

Glossary - What is the Epicurean Definition of "Pleasure?"

Post by "Cassius" of January 14, 2020 at 9:19 PM

Mike I will be interested in your comments if / when you are able to read the [Nikolsky](#) article, and the section of Gosling and Taylor on katestematic pleasure, and the Wenham article...

[Quote from Mike Anyayahan](#)

I am referring to static pleasure that is produced by the absence of pain.

... because i am not at all sure that such as think as this exists. If there is a change in state, as in removal of pain, then there is some action going on that explains the source of the pleasure. I do not believe that "absence of pain" alone is an activity, any more than "calmly" expresses an activity. As per the argument in these articles, especailly Wenham perhaps on this particular point, all pleasure comes through sensation, and absence of sensation is death. If you are sensing pleasure, you are sensing 'something' -- even if your mind is merely contemplating, which you find enjoyable. The pleasure in that moment is from your mind contemplating, a positive action, not an "absence of" anything. i think it ends up being a non-sequitur, and essentially a sophisticated attack on the feeling of pleasure itself, to talk in terms of "absence of" as describing the positive experience of pleasure.

That's why this entire issue of katastematic pleasure is so important, and why [Nikolsky](#) and gosling and taylor and Wenham write to refute it. As [Nikolsky](#) state most explicitly, the entire issue of "static pleasure" was likely invented by a later stoic (Carneades) as part of their categorization obsession, and it seems to me very likely that Epicurus would have rejected the classification if he himself had been asked about it.

But this is a deep subject where you need to expose yourself to the arguments that are stated in much more detail in these articles than I can do. If you have the time, I recommend [Nikolsky](#) first, then the Gosling and Taylor article (by which [Nikolsky](#) was inspired to write his) then followed by Wenham.