

Discussion of the thread - Against Katastematic Supremacy - Pleasure Is A Unified Whole And Not A House Divided - Forum Editorial Policy

Post by “Cassius” of July 16, 2026 at 10:41 PM

Dave - You wrote:

[Quote from DaveT](#)

.Certainly a person can feel katastematic pleasure over longer periods of time than physical pleasure. Can we agree to that?

it appears to me that we can include among those who would not agree with that Professor Kelly Aronsen in her 2019 *Health and Hedonism in Plato and Epicurus*. There, Aronsen parses kinetic vs. katastematic entirely differently from the mental vs physical your question implies:

Quote from Kelly Aronsen

Contrary to the dominant scholarly view, I argue that there is good reason to avoid classifying non-restorative pleasures as kinetic since they are not derived from movements toward painless, healthy functioning. In this chapter I contend that pleasures from taste, sex, sound, etc., are painless in themselves and are therefore katastematic; no matter whether they occur in the midst of pain (such as when we enjoy tasty food when hungry) or are isolated from pain (when we enjoy dessert after filling up on dinner), they are perceptions of the painless workings of the organism.

I don't write this to encourage us to spend more time looking for classical scholars to take sides with on the meaning of *kinetic* and *katastematic*. Nor should we throw up our hands and conclude that Epicurean philosophy is hopeless because we've lost so many texts. The right way forward for virtually everyone is to focus on the basics as it is clear that Lucretius, Diogenes of Oinoanda, Diogenes Laertius, and the general ancient world understood him. And it seems clear that *they* saw Epicurus as embracing pleasures of *both* types - pleasures of action or pleasures of state or *whatever* those words mean - and choosing among those pleasures by applying a common sense analysis of whether they will bring us more pleasure or more pain.