

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

Post by "Don" of July 10, 2022 at 7:49 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Unfortunately i cannot agree even with this statement.

It sincerely confuses me as to how you or anyone can say that. It's not Diogenes Laertius (DL) "asserting" this or even paraphrasing it. He's quoting Epicurus's *On Choices* and Metrodorus's *Timocrates*. I'll go back and read Gosling and Taylor and [Nikolsky](#), of course, to refresh my memory of their arguments, but the ancient booktitles are there, and I think *that* has to be accounted for. If we start saying, "Oh, Epicurus didn't really write that in a book with that title!" we're on a Skeptical slippery slope as to what few ancient texts we have. The flip side of this is Cicero and his whole creation of the characters Villeius and Torquatus and being able to take creative liberties with their dialogue. Yes, we can be a little more skeptical and critical of his work. But DL makes a point of basically saying, "I'm not making this up. Here are their exact words from these books."

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Whatever Epicurus may have thought about K/K, those thoughts were not significant enough to make it into those key documents.

To that, I'd say "Bingo!" According to *On Choices* and other quoted material, Epicurus used the words katastematic and kinetic. Yes, I will continue to "assert" that. But *maybe* they weren't central to his philosophy because THEY'RE BOTH PLEASURES. He didn't see the need to belabor the point. He didn't put them in a hierarchy. He recognized that, sure, there are different kinds of pleasure. In fact, there are two general "species." But his philosophy stood on the assertion that PLEASURE is the Good to which everything else points. He then needed to demonstrate *how* to live pleasurably by making choices and rejections, etc. My take on the *On Choices* quote from Epicurus is (and I'll go ciceronian and put dialogue in his mouth):

Epicurus: "Sure, I'll agree with the general idea that there are katastematic and kinetic pleasures, but the important thing is that they're *both* pleasurable! You also have two hands. Do you lift heavy stones with only one hand? Of course not! In the same way, to have a pleasurable life you need to consider all pleasures as available to you, and choose among all pleasures prudently, making choices and rejections among them. There is a time for stillness, there is a time for dancing."

It's not Epicurus saying katastematic pleasures are the *only* Good or the *only* Telos, it's the ancient and modern commentators trying to paint him into a Platonic or Aristotelean corner. I'm seeing this through a *Princess Bride* lens with Epicurus saying to his critics and the academics on the word "katastematic": "[I don't think it means what you think it means.](#)"

[Quote from Cassius](#)

what is hardly more than a footnote in DL assumes significance out of all proportion to anything else, and comes to be seized on so as to take the place of the core original point about pleasure in the first place.

Oh my, look at that. I think we might actually agree on that point.