

Welcome AutoAtaraxic!

Post by "Cassius" of June 10, 2026 at 7:21 AM

Welcome [Autoataraxic](#)

There is one last step to complete your registration:

All new registrants must post a response to this message here in this welcome thread (we do this in order to minimize spam registrations).

You must post your response within 24 hours, or your account will be subject to deletion.

Please say "Hello" by introducing yourself, tell us what prompted your interest in Epicureanism and which particular aspects of Epicureanism most interest you, and/or post a question.

This forum is the place for students of Epicurus to coordinate their studies and work together to promote the philosophy of Epicurus. Please remember that all posting here is subject to our [Community Standards and associated Terms of Use](#). Please be sure to read that document to understand our ground rules.

Please understand that the leaders of this forum are well aware that many fans of Epicurus may have sincerely-held views of what Epicurus taught that are incompatible with the purposes and standards of this forum. This forum is dedicated exclusively to the study and support of people who are committed to classical Epicurean views. As a result, this forum is not for people who seek to mix and match Epicurean views with positions that are inherently inconsistent with the core teachings of Epicurus.

All of us who are here have arrived at our respect for Epicurus after long journeys through other philosophies, and we do not demand of others what we were not able to do ourselves. Epicurean philosophy is very different from most other philosophies, and it takes time to understand how deep those differences really are. That's why we have membership levels here at the forum which allow for new participants to discuss and develop their own learning, but it's also why we have standards that will lead in some cases to arguments being limited, and even participants being removed, when the purposes of the community require it. Epicurean philosophy is not inherently democratic, or committed to unlimited free speech, or devoted to any other form of organization other than the pursuit of truth and happy living through pleasure as explained in the principles of Epicurean philosophy.

One way you can be assured of your time here will be productive is to tell us a little about yourself and your background in reading Epicurean texts. It would also be helpful if you could

tell us how you found this forum, and any particular areas of interest that you already have.

You can also check out our [Getting Started](#) page for ideas on how to use this website.

We have found over the years that there are a number of key texts and references which most all serious students of Epicurus will want to read and evaluate for themselves. Those include the following.

["Epicurus and His Philosophy"](#) by Norman DeWitt

[The Biography of Epicurus by Diogenes Laertius](#). This includes the surviving letters of Epicurus, including those to [Herodotus](#), [Pythocles](#), and [Menoceus](#).

["On The Nature of Things"](#) - by Lucretius (a poetic abridgement of Epicurus' "On Nature"

["Epicurus on Pleasure"](#) - By Boris [Nikolsky](#)

The chapters on Epicurus in [Gosling and Taylor's "The Greeks On Pleasure."](#)

[Cicero's "On Ends" - Torquatus Section](#)

[Cicero's "On The Nature of the Gods" - Velleius Section](#)

The Inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda - [Martin Ferguson Smith translation](#)

[A Few Days In Athens" - Frances Wright](#)

Lucian Core Texts on Epicurus: (1) [Alexander the Oracle-Monger](#), (2) [Hermotimus](#)

[Philodemus "On Methods of Inference"](#) (De Lacy version, including his appendix on relationship of Epicurean canon to Aristotle and other Greeks)

"The Greeks on Pleasure" -Gosling & Taylor Sections on Epicurus, especially the [section on katastematic and kinetic pleasure](#) which explains why ultimately this distinction was not of great significance to Epicurus.

It is by no means essential or required that you have read these texts before participating in the forum, but your understanding of Epicurus will be much enhanced the more of these you have read. Feel free to join in on one or more of our conversation threads under various topics found throughout the forum, where you can to ask questions or to add in any of your insights as you study the Epicurean philosophy.

And time has also indicated to us that if you can find the time to read one book which will best explain [classical Epicurean philosophy](#), as opposed to most modern "eclectic" interpretations of Epicurus, that book is Norman DeWitt's Epicurus And His Philosophy.

(If you have any questions regarding the usage of the forum or finding info, please post any questions in this thread).

Welcome to the forum!

Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean

1. Not "flourishing," "human potential," "self-actualization," or "meaningfulness," but happiness grounded in the feeling of pleasure.
2. Not "absence of pain" as a full statement of the goal of life, but "the Feelings are two, pleasure and pain" and "Pleasure is the beginning and the end of a happy life."
3. Not virtue for the sake of virtue, but virtue as instrumental for the attainment of pleasure.
4. Not "the greatest good for the greatest number," but "Every desire must be confronted with this question: What will happen to me if the object of my desire is accomplished and what if it is not?"
5. Not "humanism," "transhumanism," "individualism," "collectivism," "egoism," "altruism," "social progress," "Marxism," "democracy," "tyranny," or any "one size fits all" political ideal of any kind, but social structure based on friendship which "is formed and maintained by means of a community of life among those who have reached the fullness of pleasure."
6. Not "hard determinism," but "some things happen from necessity, some from chance, and others through our own choice."
7. Not "supernaturalism," but "materialism."
8. Not "supernatural gods," or "life after death," but confidence in a fully material universe and "for those men for whom wisdom is possible, and who do seek it, such men may truly live as gods."
9. Not only "short term hedonism," but "it is to continuous pleasures that I invite you."
10. Not "rationalism," but "all reason is dependent upon sensations."
11. Not fearful of death nor careless of losing life, but valuing life for the opportunity of pleasure it brings.

Our Posting Policy At EpicureanFriends.com:

"No Partisan Politics," "No Supernatural Religion," and "No Absolute Virtue"

This forum is dedicated to promoting the philosophy of Epicurus, and not to any partisan political positions whether "left," "right," or "center." The task of rediscovering Epicurean philosophy requires that such discussions be held elsewhere. Posts violating this rule are subject to removal.



Epicurean philosophy firmly rejects the viewpoint that there are any supernatural forces or absolute virtues or Platonic ideals of any kind. Argument which is based on supernatural claims, or "absolute" virtues or ideals of any kind, are in violation of this rule and subject to removal.

**Nothing can be created
from nothing.**

**Nature has no gods over
her.**

**Do not assign to the
gods anything that is
inconsistent with
incorruption and
blessedness.**

Death is nothing to us.

**There is no necessity to
live under the control of
necessity.**



**He who says “Nothing
can be known” knows
nothing.**

All sensations are “true.”

**Virtue is not absolute or
an end in itself - all good
and evil consists in
sensation.**

**Pleasure is the guide of
life.**

**By “Pleasure” we mean
all experience that is not
painful.**

**Life is desirable, but unlimited time contains no greater
pleasure than limited time.**

Post by “Cassius” of June 10, 2026 at 7:22 AM

AutoAtaraxic tells us:

Hi,

I was seduced by *De Rerum Natura* a couple of years ago and recently had a paper accepted for publication in which there was a strong influence of the atomic swerve in my understanding of the indeterminism of acts of dissensus *a la* Jacques Rancière's emancipatory philosophy. I'm also very interested in Epicurus notion of time as derivative, as the accident of the accident as Marx

put in in his thesis on Epicurus and Democritus. I came across your website via the piece *Clinamen Vitae - The swerve toward lived experience, where life is worthy of being lived*, after researching the term *Clinamen Vitae* which links, I believe, to an indeterminate form of emancipation. As such, I thought I'd try to start up an account and engage more with your website.

Best,

Post by “Autoataraxic” of June 10, 2026 at 7:42 AM

Thanks Cassius for the posting the intro above. I have a question that I hope somebody can answer. In the history of Epicurean commentary, who has used the term 'clinamen vitae' and in which texts? Many thanks in advance for any answers. [#Atomism](#) #Life

Post by “Cassius” of June 10, 2026 at 10:36 AM

Glad to have you autoataraxic. When I search i don't bring up much other than an article written by Elli Pensa, a friend of ours in Greece a couple of years ago. I don't find any historic use of it from the ancient world.

My read of Elli's article is that it is sort of an artistic flourish but not intended to be a major philosophical point. Certainly Epicurus held that atoms are not living things, and I don't think he would say that the swerve of the atom is a living function either. Of course at some point life does "emerge" from the motion of the atoms through the void, and Lucretius talks about the swerve being related to "free will," so there is at least some relevance.

Probably going further in discussing this would be helped by a little background on your interest in it (?)

I suspect our friend [Bryan](#) here might have the best thoughts on usages, but thereagain knowing the context of your question would probably help.

Post by “Martin” of June 10, 2026 at 11:03 AM

Welcome Autoataraxic!

Post by “Bryan” of June 10, 2026 at 5:21 PM

I am not aware of the term in ancient literature. However, let me include this section from *Epicurus' On Nature, Book 25*, which seems to be related to the idea:

"...[1] Those movements that have been fully generated are fully produced according to the penetration of certain particles, and [2] those other movements are produced according to the proximity of particles, and also in some way [3] that movement which is not being raised up by nature, but produced by one's spirit comprehending the memory and inductive consideration of its fulfillment in itself, more or less.

...of those movements that result according to the crowded-together atoms, but even the crowded-together atoms clearly move similarly. For they had a nature to fully generate such things and to begin such a task, the same atoms in accordance with a way arising from the same separation...

...one's own actions are generated in the previously mentioned way, existing as productive of the same things. Yet, although they have a nature that could be productive of these and those achievements, many actions that people generate are made unproductive because of themselves - not through the same cause of movement of both the atoms and themselves. Against these unproductive generated actions we especially contend and rebuke, while resenting those who have a temperament from their birth in accordance with a disturbing nature - just as we do in the case of all living beings that choose to act counterproductively.

...we are contending with many people simultaneously and instructing about this issue, which is contrary to the cause of the same way of thinking that all motion is in accordance with necessity. Thus, whenever something is fully generated, [i.e., one's consciousness], that comprehends a certain difference in the atoms in a certain mentally distinguishing way, but not as though from a different separation in space, [i.e., *even though the soul can be distinguished from the atoms that compose it as its own emergent object, the soul is not physically distinct from the atoms that compose it.*] one gains control of the cause of mental movements out of his own conscious choice. Then he simply delivers those conscious mental movements up to the primary natures of the atoms, and he makes this mentally generated movement entirely a standard that tests for truth.

...we praise others not merely through a cause of movement that originates out of themselves, but through that cause of movement that originates out of themselves toward the best tasks

and mental perceptions. At this time, we contend with them in no way. But for us, along with... of atoms... to those that have applied themselves. And even while we are fully clearing out the cause of movement that originates out of ourselves... or not instructing about as many things as simultaneously...

...however one refers to his self-generated movement, it is clear it exists with a nature that is fully indicated by his experience of it – even while it is not referred to as itself or according to itself...

...according to our mental perception, our primary composition would – not out of necessity – force out some of the movement that has been fully generated up to the point of certain kinds of such a thing as our own non-necessitated movements being fully generated, while our primary atomic composition would force out some movement up to the point of a soul being produced – and even a soul having an arrangement and movement as great as this, given that some movement of this kind is necessarily generated from a composition such as this [*i.e., the soul's subtle physical nature makes it susceptible to both moving and being moved*].

But one's atomic composition would force out some movement up to the point of movement such as this – specifically, the movement of this or that kind of soul – being fully generated not out of necessity. Or at least one's atomic composition would force out some volitional movement whenever someone advances to the stage of life of such volitional initiations being fully generated not according to necessity, but by having the force of movement from himself and from his own cause...

...regarding those who sincerely struggle to move themselves toward the best tasks, we do not contend with those people, and they are not holding onto laziness. But neither do we venture to encourage or provoke them toward the most opportune things, as their temperaments have already coagulated from a nature which itself is poorly assembled, and which is not fastening and igniting the cause of movement for something in a different way to the coagulation of their temperaments, which is similar to... Although we are bringing forward the cause, [*i.e., the responsibility for our own movement*], we do bring it forward for as many as..."

Post by “Autoataraxic” of June 21, 2026 at 8:43 AM

Thanks everyone. My own research showed *Clinamen Vitae* to be a fairly modern term, but I asked in case I missed anything. I came across the Latin term myself when I coined the term 'life swerve' as an analogy of the swerve of the atom, in which we can make our own swerves, so to speak—that's what seduced me so much about the *clinamen*, not just the metaphysics of it, but how we can change our lives too with an indeterminate swerve. Then I looked up what the Latin translation would be and did a search. I came across the piece by Elli here, which is why I joined.