

Dialogue on Katastematic Pleasure

Post by "Cassius" of February 18, 2018 at 11:34 AM

[Quote from Maciej](#)

Secondly. What do you mean by pleasure as is ordinary felt? Please give me examples.

All mental and bodily pleasures - "feelings" that are understandable without need for explanation or logical explanation. Bodily: Good food, good wine, sex, music Mental: All consciousness activities of the mind, whether reading a book, thinking about philosophy, or having a confident and pleased attitude toward life. All of these and many more are "felt" - these are all mental and bodily feelings that are "felt" by any ordinary person without need for explanation.

Recall that Torquatus admits that he does not agree with Epicurus on whether pleasure can or should be defended logically. This passage betrays that Torquatus was intentionally deviating from Epicurus, and shows that it should not be surprising that "Torquatus" (Cicero himself) would extend an argument about quantity to try to make a point that Epicurus was too wise to make himself:

"Some members of our school however would refine upon this doctrine. These say that it is not enough for the judgment of good and evil to rest with the senses. The facts that pleasure is in and for itself desirable and pain in and for itself to be avoided can also be grasped by the intellect and the reason. Accordingly, they declare that the perception that the one is to be sought after and the other avoided is a natural and innate idea of the mind. Others again, with whom I agree, observing that a great many philosophers advance a vast array of reasons to prove why pleasure should not be counted as a good nor pain as an evil, consider that we had better not be too confident of our case. In their view, it requires elaborate and reasoned argument, and abstruse theoretical discussion of the nature of pleasure and pain."

That passage is the tipoff to why Torquatus' logical extension of "absence of pain" to be a full description of the highest pleasure cannot be trusted. Epicurus was talking only quantity. Torquatus/Cicero misrepresented that statement of quantity to mean equality in every respect. The logical extreme is not representative of the original point (see nearby post on Cassius, Lucian, and Lucretius, who are contemporary or later than Cicero, and are not recorded to have made any analogous points).