/18/20-21 and Men.128/131.

I'd ask you to consider the possibility that this is the texts correcting themselves. When a sincere, careful interpretation produces a result even its author finds radical and troubling, that's usually evidence against one of his premises. We've already identified the likely origin of your problem - the completeness requirement that you've twice said you can't ground in Epicurus.

Epicurus taught people who drove no cars but rode roads and sailed seas that were, if anything, more dangerous than a modern highway, and nothing in the record suggests he told them not to travel to see a friend.

As to the deathbed letter - saying the pain "doesn't interfere with blessedness" because Epicurus reports being happy - that's a conclusion, not a test. This tells us the rule after the fact, but gives no way to predict a result before the fact. What would you have said in advance, not knowing the outcome, about whether that pain would interfere?

Is the position you're defending your account of *what Epicurus's texts actually say*, or is it *your own preferred view*? You say that Epicurus *should have been* something other than what he was.

People here on this thread need to understand clearly to what extent you yourself admit that your argument is not required by the texts themselves.

[Quote from Max DuBoff](#)

(Separately, I think Epicurus should've embraced value dualism rather than hedonism, arguing that the absence of pain and pleasure are both intrinsic goods; but my interpretation above stands even without this point.)

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As I said above, "I think the evidence that Epicurus believed a complete life can't get any better is clear; I don't know how else to interpret KD 3, 18, and 20-21, and Men. 128 and 131." To

reiterate, I think there's strong evidence that Epicurus thought this; I personally don't know why he was so committed to it. But that doesn't change that, as far as we can tell, he was really committed to it. I don't necessarily disagree with your point about reaching an implausible interpretation; but, at least as things stand now, your approach seems to me to have more problems.

Well, Epicurus's deathbed letter gives evidence that, in other cases of extreme pain, that pain won't interfere with blessedness. (Ditto for the, perhaps implausible, claim in Diogenes Laertius that the sage will be happy under torture.) If I didn't have this evidence, I'd predict that that pain would interfere with blessedness; and I worry that it does despite the claim that it doesn't. But I really believe Epicurus thought the pain didn't interfere, and the challenge is explaining why.

For almost the entire thread, I've been saying my interpretation of Epicurus himself. The comment about what I think he should've said was my own position, different than Epicurus's. The rest of my points are all my interpretation of Epicurus.