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WISDOM FOR HAPPINESS

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WISDOM FOR HAPPINESS:
EMOTION REGULATION, GRADUAL HAPPINESS
IN TRANQUILITY, AND PARADOXICAL
INTENTION

A Master's Thesis

by
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Ankara
July 2024

*For my family
&
You*



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PARADOXICAL INTENTION

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

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By Begüm Orhan

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

WISDOM FOR HAPPINESS: EMOTION REGULATION, GRADUAL HAPPINESS IN TRANQUILITY, AND PARADOXICAL INTENTION

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Happiness plays a dominant role in most people's lives. In this thesis, I focus on tranquility as a necessary and sufficient condition for happiness and I present a new theory of happiness. I reconceptualize tranquility through wisdom. I criticize the Epicurean hedonist accounts of tranquility. I conceptualize the way to achieve tranquility as emotion regulation that comes from wisdom. I claim that tranquility is a state of mind that can be achieved in the presence of fear and anxiety, which are considered to be the biggest obstacles to tranquility by Epicureans. Later, I discuss a new aspect of tranquility which is attaining more pleasure and happiness from the state of tranquility by having appreciative attitudes towards one's state of tranquility. Finally, I present "Paradoxical Intention" as a method for achieving tranquility and I claim that it constitutes evidence for my claim that in the presence of fear and anxiety, one can achieve tranquility.

Keywords: Happiness, Tranquility, Wisdom, Epicurean hedonism

ÖZET

MUTLULUK İÇİN BİLGELİK: DUYGU DÜZENLEMESİ, DİNGİNLİKTE DERECELİ MUTLULUK VE PARADOKSAL NİYET

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Mutluluk birçok insanın hayatında çok önemli bir yere sahiptir. Bu tezde dinginliğin mutluluğa ulaşmak için gerekli ve yeterli bir durum olduğu görüşünü savunuyor ve yeni bir mutluluk kuramını ele alıyorum. Dinginliğe ulaşma yolunu bilgelik üzerinden, Epikürcü hazcılardan farklı bir şekilde tanımlıyor ve Epikürcü hazcıların dinginlik temelli mutluluk teorisini eleştiriyorum. Dinginliği bilgelikten gelen duygu düzenlemesi üzerinden kavramsallaştırıp dinginliğin kaygı ve korkunun varlığında bile ulaşılabilecek bir durum olduğu görüşünü savunuyorum. Kaygı ve korku, Epikürcü hazcılara göre dinginliğe ulaşmadaki en büyük engellerdir. Ben de bu sebeple bu iki duyguyu temel alıyorum. Sonrasında, dinginliğin yeni bir boyutu olan ve minnet hissi sayesinde artan haz ve mutluluktan bahsediyorum. Son olarak, paradoksal niyeti dinginliğe ulaşmada bir yöntem olarak sunuyor ve onu dinginliğin kaygı ve korkunun varlığında da ulaşılabilecek bir durum olduğuna dair delil olarak gösteriyorum.

Anahtar kelimeler: Mutluluk, Dinginlik, Bilgelik, Epikürcü hazcılık

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INTRODUCTION

Happiness has been central in philosophical discourse for centuries, with various interpretations by different schools of philosophy. For example, Aristotle conceptualized happiness as *eudaimonia*, viewing happiness as the fulfillment of one's potential (Nicomachean Ethics; Ryan and Deci 145-146). Stoics conceptualized happiness as being free from negative emotions (*apatheia*), which can be attained by living in accordance with nature. Meanwhile, Epicurean hedonists equated happiness with pleasure and the avoidance of pain.

In this thesis, I will focus on Epicurean hedonism according to which happiness is tranquility. In the first chapter, I will clarify how I understand happiness and argue that tranquility is necessary and sufficient for happiness. In the second and third chapters, as opposed to Epicureans who argue that the complete lack of mental disturbance is tranquility, I will argue that emotion regulation is the necessary condition for attaining tranquility without a complete elimination of mental disturbances. In the fourth chapter, I will introduce the concept of “wise emotion regulation” and discuss its relevance for tranquility. In the fifth chapter, I will explain the role of wisdom in achieving tranquility and how wisdom should be involved in

emotion regulation. In the sixth chapter, I will argue that, unlike Epicureans who claim that tranquility is the limit of happiness and pleasure, one can experience a more pleasant state of tranquility by having appreciative attitudes towards one's state of tranquility which increases one's happiness. In the seventh and final chapter, I will argue that having approach attitudes towards unwanted emotions can be beneficial in terms of achieving tranquility. To discuss this, I will explain "Paradoxical Intention."



CHAPTER 1

CLASSIFICATIONS OF HAPPINESS

1.1 Episodic Happiness and Happiness in the Attribute Sense

Raibley classifies happiness as the “episodic happiness” and “happiness in the attribute sense” (Raibley 4-5). “Episodic happiness” refers to the momentary states of happiness (Raibley 4). For example, when we see a child enjoying his ice cream at the beach with a smile on his face, we come to an understanding that he “is happy” at that moment. Yet, “...is happy” can also mean being happy for a longer period of time, in which a person is mostly happy in their life (Haybron 147). Such happiness refers to the “attribute sense of happiness.” Haybron calls such happiness an “emotional condition,” stating that emotional conditions are more stable and consistent than “emotional states” (Haybron 128). Someone’s emotional state is prone to change within hours, whereas an emotional condition is more consistent. Haybron conceptualizes the attribute sense of happiness as being mostly in positive emotional conditions, having little to no negative emotions (Haybron 147). To be in a positive emotional condition is to have “attunement,” “engagement,” and “endorsement” (Haybron 147). “Attunement” is being in a calm state of mind, such as tranquility (Raibley 5). “Engagement” is about being actively interested in life (Raibley 5). “Endorsement” is about having positive emotions such as enjoyment or cheerfulness (Raibley 5). If a person has all three of them, they are happy in the “attribute sense” in which they can be called a “happy person.” A “happy person” is

someone who is generally happy for a long time and experiences happiness as an emotional condition rather than an emotional state.

Laura Sizer uses the terms “local” and “global” happiness to refer to the above classification of happiness (Sizer 134). “Local happiness” is similar to the episodic happiness, which is about happiness in specific and shorter periods of time, whereas “global happiness” is similar to the happiness in the attribute sense, which is about happiness spread over one’s life (Sizer 134). Global happiness is about how one approaches life rather than happy reactions one gives to certain events (Sizer 147). Local happiness is associated with positive emotional states, lasting for shorter periods of time, whereas global happiness is associated with positive mood, similar to emotional conditions, which remains for longer periods of time (Sizer 153).

Episodic and local happiness are still important for the overall happiness because, as Sizer argues, local and global senses of happiness are in a causal interaction with each other and cannot be separated (Sizer 147). A happy life in which one is happy in the attribute sense is a life that has increased amounts and intensities of happiness in the episodic sense (Sizer 147). So, when someone is feeling happy in certain moments and when such moments add up, it means that they are living a happy life, which is the global sense of happiness. When someone is globally happy, it also means that they experience local happiness in specific moments, which in total makes a happy life. Accordingly, even though I focus on the attribute sense of happiness in this thesis, I also refer to the episodic happiness since they are connected in a way that when moments of episodic happiness add up, it leads to happiness in the attribute sense.

1.2 Subjective Aspect of Happiness

Subjectivity is another aspect of happiness that I focus on in this thesis ¹. The subjective approach highlights subjects' psychological states of happiness (Sizer 138). It is about subjects' opinions and beliefs about what a happy life is (Sizer 138). Subjective happiness is about affective states, which are about people's feelings. An example of a school of thought that focuses on feelings are Cyrenaic hedonists because they conceptualize happiness from a perspective of feelings and affective states. According to Cyrenaic hedonists, happiness is a specific sensation: bodily pleasure (O'Keefe 1-2).

Happiness has affective and phenomenological aspects. For example, when someone is happy, they know what it feels like to be happy or they know that other feelings, such as joy or amusement, accompany happiness. Intuitively, one should be aware of their happiness to be happy. So, if one feels that they are happy, then they are happy, and if one does *not* feel that they are happy, then they are not happy. However, feeling happy all the time is not realistic. So, one can experience episodic feelings of unhappiness in certain moments in their lives, while feeling happy most of the time. For example, a person who is mostly happy and content in their life can experience grief after the loss of a family member. This would not mean that they are no longer a happy person. They are still a happy person who, for a period of time, will

¹ Even though there are theories of happiness that focus on objectivity, such as having an objective criterion to evaluate someone's life to determine if it is actually a happy life or evaluating if someone is living a good life, I believe, this criterion of objectivity is relevant for well-being rather than happiness. Since I do not discuss well-being, I will only focus on the subjective aspect of happiness in this thesis.

experience sadness. Even though people experience sadness, anger, or other negative emotions in their lives for certain periods of time, they can still be happy in the attribute sense. That is why experiencing momentary feelings of unhappiness does not affect one's happiness in the attribute sense. Let us consider this following example: Someone experiences episodic happiness 95% in their lives and they experience episodic sadness 5% in their lives. This person, even though they can experience sadness, is a happy person in the attribute sense. When episodic happiness adds up, they make the attribute sense of happiness. So, a person who feels happy most of the time is a person who is happy in the attribute sense.

However, someone who believes that they are mostly depressed in their lives cannot, at the same time, believe that they are a happy person because their belief that they are depressed demonstrates that they have more negative feelings about their life than positive ones (Vitrano 49). To be happy, one should *see, perceive, and evaluate* their lives to be a happy life (Vitrano 49). Even though experiencing negative feelings time to time will not lead one to be an unhappy person, experiencing negative feelings most of the time in one's life will lead that person to be an unhappy person.

1.3 My Understanding of Happiness

I argue that happiness should be understood in the attribute sense and from the subjective approach. Even though people can be momentarily happy in an episodic sense, for example, while eating a chocolate cake, this alone does not mean that they are happy in the attribute sense or that they are a "happy person." Aristotle

emphasizes the importance of the whole life while evaluating someone's happiness, "... one day or a short time does not make a man blessed or happy" (Nicomachean Ethics, Book I, Part 7, p. 12). Here, Aristotle states that short-term happiness which is the episodic sense, is not sufficient for being a happy person. This is the idea of a "happy person" in which the state of happiness is attributed to the person because they are mostly happy in their lives. We do not attribute happiness to someone who experiences happiness only for short periods of time. To be considered a "happy person," one should feel happy most of the time. So, when I talk about happiness, I will refer to the longer sense of happiness which is the attribute sense.

To demonstrate it better, let us imagine two people who enjoy eating a chocolate cake and they both look equally happy at that moment. Even though they look happy, one of them is a depressed person, whereas the other person is a happy person. Considering only episodic happiness will not be sufficient for determining someone's happiness, because even though both of them seem equally happy *at that moment*, since one of them is depressed in the long-term, we cannot claim that this person is a happy person. Accordingly, people's lives should be taken into account rather than specific moments which can be misleading for someone's overall happiness since a happy person can feel sad for a specific period of time or an unhappy person can feel happy for a certain period of time.

The happiness I refer to in this thesis is a combination of the subjective approach which focuses on the feelings of subjects and what it feels like to be a happy person, and the attribute sense of happiness in which one's happiness in the long-term is evaluated. A happy person would experience many moments of episodic happiness

which would add up to make them happy in the attribute sense. A sad person can feel happy in a certain moment which is the episodic happiness. However, since this person would experience a limited number of episodic happiness in their lives, when such moments add up, it would not be sufficient to make someone happy in the attribute sense. However, a happy person would experience a lot of happy moments which, when they are added up, makes the person happy in the attribute sense. So, if someone *feels* happy, in which one experiences episodic happiness, for a *significant period of time* in their lives in which episodic senses of happiness add up, we can conclude that this person is happy in the attribute sense.

However, a person who experienced many moments of episodic happiness and therefore had a happy life, can, incorrectly, believe that they had an unhappy life in which they did not experience significant number of moments of episodic happiness. In such a case, I would argue that, even though in reality this person experienced many moments of episodic happiness that built up to make that person happy in the attribute sense, since that person believes that they did not have a happy life, they would not be a happy person. So, even though one experiences attribute senses of happiness, if one does not consider themselves to be happy and believe that they did not experience happiness in the attribute sense, then they would not be considered happy. From an objective aspect of happiness and from a well-being perspective, this person might have been considered a happy person, however, since in this thesis I focus on the subjective account, I believe that the final evaluation and how one feels at that moment is more important for one's happiness.

CHAPTER 2

TRANQUILITY IN EPICUREAN HEDONISM: ATARAXIA

Tranquility is being free from mental disturbance, elimination of fear or other negative emotions such as envy, regret, or anxiety, a pleasant condition in which the mind and the body are inactive, being at rest, imperturbability, peace of mind, and calmness (O’Keefe 1; Berenbaum, Huang, and Flores 252-253; Griswold 8-9). In Epicurus’s letter to Menoeceus, tranquility is a state in which “any storm in the soul is quieted” (Letter To Menoeceus). According to the Epicurean hedonism, a happy life is a tranquil life and the name of their state is *ataraxia* (O’Keefe 1). The root of the word “ataraxia” is *tarassein*, which means “disturb,” and *a* means “not,” meaning “not disturbed.”

According to Epicurean hedonism, pleasure is the only intrinsically valuable thing and is regarded as the highest end (O’Keefe 1). The goal of human life is to get rid of all pain and suffering and live a pleasurable life (Konstan 3; Gillham 143-144; Liebersohn 275). Epicurean hedonism distinguishes between two types of pleasures, which are the kinetic and katastematic (static) pleasures (Gillham 145; Massie 387; O’Keefe 1; Gosling and Taylor 1982; Liebersohn 272). Kinetic pleasures are pleasures attained by satisfying one’s desires and needs; for example, drinking water and satisfying one's desire for water when one is thirsty (Gillham 145). Kinetic pleasures involve motion or a change, which is why they are called “active pleasures” (Liebersohn 274; Gillham 145). Eating a delicious cake or going out with friends to have a good time are examples of such pleasures. However, kinetic

pleasures are not the pleasures Epicurus regards as the highest end because they do not help eliminate mental disturbances such as anxiety (Gosling and Taylor 366-367). For example, if someone believes that eating chocolate or drinking alcohol, which are examples of kinetic pleasures, is going to help them cope with anxiety, they are mistaken (Gosling and Taylor 371).

On the other hand, katastematic (static) pleasures are “passive pleasures” that refer to pleasures one receives from the reduction of mental or bodily disturbances (Gillham 145). Katastematic pleasures refer to states in which there is an absence of mental disturbance rather than satisfaction of a desire, which is why they are called “passive” (Liebersohn 281). For example, lack of thirst after drinking water is a katastematic pleasure because thirst is a bodily disturbance that needs to be eliminated and is eliminated by drinking water. A state of full katastematic pleasure is a state without any more desires left to satisfy. Epicureans believe that it is the highest form of pleasure, which refers to the state of *ataraxia* (Gosling and Taylor 366).

According to Epicureans, the end goal of humans is to get rid of the desire for kinetic pleasures as much as possible and to achieve *ataraxia*, in which one is completely free from disturbance (Gillham 145; Massie 388). Epicureans regard *ataraxia* as the most pleasurable state because there are no further desires left for one to satisfy, which means one has no more desire for kinetic pleasures and has the katastematic pleasure of being unmoved (Gillham 146-147). Therefore, humans should aim to achieve *ataraxia* in order to live a happy and pleasurable life.

2.1 Obstacles to Tranquility: Fear and Anxiety

According to Epicureans, fear and anxiety are the biggest obstacles to achieve tranquility because they lead people to experience significant mental disturbance. They hinder becoming unmoved since anxiety and fear's aim is to move people to avoid dangers, which are a part of the mammalian defense system (Massie 391-392; Griswold 10; Öhman 709). Fear and anxiety have a crucial role in the development of psychopathologies, which shows their potency (Öhman 709). Their important characteristics are escape or avoidance behaviors, which are activated when someone perceives a threat (Öhman 709-710). They are aversive mental states and as a result of heart rate acceleration, coldness of hands or feet, hypervigilance, or irritability, etc. the body also gets affected (Öhman 723). So, fear and anxiety result in both mental and bodily disturbances which should be eliminated for tranquility.

2.2 Anxiety

Anxiety can be conceptualized as a fearful feeling which is mainly about possible future dangers, whereas fear is a feeling about a perceived danger at the moment (Öhman 710). So, anxiety is characterized as a “prestimulus condition” and fear as a “poststimulus condition” (Öhman 710). Unlike anxiety, fear has a more adaptive function in mammalian survival because it motivates people to cope with threats and dangers present in one's environment (Öhman 710). Without fear, mammals would not be able to respond appropriately to dangerous stimuli, which would result in a drastic decrease in mammalian survival rates. However, anxiety is not as adaptive as fear, yet, it is connected to it.

The unconscious and automatic processing of the mind is known to play a role in anxiety (Öhman 712). It demonstrates how anxiety is related to fear. Human perception is biased toward detecting threats or dangers because, in an evolutionary context, “false negatives” are more costly than “false positives” (Öhman 712). “False negatives” are failures to elicit appropriate reactions, such as not executing fight or flight reactions towards dangers or threats, whereas “false positives” are eliciting unnecessary reactions towards non-dangerous conditions (Öhman 712). False negatives are more costly because a failure to respond in the presence of danger can result in death or harm. However, false positives only lead one to exhibit unnecessary effort, which is less costly than death or injury. This also explains one of the reasons behind anxiety and anxiety disorders because if humans are biased towards detecting dangers in their environments, their perceptual system will adapt this behavior to many situations. Some people experience “irrational” fears more because of misperceived threats in their environments, which is an important symptom of anxiety disorders (Öhman 712).

Since anxiety can take many forms, it is crucial to distinguish between two types of anxiety to discuss its role in tranquility. There is “everyday anxiety,” which is about momentary feelings of anxiety, feeling anxious that one might miss their plane or believing that one will fail an exam (Griswold 14). This kind of anxiety is natural since humans are more reactive toward potentially dangerous situations and have a tendency to evaluate circumstances from a negative perspective. When someone has everyday anxiety, it is usually for shorter periods of time and does not affect their life (Crosby 237). “General anxiety,” on the other hand, is anxiety in the long term, for example, feeling nervous that one’s life is not complete or there are things in one’s

life that have gone out of control (Griswold 14). A person with general anxiety can be called an “anxious person” since anxiety has been spread over their whole life, whereas a person who has everyday anxiety is not. General anxiety can also be called “neurotic or pathological” since such anxious reactions and feelings are disproportionate to the situation when it is evaluated from a non-anxious perspective (Crosby 237). General anxiety is considered to be a more important obstacle to tranquility than everyday anxiety because everyday anxiety has less effect on one’s life since it lasts for shorter periods of time. However, general anxiety, since it affects one’s life and lasts longer, is a greater obstacle to achieving a tranquil *life* (Griswold 14). Both everyday and general anxiety affect the body since they lead one to experience increased heart rate and hyperventilation, which results in bodily disturbance. Therefore, the lack of anxiety is a katastematic pleasure which leads one to experience lack of both bodily and mental disturbances.

2.3 Fear

The other obstacle to tranquility is fear. Epicureans emphasize the importance of being free from fears since they believe that certain fears are the main reasons for not achieving tranquility, and only if one can get rid of them, one can achieve ataraxia. Eliminating such fears is one of the most important goals of Epicureans, and there are four important reasons for people’s fears and cures for each of them in the Epicurean theory (O’Keefe 1) ². The four cures are called “The Tetrapharmakos,” which are “do not fear the gods,” “do not fear death,” “pleasant is easy to achieve,”

² Here, I would like to clarify that the four “fears” are actually “anxieties” because they are fearful feelings about non-existent stimuli such as death anxiety or anxiety of experiencing pain. The reason why I named them as fears is because Epicureans call them fears.

and “painful is easy to cope with.” These fears are grounded in false beliefs, and one can get rid of them by changing such beliefs (O’Keefe 2).

Epicurus explains that one does not need to fear gods because they are in a complete state of ataraxia in which they are not bothered with anything such as punishing humans (O’Keefe 2). One should not fear death because it is a complete annihilation in which there will be no one left to suffer. Since suffering and pain are regarded as the only evil in Epicureanism and there will be no one to suffer when death occurs, one does not need to fear it (O’Keefe 2).

One should be content that happiness is easy to achieve if one uses Epicurus’s taxonomy of desires, which are natural-necessary desires, natural-unnecessary desires, and unnatural-unnecessary desires. If one focuses only on fulfilling the natural-necessary desires, one will understand that happiness is not difficult to attain (O’Keefe 3). Natural-necessary desires are desires that occur because of human biology and nature, and without their satisfaction, one cannot attain ataraxia (O’Keefe 3). Eating, drinking water, resting, and being involved in philosophy, since humans are rational beings who contemplate, are some examples of natural and necessary desires. Natural-unnecessary desires are desires that are natural for humans to have because of human nature but not necessary to be satisfied for attaining ataraxia, such as, sexual intercourse (Austin 49). Unnatural and unnecessary desires are considered unnatural when human nature and biology are taken into account (Austin 50). For example, becoming wealthy or famous are not natural desires for humans, and one does not need to attain them for ataraxia (Austin 51). If one only aims for natural and necessary desires and does not bother with the rest, it will be

easy for them to experience pleasure in life. The final cure, which is pain being easy to cope with, states that unless one is in extreme pain, one can bear it, and if one is in unbearable pain, one will die. Since death is not evil, being in pain does not result in any kind of evil.

One can achieve ataraxia by eliminating anxiety, fear, and desires other than unnatural desires. According to Epicureans, a tranquil life is regarded as the highest good and is the limit of all pleasures in which one cannot achieve a more pleasant state afterwards (Gillham 144). It is the complete and full katastematic pleasure because, in the state of tranquility, all bodily and mental pains are eliminated, and there are no more desires left to satisfy (Gillham 146). The pleasure one gets from tranquility cannot be increased because being free from disturbance in all aspects is the greatest pleasure, and in tranquility, one is free from them all (Massie 386). However, since we are human beings, we have to satisfy natural and necessary desires, such as eating when we are hungry or drinking water when we are thirsty, and it is not possible for humans to stay in the everlasting state of ataraxia (Griswold 10). Humans should always fulfill their natural and necessary desires, which will disturb their state of tranquility. For example, even though one is in a state of complete tranquility, one will always have to drink water because one will always be thirsty as a result of being a human. So, according to the Epicurean conceptualization, consistent ataraxia is not possible for humans, yet humans can strive to achieve it.

CHAPTER 3

RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF TRANQUILITY

In the previous chapter, I discussed that fear and anxiety are a part of human survival system and it is not possible to get rid of them. Since it is not realistic to eliminate fear and anxiety completely, I reconceptualize tranquility not as being free from fear and anxiety, but as a state of mind that can be achieved in the presence of such emotions which can be attained through emotion regulation that comes from wisdom. This new conceptualization is called *tranquility by regulation*.

3.1 Threshold for Happiness: Tranquility

I argue that being in a state of tranquility, in which one is peaceful and calm, is necessary and sufficient for happiness. I believe that there is a threshold to exceed for happiness and that threshold can only be exceeded by tranquility. Vague concepts are useful to demonstrate the threshold for happiness. Vague concepts are concepts that do not have sharp boundaries and they are borderline notions (Williamson 1996). For example, what makes something a heap is uncertain. Even though its grains make it a heap, how much grain is sufficient to make a heap is unknown (Williamson 329-330). Another example is baldness, where it's uncertain when one becomes bald. If you start with someone who is not bald and remove one strand of hair at a time, it is unclear at what point they become bald, whether they become bald after 20 strands or 20,000 strands. So, the concept of vagueness is about concepts that lack sharp boundaries.

I apply this concept of vagueness to happiness to discuss the role of tranquility as a necessary and sufficient condition for happiness. Let us start with a person who is completely unhappy. This person experiences happiness gradually and becomes less unhappy. As this gradual increase continues, the person moves from being completely unhappy to being less unhappy to being neither unhappy nor happy to happy. When the person becomes happy, it means that they exceeded the threshold for happiness. I argue that this threshold in which one becomes happy is exceeded only when one reaches the state of tranquility in which that person fulfills the necessary condition for happiness.

Tranquility is also sufficient for happiness because when one is peaceful and calm, they are happy in the sense that they are content with their lives because they do not experience any disturbance that comes from a feeling of dissatisfaction. If one experiences any dissatisfaction with their lives, it means that they are not tranquil. So, tranquility is both necessary and sufficient for happiness. Still, after exceeding the threshold for happiness, which happens through tranquility, one can increase their happiness.

It is not necessary for one to increase their tranquility to become happier. When one is in the state of tranquility, it means that they are happy. However, they can increase their happiness after that point in different ways and it can be unique for each individual. For example, one might increase their state of happiness after being tranquil by going out with friends or one might prefer to go on a vacation. This does not mean that one has to increase their state of tranquility, that they should become

more peaceful and calm, to increase their happiness. An example of how one can increase their happiness after becoming tranquil is by having appreciative attitudes towards one's condition of tranquility, which I will discuss further in the sixth chapter.

Even though one can increase their happiness after exceeding the threshold for happiness, I believe that a desire to get happier after exceeding the threshold for happiness is a natural yet unnecessary desire, if that desire does not cause a person to experience disturbance. It is a natural desire to become happier since happiness is an intrinsically valuable condition. However, it is an unnecessary desire for tranquility because one is already in the state of tranquility when they experience a desire to become happier. When a person's desire to get happier after exceeding the threshold through tranquility leads that person to experience disturbance, this person is no longer in a tranquil state of mind, therefore, this person is not happy. What this person actually desires in such a condition is not being happier but being happy since they are not tranquil anymore after a desire that leads them to experience disturbance. It means that a desire that causes disturbance would make a person to go below the threshold for happiness. So, only a desire to become happier that does not lead one to experience disturbance would be a natural and unnecessary desire.

3.2 A Possible Objection

One might object to the claim that tranquility is sufficient for happiness by arguing that tranquility might be sufficient for exceeding the threshold for "not being unhappy;" however, not being unhappy is not the same as being happy. For example, someone who is poor might receive enough money that would lead them to exceed

the threshold for not being poor, but exceeding that threshold would not make them rich. Similar to this example, exceeding the threshold for not being unhappy might not be the same as being happy. Therefore, tranquility is not sufficient for happiness but it is sufficient for not being unhappy.

My reply to this objection is that when one is not unhappy, it means that they are at a minimum level of happiness. Since it is at a minimum level, it might feel that one can get happier. A similar example is about health in which, if one is not sick anymore, they are at a minimum level of health in which they can still get healthier after that point, for example, by exercising or by having a healthy diet like an athlete. If one is not sick, then they are healthy enough. Similarly, if one is not unhappy, they are happy enough. Even though one can increase their happiness after the threshold and can get happier, they are automatically happy at a basic and minimum level when they are not unhappy anymore.

3.3 The Subjective Perspective

Feeling tranquil is necessary and sufficient for *feeling* happy, which satisfies the subjective aspect of happiness. When one is tranquil in which they are in a peaceful and calm state of mind, they will have a positive evaluation of their lives in which they are content with it, which will lead them to feel happy.

In addition, I claim that tranquility, unlike the Epicurean definition, can be achieved without eliminating mental disturbances such as fear or anxiety. Their complete elimination is not realistic or attainable because of their role in increasing human

survival, which humans have inherited as they evolved. According to *tranquility by regulation*, one can achieve tranquility in the presence of such mental disturbances. This conceptualization increases one's motivation since it presents a more realistic and achievable state of tranquility as a necessary and sufficient condition for happiness. The necessary condition to achieve tranquility lies in the ability of emotion regulation that comes from wisdom which I call "wise emotion regulation," and I will discuss it further in the next chapter. As one gains the ability of "wise emotion regulation," one will be in a tranquil state of mind that fulfills the subjective and affective aspects of happiness.

In addition, when one knows that tranquility is attainable even in the presence of fear and anxiety, one will feel relaxed with a sense of trust that they can achieve happiness in the presence of emotions that are considered to be the obstacles of tranquility. One will be in a state of relief because they will not be expected to do something unachievable to be happy, which increases one's motivation. So, *tranquility by regulation* increases one's feelings of calmness that comes from the relief that they can attain tranquility without trying to do something unrealistic such as completely eliminating anxiety or fear.

Tranquility is depicted as a sea without waves or storms. However, I argue that a sea without waves or storms is not realistic. Rather than presenting it as such, one can learn how to swim or build a ship to survive in a wavy or stormy sea. To be able to do it, one should first accept that a sea without waves or storms is not realistic. Since a sea can never be free from waves or storms, a theory should focus not on a waveless or stormless sea but on what one should do in the presence of them. The sea

is analogous to life; waves and storms are negativities in life, and learning how to swim or build a ship is “wise emotion regulation.” I argue that “wise emotion regulation” comes from wisdom because, theoretical wisdom helps one to learn emotions and how life is; practical wisdom and emotional intelligence help one to behave appropriately in response to certain emotions and mental disturbances such as fear and anxiety, and by the practice of wisdom, one will master the skills of emotion regulation.

Tranquility by regulation has three parts that I will unpack in the following chapters that tranquility can be attained through “wise emotion regulation,” one can increase their happiness without increasing their tranquility through appreciation, and increasing anxiety and fear can be a regulation technique by discussing Paradoxical Intention.

CHAPTER 4

WISE EMOTION REGULATION

4.1 Consistency, Appropriateness, and Completeness

In this thesis, I reconceptualize tranquility as a peaceful and calm state of mind that occurs as a result of “wise emotion regulation.” Even though I agree with Epicureans that tranquility means being peaceful and calm, I disagree with them in how to attain tranquility. The way to achieve tranquility in this reconceptualization *tranquility by regulation* is through wise emotion regulation which has three aspects:

“consistency,” “appropriateness,” and “completeness.” The “consistent” aspect of wise emotion regulation is about regulating one’s emotions continuously as much as possible. Even though a person has not used emotion regulation skills in their past, when they decide to use wise emotion regulation skills, they should aim to use them consistently after that point in time. A person does not have wise emotion regulation skills if they do not aim to use them consistently in which emotional regulation is needed.

The other aspect of wise emotion regulation, “appropriateness,” is about using the most suitable emotion regulation skill out of many types that I will explain in the next section. Suppose someone cannot evaluate a situation appropriately and that situation requires them to use emotion regulation skills. In that case, they will not be able to choose the most appropriate skill for emotion regulation. Meanwhile, someone who can correctly judge a condition and knows oneself will use the most

appropriate and effective emotion regulation technique, which fulfills the appropriateness aspect of wise emotion regulation.

The “complete” aspect of wise emotion regulation is about fully regulating one’s emotions. For example, if someone can regulate their anxiety only by 30%, in which they decreased the disturbing feeling of anxiety to an extent but not completely, it means that they cannot regulate their emotions fully. Someone who regulates their emotions 100% is someone, for example, who uses correct techniques to regulate their anxiety and ends up in a state in which it does not affect them anymore. This person fulfills the completeness aspect of wise emotion regulation by completely eliminating the disturbing power anxiety has over them.

4.2 Emotion Regulation Types

Emotion regulation plays a central role in mental health (Gross 280). Lack of emotion regulation skills is also considered to be important in the development of certain mental health difficulties such as alcohol abuse, anxiety/mood disorders, or binge eating (Gross 280). Hence, educating people about different emotion regulation skills that will best suit them should be one of the main goals of psychotherapeutic interventions. Some people might benefit from exercising or meeting with friends to regulate their emotions, whereas other people might regulate their emotions through meditation and relaxation exercises (Gross 281).

Even though the best emotion regulation skill that works for each individual can differ, it is important to have a general classification to understand it better. Gross

comes up with five types of emotion regulation skills, which give a general overview of how people prefer to use emotion regulation.

1. Situation Selection: Helps people to avoid experiencing situations they do not want to experience (Gross 283). For example, taking a different route to school than one's friend who occasionally bullies them or choosing which friend to talk to when one experiences a painful breakup are examples of situation selection (Gross 283).

2. Situation Modification: It is about changing a situation one does not like (Gross 283). An example might be getting disturbed because of the loud noises of their neighbors at night and talking to them to turn down the sound (Gross 283). To employ such emotion regulation skills, one should correctly judge situations and come to an understanding that one can indeed have an effect on them.

3. Attentional Deployment: There are three subtypes of this regulatory skill which are "distraction, concentration, and rumination" (Gross 283-284). "Distraction" helps one shift their attention from negative emotional states to positive ones or to non-emotional states, such as thinking of happy memories to cope with sad feelings or going for a walk to cope with a distressing situation (Gross 284). "Concentration" can work in a transcendental way in which one can concentrate on an activity they like as a coping mechanism (Gross 284). "Rumination" is the last subtype, in which one directs attention to the specific situation that elicits disturbing emotional states one wants to regulate (Gross 284).

4. *Cognitive Change*: Emotions have a cognitive part in which there is a mechanism that evaluates the emotion and its meaning for oneself (Gross 284). When one employs cognitive change, one can modify or re-evaluate the thoughts behind certain emotions or what they mean to them (Gross 284). An important method for this cognitive change is “cognitive reframing,” in which people can change their perception of an event by changing their evaluations and judgments of that specific condition (Gross 284). This emotion regulation skill is one of the most important and highly used methods in cognitive-behavioral therapy, the aim of which is to change the cognitions, such as beliefs or judgments, of how one perceives a situation. The therapeutic approach emphasizes the importance of how one perceives an event and claims that a situation itself is not painful, but how one approaches, evaluates, and perceives it is what makes a situation painful (Beck 195-196).

5. *Response Modulation*: It focuses on the responses given after an emotional state and discusses regulating them to influence the emotion through a backward mechanism (Gross 285). For example, one may try to regulate their physiological responses to certain emotions by using psychiatric drugs that help one to relax, or another person can decrease the intensity or frequency of certain emotions by inhibiting expressive behaviors, such as yelling at other people in response to anger (Gross 285).

When one acquires the skills of wise emotion regulation and can succeed in performing them in real life, they satisfy the necessary conditions for being tranquil in which they have the necessary and sufficient conditions for being happy. Emotion regulation will help people to be in control of their emotions and not be affected by

them negatively. It works without a need of complete elimination of fear and anxiety. Through *tranquility by regulation*, one can have a tranquil life in the presence of fear and anxiety and wise emotion regulation provides one with the skills to cope with such negative emotions. Therefore, wise emotion regulation skills lead one to live a tranquil life without a need to eliminate fear and anxiety.

4.3 A Quasi-Kinetic Pleasure: Tranquility

According to Epicureans, tranquility is a state of full katastematic pleasure in which one experiences a complete lack of mental and bodily disturbance and has no further desire for kinetic pleasures (Gosling and Taylor 366). Since katastematic pleasures are passive states of pleasure, Epicurean tranquility is a passive state in which one is unmoved³. However, in *tranquility by regulation*, one needs to actively do something, which is using wise emotion regulation skills for being tranquil. After using the skills, one is in a state of peacefulness. So, one actively does something, which is the mark of the kinetic pleasures, to reach the state of peacefulness in which the desire to eliminate disturbance is fulfilled, which is the katastematic pleasure. As one uses wise emotion regulation skills, one attains kinetic pleasure from it and their peacefulness gradually increases. So, the kinetic pleasure leads one to become peaceful. This is contrary to Epicurean view according to which one should get rid of the desire for kinetic pleasures. However, in *tranquility by regulation* one experiences tranquility as a result of an act. So, in my conceptualization, tranquility is a “quasi-kinetic” pleasure in which one experiences a kinetic pleasure that comes

³ It is a complete state of being unmoved which only gods can experience and since gods are in such a state, they do not bother with humans and that is why humans do not need to fear gods for punishment, as in the case with the Tetrastarmakos.

from using wise emotion regulation skills for the katastematic pleasure which is not being anxious or fearful anymore.

One might argue that kinetic pleasures help one to attain katastematic pleasures also in Epicurean hedonism. For example, as one drinks water, which is the kinetic pleasure, one also attains the katastematic pleasure of getting rid of the thirst. So, why would not Epicurean tranquility be called a “quasi-kinetic” state as well? My reply is that according to the Epicurean concept of tranquility, one should aim to eliminate the desires for kinetic pleasure as much as one can. So, Epicureans would argue that one should eliminate the desire for wise emotion regulation since it is an active and kinetic pleasure. However, in my reconceptualization, one achieves tranquility through wise emotion regulation. So, the act of regulating one’s emotions wisely, which is a kinetic pleasure, is central to achieving tranquility, which is the katastematic pleasure. This demonstrates that, in my theory, one attains tranquility through a kinetic pleasure, however, in Epicurean theory, one should eliminate the desire for kinetic pleasures to attain tranquility. That is why Epicurean theory is not a “quasi-kinetic” theory.

Even though, not experiencing any mental disturbance and therefore, not having a need to regulate one’s mental disturbances is an ideal state, I argue that since it is not a realistic or attainable state, one will always need wise emotion regulation skills, which is a kinetic pleasure. That is why, in my conceptualization, one does not need to eliminate their desire for kinetic pleasures for achieving tranquility since wise emotion regulation leads one to achieve tranquility. This aspect is the main difference between my conceptualization and Epicurean conceptualization of

tranquility and why mine is a “quasi-kinetic” theory whereas their theory is not. To achieve Epicurean tranquility, one needs to eliminate their desire for kinetic pleasures, however, in my conceptualization of tranquility, one uses wise emotion regulation, which is a kinetic pleasure, for tranquility.



CHAPTER 5

THE ROLE OF WISDOM IN TRANQUILITY

Tranquility by regulation is a state that occurs as one gains the ability of wise emotion regulation that comes from wisdom. In this section, I will discuss how theoretical wisdom, practical wisdom, and a practice of wisdom will lead one to have wise emotion regulation skills.

5.1 Theoretical Wisdom

Wisdom is a dense concept with many different definitions and approaches. One of the most important approaches to this highly dense concept is Aristotle's distinction between "theoretical wisdom" (*sophia*) and "practical wisdom" (*phronesis*) (Nicomachean Ethics, Book IV; Swartwood and Tiberius 12-13; Costanzo 6; Owens 6-7). Theoretical wisdom is having an understanding of how the world works and what living and nonliving beings fundamentally are. This type of wisdom is about the descriptive explanation of truth (Swartwood and Tiberius 13). On the other hand, practical wisdom is about the normative truths, how we ought to behave in certain situations, and *actually* practicing them in one's life (Swartwood and Tiberius 13; Tsai 56). Practical wisdom requires the knowledge of how to live well, which comes from what one regards as good or crucial for one's well-being (Tsai 606).

I believe that theoretical wisdom has three aspects: self-knowledge, knowledge of others, and the knowledge of the world. Self-knowledge helps one to discover new facts about oneself and such self-knowledge that comes from theoretical wisdom

would help one to obtain a “self-distancing” perspective. “Self-distancing” is obtaining a perspective to evaluate oneself through a non-egocentric way (Kross and Ayduk 187). Distancing helps one to discover new aspects of oneself and as a whole, including the negative and positive parts. It also helps people to evaluate situations objectively, without being in an emotional turmoil so that they can understand the reasons behind their experiences and responses better (Kross and Ayduk 188). Learning from self-observation at a distance enables one to discover new truths about themselves, including their good and bad aspects, desires, strengths, and weaknesses. This self-awareness ultimately contributes to a happy life since they would know what would make them happy or that they would know what it feels like to be in a happy state. In addition, when people understand who they are, they will be able to understand others better because self-knowledge will help them understand human nature in general. With the knowledge of human nature, one can evaluate what desires are natural and necessary for them to live a tranquil and happy life, which is also useful in practical wisdom.

The third aspect of theoretical wisdom is the knowledge of the world. It is important because scientific, critical, and analytic thinking will help one to learn how the world works and how things are and one can use and apply such information to pursue wisdom in other areas as well. This knowledge provides one with the tools to improve one’s cognitive and rational skills while adding to the knowledge of how the world works so that one will know how to orient oneself properly while pursuing a happy life by taking the world’s limitations and strengths into account.

Theoretical wisdom is crucial for wise emotion regulation skills. One aspect of it, which is self-knowledge is crucial because it helps one to know their emotions, which emotions are disturbing, and which type of emotion regulation out of the five type works best for one in specific conditions. The precondition of emotion regulation is recognizing and evaluating emotions (Thompson 57). This skill of recognition and evaluation will arise from self-knowledge, which is a part of theoretical wisdom. Some people are not aware of their emotions. This lack of awareness is an obstacle to emotion regulation because to be able to regulate emotions one should know and recognize which emotion to regulate. Self-awareness and self-knowledge help one to understand one's emotions, which is the first step of emotion regulation.

Furthermore, self-knowledge consists of the knowledge of what makes one happy, sad, angry, etc., since this knowledge will result in an accurate selection of activities that will be beneficial in emotion regulation (Mayer and Salovey 204). For example, someone should select an activity that will increase their happiness in a moment of anger rather than an activity that will increase their negative emotions.

In addition, as argued previously, fear and anxiety are emotions that cannot be fully eliminated. The knowledge that certain emotions cannot be fully eliminated because of human nature, which is another aspect of theoretical wisdom, will provide one with skills to cope with them more effectively than a person who falsely believes that they can be fully eliminated. This acceptance helps one to be more confident and comfortable because the knowledge will prevent them from doing something unachievable. Rather, by accepting the situation, they can work on their emotions

more successfully and appropriately. For example, someone who mistakenly believes that a complete elimination of anxiety is possible will try to use emotion regulation skills that will not be useful because no matter what skill is used, anxiety cannot be fully eliminated which might result in a decreased motivation for emotion regulation. Rather, suppose someone approaches fear and anxiety with the knowledge and acceptance that they are emotions that cannot be fully eliminated. In that case, they will approach the emotions and regulation techniques differently and more appropriately. Rather than trying to regulate emotions with an incorrect motivation of complete elimination, which might lead them to use inappropriate regulation techniques such as suppression of emotions, the acceptance that full elimination is not possible will help them regulate emotions appropriately. I will discuss this aspect more in the last chapter, in which I discuss “Paradoxical Intention.”

Epicurean taxonomy of desires can be applied to the desire for eliminating fear and anxiety. Since anxiety and fear are emotions that belong to human nature, one should place the need of their complete elimination into the category of “unnatural and unnecessary desires.” “Natural desires” are appropriate desires for humans to satisfy because of human nature and biological conditions (Austin 46). However, if a desire includes something that is not suitable for human nature, such as becoming famous or living a luxurious life, Epicureans call it an “unnatural desire” (Austin 50-51). When a desire is unnatural, it is also unnecessary for it to be satisfied to reach the state of ataraxia. Since anxiety and fear are natural for humans to have, a desire to get rid of them is unnatural because it is a desire that is against human nature. If a desire is not natural for someone to have, then it is not necessary to satisfy to achieve tranquility. Therefore, from the Epicurean perspective, desires to eliminate emotions

that are part of human nature, such as fear and anxiety, should be considered “unnatural and unnecessary.” However, the most desirable state for them is the state of ataraxia, which is achieved by the complete elimination of fear and anxiety. Such a desire to eliminate anxiety and fear is unnatural and unnecessary, yet, it is the main goal of their theory of happiness, so, there is an inconsistency in their theory.

There is another aspect of self-awareness that is important for knowing which regulation type works best for one in a specific situation and with what particular emotion. Since there are five emotion regulation types, which are “situation selection,” “situation modification,” attentional deployment,” “cognitive change,” and “response modulation,” one should be knowledgeable about which one to choose in certain situations. Evaluating conditions, experiences, and emotions plays a major role in the selection of emotion regulation types. For example, if a person evaluates a disturbing situation as possible to avoid and change, they should select the “situation modification” type of emotion regulation for a successful regulation. On the other hand, if a person evaluates a condition to be unchangeable, they should know that they have no control over it and should select “attentional deployment,” “cognitive change,” or “response modulation” for the best outcome.

Theoretical wisdom is crucial for such evaluations and one should be able to judge accurately if one has a power to change or affect a situation. To correctly evaluate if one is in a condition in which one can change or modify a situation, one should be knowledgeable about the world they live in to determine if they have power over a situation. If they accept that they do not have power to change a situation, they can

come up with alternative and useful ways to change a situation, such as the cognitive change type.

In addition to selection of the most appropriate type, one should also know how to use certain emotion regulation types. For example, to appropriately use the “cognitive change” type, one needs to correctly judge situations. Suppose someone fails an exam. In this condition, they should accept their failure and understand that they cannot change it. In that way, they can use the cognitive change type of emotion regulation. That type will help one to evaluate the condition of failure, not as the end of the world, which is a behavior also called “catastrophizing,” but as something many people experience in their lives. This evaluation helps one to come up with new skills to avoid failure to happen again. However, suppose they obtain an incorrect judgment about the situation by deceiving themselves into believing that their professor does not like them, which is why they failed. In that case, they cannot develop appropriate emotion regulation skills. So, correct emotion regulation skills require an accurate judgment of oneself, others, and situations that come from theoretical wisdom. Theoretical wisdom helps one to be in a position to evaluate situations accurately and use the most efficient emotion regulation skill. This aspect of wisdom fulfills the “appropriateness” of wise emotion regulation skills.

The other aspect of wisdom that plays a role in wise emotion regulation is practical wisdom. Practical wisdom helps one to be practically wise and practice one's theoretical knowledge in real life. In the following section, I will discuss a neglected topic in wisdom literature in philosophy, which is emotional intelligence, and argue

that emotional intelligence is a type of practical wisdom while discussing its role in wise emotion regulation.

5.2 Emotional Intelligence: A Neglected Aspect of Practical Wisdom in Philosophy

In this section, I will argue that emotional intelligence is necessary to have wise emotion regulation and that it is an aspect of practical wisdom.

Practical wisdom is a skill of living well and having normative knowledge of what one should do in certain situations to live a good life (M. De Caro et al. 4). Practical wisdom is necessary for someone to be wise because it involves applying the knowledge of theoretical wisdom into real-life circumstances (Pianalto 277). Even if someone is knowledgeable about how to act and behave in certain situations in life, if they do not act accordingly, they cannot be wise.

Emotional intelligence is a popular topic in positive psychology and it has different conceptualizations such as successfully processing and recognizing emotions, being aware of one's own emotions as well as others, regulating one's and others emotions properly, using emotions in a correct manner to achieve one's goals, and having an understanding how emotions affect one's thoughts (Zacher, McKenna, and Rooney 2; Ardel 2; Mayer and Salovey 197). Emotional intelligence has many constituents, such as empathy, perspective-taking, or emotional knowledge (Schwartz and Sharpe 386; Kauppinen 8).

Emotional intelligence guides people on how to respond to the emotions of oneself and others and it is an important element of practical wisdom since practical wisdom is about living a good life and emotions play a central role in such a life. People experience various emotions throughout their lives which affect how they approach and evaluate life. For example, if people feel happy most of the time, it means that they are living a happy life.

In addition, since humans are a social species, interpersonal relationships play a significant role in their well-being (Stewart-Brown 24). One reason for the importance of relationships is their benefit in evolution and reproductive success (Simpson and Belsky 92-93). Since humans are born underdeveloped, they are born with a strong need for others to survive, and when they grow older, humans who are in social groups can survive better than the ones who are isolated. So, interpersonal relationships have an important role in our lives, and emotional intelligence helps people become proficient in recognizing and regulating others' emotions, which satisfies the successful interpersonal relationship aspect of a happy life.

However, it is important to state that emotional intelligence does not equate to practical wisdom. Practical wisdom is a broader skill and it is about living a good life, evaluating moral conditions, and acting in a way that one should behave in certain situations. Emotional intelligence does not include normative aspects or moral judgments. It is about knowing one's and others' emotions to regulate them appropriately, which is why it is an *aspect* of practical wisdom that facilitates a happy life.

Emotional intelligence also functions in mood regulation. Since moods are emotional conditions that persist for longer periods of time than emotions and emotional states, it is also important to be knowledgeable about one's moods to be in complete control of one's emotions. In terms of regulating emotions and moods, emotional intelligence helps one to attend to, recognize, and reflect on emotions with a context-specific evaluation of that specific emotion (Mayer and Salovey 2003). When one is aware of one's mood, attends to it, and recognizes if a mood is appropriate in certain contexts, it will help one to regulate it (Mayer and Salovey 2004). The skills of recognition, awareness, and acceptance of one's moods are also outcomes of theoretical wisdom which occur as a result of self-knowledge, knowledge of others and the knowledge of the world. Emotional intelligence also provides one with the knowledge of what one can do to increase one's feelings of happiness, which is connected to self-knowledge (Mayer and Salovey 2004).

Empathy is an important constituent of emotional intelligence that has both cognitive and affective aspects (Kauppinen 6). Cognitive empathy helps one to take the perspective of the other, to imagine what the other person experiences, and to understand what others think in different situations (Kauppinen 6). However, cognitive empathy alone cannot be adequate for a fully developed empathy because a psychopath can have a perfect sense of cognitive empathy, which helps them to understand the situation of another, yet does not make them *feel* anything towards them (Kauppinen 6). So, affective empathy is needed for a fully developed empathy (Kauppinen 6). Through affective empathy, one can feel the emotions of others by putting oneself in their positions. These two skills lead to a complete empathy skill which is important for emotional intelligence.

Self-knowledge is crucial in terms of affective empathy because when one puts oneself into the position of others, one will need to find a similar condition they experienced before to relate to others' feelings. For example, suppose someone whose father is alive wants to empathize with a person whose father has passed away. In that case, they should find a similar experience from their lives to feel what that person might be feeling, for example, the death of a close relative and how that made them feel. This demonstrates how theoretical wisdom plays a crucial role in emotional intelligence.

Practical wisdom and its component, emotional intelligence, plays an important role in wise emotion regulation. As I stated previously, when someone starts pursuing wisdom, one should start using emotion regulation skills consistently. As people acquire the skills of emotional intelligence, they become proficient in regulating emotions throughout their lives. However, one does not acquire these skills automatically. As they start regulating emotions, they will be in a constant improvement. So, they start using emotion regulation skills as consistently as possible as an outcome of practicing emotion regulation many times.

The completeness and appropriateness aspects of wise emotion regulation are fulfilled as a result of theoretical and practical wisdom. As one starts to recognize and evaluate one's emotions properly and knows oneself better, one acquires the skills to completely regulate one's emotions by using the most appropriate emotion regulation types. Therefore, theoretical and practical wisdom leads one to obtain wise

emotion regulation skills by fulfilling its aspects, which are appropriateness, consistency, and completeness.

5.3 A Practice of Wisdom: Dialogue

I argue that being wise includes being open to dialogues with other people in a humble way, without having prejudices or biases, actually listening to them, understanding and valuing their opinions, and contributing to one's wisdom.

I argue that if a person is wise enough and has a certain degree of humility, this person will seek dialogues with people. Seeking dialogues with others will come from a place of curiosity about what people think about the world, which will feed the person's knowledge and can even change their perspectives completely. Thus, the wise person should be open to engage in conversations with people with different beliefs, ideas, or backgrounds that might contradict one's own ideas.

It is an important practice because knowledge can vary among people from different cultures, perspectives, and beliefs. For example, certain facts can be interpreted differently in one culture that believes in multiple gods than in a culture that believes in one god. The wise person, therefore, should try to learn different evaluations of knowledge from various people that will feed their knowledge, add to their ideas without having biases about the person or culture they are learning from, and learn how to appropriately communicate with people from different backgrounds. For example, the wise person should listen to a person who comes from a very different culture equally well as they listen to a person from their own culture. This act of being open to others' opinions should come from a place of humility and curiosity.

Such an act requires the mastery of theoretical and practical wisdom, such as emotional intelligence, which will help them regulate their emotions while listening to different opinions that contradict their beliefs. Engaging in dialogues can provide one with knowledge about themselves that they did not know of before, such as how they feel while listening to opinions that are the opposite of their beliefs or how they behave in such situations. So, with a passion for pursuing knowledge, wisdom, and a happy life and the skills that come from emotional intelligence, a wise person can obtain a chance to cultivate their wisdom by engaging in dialogues with others who come from similar and different backgrounds or cultures. This practice works as a feedback loop mechanism in which one should be wise enough to engage in conversations with others and this act will work as a way to increase one's wisdom.

Wise emotion regulation helps one monitor their emotions in conversations, which can further cultivate emotion regulation skills. One can test one's emotion regulation skills by placing oneself in unusual conditions, such as engaging in conversations with others who have contradictory opinions that one would not normally do. If one constantly stays in environments that conform to one's beliefs, one will not be able to discover new aspects of oneself, learn new perspectives, and see if one's wise emotion regulation skills work in contradictory environments.

5.4 A Possible Objection

One might object to *tranquility by regulation* by giving an example of health and sickness. One might claim that "health" is not conceptualized as the regulation of sickness but as the *lack* of it. To demonstrate it better, let us consider two people: one

has hypertension, and the other one is healthy. Even though both of them look the same from the outside because the person who has hypertension has a healthy diet, does exercises, and is considerate of the condition and, therefore, does not have symptoms of hypertension, the person with hypertension is not in the same condition as the person who does not have it. The first person needs to be extra careful to be in the same state as the healthy person. However, we consider the latter person, who does not have hypertension, to be a healthier person than the first one, even though they are equally non-symptomatic. In this case, the person who regulates their fears and anxieties, which is represented by the person with hypertension, is less tranquil, so less healthy in the example, than the person who does not have a need to regulate them. So, a person who lacks fear and anxiety can be said to be in a more tranquil state than a person who has fear and anxiety *and* regulates them.

My reply is that illnesses are not something inevitable for humans, whereas fear and anxiety are because of their role in human nature that occurred as a result of evolution. Illnesses can be avoided completely and they are not a part of human nature. When we apply the taxonomy of desires to the discussion of sickness and health, we should categorize wanting to eliminate illness as a natural and necessary desire. "Illness" means something unusual or disordered is going on in the body, which demonstrates that it is not a part of human nature. If something disturbs human nature or biological conditions, one should try to get rid of it to maintain its balanced and normal state. Since illnesses result in bodily disturbance and can be avoided, the desire for the elimination of illness is natural and necessary because if one eliminates illness, they are in a more tranquil state than a person who is ill. However, since anxiety and fear cannot be avoided because they are a part of human nature, the

desire to eliminate them completely is unnatural and unnecessary. So, health-sickness and fear-anxiety-tranquility belong to different places in the taxonomy of desires.



CHAPTER 6

APPRECIATION OF TRANQUILITY

According to Epicurean hedonism, ataraxia is the limit and highest degree of pleasures, which means that there can be no further pleasure to attain after ataraxia (Liebersohn 281; Gillham 144; O’Keefe 1; Gosling and Taylor 369). When one fully eliminates disturbance, one has achieved the limit of pleasure (Liebersohn 287). This means that if two people are in the same state of ataraxia, they both are in equally pleasant states of tranquility in which there can be no further pleasures to attain. In addition, they are in the final condition of happiness in which they cannot become happier. However, in *tranquility by regulation*, I argue that one can attain more pleasure from their state of tranquility and get happier through appreciation.

“Appreciation” is an attitude that is a way of valuing things (Manela 20). When something good happens to someone or when one perceives something’s value, they appreciate it and feel gratitude towards it (Manela 20). It is a response to something perceived as valuable (Swanton 48-50). To appreciate something, one needs to evaluate a condition, which leads to an awareness of that condition (Manela 20). In addition to such awareness, when one appreciates a condition, one feels enjoyment or gratitude (Manela 20). It consists of loving what one experiences (see Swanton 59).

One can experience a more pleasant state of tranquility if they have appreciative attitudes towards their condition than someone who does not appreciate their state of tranquility. Thus, even though two people are in the same end state of tranquility, in

which they are both peaceful and calm and cannot become more tranquil, one can experience a more pleasant state when they appreciate it. Having a more pleasant state leads one to experience more joy from their state of tranquility which increases one's happiness. As I stated previously, tranquility is necessary and sufficient to exceed the threshold for happiness, however, one can experience more happiness after they have exceeded the threshold. Appreciation is an example of how one can experience more happiness without increasing their state of tranquility.

When one experiences a more pleasant state of tranquility, it does not mean that their state of tranquility has increased, in which they are in a more peaceful or calm condition. It means that their happiness and enjoyment of their condition has increased. I agree with Epicureans that tranquility can have a limit in which one cannot become more tranquil because when one uses wise emotion regulation skills, one can achieve such a state in which they are not disturbed and completely peaceful. However, I disagree with their conceptualization that when one achieves tranquility there can be no further happiness or pleasure in which they equate happiness with tranquility. According to *tranquility by regulation*, even though one achieves the end state of tranquility in which they are in the most peaceful condition, one can experience a more pleasant state of tranquility which increases their happiness. So, in this reconceptualization, I do not equate happiness with tranquility, I approach them as dependent yet different concepts. Hence, one can experience gradual degrees of happiness after achieving tranquility without increasing their state of tranquility, and one way to do it is by appreciation.

The end state of tranquility occurs if one practices wise emotion regulation skills in which they consistently, appropriately, and completely regulate their emotions.

When one regulates their emotions in a wise manner, they are in the end state of tranquility in which they are not affected by their negative emotions and they are completely peaceful. Appreciation leads one to experience a more pleasant state of tranquility, rather than increasing tranquility itself. I claim that someone who appreciates their state of tranquility has a more pleasant state of tranquility, therefore, they are in a happier state, than someone who has the same amount of tranquility yet, does not have an appreciative attitude towards it. A person who has experienced adverse conditions in their lives or is adequately knowledgeable about such conditions can appreciate their state of tranquility, and can have a more pleasant state of tranquility, which in turn leads them to experience a happier condition.

One can appreciate their condition by, first, being aware of their condition, and, second, by enjoying that condition ⁴. One can have appreciation in two different ways which are having first-hand experiences about difficulties in life or having second-hand knowledge as a result of wisdom.

6.1 First-Hand Experiences

One way of having appreciative attitudes towards one's state of tranquility comes from first-hand experiences, which represents the self-knowledge aspect of theoretical wisdom. Let us consider two people, A and B, who come from different

⁴ In addition to recognition and enjoyment of a situation as necessary conditions for appreciation, there is another aspect of appreciative attitudes which is humility. Being humble results as people appreciate their experiences, however, it does not always occur. So, it is a possible state someone can experience in addition to appreciation.

backgrounds. A had a happy life and only experienced minimal struggles. As a result of wisdom, A learned wise emotion regulation and reached tranquility. B, on the other hand, had a life full of difficulties and struggled a lot. Still, by pursuing wisdom, this person became tranquil through wise emotion regulation like the first one. I claim that B is in a more pleasant state of tranquility than A because B knows how hard life can be and achieved the state of tranquility after experiencing such difficulties in life, which helps them appreciate their state better than A. Being deprived of something more leads one to appreciate better when one receives what they were deprived of. This is also present in Epicurus's Letter to Menoeceus in which Epicurus says that "bread and water confer the highest possible pleasure when they are brought to hungry lips" which means that even the most basic food can feel like a feast when a hungry person eats them which shows that how being deprived of a certain thing can affect the pleasure one attains from it, leading one to appreciate them better (Letter to Menoeceus). Such appreciative attitudes result in additional enjoyment of their present state of peacefulness, which increases one's happiness.

Even though both A and B are in equal states of tranquility at that moment, A, who did not experience difficulties in life, had a happier life in total than B, who experienced difficulties in life. However, A having a longer happy life does not affect B's happiness that occurs as a result of tranquility and appreciation. I argue that B is in a more pleasant *state* of tranquility than A because of appreciation. I do not claim that B, who appreciates their present condition, has a happier life than A in the attribute sense. Appreciation is a way to have a happier and a more pleasant *state* of tranquility. It does not affect one's life as a whole. However, since a happy life consists of happy moments, in the episodic sense, when one continues to appreciate

their state throughout their lives, which is a way to increase one's happiness, we can claim that this person would have a happy life.

6.2 Second-Hand Knowledge

Knowledge of other and knowledge of the world, which are the other aspects of theoretical wisdom, practical wisdom, and the practice of wisdom are the second ways to have appreciative attitudes. Wisdom, in general, helps one to grasp the opposite of tranquility and be aware of life's adversities without having to go through them themselves. Knowledge of others and the world help one discover different lives, what difficulties people have to go through, how adversities affect people, etc. Since it is not possible to experience everything in life, the best way to know them comes from theoretical wisdom and, more specifically, knowledge of others and the world. As one gets to know the world and others, one will learn a variety of life difficulties. It will help them realize and appreciate their tranquility better than someone who lacks this knowledge.

Emotional intelligence, a part of practical wisdom, is crucial for empathizing with adverse experiences. As I previously discussed, empathy, both cognitive and affective, is important for emotional intelligence. By using the information one has gained from theoretical wisdom, one will be able to empathize with others by using the skills of emotional intelligence. This will help one to appreciate their tranquility better than someone who only knows the adversities in life but does not empathize because emotions and feelings can have stronger effects than mere thoughts. For example, fear facilitates one's fight or flight responses in the face of danger. If one does not experience fear in the face of a threat, only has a thought that it is something

dangerous, one will not be able to respond appropriately or quickly. So, emotions and feelings are powerful tools for facilitating responses. That is why empathizing with other people and what they might be feeling in such conditions will lead one to experience how different adversities there are in life and lead to more powerful outcomes in terms of appreciating one's condition of tranquility.

The last aspect of wisdom that increases one's appreciative attitudes is the practice, which is being open to dialogues with others. It helps one to see many different lives, get to know them, and understand and empathize with people who experience difficulties in life through engaging in conversations. Through conversations, one can learn about many different lives, which they might not have learned through mere theoretical knowledge. This practical act can help one to appreciate their state of tranquility better because talking to other people means knowing them, putting oneself into others' conditions, and feeling sympathy for them, which will facilitate one's appreciative attitudes. These appreciative attitudes come from theoretical wisdom, emotional intelligence, and being open to dialogues, which all facilitate one's appreciation abilities, increasing the pleasure one attains from tranquility and in turn, happiness.

6.3 Two Possible Negative Outcomes of Appreciation

When one appreciates their state of tranquility that comes from the knowledge of difficulties in life, one might experience two possible negative feelings which are guilt and fear of losing their state of tranquility. The awareness aspect of appreciation can result in negative outcomes that comes from the knowledge of the difficulties other people experience. However, practicing wisdom appropriately eliminates such

negative outcomes. When someone experiences tranquility and appreciates it by thinking that there are many people who have non-tranquil and difficult lives can experience guilt because of their good condition. Knowing that there are many people who suffer can lead one to feel guilty because they do not experience such difficulties in life. This is also present in a psychological study that listed many factors why people might feel guilt and one reason for the sense of guilt is that “I live a good life in the presence of difficulties Third World Countries experience” (Luck, Tobias, and Luck-Sikorski 6). This demonstrates how people feel responsible for humanity and might experience guilt for not suffering with the rest of the people. However, wisdom would provide one with the knowledge that feeling guilt towards one’s state of tranquility would not change difficulties other people experience. In addition, wisdom would provide one with the knowledge that one should be in a good condition to help others who experience difficulties in life. Feeling guilt or sadness because of one’s good conditions in life would not change the negativities other people experience, it would even make it worse by adding one more people to the list of people who suffer, which is also an idea present in Stoicism. Stoic philosophy states that it does not make sense to be distressed about others’ because one does not change anything about their painful conditions by feeling disturbed about it and one only contributes to the people who suffer by adding one more person to the group of people who are in distress (Marcus Aurelius). Therefore, one should not feel guilt towards their good condition.

The other possible negative outcome of appreciation is the fear of losing one’s state of tranquility. When one is aware that they are living a tranquil life in which they are happy and content, one can experience fear of losing it because one knows how bad

life can be without tranquility, that comes from the knowledge of adversities in life or first-hand experiences. However, the main aim of *tranquility by regulation* is that one should not fear losing tranquility, because one is equipped to regulate emotions and can again reach to a tranquil state that comes from wise emotion regulation if it is lost. When one is knowledgeable that one can achieve tranquility in the presence of fear and anxiety, one does not need to fear if they will lose their state of tranquility because they will know how to reach the state back and would know that it is attainable. However, if it were the Epicurean theory, one might fear losing their state of tranquility because experiencing fear or anxiety would hinder one's possibility to be happy since happiness occurs after a complete lack of such emotions. In this reconceptualization, since one is equipped to reach tranquility in the presence of fear and anxiety and it is possible to attain tranquility again when one loses it, one does not need to fear losing it since they can attain it again through wise emotion regulation, without having to do something impossible such as the complete elimination of negative emotions.

CHAPTER 7

INCREASING FEAR AND ANXIETY FOR TRANQUILITY: PARADOXICAL INTENTION

In the final chapter, I will discuss a method for achieving tranquility, called the Paradoxical Intention, and highlight that, rather than the complete elimination of anxiety or fear, one needs them for achieving tranquility. I will explain what Paradoxical Intention is and I will state that this method should be the sixth type of emotion regulation. Next, I will present a possible objection to it by Epicureans and reply to it.

Paradoxical Intention is a rather counterintuitive therapeutic technique used for psychological and somatic difficulties. The method is counterintuitive because it focuses on increasing the intensity of an unwanted condition such as anxiety, fear, compulsions, sweating, trembling, etc. (Frankl 523-524). Paradoxical Intention targets the attitudes behind unwanted emotions or situations (Frankl 523-527). Since the above examples, such as anxiety or fear, lead a person to suffer, a person takes an avoidant attitude toward such conditions with the aim of getting rid of them.

However, Paradoxical Intention is a technique focused on having an approach attitude towards disturbing emotions since fight or avoidance attitudes reinforce the intensity of unwanted emotions and strengthen the symptoms (Frankl 523).

Therefore, an opposite attitude should be obtained to decrease symptoms, such as trying to increase one's anxiety by thinking about the worst-case scenario and accelerating one's heart rate.

To demonstrate it better, I will refer to an example of a patient who used to experience trembling due to fear of her teacher (Frankl 524). The patient was suffering from tremors as a result of extreme fear of her teacher, and she wanted to eliminate it with a desire to hide her trembling from the teacher. However, as she was trying to stop her trembling and fear, both of them kept increasing. When she saw a clinician for her condition, she was told to show her teacher how a good trembler and fearful person she was (Frankl 524). So, when she went to the class with the belief that she was going to show her teacher how fearful she was of her and was going to try to give her the best performance of her trembling, she noticed how her fear and tremor stopped (Frankl 524). This demonstrates how changing the attitudes from avoidance or fighting behavior to approach attitudes can be beneficial in terms of decreasing them.

Even though how Paradoxical Intention works has not yet been fully discovered, and additional experiments are required, there are certain explanations (Michelson and Ascher 215). The method assumes that humans have self-corrective behaviors, which is about evaluating conditions and correcting the ones that they regard as “unwanted” or “pathological” (Akillas 382). Such beliefs lead people to try to avoid them since they believe they are harmful and should be avoided (Akillas 382). However, when they change the beliefs behind such conditions that they are not emotions to be avoided but embraced, the meaning they attribute to them changes (Akillas 382). They no longer evaluate such emotions as painful or harmful because their behavior demonstrates the opposite, which is embracing such emotions. This paradoxical behavior of increasing painful emotions results in an understanding that they are not to be feared or avoided which leads to a decrease in their intensity.

7.1 The Role of Paradoxical Intention in Tranquility

Paradoxical Intention plays an important role in *tranquility by regulation*. As the method claims, desires to avoid or fight unwanted emotions such as anxiety or fear result in increased states of such emotions (Frankl 523). Epicureans suggest that to achieve tranquility, one needs a complete elimination of fear and anxiety. However, since they are emotions that are a part of human nature, I argued that the desire to eliminate them is unnatural and unnecessary. Looking from the perspective of Paradoxical Intention, there is also the aspect that a desire to eliminate anxiety because of a belief that they are painful and should be avoided, itself increases anxiety. So, the Epicurean tranquility becomes unattainable. That is another reason why Epicurean conceptualization is problematic since the motivation to get rid of anxiety and fear will increase them more. Rather, a theory of tranquility should understand tranquility as a state that can be achieved in the presence of fear and anxiety and a way to do it is by increasing such unwanted emotions. One can achieve tranquility after increasing the intensity of unwanted emotions, even by increasing emotions that are considered to be tranquility's biggest obstacles. Therefore, *tranquility by regulation* proposes a more realistic, beneficial, and achievable state than the Epicurean conceptualization.

I believe that Paradoxical Intention is another type of emotion regulation because it helps one to alleviate the symptoms of unwanted emotions such as fear or anxiety. Increasing negative emotions work in an opposite way in which one stops being negatively affected by them and through this way, one can achieve a state of

tranquility. So, Paradoxical Intention can work as a type of wise emotion regulation skill that helps one to achieve tranquility.

In addition, through Paradoxical Intention, one can increase their appreciative attitudes towards their tranquility and experience a more pleasant and happier state. Since Paradoxical Intention leads one to experience fear and anxiety intensely, which are the biggest obstacles to tranquility, it will help one to appreciate their state of tranquility more because the more one is deprived of something, the more one will appreciate it when they receive it. So, Paradoxical Intention plays an important role in appreciating one's tranquility which leads to an increase in one's happiness.

7.2 An Objection

According to Epicureans, the greatest evil is suffering. They even try to come up with remedies to defeat it, such as the Tetrapharmakos (Graver 157). Since the main goal is to avoid pain, Epicureans would disapprove of a method that focuses on increasing it. They would state that it is voluntary suffering and irrational for someone to put oneself into such a condition (Graver 170).

Epicurus claims that anyone who directs their attention to suffering is foolish (Graver 170). He criticizes theories that discuss the importance of pre-rehearsal, such as Stoicism, in which someone should rehearse adversities that could happen to them by imagining or deliberately putting themselves into such situations (Graver 170). Epicurus names such practices "voluntary misery" (Graver 170). He also rejects attending to pain in painful conditions. He states that someone should redirect their attention from such disturbances, or they should think of pleasurable memories to

avoid them (Graver 171). One should be able to distract one's mind from suffering and be able to attend pleasurable moments that would decrease the pain (Graver 171). He regards distracting oneself from pain or suffering as wise behavior (Graver 176). Therefore, Epicurus would claim that Paradoxical Intention is irrational and should be avoided because it puts one into voluntary suffering, which is the greatest evil. It would lead one to suffer more and would hinder achieving tranquility.

My reply is that Paradoxical Intention has been proven to be useful in many patients with diverse conditions such as anxiety, phobias, sleep disorders, etc. (Michelson and Ascher 217-219; Ascher 332-333). This demonstrates that rather than avoiding painful emotions, approaching and increasing them is more effective. Therefore, approaching such emotions with avoidance behaviors and attitudes results in unwanted conditions, which are increased states of such emotions. Rather than not attending to pain or redirecting thoughts to pleasurable states, as Epicurus suggests, one should do the contrary, which is to welcome and increase such emotions. Therefore, Epicurus's idea that attending to negative emotions leads to misery is incorrect since increasing such emotions and fully attending to them is known to be a powerful tool for eliminating them. In addition, Paradoxical Intention can work as a tool to increase one's happiness next to their tranquility through helping one to appreciate their states of tranquility.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, first, I discussed episodic and attribute senses of happiness and I approached happiness from a subjective point of view. I presented tranquility as a necessary and sufficient condition for exceeding the threshold for happiness. Next, I discussed the theory of Epicurean hedonism. I proposed a different conceptualization of tranquility than Epicureans called *tranquility by regulation*. I argued that wise emotion regulation helps one to achieve tranquility in the presence of fear and anxiety, which are considered to be the biggest obstacles to tranquility by Epicureans. I argued that the desire to eliminate anxiety and fear are unnatural and unnecessary because they are emotions that belong to human nature. Then, I explained what wise emotion regulation is and how wisdom is involved in it. Next, I argued that one can experience increased states of happiness after exceeding the threshold for happiness by having appreciative attitudes. Finally, I discussed a method for becoming tranquil called “Paradoxical Intention” and I argued that it should be accepted as another type of emotion regulation skill and that it is a technique that contributes to one’s appreciative attitudes.

I hope that this thesis will contribute to the discussions of happiness and tranquility. I believe, *tranquility by regulation* is a more motivating theory of happiness than the Epicurean theory and it should be further investigated to determine if this theory also has real-life applications through psychological experiments. Appreciation should also be included in psychological experiments to determine empirically if it has a positive effect in facilitating happiness. In addition, Paradoxical Intention should be studied more in the future and should be investigated if it is a type of emotion regulation.

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