

Dialogue on Katastematic Pleasure

Post by "Cassius" of February 18, 2018 at 7:44 AM

Several comments, while keeping in mind that this is a translation so it's unclear how far precise word choice is correct:

(1) "not that kind ALONE" of course endorses feelings of delight without giving any indication that Epicurus held this to be an inferior kind of pleasure.

(2) Yes, that is where Torquatus (as written by Cicero) claims that "the greatest pleasure" is a result of the complete removal of pain. The rest of the statement is nothing more than a statement that removal of pain is a pleasure, with which of course I agree. The key controverted issue we are discussing is whether and how "complete removal of pain" constitutes a complete description of "the greatest pleasure" which is what I reject as clearly false and intentionally misleading by Cicero. From the respect of "quantity" or "purity" yes, but from the respect of a positive statement of what is being experienced, I say clearly no. And the fact that this deficiency in explanation and apparent contradiction is so clear, on its face, is what makes Cicero's argument so compelling.

Lawyers do not state their opponent's cases as their opponents want them stated. They state their opponent's cases by drawing and quartering the opponent's position into segments, and taking isolated statements to logical extremes which the opponent's full case would never embrace or reach due to other factors they state in their full case.

As Cicero points out here through Torquatus, Epicurus grounded pleasure in "positive agreeable perception of the senses," because in fact he had previously laid the foundation that absence of sensation is death. Going further, I am not sure that a case can be made that Epicurus endorsed ANY notion of pleasure that is not defined within a "positive agreeable perception of the senses."

All the rest of the exposition is simply to note that just like any other "positive agreeable perception of the senses," relief from hunger, thirst, or other pain is ALSO perceived as a "positive agreeable perception of the senses." None of that establishes a definition of a state which is the "highest pleasure" except in one sense alone: that all pain has been driven away, and therefore the other "positive agreeable perceptions of the senses" are felt in their most intense, most delightful, undiluted form.

Though we disagree this exchange is highly helpful, because I know at least in my case that I have given far too little time to reading and expanding Book 2.