

## PD01 - Blessed and Imperishable?

Post by "Cassius" of March 3, 2020 at 2:50 PM

Eugenios - you bet. I will also say this: I try to be very alert to never taking anything on "authority" and so I do not like to reference DeWitt as much as I do. HOWEVER while I am perfectly sure that he may have made mistakes in certain areas (although I cannot currently cite anything major) I firmly believe that his approach merits great attention, so if you don't have a copy of that please let me know so I can point you to places you can find it if you don't have it already. But sounds like you are well equipped already!

You'll see elsewhere on the site here that on the issue that I think is most profound - the "ataraxia" / tranquility argument, I think DeWitt is also correct, but to go further his conclusion is bolstered by the applicable chapter in Gosling & Taylor's "The Greeks On Pleasure" and by the [Nikolsky](#) article "Epicurus on Pleasure."

Given how central I see that argument to be, it's almost amusing to me that DeWitt treats it almost as a sideline rather than one of his pet issues. He was much more interested apparently in anticipations, and the "[all sensations are true](#)" issue, and numerous other points -- but his interpretation of Epicurus as not focusing exclusively on katastematic pleasure foreshadows the conclusions in the other books and articles I just mentioned.

There are numerous technical details (anticipations is a great example, along with nature of the gods) that I don't think are of "life and death" centrality to making Epicurus important to us today, but to me, I simply could not accept for a moment *that my life is so short, that there is no life after death, that [pleasure is the guide of life](#), that there is no absolute morality or virtue or divine revelation* --- and **THEN be told that the best thing for me to do with my time is live on bread and water in what amounts to a cave with a couple of friends????**

**There is NO WAY I believe Epicurus taught that,** and no way that I believe that the ancients, who had access to all his texts and loyal followers, interpreted him in that way. I am convinced that the message I draw from all these presumptions is the same that the ancient Epicureans drew: that we should indeed "seize the day" and make the most of whatever opportunities of pleasure are available to us for as long as we live, each in our own circumstances.

That lesson or realization, if you will, is tremendously difficult for many people to accept, indoctrinated as they are from all sides that there is either a god or ideal virtue to which we all must conform. Sometimes I find it interesting to consider how Epicurus himself confronted the issue of choosing between "truth" as we understand it, versus "pleasure" which he concluded was the guide and goal of life, because it is easy to argue that happy fool is a better life than an unhappy "wise man." But I am convinced that he concluded to embrace **both**, and I don't think he accepted any contradictions after his basic understanding of nature was established. Better

that the life be short, while confidently embracing whatever pleasure is available, than long and ultimately miserable from embracing foolishness, which so rarely ends up being pleasant or happy.