

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

Post by "Don" of July 17, 2022 at 6:51 PM

[Cassius](#) asked me:

"what would you say are the implications of your position"

Well, I was going to read all the papers, synthesize all the points, convey my agreements and objections, pull in modern and ancient citations and quotes, and...

But that seemed like way too much work and pain!!

So, what I'll do is try to summarize my thinking into some bullet points and see how far we get.

From what I read in the classical and modern sources:

- The katastematic and kinetic pleasure distinction was not uncommon in ancient philosophical debate.
- Epicurus saw his own approach to this debate as a clear line of contrast between his school and, primarily, the Cyrenaics since both schools were getting painted with the same hedonistic brush.
- - The Cyrenaics posited 2 kinds of feelings (pathē) that a human could have (Pleasure (kinesis), Pain) and a 3rd Neutral "state" (katastema) when experiencing neither pleasure nor pain.
- - - Epicurus rejected this "3rd state". He said the "pathē are two: pleasure and pain." When you're feeling one, you're not feeling the other. This appears to have been revolutionary and controversial at the time, to hear any number of ancient authors tell it.
- - - I see this corroborated especially by X.136 in Diogenes Laertius but other places as well.
- That said, once Epicurus defined "pleasure" as including katastema within the pathos of pleasure, the distinction does not appear to have been a big deal. He was concerned with pleasure. All pleasures.
- - Epicurus, per his quote (and surrounding context of X.136) from *On Choices and Avoidances*, equates ataraxia and aponia with katastematic pleasures (katastematikai hēdonai).
- - - I also find the "calm sea" metaphor of katastematic pleasure in several sources intriguing since there are numerous references to seas, waters, boats, harbors in Epicurean writings from Epicurus to Lucretius and beyond.

- - In light of the ataraxia & aponia = katastematikai hēdonai definition, anytime ataraxia & aponia (or the associated freedom from pain in body or mind, or calm, etc), we can substitute "katastematic pleasure."

- - - BUT, more importantly, it doesn't matter! It's all pleasure, whether ataraxia & aponia, eating food, seeing pleasing forms, etc. It's all pleasure.

- - - HOWEVER, Epicurus DID seem to place some importance , on that freedom from pain and trouble in both body and mind. BUT not to the exclusion of every other pleasure because he couldn't conceive of "good things"/pleasure without what the Cyrenaics conceived of as kinetic pleasure. As Epicurus writes to Menoikeus: "We do everything in order to neither be in bodily or mental pain nor to be in fear or dread; and so, when once this has come into being around us, it sets free all of the calamity, distress, and suffering of the mind, seeing that the living being has no need to go in search of something that is lacking for the good of our mental and physical existence. For it is then that we need pleasure, if we were to be in pain from the pleasure not being present; but if we were to not be in pain, we no longer desire or beg for pleasure. And this is why we say pleasure is the foundation and fulfillment of the blessed life."

PS: I would like to go back over this thread and compile all the sources I mentioned previously. Honestly, I forgot some, looking back over this long thread. But that'll come later.