

# Further Ways to Consider "Death is Nothing to Us"

Post by "Kalosyni" of February 12, 2023 at 6:48 PM

Principal Doctrine 2: "[Death is nothing to us](#), for that which is dissolved is without sensation; and that which lacks sensation is nothing to us."

I found these questions which dive deeper into the meaning with in this phrase (presented in [an article reviewing "Facing death : Epicurus and his critics"](#), by James Warren.

Quote

The Epicurean belief that "[death is nothing to us](#)" is meant to correct the mistaken beliefs which people have that generate a fear of death. But as JW acutely notes, precisely what is fearful about death is ambiguous. On his analysis, it could include at least four analytically distinct fears: 1) the fear of being dead (namely, of not existing); 2) the fear that one will die (namely, apprehension about being mortal); 3) the fear of premature death (namely, of dying too young or before one has completed one's goals in life); and 4) the fear of the process of dying. JW claims that "there is no single Epicurean 'argument against death'. Rather, they had an armoury of arguments which could be deployed against the various different kinds of fear of death"

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Post by "Pacatus" of November 1, 2023 at 5:27 PM

On listening to Part 1 of the Emily Austin podcast interview, I looked up and read her paper "Epicurus on the Politics of Fearing Death," which she referenced. (It can be found here: [https://www.academia.edu/14801045/Epicu...f Fearing Death](https://www.academia.edu/14801045/Epicu...f_Fearing_Death).)

She argues cogently from the source material to the following conclusion - which she sums up thusly: "I have argued that Epicurus does not believe all forms of the fear of death are irrational and eliminable. At least one fear - the fear of violent death caused by others - is brute and must be managed politically." And: "In sum, I argue that Epicurus believes there is a fear of death that does not disappear, which we can control with due care and with close attention to the social environs."

My thought is that, from a modern point of view, we might distinguish between that "brute fear" - which is likely part of the evolutionarily inherited "survival response," which is a natural

response, of physiological/neurological nature, to an immediate perceived threat - versus "maladapted" fears (which I'll call "anxiety"), which are both unnatural and irrational (e.g., that I won't be able to afford that trip to Rome, or that my girlfriend will break up with me ... .)

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With that said, I thought that discussion of Dr. Austin's views in this paper might just be interesting.