

Is All "Ataraxia" Equal?

Post by "Cassius" of November 19, 2023 at 11:47 AM

My opening post was far too wordy but that quick take makes it easier to focus. My comments in red:

Here's my quick take:

1. Pleasure feels good. That's what makes it pleasure and not pain. Comment: No controversy there.
2. Choiceworthiness is determined by consequences, both to oneself and how one is perceived by one's community and friends. Comment: Not much controversy there, though I would say that "how one is perceived by one's community and friends" ultimately resolves to being significant because it will lead to a consequence to oneself.
3. "Does the choice between pleasures hang only on whether a pleasure might bring some disturbance." Yes. Comment: This is where I think more explanation is required, and my question may not be worded in an optimum way. The "some" was intended to be a reference to measure. The question might be better stated as "Does the choice between pleasures hang only on whether choosing one pleasure might produce one unit of pain, while another pleasure might produce zero units of pain?" The real point of the question is whether "any amount of pain" is sufficient to make one choose one pleasure over another, or whether you have to quantify BOTH the amount of pleasure and the amount of pain in order to make a decision.
4. "Can one pleasure be so much more pleasing than another that it is worth choosing?" That's just another way of asking "What are the consequences of this pleasure vs that pleasure?" Comment: Yes I agree that's another way of asking the same question, the answer which I think is "Yes." Agreed?
5. I continue to soapbox that we can have more confidence in accessing some pleasures than others (the infamous katastematic vs "kinetic" discussion). Comment: In this context I will say that "availability of access" is probably not a key factor in dealing with this issue. Yes accessing some pleasures will be easier (involve less pain) than others. But I don't think "involving less pain to access" is the full answer to the question of which pleasures to pursue. If it were, then the rest of the discussion would be resolved in favor of a rule that "Pursue first and foremost those pleasures which are easiest to access" and that would be fairly interpretable, standing alone, as "live in a cave on bread and water."