

Glossary - What is the Epicurean Definition of "Pleasure?"

Post by "Hiram" of January 15, 2020 at 10:22 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

There is no doubt that the term ataraxia is used occasionally and in certain contexts; that is not the issue. The issue is whether we should draw the conclusion that "ataraxia" is correctly identified as equivalent to a specific type of pleasure, or as a unique "highest pleasure," which I contend is not the case, nor do those cites establish that point. The goal of life stated over and over again by Epicurus and others is pleasure, not "ataraxia." Pleasure is the overriding ultimate term, ataraxia is a subordinate concept.

Correct, the end of the calculus of pleasure vs. pain is net pleasure. But we should not dismiss ataraxia itself for this reason.

As for "higher pleasure", the closest thing to that is in Diogenes of Oenoanda, where we find the argument that pleasures and pains of the mind are more intense and of longer duration than those of the body - <https://theautarkist.wordpress.com/2017/03/31/dio...al-doctrine-20/>

Putting aside the telos, Ataraxia and aponia are themselves important criteria when it comes to carrying out choices and avoidances, says LMenoceus. We must refer our choices and avoidances to them. This is in line with Metrodorus' teaching that we should acquire the confident expectation that we will be able to secure our natural and necessary desires (if we worry about where our next meal will come from, or where we are going to sleep, we can't live pleasantly). We study nature to avoid perturbations (the -tarax- portion of ataraxia) about natural phenomena, etc.