

Welcome Camotero!

Post by "Cassius" of June 12, 2020 at 5:04 AM

This one is possibly the deepest of all and I do think we need to articulate this one better:

"It's confusing that some abstractions are bad and some good, so how to draw a line. Like higher math or complex music theory etc."

I am on my phone so my typing here is truncated but here is a start.

First, I do not think it would be correct to say that Epicurus would have considered some abstractions "good" and some "bad." Good and bad are themselves abstractions and the issue is not that some abstractions are good and bad; the issue is always ultimately (1) abstractions do not exist outside our minds and (2) ultimately it is always pleasure and pain that are of significance to us.

I have been concerned for a while that we are not being precise enough on that point. I know it can sound like we are campaigning against abstractions as a whole, and so I am saying I do not think that is a correct point. Abstractions are tools - to take an emotional example they are like guns, and they can be used for great good / pleasure or great evil / pain.

Then there is the related issue of opinion and when opinion is true or false and when we should "wait." That is not quite the same issue but it is related, and that is where we need to make the point more clear that the more an opinion is "abstracted" away from the senses (including pain and pleasure) then the more likely it is that the opinion does not accurately reflect our reality and will lead to painful result.

So we come back to the analogy that abstractions are like "virtue" - they are tools of great power that are natural for us to use toward the natural end of pleasant living, but when considered to be ends in themselves they can lead to great error and more pain / less pleasure.

I am out of time to expand on that now but I will work on that because you are identifying a point that has lots of implications and we need to do better on it.