

Discussion of Article "Challenging Ataraxia" by Haris Dimitriadis

Post by "Cassius" of May 15, 2020 at 4:44 PM

Please use this thread for discussion of the article posted here: ["Challenging Ataraxia" - By Haris Dimitriadis](#)

Post by "Don" of May 15, 2020 at 7:16 PM

I'm not sure why Dimitriadis chose to use that excerpt from the Letter to Menoikos since the word *ataraxia* ἀταραξία itself doesn't appear there. I think I understand his basic argument, but I would think a better quote would have been one where the word under discussion was actually used by Epicurus. I realize it does say "freedom from turmoil in the mind" using other terms than *ataraxia* itself, but I found it an interesting choice.

Is *ataraxia* possibly just a quality of the mind and not a goal? A description just using available vocabulary that people would readily understand? The person who follows Epicurus's teachings can hope to feel this quality of mind (and the feeling of freedom from pain in the body) by striving to make sound choices and rejections but that quality is not in and of itself a goal or end, not a *telos*. Just something that arises naturally as part of Epicurean practice.

Post by "Cassius" of May 15, 2020 at 7:45 PM

Eugenios I am to blame for that use of that particular quote. Haris submitted the text to me without a graphic, and I put together the final article in a hurry this morning, using that quote, made from this version: <http://wiki.epicurism.info/Letter to Menoecus/> , due to the "by pleasure we mean" structure of the sentence.

Would you suggest a better passage that uses *ataraxia* itself?

As to your questions in the second paragraph, I don't have a good ultimate answer but I think those comments go in a promising direction, especially in light of thinking about the distinction

made by Konstan we have been discussing recently: [Managing Expectations In The Study of Epicurus](#)

Post by “Cassius” of May 15, 2020 at 8:03 PM

Possibly this is a better choice, but after more reflection I think it would be best just to include the full section....

[127-8](#)) Ἀναλογιστέον δὲ ὡς τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν αἱ μὲν εἰσι φυσικαί, αἱ δὲ κεναί, καὶ τῶν φυσικῶν αἱ μὲν ἀναγκαῖαι, αἱ δὲ φυσικαὶ μόνον· τῶν δὲ ἀναγκαίων αἱ μὲν πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν εἰσὶν ἀναγκαῖαι, αἱ δὲ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀοχλησίαν, αἱ δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ ζῆν. τούτων γὰρ ἀπλανῆς θεωρία πᾶσαν αἴρεσιν καὶ φυγὴν ἐπανάγειν οἶδεν ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ σώματος ὑγίειαν καὶ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀταραξίαν, ἐπεὶ τοῦτο τοῦ μακαρίως ζῆν ἐστὶ τέλος. τούτου γὰρ πάντα πράττομεν, ὅπως μήτε ἀλγῶμεν μήτε ταρβῶμεν. ὅταν δὲ ἅπαξ τοῦτο περὶ ἡμᾶς γένηται, λύεται πᾶς ὁ τῆς ψυχῆς χειμῶν, οὐκ ἔχοντος τοῦ ζῶου βαδίζειν ὡς πρὸς ἐνδέον τι καὶ ζητεῖν ἕτερον ὢ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος ἀγαθὸν συμπληρῶσεται. τότε γὰρ ἡδονῆς χρεῖαν ἔχομεν, ὅταν ἐκ τοῦ μὴ παρεῖναι τὴν ἡδονὴν ἀλγῶμεν· <ὅταν δὲ μὴ ἀλγῶμεν> οὐκέτι τῆς ἡδονῆς δεόμεθα.

[127-8](#)) One should keep in mind that among [desires](#), some are natural and some are vain. Of those that are natural, some are necessary and some unnecessary. Of those that are necessary, some are necessary for [happiness](#), some for [health](#), and some for [life](#) itself. A correct view of these matters enables one to base every choice and avoidance upon whether it secures or upsets bodily comfort and [peace of mind](#) – the goal of a happy life. Everything we do is for the sake of freedom from [pain](#) and [anxiety](#). Once this is achieved, the storms in the [soul](#) are stilled. Nothing else and nothing more are needed to perfect the well-being of the body and soul. It is when we feel pain that we must seek relief, which is [pleasure](#). And when we no longer feel pain, we no longer need pleasure.

Post by “Cassius” of May 15, 2020 at 8:35 PM

Updating and revising now...

Post by “Don” of May 15, 2020 at 8:35 PM

Sorry, [Cassius](#) ! I thought the two were together in the original article! I didn't intend to be critical of you.

But, yes, I agree. That second one is spot on!

bodily comfort and **peace of mind**: τὴν τοῦ σώματος ὑγίειαν καὶ **τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀταραξίαν.**

Post by “Cassius” of May 15, 2020 at 8:38 PM

1) NEVER be concerned about being critical of me! I make more mistakes than most! And I am glad you called this out -- you are quite right that we needed a section where "ataraxia" is actually used.

2) Take a look at it now. I just included the english of the full section. This may not be optimum either, but really the full section is relevant so rather than try to cut and paste it probably makes sense to just cite the whole thing.