

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

Post by "Cassius" of July 12, 2022 at 8:09 PM

I am kind of surprised that you take that position so I need to reflect on it, but given that we are positing that the healthy state of the body is itself pleasurable, and that some degree of pleasure is always available mentally (through memories at least) I would think it is true that "some" degree of pleasure is always available, even if it is drastically offset by a particular pain.

We probably need to discuss [PD03](#) in this context (The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal of all that is painful. Wherever pleasure is present, as long as it is there, there is neither pain of body, nor of mind, nor of both at once.) but I think in past discussions most people have agreed that PD3 does not mean that different parts of the body and/or mind cannot be experiencing pleasure and pain at the same time, with the classic example being that of Epicurus taking pleasure in his friends and memories even though he was dying from a painful physical disease.

I think this is also referenced in the "I call you to continuous pleasure" passage and perhaps others.

Neither was he in debt to his teachers for his hedonism. None of them was a hedonist. He was in debt to Plato for suggestions concerning the classification of desires and the calculus of advantage in pleasure,⁴⁷ but differed from both Plato and Aristippus in his definition of pleasure. To neither of these was **continuous pleasure conceivable, because they recognized only peaks of pleasure separated either by intervals void of pleasure or by neutral states. In order to escape from these logical dead ends Epicurus worked his way to a novel division of pleasures into those that were basic and those that were decorative.⁴⁸ The pleasure of being sane and in health is basic and can be enjoyed continually. All other pleasures are superfluous and decorative. For this doctrine, once more, he was in debt to no teacher.**

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THE NATURAL CEILINGS OF PLEASURE

Having established body and soul upon a parity, equal partners in life, Epicurus next proceeded to propound a number of paradoxes: first, that limits of pleasure were set by Nature, beyond which no increase was possible; second, that pleasure was one and not many; and third, that **continuous** pleasure was possible. These new doctrines were the offspring of controversy, because the contrary doctrines had been sponsored by Plato and his followers, who in this instance agreed for the most part with the multitude.

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hedonism as a practical code of conduct for mankind. No philosophy that offered merely intermittent intervals of pleasure would have possessed any broad or cogent appeal for those in quest of the happy life.

The predecessors of Epicurus had spent considerable thought upon the analysis of pleasure, but their attitude was in the main merely analytical and academic, lacking relevance to action. Their zeal was not for promoting the happiness of mankind. They were rather in the position of men who give themselves to the study of anatomy without contemplating the practice of medicine. The attitude of Epicurus, on the contrary, was pragmatic from the beginning. The declaration that "Vain is the word of that philosopher by which no malady of mankind is healed" has already been quoted.⁵¹

The desired logical basis for the continuity of pleasure was afforded by the discovery of natural ceilings of pleasures. From this is derived the division into basic and ornamental or superfluous pleasures, corresponding respectively to natural and necessary desires and those that are neither natural nor necessary. Hunger and thirst exemplify the

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former class while the desire for rich viands and rare wines belongs to the second class. Correspondingly, the satisfaction of normal hunger and thirst is a basic pleasure while the gratification of abnormal desires for rich foods and drinks is ornamental and superfluous.

This recognition of basic pleasures, in its turn, signified the recognition of a normal state of being, consisting of health of mind and of body and freedom from fears and all unnecessary desires, which was called ataraxy or serenity. This condition was denominated static, but allowance must be made for a certain variation. Hunger and thirst recur and call for satisfaction, which is a moderately kinetic pleasure, whereupon the individual returns to the normal state of absence of pain. Epicurus describes it in one of those reciprocal statements for which he had a preference: "Only then have we need of pleasure when from the absence of pleasure we feel pain, and when we do not feel pain we no longer feel need of pleasure."⁵² While these words have reference to the natural desires of the body, the description of the normal state must be understood to include freedom from pain in the body and