

Is gratitude a katastematic or kinetic pleasure?

Post by "Cassius" of October 25, 2023 at 2:36 PM

[Quote from burninglights](#)

I'll offer up an example: a guy goes to a football game and cheers with glee when his team scores the touchdown, only to sulk minutes later when the other team scores the touchdown. This is kinetic pleasure: externally generated and (relatively) unstable.

Later he writes gratefully about his fun experience at the game in his journal, which generates a warm glow within that stays with him the rest of the night. This is katastematic pleasure: internally generated and (relatively) stable.

My guess, anyway.

This is where Don't research into the Greek is eventually going to help us out of this cave, in my view, because we are eventually going to latch on to what "kinetic" really includes (almost every kind of mental and physical pleasure) and then it will be easier to decide whether what's left is in fact usefully described as "katastematic."

It has been too long since I read the Gosling & Taylor "The Greeks on Pleasure" but they spilled a *lot* of ink on this issue. The trouble is that *kinetic* does tend to imply "in motion" and *katastematic* implies something else.

The distinction you raise in your example between the two types of pleasurable experiences - "touchdowns vs gratefulness" - certainly exists. No one in his right mind would say that they are exactly the same, or that both are not enjoyable.

Part of the problem is that *duration* alone does not appear to be the distinction implied in K/K discussions, nor is duration the deciding factor in which pleasures to value. Epicurus says explicitly we do NOT value exclusively by duration in the letter to Menoeceus as to the food we choose at a banquet and the type of life we should seek. We want the "most pleasant" and not the "longest."

And for someone who might want to assert that duration is the key, I would ask them - What is the magic line between stable and unstable? Does a minute or an hour or a day or a week or a year qualify as "stable"?

You will see in Emily Austin's footnote on this topic that she goes with Gosling & Taylor that this issue may be interesting but not crucial to analysis (I will see if I can find her exact wording).

Definitely there are many types of pleasures, and definitely some last longer than others, and definitely some are mental and some are physical, and definitely some are easier to access than others. All those factors seem indisputably important. But is it correct to overlay the word "kastematic" over some rather than others? That's a much tougher question.