

"Lucretius on the Divine" - Dr. Christopher Eckerman

Post by "Cassius" of July 9, 2022 at 7:20 PM

I'll put this comment here, because it applies here, even though it applies in numerous other threads:

Why do I think this topic is so important that it needs to be discussed in so much detail?

Because I think the ULTIMATE point, on which I think Don and I agree, is that Epicurus taught that ALL Pleasure is desirable, that PLEASURE is the alpha and omega of a blessed life, and because there is ultimately no absolute standard of higher pleasures which all human beings should pursue equally.

The question in every case is that each person has to ask himself:

[VS71](#). Every desire must be confronted by this question: What will happen to me if the object of my desire is accomplished, and what if it is not?

And there is no absolute right and wrong answer to that question using any form of categories that applies to everyone all the time and everywhere except "pleasure" and "pain."

Definitely there are lots of other ways of looking at the question, such as asking oneself whether the desire/ sought after pleasure is "natural" or "necessary," and you can ask whether it is bodily or mental, and how long the pleasure will last, and how much pain will be required to get that pleasure, and how intense the relative pains and pleasures will be, and all sorts of other "practical" questions.

But what the advocates of "katastematic" pleasure clearly appear to be doing, and we see it in the way the entries at wikipedia are written and in many of the recent articles, is to seek to replace "PLEASURE" in the minds of the student of Epicurus with something entirely different, but which does in effect relegate "pleasure" as commonly understood to be a term of second-place status. And that guts the heart out of Epicurean philosophy and replaces it with a minimalist, simplistic, "let's do just enough to get by so that we never experience any pain at all" mentality.

That's the danger, and that's the problem with focusing on "katastematic pleasure" as fundamental, that Gosling and Taylor, Nikolsky, and Wenham identify in very well- documented terms.