

# Episode 217 - Cicero's On Ends - Book Two - Part 24 - Does Luck Control Whether An Epicurean Is Happy?

Post by "Cassius" of March 2, 2024 at 9:28 AM

I think in this episode we will begin with a recap of what we discussed last week (the respects in which time does and does not make a difference in "pleasure"). We can talk about the comments made since then about how "pleasure" can be viewed from the same perspective as the Stoics viewed virtue. Paraphrasing Seneca, we can explain that there is nothing straighter than straight, nothing more true than true, and nothing more pleasurable than pleasure.

That will give us an opportunity to review Dewitt's subsection on "The Unity of Pleasure, starting on page 232 of his book. There we have DeWitt's explanation as to how all pleasures fit into a single class, all being good, irrespective of time or intensity or part of the body affected ~~these pleasures themselves but because of the discomforts that follow upon them.~~" <sup>42</sup> **The net effect of these pronouncements is to put all pleasures in a single class, all being good, irrespective of extension or condensation or of the organ affected or of approval or disapproval, which attach only to consequences. This is an instance where Epicurus exhibited deeper insight than Plato in the latter's own field, discerning the one in the many.**

That should put us in good position to understand the proper response to Cicero's new arguments that Epicurus doesn't seem to recognize the distinctions between pleasures that any ordinary person recognizes. We will then be better able to go back and forth between "the one" and "the many" without being thrown off by the different perspectives.

As I write this I am trying to think of an article or section of one of the recognized commentary books that makes this same point. Can anyone think of one?

Probably this issue would be expected to be covered in a section that mentions the "kinetic/kastatematic" classification, but instead of making DeWitt's point that all pleasures are pleasure, thus explaining Epicurus consistently through the unity of pleasure, most of the ones I am aware of go off the rails in stressing the differences between the two. They argue that one is better and more to be chosen than the other, which defeats the "unity" point, turns the argument on its head, and undermines the argument rather than explaining it.