

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

Post by "Cassius" of July 11, 2022 at 7:50 AM

I wake up this morning thinking about this, which is not a response to present interlocutors but to the Wikipedia-Epicureans.

If there is really one major primary and unyielding position I have on the "katastematic / kinetic" pleasure issue, it comes down to this:

I am going to presume that the goal of this website and at least most of our joint work here is to make Epicurean philosophy understandable and practical to a new generation of people. Given that presumption, and that the presumption that they aren't minting too many new people whose first language is ancient Greek, then it is imperative that the word "katastematic" not be left in Greek, but be translated into plain English. "Kinetic" needs the same treatment, but at least given our modern usage of the word "kinetic, that word is not so ambiguous and amorphous. I suspect what we are reading into it given the English version is not faithful to what was really meant philosophically by "kinetic," because Kinetic" today has an implication of "frenzy" which is not positive. But at least "kinetic" is not grossly useless and meaningless and amorphous like "katastematic."

So what are we REALLY talking about in this issue?

Did Epicurus hold that the "healthy functioning of the organism" is a pleasure? HECK YES!

Did Epicurus hold that a background sense of calmness and tranquility is also a pleasure? HECK YES!

Did Epicurus hold that a confident continuation of our present state of pleasure is also a pleasure? HECK YES!

Did Epicurus hold that our ideal state of functioning to be filling our experience pleasures and thereby eliminating from our experience all pains? HECK YES!

And I suspect that we could go on and on, as long as we are clear what we are talking about in our native language.....

However for purposes of explaining Epicurus to other people and even most of us understanding it for ourselves, we need to be clear on what Epicurus did not do:

Did Epicurus hold that he had come up with a semi-mystical concept so subtle and so exotic that no one but a Greek uttering the incantation "katastematic" could understand what he was

talking about? HECK NO!

Did Epicurus ever hint that "katastematic" pleasure, even when translated into understandable terms, was a special type of "fancy pleasure" (Elayne's term) which supercedes and transcends all other types of pleasure and is the true goal of life? HECK NO!

It's really only when we constantly talk about a word that no one today truly knows all the shades of (since we are not ancient Greeks) that we find the divide unbridgeable. Explain what is meant in clear terms and we can then agree where possible and reduce the disagreements to clearly defined issues, but until we explain in clear English terms what we are talking about, we just spin our wheels endlessly.

No one here at EpicureanFriends is guilty of what I am complaining about, and just to be super-clear I am 100% confident of the motives of everyone in this present conversation. But the Wikipedia-world is dominated by people who are perpetuating just this kind of confusing, and they are doing it because they will not accede to "PLEASURE" being what Epicurus held to be the goal and guide of life. And getting back to the opening premise, if the goal of the website here is to help explain Epicurus to a new generation of people, then we have to get ready to stand up to the Wikipedia-mindset on this issue.