

From: Catherine
Sent: Fri, 17 Feb 2023 16:12:02 -0500
To: 한진강
Subject: Re: Dear professor
Attachments: death (1).pdf

Hello and apologies for this late reply!

First, I think you are absolutely right that clever short arguments such as Epicurus's claim that 'Where we are death is not and where death is we are not' cannot possibly remove the fear of death. And he is just wrong that severe pains are short and all long term pain is mild.

And I think you are absolutely right about two more things--the survival instinct as programmed into living things and the difficulty of giving up pleasures for abstract, theoretical reasons that do not feel immediate. However, the very old and ill often do prefer nonexistence to living longer and long for death as a release. (Not all of them of course-- people are different from one another)

So agreed-- Epicurus gives a weak, unpersuasive argument for not fearing death. But his main motive it seems to me is to remove fear of the afterlife especially Hell, an idea used to frighten people into submission he thinks.

More persuasive are Lucretius's arguments in his Epicurean poem De Rerum Natura. There he makes the following points:

Everything in nature has a limited time span, and we are part of nature.

It's bad to have your life cut short when you are young and have not experienced all the pleasures of the world, including having children of your own.

When you are very old and have lived (as you should) a full and fearless life, you should not try to cling to life and overstay your time at the feast. This is futile and embarrassing.

It is dignified as an very old person to make way for future generations- to 'hand on the torch of life'as in a relay race.

All this is much better quality of argument, I think-- and maybe you will agree?

With best regards, and thanks again for writing,
Catherine Wilson

> On 25. Jan 2023, at 12:13, 한진강 <hanjingang8@gmail.com> wrote:

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> Hello, I am a Korean who is interested in Epicurus. I have some questions about Epicurus. I send this letter because I found out that you have a great insight into Epicurus.

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> Please read it and send me answer