

Would You Rather Live For A Week As (1) Epicurus During the Last Week of His Life or (2) An Anonymous Shepherd Laying In The Grass In The Summertime With No Pain At All?

Post by "Cassius" of September 12, 2023 at 9:10 AM

So that would be an example of someone using ataraxia in a general sense, because he is saying that the Stoics could achieve their tranquility better through Epicurean views than through their own views. But doesn't that mean that ataraxia is being used as a generic term to refer to a general "peace of mind" rather than to a term that is uniquely Epicurean?

The point of my question here is that I can see a lot of reason why "ataraxia" can be translated into a generic "peace of mind" or "absence of disturbance" that could apply to most anyone of any philosophy or religion at any particular moment. In contrast, I don't see it to be a good idea to consider that "ataraxia" has a specifically Epicurean meaning that justifies elevating it in the way that many writers today tend to elevate it. It's that elevation that I think we see over and over and is what I would expect would be behind the statement by Luc Schneider:

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In fairness to Luc I think this is the way you will often see the term ataraxia used, which would be consistent with the analogy you used to the effect of "once wise always wise." Is ataraxia something that which, once achieved, is not lost?

Or is ataraxia some particular point of achievement, like snatching a prize at the end of the race, that if achieved for a single moment, is worth all the other time and effort spent pursuing it?

I would see Epicurus' statement as targeted toward those such as Socrates who effect to be unwise in their discussion and I would not see wisdom as something that "once achieved" cannot be lost. Do not wise men often act unwisely, even if only by mistake?

And of course to bring this back to topic, I wouldn't think I would judge whether I wanted to be Epicurus or the shepherd for a week according to whether either one of them "had achieved ataraxia." Would you see that (whether the person as "achieved ataraxia" as a reasonable way to make that decision?

Edit: "Or is ataraxia some particular point of achievement, like snatching a prize at the end of the race, that if achieved for a single moment, is worth all the other time and effort spent pursuing it?" << I like this way of framing the question as I think this presumption is getting closer to the real issue.