

Feedback From A User

Post by “Lee” of January 17, 2020 at 10:41 PM

Thank you for taking the time to provide such a thoughtful and clear answer to my questions about universals Cassius. I will definitely listen to the Jackson Barwis dialogue and study the principles page you created about anticipations. I am impressed and immensely appreciative that you take the time to share your considerable knowledge with me and others.

I suspected the answer to my question would center on anticipations because when I read that chapter in De Witt, it seemed to encompass general concepts- especially the treatment of justice. I found the argument about the importance of social relations and justice to be compelling. If bees can cooperate so exquisitely in the hive it seems that nature can cause us to engage in even more complex social behavior or rules by anticipations.

I also find it quite plausible that a material mechanism could account for how we are born with a recognition of such things. It reminds me of the amazing experience of watching my newborn son search out his mother’s breast and begin to nurse only minutes after being born. I remember thinking how astonishing it was that nature had clearly endowed him with knowledge before he had even seen the world beyond the womb!

[Quote from Cassius](#)

...and if on such an appeal, we could not feel within the sentiment of benevolence, and the peculiar pleasure attending it; and that of malevolence and its concomitant pain, not all the reasoning in the world could ever make us sensible of them, or enable us to understand their nature.

...And whatever this faculty or mechanism is, it is at least partly mental, and I don't think it is active only in the area of pleasure and pain.

I am beginning to see the wisdom in the Epicurean teachings included in your quote above. I was always a bit uncomfortable with the apparent circularity in Aristotle’s arguments that what appears good is that which we desire and that we naturally desire what is good. Pleasure and pain seem to be the essential natural guides (or telos) that provide the way to really determine the ultimate good.

I have a further question about anticipations that is a continuation of my original question. I find myself understanding these anticipatory “concepts” or “ideas” as having some sort of real existence- even if only in the mind. I continue to wonder if they are immaterial. Maybe this is just the prejudice of my Platonic and Aristotelian education but it is difficult for me to understand how we can predicate the same anticipatory “concept” of many things and for it to have a common meaning unless the concept itself (like justice) has some sort of real existence. I may be over thinking this but I have spent years studying to make sense of the intellectual world and struggle to understand what kind of existence these things have in Epicureanism materialism. Can you explain this existence any further?

Appreciatively,

Lee (JLR)