

Episode 196 - The Epicurean Arguments In Cicero's On Ends - Book Two - Part 06

Post by "Cassius" of October 14, 2023 at 9:34 AM

I wrote my post #3 in the middle of the night, and when I read Don's post #4 I was half asleep. I failed to really be clear about this part which I would steer away from:

[Quote from Don](#)

A = pleasure (pleasurable sensation/positive affect)

B = pain (painful sensation/negative affect)

A1 = "Any experience of agreeable "stimulation"" (ie, kinetic pleasure)

A2 = "normal and healthy experience of life" (ie, katastematic pleasure)

I think the designation of A1 as kinetic and A2 as katastematic would not be helpful. Regardless of different readings of the texts, as I understand the situation the k/k terminology is not nearly as well establishable in the core Epicurus and Lucretius texts as is the discussion of the difference between "stimulation" vs "absence of pain / normal experience of life." The problems that result from this k/k classification include for example exactly the one Don mentions in his post, that the "kinetic/katastematic" distinction does not map directly onto the distinction between stimulation vs normal painfree life.

The summoning up and savoring of memories is mental, and though we don't think of that usually as an "action" experience, it does fall under the category of an action as I understand the authorities. Action is not merely physical change but also includes mental change, and so (again as I understand the authorities) stopping and starting to think about distinct memories is considered kinetic, as is any process that involves "change of state" rather than "static state." Diving into whether the pleasure involved is "changeable" or "static" introduces complexities that are not needed for the overall analysis of whether pleasure predominates over pain.

The big hurdle to get over and the reason for discussion is to understand what "absence of pain" means. Resolving the issue that we should seek the predominance of all types of pleasures over all types of pain resolves the biggest issues in controversy as to what the goal of life is. As I see it, the prime objective should be first is to identify and have confidence on the desired goal. Once we do that, then the question can turn to which individual pleasures to pursue under a particular circumstance. And that's going to be more of a practical fact-specific question than a theoretical issue.