

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

Post by "Godfrey" of July 14, 2022 at 2:03 AM

[Don](#) I'm coming to the idea that the detailed discussions of types of pleasure, such as katastematic and kinetic, are a misunderstanding and obfuscation of what Epicurus was saying. The way I read the PDs and the letters, pleasure is pleasure. Sure there are varieties of pleasures, but they are of very minor concern.

What I see as the problem is conflating pleasures and desires. It's very easy to do, and in conflating them, one can then imply that there are greater and lesser pleasures and hence pleasure can't be "the good". But the way I read Epicurus' works, he treats pleasure and desire very differently. He categorizes desires, but not pleasures. And in doing so he provides a way to understand and work with desires. A way that is intended to result in an abundance of pleasure. Worrying about what type of pleasure is best serves no purpose for living his philosophy. (Some of these thoughts were prompted by the Liebersohn article in which he tried to make a connection between katastematic-kinetic and necessary-unnecessary. In reviewing Epicurus' writings and giving it some thought, I think he totally missed the boat [if you will].)

An interesting thing, though, is that Epicurus does mention desire and pain together. I only recently noticed this, and haven't yet given it adequate thought. But I don't believe that this leads to either an "absence of pain" or a "remove all desire" interpretation. He makes clear that we choose some pains for a greater pleasure. I think that he's doing something similar by ranking desires: he's giving us a practical framework to work with desires, just as we can use pain as a tool to increase pleasure.