

Welcome Camotero!

Post by "Mathitis Kipouros" of June 14, 2020 at 2:43 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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.

This is clarifying, thanks.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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.

This is one of the main takeaways for me from listening to the podcast. Because the popular discourse doesn't address very well what the position of the Philosophy with respect to virtue is. I'm sure I'm not using the right words, but what I'm talking about is the need for virtue in order to be able to rely on pleasure/pain, and the uselessness of virtue without it. Echoes of the "disconnect" that Erich Fromm used to write about come to mind. And of course, ying/yang, right/left brain, and all the others we've heard about.

Taking this sidetrack a bit further... This *disconnect* is real, though. I'd bet that to the regular person, when you tell them to become aware of what they're feeling, to get out of their mind, the last thing that comes to their mind is to address what they can identify as pleasurable or painful. Even in guided meditation, where one of the main techniques is to become aware of the sensations in your body, making a value judgement about what feels painful or pleasurable is completely out of the question. This is radical stuff. And it's been squeezed out of us for years (our connection to pleasure/pain). Or at least it hasn't been addressed for development as the rational part of us has. So interesting...