

Critique of the Control Dichotomy as a Useful Strategy

Post by "Cassius" of March 10, 2026 at 3:18 PM

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

refers to whatever is completely within my control versus whatever is completely out of my control - then it is an idealistic abstraction, and not useful. (And I suspect that idealism is exactly how the Stoics saw it.)

...ith regard to happiness, I equate it with pleasure (mental or physical, kinetic or katastematic). If I'm happy, I'm enjoying some pleasure. In that sense,

which calls to my mind Pacatus the question of whether to view happiness as *complete* pleasure or as some predominance of pleasure over pain. That seems to be a major point of dispute - whether to consider someone happy even when they are experiencing some degree of pain.

That's a hurdle that has to be overcome in the analysis of "absence of pain." Those who want things COMPLETELY under their control seem likely to insist on happiness being TOTAL absence of pain. I don't think Epicurus viewed it as helpful to see things in such black and white terms. Pleasure may be the "opposite" of pain, and pain not be present when pleasure is present, but if someone thinks that "I can't have any pleasure, or any happiness, at all so long as I am experiencing any pain," then they have set themselves up for failure.

Which I why I don't think Epicurus thought in those terms, and why we have to parse the meaning carefully.