

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

Post by “Eikadistes” of July 16, 2022 at 3:59 PM

De Witt seems to think that this distinction (between "static" and "kinetic" pleasure) was profound:

Quote

“It was the discovery of static pleasure, without which continuity of pleasure was impossible, that resulted in the division of pleasures into static and kinetic. There was no call for such a division until the name of pleasure had been extended to denote the possession of health. On this point, however, as on many others, greater precision is possible. The modern use of the word static as opposed to kinetic is Aristotelian in origin. The Epicurean word is katastematikos, from katastema, explained in the lexicon as 'stable condition.' It connotes, moreover, change of state, from action to rest. To Epicurus it denotes a normal state of pleasure to which the individual returns after kinetic pleasure, which is activity. For example, it is the comfortable feeling that follows after the satisfaction of hunger and thirst, the relaxed condition that follows after attending the theater, a public festival or a banquet. Exceptionally, it describes the return to normal after the joy of escape from peril of life.

Since this innovation was, as it were, the keystone of the new hedonism, it is not surprising to learn that it was expounded in the letter addressed to the philosophers in Mytilene, which is rightly regarded as having been written in Lampsacus, nor that it was emphasized in other major writings and kept in the forefront by successors. That it was an innovation is made clear by a sound paragraph of Laertius. Discussing the divergence from Cyrenaic doctrine he quotes a phrase of Metrodorus: 'Pleasure being thought of both as associated with motion and as static.' Epicurus is quoted at slightly greater length: 'Serenity of mind and freedom from bodily pain are static pleasures, but joy and delight are seen to be associated with motion, that is, activity.' In both these passages modern usage calls for the adjective static; the Greek would demand katastematic. Static and kinetic would apply to the state of a stone, now lying on the ground, now sent hurtling through the air. Katastematic and kinetic would apply to the pleasure of a healthy Epicurean, now enjoying a quiet evening at home, now having a rollicking time at one of the monthly banquets.” (De Witt, Epicurus and His Philosophy 242-43)

So, for De Witt, *Kinetic* pleasure is a *rolling* stone and *Katastematic* pleasure is a *mossy* stone?