

"Lucretius on the Divine" - Dr. Christopher Eckerman

Post by "Cassius" of July 9, 2022 at 5:30 PM

So I will be arguing that the issue is not whether concepts denoted by peace of mind and freedom of pain are valuable to an Epicurean - they certainly are.

The question is whether these pleasures are in fact properly called "katastematic" and I will be citing the chapter devoted to just this question in Gosling and Taylor, which we have on the forum here:

File

[Gosling & Taylor - On Katastematic and Kinetic Pleasure](#)



Gosling & Taylor on Katastematic and Kinetic Pleasure



Cassius

February 3, 2018 at 1:28 PM

They go into great length debating the different positions, but here is one of their conclusory paragraphs. Unfortunately G&T go into great detail to consider every possible position, so they number their paragraphs in excruciating detail and often seem to be debating themselves. It's really necessary to read the full chapter to see how they marshal their evidence AGAINST the view that it was an important aspect of Epicureanism to distinguish between kinetic and katastematic pleasures.

19.0.4. The kind of view we wish to oppose holds that it was an important feature of Epicureanism to insist on dividing pleasures into two sorts, sensory ones on the one hand, and katastematic ones, of which lack of disturbance of mind (*ataraxia*) and lack of pain (*aponia*) are the important examples, on the other. The distinction was important to Epicurus because it was the latter which he wished to put forward as the good in life, and he needed the contrast in order to defend himself against the charge that he was advocating a life of debauchery. He can be seen doing this in the *Letter to Menoeceus* (DL X.131-2) where he says that when we call pleasure the goal we do not mean the pleasures of profligates, but to be without pain of body or distress of mind. The pleasures of profligates are obviously the sensory pleasures, and Epicurus is making it clear that he is putting forward something else as our goal. There are four objections which such views have to meet (see 19.0.6-9).

It's not good form to argue authorities, but few of us have written a whole book on the Greek views on pleasure, so the Gosling & Taylor viewpoint which they document at great length deserves (at least) a lot of attention.