

Do Pigs Value Katastematic Pleasure? (Summer 2022 K / K Discussion)

Post by "Cassius" of July 2, 2022 at 6:33 AM

Now on the last comment there Godfrey I think probably Cicero's description is literally true but the sarcastic tone (which really was present) comes from the cultural bias against pleasure. This is also very similar to what Torquatus says in the "proof" sequence where he says imagine the life filled with pleasures of every kind and no pain - can we imagine anything better?

As for abiding to some extent maybe the issue is "confidence" or "attitude" which is something that seems to stay on over time.

As for the DL references to rest / katastematic, as you probably saw in G&T there had been a long history of Greeks talking about replenishment and active and resting pleasures, so Epicurus certainly would know of the terms and could have used them. So the issue is not whether he ever used the terms at all - the issue is more "Were these terms of significance to Epicurus as a focus and centerpiece of his philosophy?". We don't see Epicurus very often talking about types of pleasure, but he does so only occasionally.

It is really only the "alleged" linkage between katastematic pleasure (which occurs very rarely) and "absence of pain" (which does seem to be an important term, as it describes the limit) that allows these commentators to put katastematic pleasure in a special class.

Once that linkage is exposed as a mirage, the DL comments take on much less significance.

Again, any focus on a single "type of pleasure" as especially important is going to have this same logical problem - the focus on that pleasure tends to expand to "take over" the whole philosophy. The true focus seems to be that all pleasures are desirable, and personal to the person who feels them, and the only caution in pursuing them is that you need to be aware of their price in pain, because if you aren't willing to pay that price then "don't make the purchase!"

We can list all sorts of pleasures, and the price that they cost in pain, but in a non-fated non-supernatural world the choice of which to pursue is always going to be contextual. When you are lying on the train tracks and hear a whistle in the distance, it's not the "pleasures of rest" that you want but the pleasures of "action."

But I do agree - you always want to keep the attitude of confidence that you understand the basic scheme of things with you, and this is going to make you a much stronger person than those who believe in myths. You want to build that into your frame just like you exercise to

build muscles. And that's clearly something that Epicurus encouraged and wanted. But is there any real profit to be gained in calling that "katastematic pleasure," or evidence that when Epicurus discussed those attributes of confidence and strength of mind that he used that term?