

Welcome Camotero!

Post by "Cassius" of June 12, 2020 at 10:12 AM

Camotero I am currently editing episode 22 of the podcast, and I am hearing discussion that will raise this same question we are currently addressing as to how to assess abstractions. It's currently around the 10 minute mark after Martin starts reading, but that is going to change when I add the intro. It's a section in which Elayne makes a comment about abstractions being related to the discussion of some pursuits being "vain" and "futile," and that at least part of the issues with such things is that they are impossible to completely satisfy.

Listen especially for the statement "Nobility is an abstract concept and you're never going to have enough..."

Yes I think the issue of "insatiability" is definitely a part of why some choices in life are less preferable than others, and I would say that "nobility" is one of this, but I am not sure that we want to go so far as to imply that "all" abstractions have that problem, or that the issue arise purely because nobility is an abstraction. Elayne does not elaborate on that in the podcast, but I can understand how some people would think that is what is being said. Maybe in fact that is part of the truth, but I doubt it is the whole issue, and the issue needs a lot more clarity.

Even my summary here is not as accurate as it could be. I think there are issues involved not only with the issue of abstractions but with a lot of discussion of "vainness" and "futility," especially in what I see some other writers say about Epicurus. Personally I am not comfortable with a significant part of the analysis I see in other locations on the internet about how to analyze the issue of something being "vain" or "futile" and how that fits into the big Epicurean picture. All pleasure is pleasurable, but some choices are in sum going to bring more pain than pleasure. I doubt it makes sense to say that this question is answered completely by simply looking to see if the choice or activity involves an abstraction.

Feel free to talk more about this now, or wait til the podcast is released this weekend, or both, but it's an issue we do need to address more clearly.