

"Objection Your Honor! Attorney Cicero Is Mischaracterizing the Testimony To Mislead The Jury! The Evidence Is Clear: Not Only Is "Ataraxia" Not The Highest Pleasure - Ataraxia Alone Is Not A Pleasure At All!

Post by "Cassius" of February 2, 2018 at 7:56 AM

"Do any of the three letters written by Epicurus mention or explain static versus dynamic pleasures? If not, then it is not essential. How about the principle doctrines? Even so, a list of doctrines is never as clear, as a letter. If not then it is not Epicurus himself. Not essential."

<<< To me that is the key and the start of the analysis. The great majority of this k/k analysis comes from Cicero with a little added personal commentary from Diogenes Laertius, which was probably written hundreds of years later even than Cicero. We don't have anything within 200+ years of Epicurus himself that even hints that Epicurus considered a distinction between "static" and "active" to be helpful. And if Epicurus dealt with it at all, it's a safe bet that he did so only to unwind the ****harm**** of thinking about pleasure as static, and to refute Plato, just as Wenham and [Nikolsky](#) indicate. The letter to Menoeceus, where this k/k category would certainly have been discussed if it were significant, does not devote a word to it. Instead it says the opposite - ALL pleasure is desirable, not some pleasures intrinsically more than others, or some pleasures intrinsically for the sake of others.

The only way to read this k/k distinction into Menoeceus is to presume that "absence of pain" means a state of non-feeling, and therefore "absence of pain" means "katastematic" under a different name. That's not just wrong, but absurd, given the clear intent of the rest of the letter and many other reliable statements that pleasure is a feeling we all recognize by nature, not an "absence of" anything else. Pain is to be avoided so that we can experience pleasure, not so we can experience a state of non-feeling. Any attempt to describe the pleasures that we experience when we are living without pain is simply a list of ordinary and familiar mental and bodily pleasures.

But I will go further than to say that "it is not essential." It's not just non-essential, it is terribly harmful to a philosophy based on feeling to state or imply that a state of non-feeling is the goal of life. That is sabotage of the highest order, the kind of thing with have to expect from a master lawyer with an agenda to defeat and wipe out Epicurean philosophy - which it has very nearly succeeded in doing.