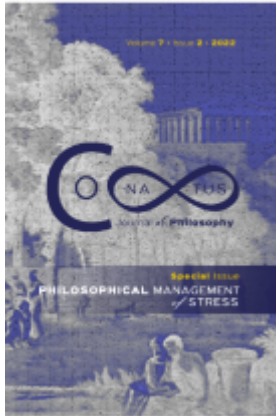


New Christos Yapijakis Article: "The Philosophical Management of Stress"

Post by "Cassius" of January 6, 2023 at 2:37 PM

[Philosophical Management of Stress: An Introduction|Conatus - Journal of Philosophy](#)



[Full text link](#)

Christos Yapijakis National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

[ORCID](#)

Abstract

All human needs are compromised by everyday stressful conditions, which may be objectively devastating or subjectively augmented due to idiosyncratic way of thinking. Unmanaged acute stress can affect emotions, thinking and behavior and chronic stress can result in several severe health problems. Philosophy may provide a frame of thinking that may help in managing everyday stress. There are personal dimensions in the philosophical management of stress based on examples of Aristotle's eudaimonia consisted of morality and pleasure, Plato's transcendence aiming to join with the supreme good, Pyrrho's serenity through suspension of judgement and the Stoics' rational attachment to virtue. Furthermore, there are social dimensions of philosophical management of stress, since there is abundant scientific evidence that stress affects moral decision-making and therefore an ethical theory of life may not be sufficient in stressful conditions. In this context, such social aspects include the relationship of eudaimonia with community life, the artistic practice and the virtual eroticism in the contemporary world of digital media as a stress relief from physical confrontation with other persons in real life, the empathy and care as a crucial quality for stress relief and social change, as well as the Epicurean approach of stress management that may have both personal and social utility. Intervention programs of stress management combining many lifestyle techniques have been shown to enhance resilience and decrease stress for a period of time, based on systematic behavioral change. Two successful novel empirical pilot studies of pure philosophical management of stress based on cognitive psychotherapy and modification of mentality have been presented, both of them realized in the COVID-19 pandemic period: a three-month positive psychology intervention combined with Epicurean and Stoic concepts was provided to adolescent students and a month-long philosophical management of stress program based on Science and Epicurean Philosophy was offered to public sector professionals.

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2817-new-christos-yapijakis-article-the-philosophical-management-of-stress/>

Post by “Little Rocker” of January 6, 2023 at 3:49 PM

I noticed that *Conatus* is open-access (hooray!), and the studies Yapijakis references in the introduction are contained separately in the [issue](#):

[Epicurean Stability \(eustatheia\): A Philosophical Approach of Stress Management](#)
[Philosophical Management of Stress based on Science and Epicurean Pragmatism: A Pilot Study](#)

Post by “Cassius” of January 6, 2023 at 4:18 PM

Thanks LR for posting those links. I have an initial observation about those articles that I find very interesting.

Unless I am missing something (always a possibility!) the article "Philosophical Management of Stress Based on Science and Epicurean Pragmatism" does not contain even a single instance of the word "pleasure." No need to comment further at the moment on why that might be, but one indication of a sound Epicurean approach to me has always been to be sure that "pleasure" is not obscured or replaced with other priorities.

The other article "Epicurean Stability" does mention "pleasure" fairly regularly, so that's more reassuring. However on first glance it looks like that article is going to give us a lot of opportunity to discuss how to keep sharp the distinctions between core Epicurean viewpoints as opposed to "eudaimonia" "well-being" and "flourishing" and similar concepts often problematic when used too loosely. Could be that we'll need to consult some of Diogenes of Oinoand's "shouting" about keeping "pleasure" in its proper place before this is over. 😊

Lots more to read before I can comment much more.

Post by “Cassius” of January 6, 2023 at 4:23 PM

I note from the main article in the first post that the word "pleasure" appears several times, but most frequently in general terms not referencing Epicurus, until here:

Quote

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2817-new-christos-yapijakis-article-the-philosophical-management-of-stress/>

We underline that according to Epicurus: [...] prudence can maintain psychosomatic balance (eustatheia) by consciously choosing what brings happiness, namely by wise satisfaction of natural and necessary desires (which concern our instincts), by understanding the nature of our emotions as criteria of truth, and by wise selection of those pleasures that are useful and not harmful.⁹²

I added the underlining.

Given our recent discussions, I wonder if Epicurus would agree that use of terms like "useful" and "harmful" as superior to "pleasurable" and "painful" is the most preferable way to discuss the pleasure / pain calculation of choices and avoidances. I tend to think not, but it will be interesting to see what others think about this formulation.

Post by “Don” of January 6, 2023 at 5:04 PM

I was curious what footnote 92 referred to, and it's simply the fact that that quoted section is from his other paper. That seems a little circular, but at least it's referenced.

Post by “Godfrey” of January 6, 2023 at 5:51 PM

FWIW, I always cringe when pleasures are referred to as useful, harmful and such. This implies a ranking of pleasures, which to my understanding, Epicurus was firmly against. To me, choices and avoidances occur with desires, not pleasures. This is perhaps picking a nit, but it's a nit that can lead to "fancy pleasures" like absence of pain, as well as a misunderstanding of the philosophy.

Post by “Cassius” of January 6, 2023 at 5:58 PM

I want to repeat what I hope is obvious but which should not be left to implication: I have tremendous respect for all the work that Christos has put in over the years in promoting Epicurean philosophy, and so any "criticism" here of any formulations should be seen in that

context. Heck every time I formulate things myself I do it differently, always hoping to improve but sometimes backsliding. It sounds petty sometimes to state a disagreement when the full context is that there is so much to be praised, but that's exactly the kind of constructive approach I think helps us all. And that's why I agree with Godfrey's comment but also have the greatest respect for Christos and holding both those positions is not a contradiction. A lot of the benefit we can get out of this forum is friendly and constructive criticism that leads to improvement.

Post by “Don” of January 6, 2023 at 10:42 PM

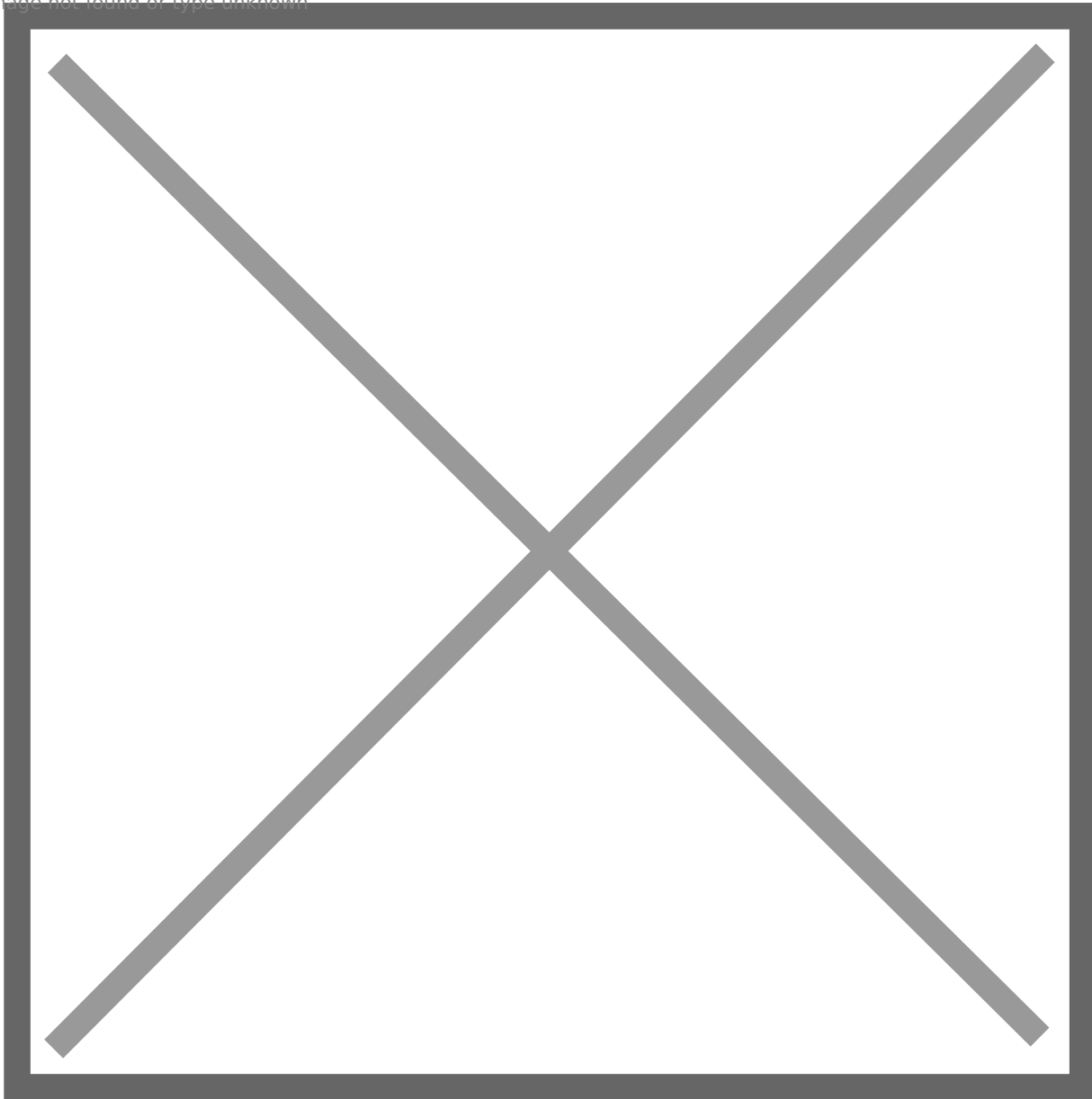
[Quote from Little Rocker](#)

I noticed that *Conatus* is open-access (hooray!), and the studies Yapijakis references in the introduction are contained separately in the [issue](#):

[Epicurean Stability \(eustatheia\): A Philosophical Approach of Stress Management](#)

I realize Dr. Yapijakis is a Associate Professor of Genetics, but his use in this paper of the outdated "triune brain" - even as a metaphor - stopped my reading in its tracks. I have been familiar with this reptile/ mammal/ primate brain "theory" since Carl Sagan's *Dragons of Eden*. But, first in Dr. Lisa Feldman Barrett's work then following up with others, I found out that this idea, even as a metaphor, is outdated and simply factually wrong. For example:

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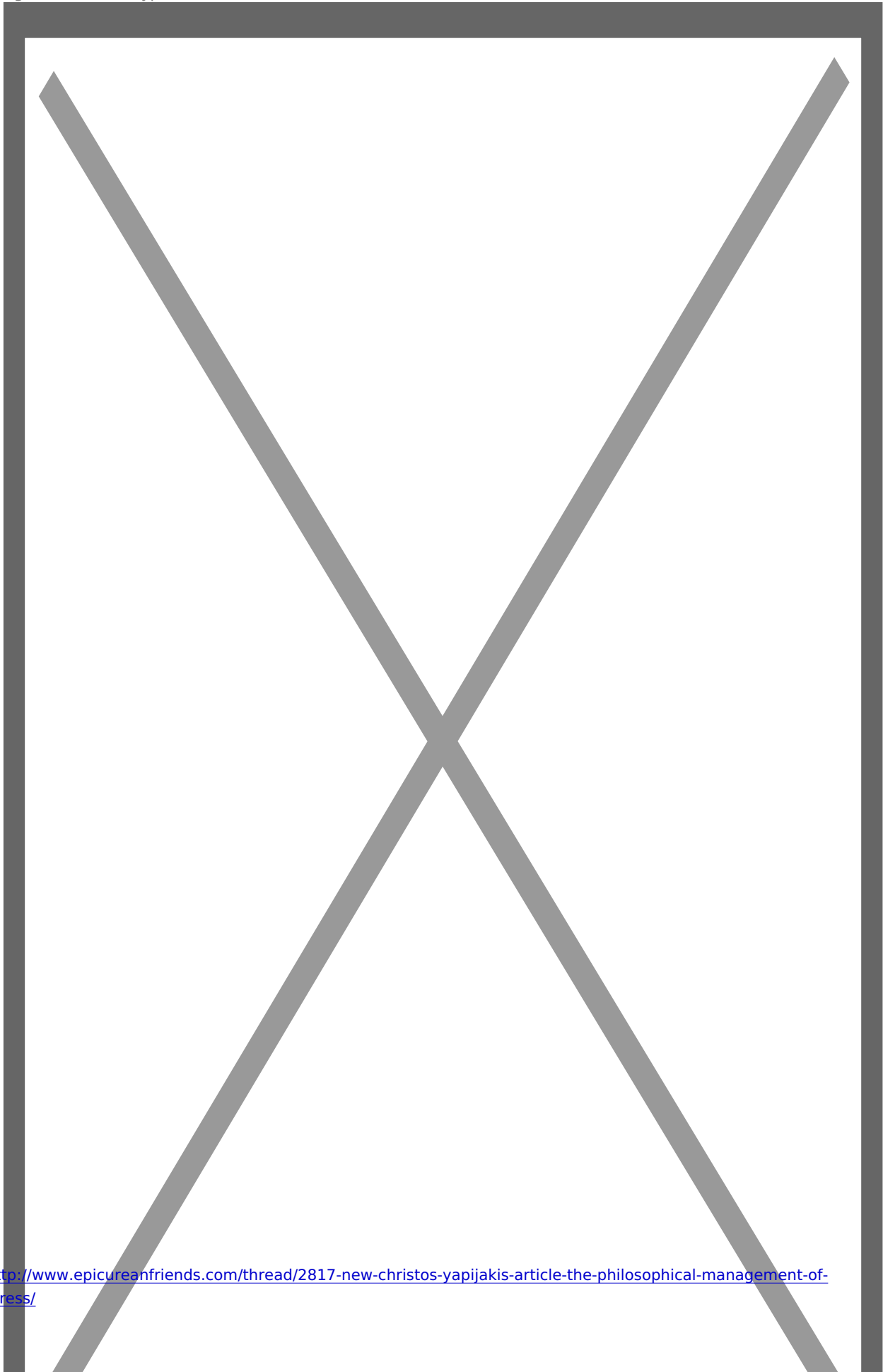
[A theory abandoned but still compelling](#)

In 1977 readers were enthralled by *The Dragons of Eden*, a book by the astronomer Carl Sagan that explored the evolution of the human brain. Dragons won the
medicine.yale.edu

Quote

MacLean's basic premise—his “‘hats on top of hats’ view” that brain systems were added by accretion over the course of evolution—was mistaken.

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<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2817-new-christos-yapijakis-article-the-philosophical-management-of-stress/>

[Rethinking the reptilian brain. - Dr Sarah McKay](#)

The reptilian brain model is not based on evolution or neuroscience. What neuroscience-based stories or concepts should use you instead?

drsarahmckay.com

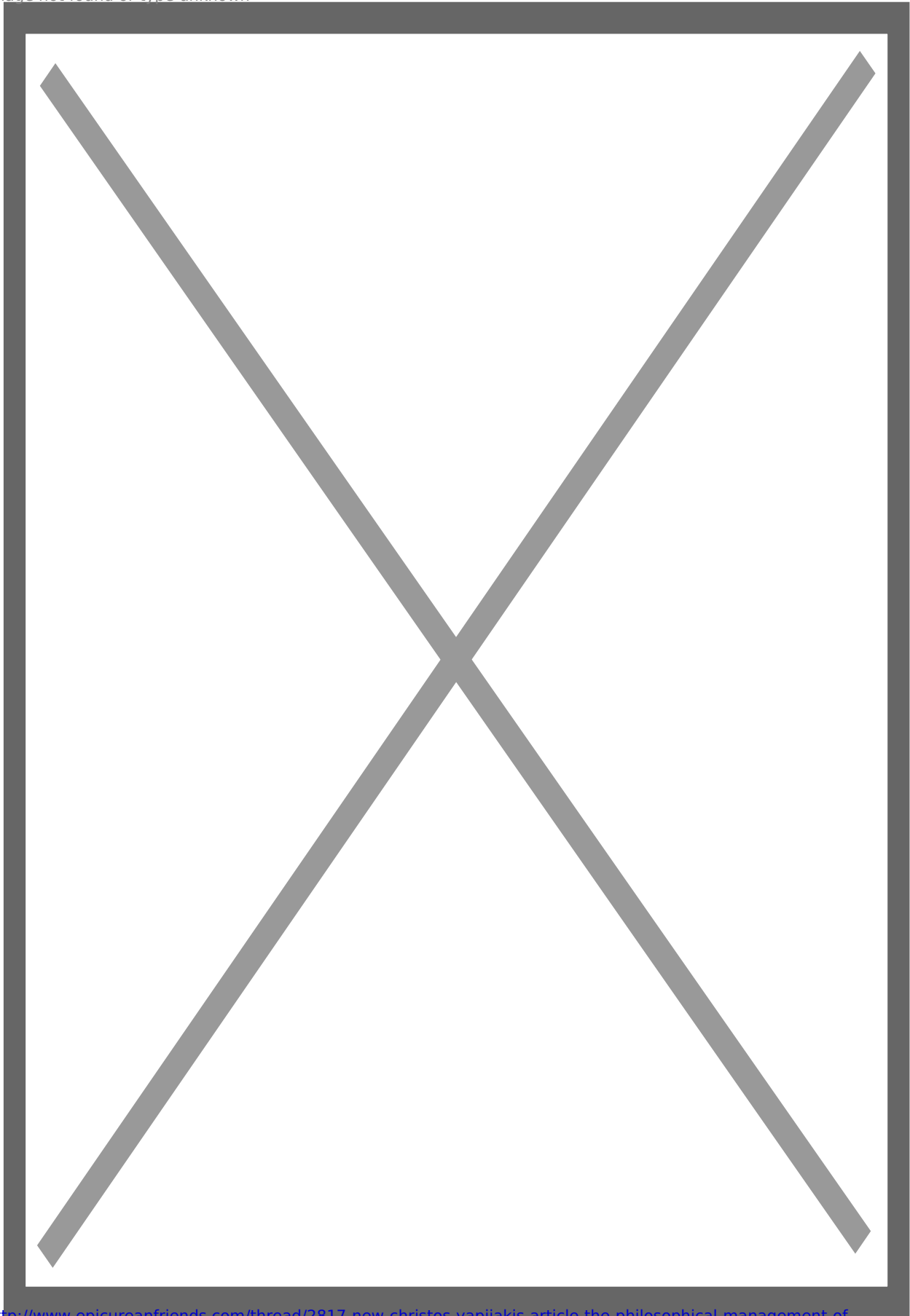
Quote

Does it matter if we use the 'reptilian brain'?

TL:DR. YES!

We are not born with hard-wired pre-packaged emotions emerging from a lizard brain. The human brain is not a tripartite-series of separate complexes. We are not at the mercy of our lizard brain when we experience threat. We've established that.

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<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2017-new-christos-yapijakis-article-the-philosophical-management-of-stress/>

[It's Time To Correct Neuroscience Myths - Northeastern University College of Science](#)

Lisa Feldman Barrett, a psychology professor at Northeastern who has been awarded a 2019 Guggenheim Fellowship, finds misinformation and myths about the brain...
cos.northeastern.edu

Quote

"Scientists have known since at least the 1970s that the idea of a lizard brain is a fiction of neuroscience," Barrett says. "The problem here is that it takes 10, 20, sometimes 50 years before discoveries in science make it to the public."

And so on. I could paste a number of articles, but I think that makes the point. I also vaguely remember making this point about his using the triune brain a year or so ago. I didn't like it then, and I don't like it now. Even if "lizard brain" is in quotes, it's factually wrong and metaphorically misleading. It's not necessary to explain Epicurean philosophy. Just leave it out.

Post by "Don" of January 7, 2023 at 12:27 PM

I should echo [Cassius](#)'s respect for Dr. Yapijakis' efforts in establishing the Gardens in Greece and the conferences in-person and online and the publishing efforts. I did watch most of the online conference in which [Cassius](#) participated (I am remembering correctly that you gave a talk, correct??), and I have an idea what it takes to coordinate events like that. So, that all is impressive in the evangelizing - the spreading the good news - of Epicurean philosophy.

However...

I'm a little uneasy about how some of that paper is phrased, especially (emphasis added):

Quote

Therefore, the Epicureans aimed at eustatheia, the good psychosomatic balance, since they believed that "the consistently good condition of the flesh and the relating hope for its preservation offer the ultimate and surest joy to those who are able to contemplate it."³⁰ Epicureans were taught to ascend the scale of pleasure by intensifying its continuity and to control its discontinuity. They became more interested in quality than in quantity by taking into account (συμμέτρῆσις, symmetrisis) useful and useless pleasures.

The "aiming at eustatheia" is interesting. It's most prominent in the Usener 68 fragment from Plutarch:

Quote

[U68]

Plutarch, That Epicurus actually makes a pleasant life impossible, 4, p. 1089D: It is this, I believe, that has driven them, seeing for themselves the absurdities to which they were reduced, to take refuge in the "painlessness" and the "stable condition of the flesh," supposing that the pleasurable life is found in thinking of this state as about to occur in people or as being achieved; for the "stable and settled condition of the flesh," and the "trustworthy expectation" of this condition contain, they say, the highest and the most assured delight for men who are able to reflect. Now to begin with, observe their conduct here, how they keep decanting this "pleasure" or "painlessness" or "stable condition" of theirs back and forth, from body to mind and then once more from mind to body.

Aulus Gellius, Attic Nights, IX.5.2: Epicurus makes pleasure the highest good but defines it as sarkos eustathes katastema, or "a well-balanced condition of the body."

....

Fragment 68: To those who are able to reason it out, the highest and surest joy is found in the stable health of the body and a firm confidence in keeping it. τὸ γὰρ εὐσταθὲς σαρκὸς κατάστημα καὶ τὸ περὶ ταύτης πιστὸν ἔλπισμα τὴν ἀκροτάτην χαρὰν καὶ βεβαιοτάτην ἔχει τοῖς ἐπιλογίζεσθαι δυναμένοις.

See also VS33

The body cries out to not be hungry, not be thirsty, not be cold. Anyone who has these things, and who is confident of continuing to have them, can rival the gods for happiness (eudaimonia).

Display More

Metrodorus also echoes these thoughts, almost exactly in his [Fragment 5](#).

However, Plutarch's text is interesting: *they keep decanting this "pleasure" or "painlessness" or "stable condition" of theirs back and forth*. He seems to imply that the Epicureans used "pleasure" or "painlessness" or "stable condition" almost interchangeably: ἡδονὴν (hēdonēn) ταύτην εἴτ' ἀπονίαν (aponian) ἢ εὐστάθειαν (eustatheian). But this is the first time I've seen the word eustatheia. It's not a bad word to use, but I can surmise some may have an issue with it being "aimed at." It might be interesting to delve into that term more. So, I applaud Dr. Yapijakis for calling my attention to that.

I'm more concerned with the phrasing "ascend the scale of pleasure" and "useful and useless pleasures." I agree with [Godfrey](#) that that should be "useful and useless *desires*" at best. The "ascent" doesn't strike me as appropriate either.

In the end, as I said, I can appreciate his work over the years, but I'm not entirely comfortable with some of his emphasis and his framing.

Post by “Cassius” of January 7, 2023 at 12:51 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

In the end, as I said, I can appreciate his work over the years, but I'm not entirely comfortable with some of his emphasis and his framing

Yes I agree. I think a significant part of the question comes from the attempt to combine Epicurus with "Humanism" and other viewpoints, with the inevitable tensions that that creates.

We all have a very understandable desire to take a "big tent" approach, but we need to be honest with our readers and ourselves as to how far to go in that regard, or else we end up in disappointment and disillusionment. "Humanism" is an even more ambiguous term than "Epicureanism," but I think it is fair to say that whatever we consider "Humanism" to mean, it means something other than a pleasure-based ethics. And in fact the articles we are talking about are pretty specific in defining their ethical goals in terms of Humanism rather than Epicureanism, as if Epicureanism is just a tool to convince people to be Humanists.

A lot of the phrasing I think we are seeing seems to be geared towards "flourishing" and "wellbeing" and similar terms that evoke more of an Aristotelian and even Platonic approach than I think most of us here would conclude us truly compatible with Epicurus. Anytime we start de-emphasizing the term "pleasure" with other wording we are in dangerous territory.

Post by “Don” of January 7, 2023 at 1:00 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

"flourishing" and "wellbeing" and similar terms

I'm personally fine with Epicureans using terms like that as long as they're in the context of eudaimonia and in the larger context of pleasure/pain, etc.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Anytime we start de-emphasizing the term "pleasure" with other wording we are in dangerous territory.

See that's why I find that Plutarch quote so interesting with him claiming that the Epicureans went "back and forth" using pleasure, aponia, and eustatheia. However, my take on that is that it all referred back to pleasure. Aponia is "absence of pain" (sort of, but that's another thread) because pleasure replaces it. Eustatheia is pleasure because it's that internal, stable tranquility that we can be sure of. Pleasure is the key in the philosophy, so whatever terms one uses, they have to return to a framing of pleasure.

Post by "Cassius" of January 7, 2023 at 1:15 PM

Quote from Philosophical Management of Stress based on Science and Epicurean Pragmatism: A Pilot Study

The philosophical approach to stress management comes hand in hand with feasibility, effectiveness, and applicability: it can be offered to everyone, regardless one's age and educational level. We decided that the key philosophical perspective of this program had to be Epicurean pragmatism (epistemologically) and humanism (morally). Pragmatism is the philosophical outlook that focuses on objective reality, and considers important what may be practically useful. As a consequentialist tradition, pragmatism assumes that stressful thoughts stem from real-life problems, to which practical solutions should be proposed. Any theory or aim should be judged according to criteria such as applicability, practicality and utility. The major figures in this tradition are William James and John Dewey.⁴ Humanism, in turn, holds that humanity, that is, being human, constitutes the ultimate value, and assumes that the ultimate end of any law-abiding civilized society is to defend basic human rights such as life, freedom, and happiness (eudaimonia). The declared objective of humanism is to defend the dignity and personality of every human, and facilitate the development of our capabilities in such way, as to live harmoniously in any given society, emphasizing that the actual meaning of life consists in the pursuit of happiness. The elaborated moral status of this notion, happiness, can be traced back to the Ancient Greek philosophical tradition, while it has also maintained its dominant status during the Renaissance, the

This paragraph in particular I think highlights the issue. Although I beat the drum for Epicurean epistemology myself, I definitely do not look **outside** Epicureanism for ethics or morality. My view would be that to affirmatively state the morality aspect of the study is Humanism rather than Epicureanism takes the approach completely outside of Epicurean philosophy into a "virtue" based orientation. All of the goals being listed of course impress us generally virtuous / desirable, but the only bedrock foundation is pleasure, and context will determine in any particular situation where those generally-desirable objectives fit in the larger and ultimate goal of "pleasure."

Post by "Little Rocker" of January 7, 2023 at 2:06 PM

While Epicurus calls all sorts of actions or agreements 'beneficial' or 'harmful,' I'm inclined to agree with Godfrey and Cassius that Epicurus would hesitate to call pleasures as such harmful because he insists that all pleasures are in themselves good and that pain exhausts the category of harm. So saying a pleasure **is** harmful is a contradiction--like saying that pleasure is pain.

Now, you could technically run pleasure and harm together via causation--if some pleasures always produce more pain than pleasure, then you could perhaps say those pleasures **are** harmful because they produce harms of necessity. You might think that move makes the most sense in the case of vice because he says 'it is **impossible** to live pleasantly' if we are vicious. So someone might reasonably ask, why not just say 'vicious pleasure is harmful pleasure'? Or, **it is impossible** to be tranquil without studying science, so that relishing scientific ignorance is a harmful pleasure.

But I again think Godfrey is right that running them together muddies important distinctions best kept separate and tidy, like between instrumental and intrinsic goods. More importantly, Epicurus almost always writes in conditionals about particular actions (which is what makes his Greek so freaking frustrating!), so I'm not entirely convinced you could establish a firm causal link for specific pleasures anyway. So he'll say, 'if it were not the case that X, then we would not object,' or 'if it were true that X, then we would approve...'

Consider, for example, politics. There is a lot of pain in politics, and generally that pain does not produce sufficient pleasure to justify the pain. But Epicurus makes it clear that in some cases the benefits might justify the pain. So we don't want to say that politics is in most cases a harmful pain, but sometimes a beneficial pain. Better to just say that sometimes pain is worth it, and other times its not.

Post by “Don” of January 7, 2023 at 2:14 PM

So, my interpretation has been that pleasure *is* good but it's the *context* within which that pleasure is experienced (and the personal responsibility we take for that context) that makes all the difference.

Ex., Drinking wine with friends is pleasurable.

Drinking wine to excess party after party is going to be... let's say less than optimal for your pleasurable existence.

Post by “Joshua” of January 7, 2023 at 2:27 PM

Quote from Fragment from the Greek Playwright Euboulos

"For sensible men I prepare only three kraters: one for health (which they drink first), the second for love and pleasure, and the third for sleep. After the third one is drained, wise men go home. The fourth krater is not mine any more - it belongs to bad behaviour; the fifth is for shouting; the sixth is for rudeness and insults; the seventh is for fights; the eighth is for breaking the furniture; the ninth is for depression; the tenth is for madness and unconsciousness."

Post by “Little Rocker” of January 7, 2023 at 3:17 PM

I mean, at the risk of sounding too extreme, I suspect that Epicurus is even open to the possibility that drinking to excess can be beneficial under some bizarre, even common, circumstances. If, for lack of a better example, a tyrant says he will force the citizens with the healthiest relationship to alcohol to fight in an unjust war, I think Epicurus might recommend falling down drunk in public a few times. Or if the only way a person can motivate themselves to do something courageous is to opt for 'liquid courage,' then Epicurus might say, 'hey, better perhaps you didn't need it, but well, turns out you do. Let me refill your glass.'

Or, ruling out the genuinely bad behavior Euboulos mentions, if it turns out empirically that getting drunk on Friday and ending up at Waffle House with college friends creates long-lasting memories of pleasure, then those memories could justify the hangover. I guess I'm just saying that I'm willing to consider going a lot further into traditional hedonism than a lot of people might find comfortable.

Post by “Don” of January 7, 2023 at 3:28 PM

Thanks, [Joshua](#) !! 👍 👍 I had forgotten about these lines.

Here's a variant translation from Perseus:

And Eubulus introduces Bacchus as saying—

Let them three parts of wine all duly season

With nine of water, who'd preserve their reason;

The first gives health, the second sweet desires,

The third tranquillity and sleep inspires.

These are the wholesome draughts which wise men please,

Who from the banquet home return in peace.

From a fourth measure insolence proceeds;

Uproar a fifth, a sixth wild licence breeds;

A seventh brings black eyes and livid bruises,

The eighth the constable next introduces;

Black gall and hatred lurk the ninth beneath,

The tenth is madness, arms, and fearful death;

For too much wine pour'd in one little vessel,

Trips up all those who seek with it to wrestle.

Εὐβουλος δὲ ποιεῖ τὸν Διόνυσον λέγοντα ἑΙΙ 196 Κ':

τρεις γὰρ μόνους κρατήρας ἐγκεραννύω
τοῖς εὖ φρονοῦσι: τὸν μὲν ὑγείας ἕνα,
ὄν πρῶτον ἐκπίνουσι: τὸν δὲ δεύτερον
ἔρωτος ἡδονῆς τε: τὸν τρίτον δ' ὕπνου,
ὄν ἐκπιόντες οἱ σοφοὶ κεκλημένοι
οἴκαδε βαδίζουσ'. ὁ δὲ τέταρτος οὐκ ἔτι
ἡμέτερός ἐστ', ἀλλ' ὕβρεος: ὁ δὲ πέμπτος βοῆς:
ἕκτος δὲ κώμων: ἕβδομος δ' ὑπωπίων:
<ὁ δ' > ὄγδοος κλητήρος: ὁ δ' ἕνατος χολῆς:
δέκατος δὲ μανίας, ὥστε καὶ βάλλειν ποιεῖ.
πολὺς γὰρ εἰς ἕν μικρὸν ἀγγεῖον χυθεὶς
ὑποσκελίζει ῥᾶστα τοὺς πεπωκότας.

Post by “Joshua” of January 7, 2023 at 3:45 PM

Ha! There's nearly an hour gone looking for the Greek text. Found 45 minutes after [Don...](#)

Since I've found it, I can record for the record that this is fragment 93 from the 4th century b.c.e middle comedy poet Eubulus, thought to be from a comic play titled Semele or Dionysus, and preserved by the 2nd-3rd century c.e. Greek grammarian Athenaeus.

[Athenaeus, The Deipnosophists, Book II., chapter 3](#)

Post by “Joshua” of January 7, 2023 at 3:53 PM

Quote

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2817-new-christos-yapijakis-article-the-philosophical-management-of-stress/>

I mean, at the risk of sounding too extreme, I suspect that Epicurus is even open to the possibility that drinking to excess can be beneficial under some bizarre, even common, circumstances.

I don't think I've ever related a tale with so much vigor as when I was sitting with friends at my sister's wedding reception, describing a pleasant morning on I-24 south of Nashville when the resident of a hot air balloon floating over the interstate gestured for me to pull the air horn. The wine rather added something, I think.

Post by “Don” of January 7, 2023 at 4:35 PM

[Quote from Little Rocker](#)

I mean, at the risk of sounding too extreme, I suspect that Epicurus is even open to the possibility that drinking to excess can be beneficial under some bizarre, even common, circumstances. If, for lack of a better example, a tyrant says he will force the citizens with the healthiest relationship to alcohol to fight in an unjust war, I think Epicurus might recommend falling down drunk in public a few times. Or if the only way a person can motivate themselves to do something courageous is to opt for 'liquid courage,' then Epicurus might say, 'hey, better perhaps you didn't need it, but well, turns out you do. Let me refill your glass.'

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I don't think that's extreme. I would absolutely agree. You're just a little more creative in your scenarios than I've been 😊

Having been raised in a society that likes absolutes in its ethics, that lack of absolutes in Epicurus I find refreshing, difficult to internalize, and intriguing all at the same time.

Post by “Don” of January 7, 2023 at 4:57 PM

[Quote from Euboulos](#)

Let them three parts of wine all duly season

With nine of water, who'd preserve their reason;

...

Quote from Fragment from the Greek Playwright Euboulos

"For sensible men...

I find it interesting that "preserve their reason" and "sensible men" translates τοῖς εὖ φρονοῦσι (tois eu phronousi) which is related to phronesis "practical wisdom." Something like "those who exercise their wisdom well."

Post by "Cassius" of January 7, 2023 at 6:38 PM

[Quote from Little Rocker](#)

I guess I'm just saying that I'm willing to consider going a lot further into traditional hedonism than a lot of people might find comfortable.

I agree with Don's comments agreeing with your direction here, and I think your direction is compelled by the philosophy even though it is the place a lot of division occurs and a lot of people eventually drop away. In fact I would say that people who never reach this point of understanding about Epicurus have never really understood the atomist [foundations of Epicurean philosophy](#). They are still stuck in some variation of idealism of which they can't let go.

It's tricky to describe and yet not sound like a "monster," but it seems to me that Epicurus was saying that the universe simply doesn't care about our moralities. We're given pleasure and pain to do with what we will, and while most people are constituted similarly and do generally tend toward the same conclusions about how best to implement those choices, no matter how strongly we feel that "our way" is the best, the moral evaluation can never be more than "our perspective." That's not to say that we shouldn't consider our perspective critically important. I think Epicurus was allowing that we should engage with the world even in politics to the extent it is necessary and leads to a more pleasant life under our own circumstances. I too think that each of us should work as hard as we can to bring the kind of world we would like to live in to

reality, at least in our own personal context. But given the atomist nature of the universe, we always have to remember that our perspective remains our own, and now matter how much emotional investment we place in it, that emotional investment never transmutes into the blessing of supernatural gods, ideal forms, or any other kind of unchanging absolute standard of morality.

That chills some people and drives them away, but "it is what it is" if you follow Epicurean philosophy to its logical conclusions. Fudging on this point is what I think leads to disillusionment and disappointment, and I think we are better off biting the bullet and following the philosophy to its logical end point.

Post by "Don" of January 7, 2023 at 8:08 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

It's tricky to describe and yet not sound like a "monster," but it seems to me that Epicurus was saying that the universe simply doesn't care about our moralities.

Thoughts...

One doesn't sound like a "monster" saying the universe doesn't care - about us, our moralities, our culture, our world. That's a simple fact. Fully onboard with that idea.

However...

One starts to sound like that "monster" if it's implied or inferred or understood that Epicureans see "no problem" when people harm or kill others for pleasure. I continue to hold that the philosophy does not do that. I've had this conversation on this forum before, so apologies for anyone who was around for that. But after that basic premise, it gets complicated. After that, it's all contextual. And, I think, I'm able to now get my head around some nuances to that idea. "Torquatus" provides some tough contexts to consider. But this thread has really made me think about the foundational place that context and intention play in sizing up any "ethical" discussion in Epicurean philosophy. It seems to me that one can't really talk about "right" and "wrong" but rather, for example, "just" and "unjust." But there's no judge on high or stone-carved rulebook. A "commandment" like Thou shall not kill is somewhat useless and almost universally ignored. I'm intentionally using that as it's one of the most provocative.

Should you kill to protect your life?

Should you kill to protect your family?

Should you kill to protect your friends?

Should you kill to protect a stranger?

Should you kill to protect your car?

Should you kill to *prevent* harm to your life or your loved ones?

Should you hire someone to kill for you to prevent harm to yourself?

Should you kill animals to eat?

Should you kill rats in your house?

Should you kill bacteria that make you sick?

Should you kill animals in experiments?

Should you kill people like the TV character Dexter does because they've done "bad" things?

I'm hoping the list made you more uneasy as you went down.

To be clear, none of these scenarios matter one way or the other at all to "the universe."

However, we live in a human society with social contracts that provide context for these scenarios. There are just and unjust actions. There are choices and rejections to make. There are wise and unwise choices. *Almost* every one of those scenarios could have multiple contingencies, contexts within which some choices would be prudent and other choices that would not be prudent. Not having a rulebook is hard but it can also be seen as freeing. Because of this, I see Epicurean philosophy as a very grown up, adult way of living. There are exemplars like Epicurus, but ultimately it's up to each individual to make prudent decisions that lead to a healthy body, a tranquil mind, friends that can be relied on, enough community goodwill to be safe, and extravagant pleasures that provide for a pleasurable life.

I'll relinquish the soapbox for now.

Post by "Little Rocker" of January 8, 2023 at 12:12 AM

But Cassius, surely it's more than simply my 'perspective' that Stoicism sucks! 😬 Isn't Stoicism, like, transcendently bad?!

I admit that your Epicurus does sound uncommonly sceptical to me. At least on their surface, KD 36-8 suggests that there's a 'basic grasp' of justice that sets the standard. I find those

justice doctrines inscrutable, but it seems that he thinks there's some objectivity at stake and that some laws and contracts are actually better than others.

Post by “Don” of January 8, 2023 at 12:32 AM

[Quote from Little Rocker](#)

At least on their surface, KD 36-8 suggests that there's a 'basic grasp' of justice that sets the standard

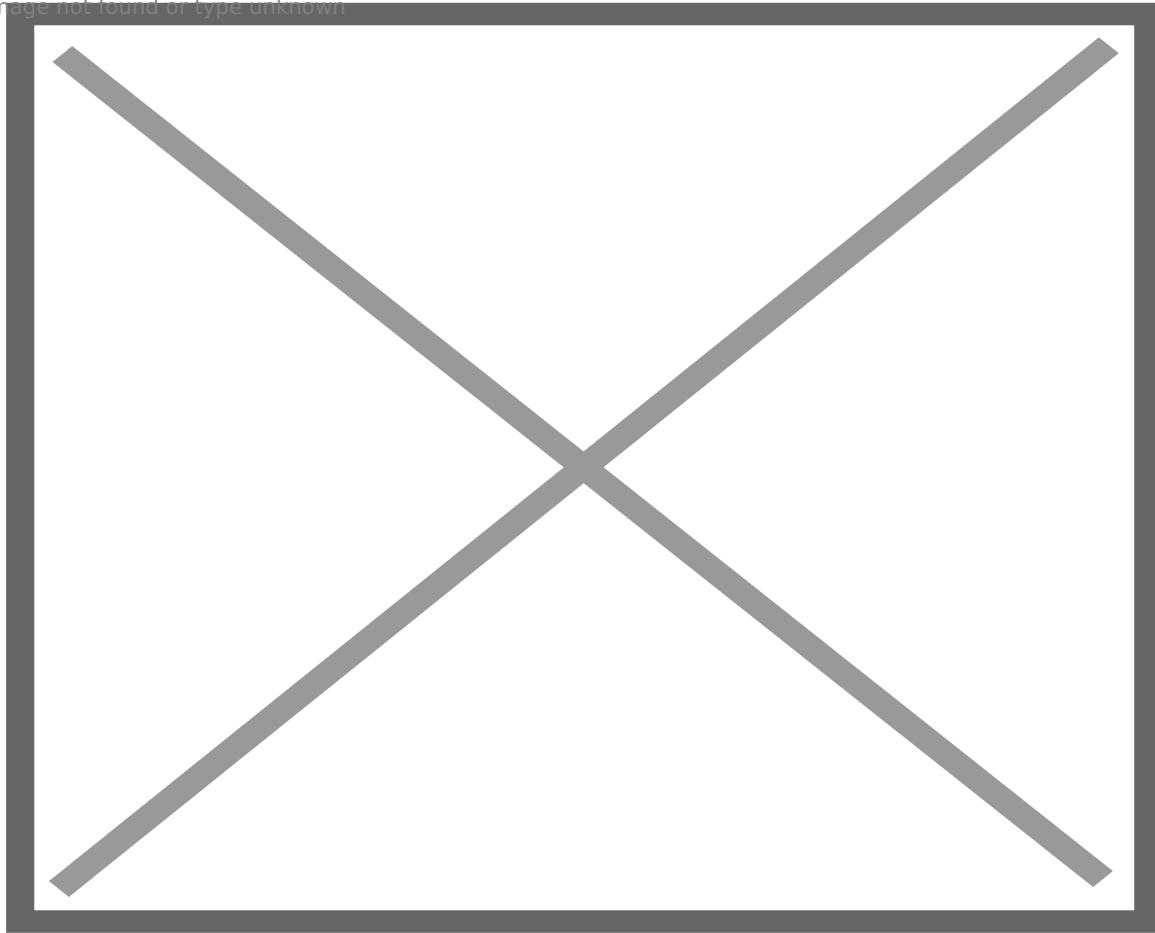
I agree. That "standard" seems to me to be P31

"Natural justice is a covenant for mutual benefit, to not harm one another or be harmed."

I've also begun to understand the prolepsis of justice to be connected in some way to the inborn sense of fairness seen in research with babies and toddlers.

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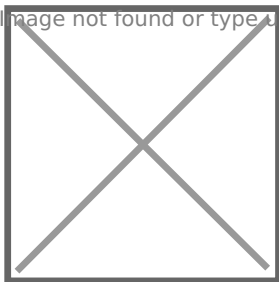


[Do Kids Have a Fundamental Sense of Fairness?](#)

Experiments show that this quality often emerges by the age of 12 months
blogs.scientificamerican.com

Infants as young as 12 months expect resources to be divided equally between two characters in a scene. By preschool, children will protest getting less than peers, even paying to prevent the peer from getting more. As children get older, they are willing to punish those who have been unfair both when they are the victims of unfairness as well as when they witness someone else being treated unfairly.

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[Developmental differences in infants' fairness expectations from 6 to 15 months of age](#)

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2817-new-christos-yapijakis-article-the-philosophical-management-of-stress/>

The present research investigated the developmental trajectory of infants' fairness expectations from 6 to 15 months of age (N = 150). Findings revealed a...

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

A nascent sensitivity to fairness can be traced back to infancy. At 15 months of age, infants look longer at unfair distribution outcomes (i.e., a 3:1 distribution) compared to fair outcomes (i.e., a 2:2 distribution; Schmidt & Sommerville, 2011). This looking time preference suggests that infants expect resources to be distributed equally among recipients and they are able to identify a violation of this norm of equality.

[Babies show sense of fairness, altruism as early as 15 months](#)

A new study by a UW psychologist presents the first evidence that a basic sense of fairness and altruism appears in infancy

www.washington.edu

A new study presents the first evidence that a basic sense of fairness and altruism appears in infancy. Babies as young as 15 months perceived the difference between equal and unequal distribution of food, and their awareness of equal rations was linked to their willingness to share a toy.

Post by "Cassius" of January 8, 2023 at 5:27 AM

[Quote from Little Rocker](#)

Isn't Stoicism, like, transcendently bad?!

I admit when you put it that way it's hard to disagree!! 😊

[Quote from Little Rocker](#)

I find those justice doctrines inscrutable, but it seems that he thinks there's some objectivity at stake and that some laws and contracts are actually better than others.

"Inscrutable" is a good word for me too, but there must be a way to decode it. He spends so much time stressing how things that were previously just become unjust when circumstances change that the whole presentation seems to be weighted more toward establishing the limitations of the abstract concept of justice rather than specific examples of justice in the real world.

And maybe that presentation choice makes sense given how much attachment we have to the idea of thinking that there is an absolute justice, and therefore the need to shake us out of our complacency. I suppose it is important too to point out that since neither gods nor ideal forms create permanent and absolute justice, even we humans, in forming our agreements with each other not to harm or be harmed, don't in so doing create anything that has permanency or absoluteness to it.

But regardless of whether "justice" is involved, i think the faculty of pleasure and pain gives us much of what we want in this department. Just like "normal" people like ice cream, "normal" people find the things most people consider to be benevolent to be pleasing, and most people find things that we ordinarily consider to be malevolent to be painful. And our liking for ice cream and dislike for things that taste nasty is to a significant degree hard wired into us.

The phrasing I like to quote on that issue comes from a 1779 book I found some years ago from [Jackson Barwis](#) written against John Locke's version of blank slate theory:

[Quote from Jackson Barwis - Dialogues on Innate Principles](#)

When we are told that benevolence is pleasing; that malevolence is painful; we are not convinced of these truths by reasoning, nor by forming them into propositions: but by an appeal to the innate internal affections of our souls: and if on such an appeal, we could not feel within the sentiment of benevolence, and the peculiar pleasure attending it; and that of malevolence and its concomitant pain, not all the reasoning in the world could ever make us sensible of them, or enable us to understand their nature.

Post by "Todd" of January 8, 2023 at 10:47 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

He spends so much time stressing how things that were previously just become unjust when circumstances change that the whole presentation seems to be weighted more toward establishing the limitations of the abstract concept of justice rather than specific examples of justice in the real world.

I agree.

I also find it interesting that [PD39](#) follows immediately after the PDs talking about justice.

I see [PD39](#) as relating to the idea of justice as much as (or more so than) friendship. Based on the awkwardness of the translations, I doubt Epicurus even used the word for friendship there. Was he instead referring to the establishment and content of the agreements that constitute justice?

Implied in [PD39](#) is the insight that cooperation is far more productive of pleasure than conflict or isolation.

If our ethic is to pursue pleasure, and cooperation with others (to the extent possible) is the best way of doing that, then I think that provides a basis for saying more specific things about justice and which kinds of behavior are going to get us the most pleasure in the long run.

Post by “Don” of January 8, 2023 at 11:00 AM

[Quote from Little Rocker](#)

But Cassius, surely it's more than simply my 'perspective' that Stoicism sucks! 😄 Isn't Stoicism, like, transcendently bad?!

😄 Yes! It is so refreshing to read that.

There *are* healthier ways of living than others, ways *more aligned* with "the way things are" than others.

Post by “Don” of January 8, 2023 at 11:12 AM

[Quote from Todd](#)

I see [PD39](#) as relating to the idea of justice as much as (or more so than) friendship. Based on the awkwardness of the translations, I doubt Epicurus even used the word for friendship there.

Yeah, I'm like a moth to a flame 😊

You are correct. Epicurus did not use any word that specifically refers to "friendship" like philia φιλία anywhere in that PD. The Saint-Andre translation is one of the more literal ones I've seen:

The person who has put together the best means for confidence about external threats is one who has become familiar with what is possible and at least not unfamiliar with what is not possible, but who has not mixed with things where even this could not be managed and who has driven away anything that is not advantageous.

Ὁ τὸ μὴ θαρροῦν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔξωθεν ἄριστα συστησάμενος οὗτος τὰ μὲν δυνατὰ ὁμόφυλα κατεσκευάσατο· τὰ δὲ μὴ δυνατὰ οὐκ ἀλλόφυλά γε· ὅσα δὲ μηδὲ τοῦτο δυνατὸς ἦν, ἀνεπίμικτος ἐγένετο, καὶ ἐξηρέσατο ὅσα τούτων λυσιτελεῖ πράττειν.

For ones like this, I always encourage people to check out @Nate 's compilation of translations of the PDs in the File library here at EoicureanFriends.

PS: I wonder, as I read those translations compiled by @Nate , if those "external threats" refer in some way to the "external threats" to our inner tranquility. That confidence referred to in [PD39](#) reminds me of Epicurus, Metrodorus, and Philodemus talking about the assurance we can have about pleasure arising from internal sources against the less confidence we can have about pleasure from sources outside ourselves. I may be stating the obvious, but it literally just hit me as I was reading through @Nate 's doc.

Post by “Little Rocker” of January 8, 2023 at 11:16 AM

Cassius, I suspect we agree about more than we disagree about. We agree that justice does not ‘exist’ in a Platonic sense and that it can vary by circumstance. We also agree that you simply can't get everyone to acknowledge or conform to a reasonable contract that involves, for example, not murdering your fellow citizens.

I think we might disagree about whether Epicurus thinks there's a fact of the matter about whether particular political arrangements are just or unjust. I think there's a core to justice that Epicurus takes to be objective, and he would not mind if most people disagreed because he often thinks most people are confused about what follows from basic grasps (see most people's ideas about piety). I think he would be fine saying, ‘they think that's just, but they're mistaken.’

That said, I have a feeling that he thinks the objective elements of justice are pretty thin (exhausted perhaps by securing ‘confidence’ from your neighbors) and that many of the political matters that tie people in knots are of little interest to Epicurus because he thinks you shouldn't get emotionally invested in things that are not necessary for fundamental security. So he might very well say, ‘They think that's a question of justice, but they're mistaken.’ But again, we have so little textual evidence.

Post by "Little Rocker" of January 8, 2023 at 12:02 PM

Quote from Todd

I see [PD39](#) as relating to the idea of justice as much as (or more so than) friendship. Based on the awkwardness of the translations, I doubt Epicurus even used the word for friendship there

I agree, though I admit that PD 39 gives me nightmares. Translating Epicurus is like eating burnt toast for every meal. FWIW, I think 40 also ties together justice and friendship.

Post by "Kalosyni" of January 8, 2023 at 1:09 PM

Some thoughts on [PD39](#)...since it has come up in this thread...and apparently I am incorrectly interpreting the meaning of this PD.

"The man who has best ordered the element of disquiet arising from external circumstances has made those things that he could akin to himself, and the rest at least not alien; but with all to which he could not do even this, he has refrained from mixing, and has expelled from his life all which it was of advantage to treat thus." [PD39](#) (Bailey)

"The person who has put together the best means for confidence about external threats is one who has become familiar with what is possible and at least not unfamiliar with what is not possible, but who has not mixed with things where even this could not be managed and who has driven away anything that is not advantageous." [PD39](#) (St. Andre)

This is one in which it would be good to be able to directly translate from the original. Here is how I interpret this PD regarding "external circumstances". There is a chance that an asteroid will hit earth and cause an apocalypse. Also, a coronal mass ejection (CME) could wipe out all electrical systems, satellites, and the internet.

So I see this PD as dealing with threats and how you make peace with these threats -- the understanding of those threats -- what is true and what is not true about those threats. About a year and a half ago, my mom was telling me that an asteroid was soon going to hit the earth. Her Christian friend had given her "reliable" information about the Apophis asteroid, and that scientists had made an error in their calculations -- that the asteroid was going to definitely hit

earth. But instead of taking any "bait" on this, I calmly replied: "Oh that's interesting", and proceeded to do research about an nearby astroids. After my research, I was sufficiently reassured regarding the unlikelihood of an astroid collision. (Also knowing that there is a still a future chance of impact by an astroid, but not for a long time to come).

Regarding coronal mass ejections, I also researched this, but what I learned was not encouraging -- there is a high likelihood of this causing problems if/when it occurs, and at what level of intensity. So this is one in which we should be ready to recognize the signs of this and realize how it will affect all of us -- and make peace with it. Enjoy life now, prudently, knowing that the continuance of life has uncertainties.

So I see this as expelling mis-information and understanding the natural world.

Post by "Todd" of January 8, 2023 at 1:21 PM

Here are some of the key Greek words from [PD39](#), and their meanings. (Thanks to Nate for that awesome compilation & glossary!)

[Quote from Nate](#)

ALLOPHYLA - ΑΛΛΑΦΥΛΑ - ἀλλόφυλά - /a:l:'o.p'h'y:la:/ - plural declension of ἀλλόφυλος (allóphulos) from ἄλλος (állōs, "different") + φύλον (phýlon, "type") meaning "different group", "race", "stock", "kin", "sex", "religion", "tribe", "country", "ethnicity", "foreign"

HOMOPHYLA - ΟΜΟΦΥΛΑ - ὁμόφυλα - /ho.'mo.p'h'y:la/ - a plural infection of ομόφυλος (omóphulos) from ὁμός (homós, "same") + φύλον (phýlon) meaning "same race", "stock", "kin", "sex", "religion", "tribe", "country", "ethnicity".

SYSTESAMENOS - ΣΥΣΤΗΣΑΜΕΝΟΣ - συστησάμενος - /sy:ste:'sa.me.nos/ - related to the word συνίστημι (synístemi, "to combine") meaning "make friends", "unite together", "treat akin to oneself", "prepared a family", "forged a community [of all the creatures]".

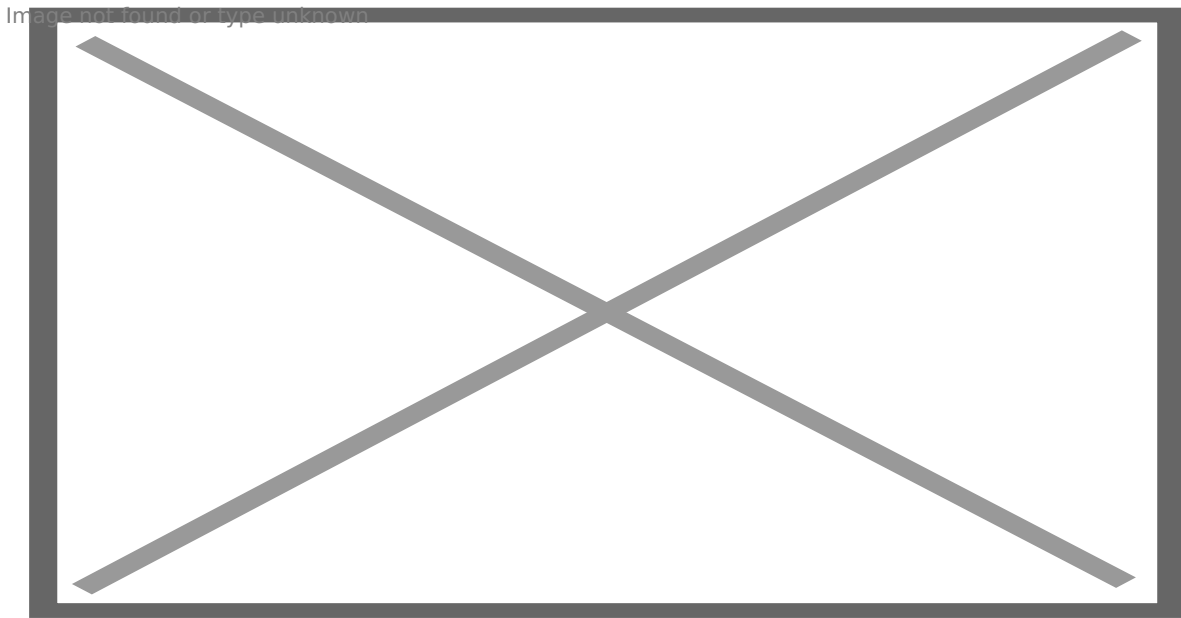
The rest of the words seem relatively generic, but those three clearly refer to people. Or in the case of the last one, it seems like it would usually refer to people, and given the presence of the other 2 words, that seems like the clear intent.

It seems presumptuous of many of the translators to disregard the "people" connotations of these terms and just refer to "things".

Again, many thanks to Nate for that wonderful resource!

Post by “Todd” of January 8, 2023 at 1:29 PM

Also, this...seems important:



[tribe | anthropology](#)

tribe, in anthropology, a notional form of human social organization based on a set of smaller groups (known as bands), having temporary or permanent...

www.britannica.com

Post by “Don” of January 8, 2023 at 1:30 PM

Good call, [Todd](#) , in returning to the source. Kicking myself for relying on translations 😊

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, φύλον](#)

You are correct in seeing those as referring to humans of the (homophylos) same tribe etc and (allophylos) other tribes.

This probably circles back to those with whom you can make social agreements and those you can't.

Thanks!

Post by “Cassius” of January 8, 2023 at 2:40 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

So this is one in which we should be ready to recognize the signs of this and realize how it will affect all of us -- and make peace with it.

"And make peace with it...". Or first and preferably, to the extent possible, prepare to harden our systems to minimize as best as possible the effect of it. Or, where that is not possible, prepare a spaceship to allow as many as possible to escape the impact. Only when I am facing absolutely certain early destruction (which does happen in many cases) or circumstances such as preventing death of a friend as Epicurus describes) would I make peace with early destruction that might possibly be avoided.

Now I will return to watching my copy of ["When Worlds Collide"](#). Excellent movie.

Post by “Don” of January 8, 2023 at 2:43 PM

immunity from external interference and friendship (cf. VI, VII, XXVII, XXVIII, XXXI, and in particular XIV). The general idea is not very difficult: the wise man must first grapple with the element in external things which militates against *ἀταραξία*, then he must win over to his side (*ὁμόφυλα*) things which are akin to him (cf. Ep. iii, § 124. 4 ταῖς γὰρ ἰδίαις οικειούμενοι διὰ παντὸς ἀρεταῖς τοὺς ὁμοίους ἀποδέχονται): others, if he cannot have with him, he must at any rate not allow to be alien to him (*οὐκ ἀλλόφυλά γε*). But supposing it is impossible with some things to secure even this, then he must keep clear of them altogether either by refusing to have dealings with them himself (*ἀνεπίμικτος*), or by driving them beyond the borders of his life (*ἐξωρίσατο*). All through the neuter really implies persons: cf. I τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἀφθαρτον.

For the general idea which is implied of a sort of league of Epicurean wise men against the world we may compare XL and Cic. *de Fin.* i. 20. 70 'sunt autem qui dicant foedus esse quoddam sapientium, ut ne minus amicos quam se ipsos diligant'.

1. τὸ μὴ θαρροῦν . . . συστησάμενος is the reading of the MSS. Usener despairs of it, and suggests in his notes that we must either read *συστελάμενος* (presumably 'the man who best contracts (or 'narrows') the element of disquiet'), or τὸ μὴ θαρροῦν . . . συστησάμενος ('the man who has best organized immunity'), supposing that a corresponding *δέ* clause has dropped out. But it is, I think, possible to retain the MS. text not, as Bignone takes it, 'the man who is best able to confront' (*affrontare*), but rather 'the man who is best able to order (or control) the element of disquiet'. For this use of *συνίστασθαι* we may compare its military use with such words as *πόλεμον*, *κίνδυνον*, *ἐπιβολήν*, &c., while the participial τὸ μὴ θαρροῦν will be like τὸ ἀλγοῦν in IV and τὸ φοβούμενον in XII.

2. *ὁμόφυλα κατεσκευάσατο*, 'made akin to himself', lit. 'made members of his own tribe': the metaphor is political, though the reference of the aphorism is not political, but quite general. Hicks translates 'made into one nation all the folk capable of uniting together', an incredible action on the part of an Epicurean philosopher!

4. *ἀνεπίμικτος*, 'without intercourse with' so *βίος ἀνεπίμικτος ὁμιλίας*, Plut. 2. 438 c.

καὶ ἐξωρίσατο . . . πράττειν a very doubtful and difficult clause. All MSS. except one give *ἐξηρίσατο*, and the majority *ὅσα τοῦτ' ἐλυστέλει πράττειν*. Usener, basing his text on *ἐξηρίσατο*, B's *τούτω* and F's *λυστέλει*, reads *ἐξηρίσατο ὅσα τούτων λυστέλει πράττειν*, 'he wins over all of them which it is profitable to treat thus (for *ἐξηρίσατο* with acc. in this sense cf. Dem. 1396 26 ἂν τοὺς κυρίους ἢ δώροις ἢ δι' ἄλλης ἡστυνοσούν ὁμιλίας ἐξαρέσθαι). But (1) *πράττειν* by itself will not construe; (2) the sense is not what is wanted: this idea has already been expressed in *ὁμόφυλα κατεσκευάσατο*, and it is absurd to say that he 'wins over' those whom he cannot even persuade to remain neutral! The only possible meaning for this last clause is 'when he cannot even make them neutral, he either withdraws himself from them or expels them from his life'. This sense can be obtained if we follow Stephanus in reading *ἐξωρίσατο*, which is practically the reading of H. The exact parallel to the meaning will then be found in XIV if we read there *δυνάμει τῆς ἐξοριστικῆς*, and the idea is also implied in *ἐκ τῶν ὁμορούτων* in XL. Bignone agrees in reading *ἐξωρίσατο*.

ὅσα τοῦτ' ἐλυστέλει πράττειν is the text best supported by the MSS., 'all whom it was an advantage to treat thus', *τούτω* *πράττειν* governing the acc. like *εἶ ποιεῖν*, &c. Bignone reads *ὅσα τούτω λυστέλει πράττειν*, and translates 'in so far as it is profitable', but this appears to me to be an impossible sense for *ὅσα*.

XL. A summary up of the best kind of life in a community of true

Post by “Little Rocker” of January 8, 2023 at 3:07 PM

The weirdest part of the commentary that Don kindly posted (and there's a wealth of weirdness) is the claim about 39: 'all through, the neuter really implies persons.' In other words, the fact that Epicurus uses neuter plural means he could be talking about people or things. But in this case I agree, so at some point my efforts yielded the following very literal rendering, which I certainly won't fight for to the death:

"The one who best contrived against a lack of confidence about external threats made those he was able kin, while those he was unable, he did not make aliens. Those with whom he was not able to do even this, he avoided and banished so far as it was advantageous to do so."

The 'with whom' gives away my decision to go with 'persons,' but basically, you would have reason to translate it either way. That said, the opening construction is loosely the same in KD 40, and it does seem pretty clear there he's talking about people. So who knows, really?

The truth is that Epicurus tends to just sort of make up grammar and new uses for prepositions, and people are always like, 'why in the world is this genitive' or 'to which of three possible antecedents does this use of 'these' refer.' I love Epicurus, but I stand by my verdict that translating him is like a steady diet of burnt toast.

Post by “Don” of January 8, 2023 at 3:22 PM

[Quote from Little Rocker](#)

"The one who best contrived against a lack of confidence about external threats made those he was able kin, while those he was unable, he did not make aliens. Those with whom he was not able to do even this, he avoided and banished so far as it was advantageous to do so."

...

The 'with whom' gives away my decision to go with 'persons,' but basically, you would have reason to translate it either way. That said, the opening construction is loosely the same in KD 40, and it does seem pretty clear there he's talking about people.

Your mention of 40 reinforces my conviction that there really aren't "40 [principal doctrines](#)." That appears to me to have been imposed much later because the manuscripts do not appear to have been delineated like that. The *Kyriai Doxai* looks to me as if it was originally a prose work similar to the letters which means there wouldn't have been "hard and fast" demarcations between "doctrines" but rather paragraphs on different topics. Reading them individually as if in isolation has seemed the wrong approach - to me, at least - for awhile now.

PS...

[Quote from Little Rocker](#)

a steady diet of burnt toast

LOL! 😄 I must like burnt toast because I get a kick out of it. That said, I hear you!

Post by “Todd” of January 8, 2023 at 7:05 PM

[Quote from Little Rocker](#)

The 'with whom' gives away my decision to go with 'persons,' but basically, you would have reason to translate it either way. That said, the opening construction is loosely the same in KD 40, and it does seem pretty clear there he's talking about people. So who knows, really?

For me, your mention of the opening construction of [PD40](#) reinforces my opinion that [PD39](#) & 40 on are really a continuation of the justice discussion, and social relations more broadly: not all "things", but also not really friendship either.

[PD39](#) & 40 both start off with a reference to security from threats. I suspect those refer to threats from other people, which is precisely the aim of justice, but there is no need to assume that. I'm happy to concede that Epicurus is talking about any type of threat to our enjoyment of pleasure. However, it does suggest that these two PDs are closely related.

[PD39](#) is about social relations. I *am* assuming that most of [PD39](#) is talking about people.

- 1) "Homophyla" and "Allophyla" have too many "people" connotations to ignore without a good reason
- 2) It just makes a lot more sense of the rest of the PD, in my opinion
- 3) Several translators seem to agree, though not all

If you accept that [PD39](#) is talking about people, then there are strong suggestions of references to justice.

Epicurus says we should try to treat as many people as possible like kin. "Like kin" implies more than mere justice. It would include justice, of course, but goes beyond. I'd call it something like active cooperation. The "as many people as possible" part of that doesn't sound like friendship to me though, because we are advised to extend it to as many people as possible. Our friends would be a subset of these relationships.

There are some people with whom we can't productively cooperate. But we also prefer not to make enemies of them. I would say these are the people we deal with by simply agreeing not to harm each other. Justice, and nothing more.

And then there are the people who won't even agree not to harm us. Or they do agree, but then harm us anyway. Epicurus says we should avoid them. Good advice, whether or not that is what Epicurus meant. And the fact that it *is* good advice is yet another point in favor of this interpretation.

Finally, [PD40](#) describes the benefits of following the above procedure: the ability to live pleasantly with friends.

An important point about my interpretation of [PD40](#) is that the friends with whom you live pleasantly are (probably) not the same people from whom you had to secure protection!

Some translations of [PD40](#) make it sound like you obtain confidence and security by being friends with everyone around you. That might work if it was possible, but few of us are in a position to carefully curate our neighbors, classmates, co-workers, etc. Epicurean philosophy is supposed to work for everyone, not just an elite few.

My view of [PD40](#) is more like, "Being confidently secure from your neighbors (those around you), now live pleasantly with your friends."

Epicurus never uses *philia* in [PD39](#) or 40, only above in [PD27](#) & 28. That was the "section" on friendship, IMO.