

Differences between Epicureanism and Cyrenaicism

Post by "Cassius" of November 4, 2021 at 4:53 PM

I haven't re-read either the [Nikolsky](#) article or the Gosling & Taylor chapter, but if I recall one of my reactions to G&T it is that there is in my view extreme difficulty in ascertaining what "katastematic" pleasure really is if it cannot be sensed. I tend to focus on the fact that that which cannot be sensed is nothing to us, as in PD2, and if we are defining Katastematic pleasure in that way then that poses real problems for the person asserting that it is important, much less that it is the true goal of life.

But to really dig into this it's necessary to go back in the history that G&T present, because what I am remembering is not just that any pleasure that can be sensed is by definition kinetic, it's really an issue of "change" or "motion" at the deepest level that is involved. In other words that's why the referenced "learning" but it goes further -- if you can sense any change at all, much less a beginning or an end, to the activity, then it's kinetic. In fact you pretty much have to rule out anything that is an "activity" or anything that you "feel" -- which gets into the complicated implications of "feeling" vs. "sensation." I personally think it's fair to say that if you can "feel" the pleasure then you're engaged in a kinetic pleasure, and that includes "feeling good" or "feeling appreciation for a work of art" or "feeling happy" or any other experience of life. In fact that focus on "experience" - if I recall correctly - is the point of the Wenham article, because the argument would be that anything that can be "experienced" is kinetic -- meaning that katastematic pleasure (I get to the point where I hate even to type the word) cannot be "experienced."

[Wenham - On Cicero's Interpretation of Katastematic Pleasure in Epicurus](#)

(I'm really going out on a limb here because I haven't read Wenham in a long time, and my memory is already questionable - I hope I am at least partly right in citing him for that proposition. 😊)

Edit:

OK yes glancing at the abstract indicates to me that while I may have to be corrected, there's probably at least some resemblance between the way I described it and the content of the article:

The standard interpretation of the concept of katastematic pleasure in Epicurus has it referring to "static" states from which feeling is absent. We owe the prevalence of this interpretation to Cicero's account of Epicureanism in his *De Finibus Bonorum Et Malorum*. Cicero's account, in turn, is based on the Platonic theory of pleasure. The standard interpretation, when applied to principles of Epicurean hedonism, leads to fundamental contradictions in his theory. I claim that it is not Epicurus, but the standard interpretation that generates these errors because the latter construes pleasure in Epicurus according to an attitudinal theoretical framework, whilst the account of pleasure that emerges from Epicurean epistemology sees it as experiential.

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2245-differences-between-epicureanism-and-cyrenaicism/?postID=14576#post14576>