

On Malte Hossenfelder's book "Epikur"

Post by "Cassius" of November 13, 2021 at 3:06 AM

I am probably more with Kalosynis formulation rather than to say that ataraxia is equal to pleasure.

We're into the definition game when we say something "is equal to" something else, but this is something we have to be clear about. I would say that ataraxia is a way of experiencing some (any) other mental or bodily pleasure (without disturbance). I am still firmly maintaining that "absence of something" is not something that is a positive feeling or experience. It is something we can define as desirable, like absence of roaches in your house, but when you are experiencing absence of roaches as a good thing you are really experiencing your house in a way you like to experience it - without roaches.

Further, the real hazard of defining ataraxia as equal to pleasure plays into the hands of those who equate it with "peace of mind" and say that it is the true goal of life rather than pleasure itself.

This recalls Joshua saying in episode 95 that he does not enjoy spending too much time defining pleasure. I think that is a very good observation and it represents a goal we should have not to worry about these issues. But like Joshua also said after his first podcast, he felt like Cicero had us dancing like puppets on his arguments.

I don't think any of us here are negatively caught up in that, but a lot of people I see on the internet ARE. They desperately want to validate Buddhist or Stoic viewpoints by saying that the real goal of life is some sort of nothingness.

Everybody is entitled to their own opinion about things, but I think it's our responsibility (if we want more Epicurean friends) to make sure that argument doesn't get in the way of people escaping Buddhism and Stoicism to "the true philosophy."