

Another Article Insisting On The Importance of the Kinetic / Katestematic Distinction, Despite Citing Nikolsky

Post by "Cassius" of July 7, 2022 at 1:52 PM

To Don's point:

Right, and of course -- there are definite distinctions between pleasures. The real issue and controversy is over the place and hierarchy of the two categories, as conveyed in "Absence of pain, [aponia](#), and lack of disturbance of mind, [ataraxia](#), are two of the katestematic pleasures and often seen as the focal ones to [Epicurus](#)." To the extent that that sentence says that (1) aponia and ataraxia are katestematic pleasures, and (2) they are "focal ones" to Epicurus (implying of central importance) I would context both of those statements are highly open to debate and the controversy should have at least been noted in the article.

And the really irritating aspect of the controversy is that the implication of those who are primarily arguing for katestematic pleasure as being superior is that they also argue that katestematic pleasure is not something that is "sensed" in the normal way. As pointed out by Wenham, to any normal interpretation of the sensory basis of Epicurean philosophy, something that is not experienced is worth nothing.

And all of this argument is based on the most slender of threads in Diogenes Laertius as amplified by Cicero hundreds of years later, while not a word about it is breathed in Lucretius or virtually any other source.

Two more comments:

1 - I am always quick to remember the William Short quote about guarding against lethargy because of all people I am the most guilty of it! 😊

2 - Those Wikipedia articles on Epicurus and Epicureanism are full of the same assertions, without any reference to any disagreement among those who read him. And they all lead back and lay the groundwork for the conclusions in the main article, that the "greatest good" is not pleasure, but ataraxia / aponia / "peace of mind." That the key to working with desires is to LIMIT them and live "the simple life" (which is not *always* the case), that all Epicureans should withdraw from politics (with which the Roman Epicureans begged to differ)



I try to always be clear on that. Someone who values that aspect of Epicureanism will benefit from Epicurean philosophy and find justification for their choices. But in doing so, such people are way out of line in suggesting that that is the ONLY way to practice Epicureanism, and that their reinterpretation of the key wording, displacing "Pleasure" from the ultimate standard of action, is again way over the line in what the texts allow them to do.

It's not the "kinetic" valuers who try to write the "katastematics" out of Epicurean philosophy, it's the "Katastematics" who use every opportunity to claim Epicurus for themselves as if they needed more than the Stoics and the Platonists and the entire rest of Greek philosophy to justify their choices.

When all the while Diogenes Laertius was very clear that Epicurus held both to be valuable, and he never clearly labeled one as subordinate or instrumental to the other.

"Epicurus differs from the Cyrenaics about pleasure. For they do not admit static pleasure, but only that which consists in motion. But Epicurus admits BOTH kinds BOTH in the soul and in the body, as he says in the work on Choice and Avoidance and in the book on The Ends of Life and in the first book On Lives and in the letter to his friends in Mytilene"