

Is gratitude a katastematic or kinetic pleasure?

Post by “Cassius” of October 25, 2023 at 12:42 PM

I am on my phone and have to be brief in this post but aside from my views on the K/ K issue as a whole, it is my understanding that any pleasure which involves starting and stopping (summoning up a memory, or thinking of gratitude or anything else at a particular moment) is considered kinetic because it involves change. This is one of the difficulties of the k/k distinction.

Post by “Don” of October 25, 2023 at 2:29 PM

For the record, I have no doubt that Epicurus and all the classical Epicureans made this distinction. Primarily from DL 10.136:

The words of Epicurus in his work *On Choice* are : "Peace of mind and freedom from pain are pleasures which imply a state of rest ; joy and delight are seen to consist in motion and activity."

plus other references in Metrodorus and other texts.

That said, off the top of my head, I agree with [Cassius](#) that feelings of gratitude would be a 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 "*katastematic*" over some rather than others? That's a much tougher question.

Post by "Don" of October 25, 2023 at 2:38 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

The trouble is that *kinetic* does tend to imply "in motion" and *katastematic* implies

Stability.

PS. I should have read further down before replying 😊 You raise some interesting points.

Post by "Cassius" of October 25, 2023 at 2:45 PM

Emily Austin, Chapter 4 Footnote 8:

Quote

This is a non-specialist text, so I have chosen not to wade into the dispute about katastematic and kinetic pleasures in the body of the text. A specialist will recognize that I am adopting a view roughly in line with [Gosling and Taylor \(1982\)](#) and [Arenson \(2019\)](#). On my reading, katastematic pleasures are sensory pleasures that issue from confidence in one's ability to satisfy one's necessary desires and an awareness of one's healthy psychological functioning; choice-worthy kinetic pleasures are the various pleasures consistent with maintaining healthy functioning, and those pleasures vary, but do not increase healthy psychological functioning.

You'll note that Dr. Austin is saying that katastematic pleasures are also "sensory," which is in itself a sort of wading into the issue, as many of the writers who advocate katastematic pleasures as better than kinetic either expressly or implicitly take the position that katastematic pleasures are not "sensory" at all.

There's that same problem again -- sensation would appear to go along with kinetic, and yet if katastematic pleasures are non-sensory, as some advocate, then what's the use of something you can't sense? The real problem in my view is that a lot of people want to overally "absence of pain" as meaning "katastematic pleasure" rather than accepting the repeatedly asserted position that "absence of pain" is just another term for "pleasure" of any type.

And thus you trigger my latest list of cites: 😊

1. ***Epicurus PD03*** : *"The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal of all that is painful. Wherever pleasure is present, as long as it is there, there is neither pain of body, nor of*

- mind, nor of both at once ."*
2. **Epicurus Letter to Menoeceus** : *"By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul."*
 3. **Diogenes Laertius X-34** : *"The internal sensations they say are two, pleasure and pain, which occur to every living creature, and the one is akin to nature and the other alien: by means of these two choice and avoidance are determined."*
 4. **On Ends Book One, 30** : *"Moreover, seeing that if you deprive a man of his senses there is nothing left to him, it is inevitable that nature herself should be the arbiter of what is in accord with or opposed to nature. Now what facts does she grasp or with what facts is her decision to seek or avoid any particular thing concerned, unless the facts of pleasure and pain?"*
 5. **On Ends Book One, 38** : *Therefore Epicurus refused to allow that there is any middle term between pain and pleasure; what was thought by some to be a middle term, the absence of all pain, was not only itself pleasure, but the highest pleasure possible. Surely any one who is conscious of his own condition must needs be either in a state of pleasure or in a state of pain. Epicurus thinks that the highest degree of pleasure is defined by the removal of all pain, so that pleasure may afterwards exhibit diversities and differences but is incapable of increase or extension."*
 6. **On Ends Book One, 39** : *For if that were the only pleasure which tickled the senses, as it were, if I may say so, and which overflowed and penetrated them with a certain agreeable feeling, then even a hand could not be content with freedom from pain without some pleasing motion of pleasure. But if the highest pleasure is, as Epicurus asserts, to be free from pain, then, O Chrysippus, the first admission was correctly made to you, that the hand, when it was in that condition, was in want of nothing; but the second admission was not equally correct, that if pleasure were a good it would wish for it. For it would not wish for it for this reason, inasmuch as whatever is free from pain is in pleasure."*
 7. **On Ends Book One, 56** : *By this time so much at least is plain, that the intensest pleasure or the intensest annoyance felt in the mind exerts more influence on the happiness or wretchedness of life than either feeling, when present for an equal space of time in the body. We refuse to believe, however, that when pleasure is removed, grief instantly ensues, excepting when perchance pain has taken the place of the pleasure; but we think on the contrary that we experience joy on the passing away of pains, even though none of that kind of pleasure which stirs the senses has taken their place; and from this it may be understood how great a pleasure it is to be without pain. [57] But as we are elated by the blessings to which we look forward, so we delight in those which we call to memory. Fools however are tormented by the recollection of misfortunes; wise men rejoice in keeping fresh the thankful recollection of their past blessings. Now it is in the power of our wills to bury our adversity in almost unbroken forgetfulness, and to agreeably and sweetly remind ourselves of our prosperity. But when we look with penetration and concentration of thought upon things that are past, then, if those things are bad, grief usually ensues, if good, joy.*

8. **On Ends Book One, 62** : *But these doctrines may be stated in a certain manner so as not merely to disarm our criticism, but actually to secure our sanction. For this is the way in which Epicurus represents the wise man as continually happy; he keeps his passions within bounds; about death he is indifferent; he holds true views concerning the eternal gods apart from all dread; he has no hesitation in crossing the boundary of life, if that be the better course. Furnished with these advantages he is continually in a state of pleasure, and there is in truth no moment at which he does not experience more pleasures than pains. For he remembers the past with thankfulness, and the present is so much his own that he is aware of its importance and its agreeableness, nor is he in dependence on the future, but awaits it while enjoying the present; he is also very far removed from those defects of character which I quoted a little time ago, and when he compares the fool's life with his own, he feels great pleasure. And pains, if any befall him, have never power enough to prevent the wise man from finding more reasons for joy than for vexation.*
9. **On Ends Book Two, 9** : Cicero: "...[B]ut unless you are extraordinarily obstinate you are bound to admit that 'freedom from pain' does not mean the same thing as 'pleasure.'" Torquatus: "Well but on this point you will find me obstinate, for it is as true as any proposition can be."
10. **On Ends, Book Two, 11:** Cicero: Still, I replied, granting that there is nothing better (that point I waive for the moment), surely it does not therefore follow that what I may call the negation of pain is the same thing as pleasure?" Torquatus: "Absolutely the same, indeed the negation of pain is a very intense pleasure, the most intense pleasure possible."
11. **On Ends Book Two, 16** : "*This, O Torquatus, is doing violence to one's senses; it is wresting out of our minds the understanding of words with which we are imbued; for who can avoid seeing that these three states exist in the nature of things: first, the state of being in pleasure; secondly, that of being in pain; thirdly, that of being in such a condition as we are at this moment, and you too, I imagine, that is to say, neither in pleasure nor in pain; in such pleasure, I mean, as a man who is at a banquet, or in such pain as a man who is being tortured. What! do you not see a vast multitude of men who are neither rejoicing nor suffering, but in an intermediate state between these two conditions? No, indeed, said he; I say that all men who are free from pain are in pleasure, and in the greatest pleasure too. Do you, then, say that the man who, not being thirsty himself, mingles some wine for another, and the thirsty man who drinks it when mixed, are both enjoying the same pleasure?"*

As to how the fact of coexistence of pleasure and pain existing in different parts of experience do no contradict [PD03](#):

1. **Epicurus to Idomeneus, Diogenes Laertius:** *On this blissful day, which is also the last of my life, I write this to you. My continual sufferings from strangury and dysentery are so great that nothing could increase them; but I set above them all the gladness of mind at the memory of our past conversations. But I would have you, as becomes your lifelong*

attitude to me and to philosophy, watch over the children of Metrodorus.

2. **Lucretius Book 3 line 98:** "Thus often the body, which is clear to see, is sick, when, all the same we feel pleasure in some other hidden part; and contrariwise it happens that the reverse often comes to be in turn, when one wretched in mind feels pleasure in all his body; in no other wise than if, when a sick man's foot is painful, all the while, may be, his head is in no pain. Moreover, when the limbs are given up to soft sleep, and the heavy body lies slack and senseless, yet there is something else in us, which at that very time is stirred in many ways, and admits within itself all the motions of joy and baseless cares of heart."

Post by "Cassius" of October 25, 2023 at 2:52 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

PS. I should have read further down before replying 😊 You raise some interesting points.

Another part of the problem is that "stable" implies "good" while "transitory" implies "less good than stable."

But if the word kinetic means anything at all, is it not associated with "motion" or "moveo" / movement in Cicero's wording? Yes you can have motion that is "smooth," and long-lasting, and surely that is a more desirable kind of pleasure than a pleasure that last less long and is more "rough." I would think all of us probably agree that a pleasure that is smooth and longer-lasting is more desirable than a pleasure that is not.

Is that all that is in issue? Then we could just say "a pleasure that is smooth and longer-lasting is more desirable than a pleasure that is not."

Is something else in issue? If it is, then I'm not yet convinced I have a clue as to what that issue is, because it's surely not a distinction between mental vs physical, which is another point on which I think all of us agree. Maybe there is some issue of "confidence" that is "unshakeable" and stays with us for a really long time due to our philosophical conclusions, but if so, again, I'd assert that everyone would be better off being clear about that in one's own language.

Post by "Cassius" of October 25, 2023 at 2:55 PM

[Quote from burninglights](#)

Here, he seems to express the idea that grateful recollections have played an important role in the old man having 'come to anchor' in life, suggesting again that by way of gratitude one can find peace of mind.

But before I go off to much further on the details, re-reading your original post I presume what you are doing is looking to identify pleasures that are accessible and longer-lasting and looking at ways to cultivate those rather than moment to moment stimulations and excitements. Just thought again I would be clear and say that that is a very desirable search and something to explore and write at length about, no matter what labels we put on it.

Post by “burninglights” of October 25, 2023 at 3:03 PM

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Post by “Cassius” of October 25, 2023 at 3:26 PM

[Quote from burninglights](#)

But, since I do tend to take the distinction as legitimate, it does make me wonder what, exactly, it means though!

Someone is eventually going to wade through the texts and the scholarly commentaries that parse the vocabularies and give examples of how all these words are used. I tend to think that the Gosling & Taylor book is exhaustive, but there are many many more.

As for here on the forum, I tend to think Don is your man who will eventually do that! 😊

In the meantime I would just advise caution in getting too wedded to a particular position, along the lines of the "waiting" idea in Diogenes Laertius.

And part of the reason I advise that caution is that if someone gets too caught up in the wording, that focus could tend to distract away from more common sense analysis you are trying to pursue. I think you are right in your direction, and that's all there is too it. On the other

hand, *many* people seem to have decided to themselves: "Epicureans were constantly dropping the name "katastematic" as a synonym for "absence of pain," and so therefore I will set my sights on "katastematic pleasure" as "absence of pain," and I'll write the whole world of kinetic pleasure out of the equation."

"Absence of pain" is the key to the analysis. If you conclude that "absence of pain" means "pleasure" then you will conclude that "absence of pain" can refer to **any** kind of pleasure, meaning **any** kind of mental or physical activity which is not painful. And **that** opens up the full spectrum of non-painful human activity as being desirable, which is a great deal more liberating than thinking that you need to go back to graduate school and learn detailed Greek vocabulary before you can understand Epicurus.

If you conclude that absence of pain means "katastematic pleasure," then I think you lose the benefit of what is being said on very face of the quotes I included above. You then turn against not only what Cicero's Epicurean speaker insists on repeatedly, but you turn against Epicurus himself "By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul.") and what Diogenes Laertius said that Epicurus valued "both" types of pleasure.

If you suspend this analysis until you get a graduate degree to unwind the Greek, you'll lose appreciation for the pleasure-maximizing viewpoint that "if I am not in pain I am in pleasure," and you'll constantly go looking for something else (probably through asceticism).

To repeat I am not saying that you personally are running afoul of that problem, but I would wager a lot of money that many of the commentaries are doing exactly that, and that is what leads to a lot of confusion.

Post by "Cassius" of October 25, 2023 at 4:01 PM

[Quote from burninglights](#)

But I also wanna feel the most pleasure from the least effort

That describes me precisely! 😊

Post by "Godfrey" of October 25, 2023 at 4:22 PM

We have two methods of working toward a pleasant life which can be found in the extant texts of Epicurus: 1) working with the categories of desires and 2) working with intensity, location and duration of individual pleasures. Considering the lack of clarity of k/k pleasures, both of these methods seem, to me, to be more directly useful than trying to sort out the k/k debate (although [Don](#) may not agree with that, and I respect his thinking on the matter!).

Each of these two methods is geared toward helping us feel the most pleasure with the least effort.

When using intensity, location and duration to consider individual pleasures there is no hierarchy among these three that I'm aware of. We use our own evaluations, for our own particular situation.

Post by “Don” of October 25, 2023 at 4:33 PM

The kinetic/katastematic distinction, from my perspective, was most helpful in distinguishing the Epicurus's school from the Cyrenaics. It established the Garden as embracing ALL pleasure as the good, not just the kinetic of the Cyrenaics.

Post by “Titus” of October 25, 2023 at 4:47 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

The kinetic/katastematic distinction, from my perspective, was most helpful in distinguishing the Epicurus's school from the Cyrenaics. It established the Garden as embracing ALL pleasure as the good, not just the kinetic of the Cyrenaics.

This sounds very sound to me. The thing to be careful about is, not to go in the opposite direction and even begin to embrace katastematic for the sake of reaching a "nirvana-like state of ataraxia".

Post by “Cassius” of October 25, 2023 at 5:05 PM

[Quote from Titus](#)

The thing to be careful about is, not to go in the opposite direction and even begin to embrace katastematic for the sake of reaching a "nirvana-like state of ataraxia".

That's the way I see it, and I also see no reason at all to ever associate "katastematic" with "a nirvana-like state of ataraxia." But I think that's exactly what a lot of people outside this forum are doing.

[Quote from burninglights](#)

So I go to the shop of the best basket weaver in town. He's not in, but there's a pile of wicker on the floor and a note that reads, "there's warp and there's woof." I have no idea that means, but I'm pretty sure it's gonna be helpful in some way.

As you know and agree, Don has a list of citations supporting his position. If you have not read it, you can read the Boris [Nikolsky](#) article on this website which builds on the Gosling & Taylor analysis and takes a different position. All I can tell you is to read the articles to the extent you are interested and form your own opinion. In the end, I would suggest the best approach is to look at the reality of what is in the wicker basket, and what you can feel for yourself in your own mind and body, and label according to the reality you can observe.

Post by “TauPhi” of October 25, 2023 at 6:25 PM

Here's my take on kinetic/katastematic pleasures. I don't give any guarantees whether this is a sound take but you can take my take as a takeaway and feed your thoughts with it, if you wish [burninglights](#).

Katastematic pleasure is an embedded phenomenon in a sensory processing unit. In other words, everything that is alive, has senses and a brain (or the corresponding organ) capable of translating sensory inputs into experiences, is equipped with katastematic pleasure at birth. This pleasure is, simply put, background noise to life.

As such, katastematic pleasure has nothing to do with intensity, location and duration. These can be descriptors of kinetic pleasures. If one really wants to apply these descriptors to human katastematic pleasure, they would look something like this:

intensity: subjective and unquantifiable

location: somewhere between one's ears

duration: lifespan

If a person has difficulties recognizing this background noise as a pleasure, or worse mistakes it for pain, their quality of life suffers and their lives turn into never-ending battle against ghosts that are not on there.

Kinetic pleasures are everything else, including gratitude you were wondering about.

Post by “Pacatus” of October 25, 2023 at 6:42 PM

It seems to me that discussions of katastematic pleasures in terms of relative stability or relative duration run into a kind of sorites question: how many grains of sand do you have to have before you can call them “a heap”? (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sorites_paradox) How stable for how long does a pleasure have to last to become katastematic?

I found it interesting that the Wiki article made the point that “Vagueness alone does not necessarily imply invalidity.”

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Sunday night, I was watching a football game and cheering for my team: a pleasurable activity that I would call kinetic. During breaks in the action, I would allow my awareness to go to my bodily feeling of continued satisfaction and contentment from the light dinner I had eaten sometime before. Is that more katastematic? I initially thought so. Or does the iteration of my awareness itself imply kinetic activity that determines how the pleasure would get labelled?

Post by “Cassius” of October 25, 2023 at 7:09 PM

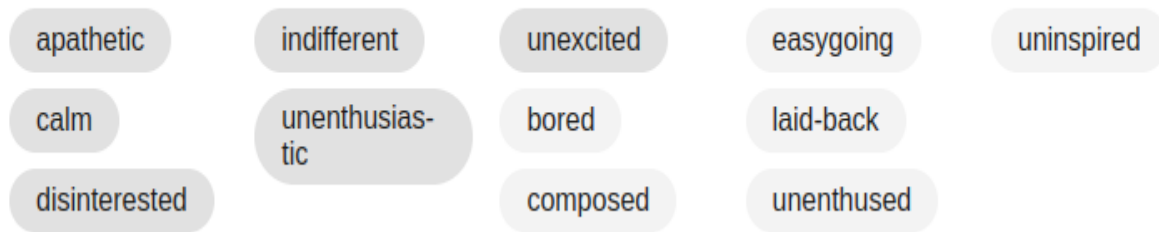
Let's suppose that the issue we are really discussing were the difference between "excited" or "stimulated" experiences, such as riding a rollercoaster or running for the touchdown, vs experiences of daily normal experience that do not involve pain (so we are going to label them pleasurable) but that also do not involve that "rush of excitement" or "rush of stimulation."

Here's one of the problems that you run into unless you are careful, because while these words may be the reverse of excited, most (except for calm and maybe a few others) carry negative

connotations that no one but a Stoic would endorse.

ANTONYMS FOR excited

● Most relevant



Post by “Don” of October 25, 2023 at 7:25 PM

I think we have to entertain the possibility that THE katastematic pleasures are simply ataraxia and aponia.

Ataraxia is the tranquility of mind that results from ridding one's mind of fears of death and the gods and obtaining a proper understanding of natural phenomena, and so on. I'm working on a good description of aponia. It's not just "freedom from pain" in a banal sense.

Ataraxia becomes the background of our experience. Once we really lock it in (*really* and truly lock it in!! I know I'm not there yet!), we approach our all our other experiences with that stability and tranquility of mind that can't be shaken or taken away.

Post by “burninglights” of October 25, 2023 at 10:36 PM

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Post by “Don” of October 26, 2023 at 12:12 AM

Searching the texts for mention of the pleasures Epicurus cites in *On Choices and Avoidances* is a good idea.

However, I would offer that it's important to search the Greek words and not the English translations. That said, I'm curious to look at your citations to see what words are used in the Greek text!

The words Epicurus uses are in DL 10.136 are:

καταστηματικά ἡδοναί (katastematikai hedonai) "katastematic pleasures"

- ἀταραξία (ataraxia)
- ἀπονία (aponia)

κατὰ κίνησιν ἐνεργεῖα βλέπονται (kata kinesin energeia blepontai) "(pleasures) consisting in motion and activity"

- χαρὰ (khara) "joy" (Hicks)
- εὐφροσύνη (euphrosyne) "delight" (Hicks)

Sometimes the English translation use "joy" or "delight" or similar words to translate hedone "pleasure" which obscures what the word used is. So, I'm really not trying to be difficult, but translations can really obscure what the actual text actually says sometimes.

Here's where I replaced words conveying katastematic and "kinetic" pleasures:

Post

[**RE: Modern Neuroscience And The Katastematic / Kinetic Debate**](#)

There aren't a lot of opportunities, but I decided to try and replace single words with either katastematic or kinetic pleasure.

It should also be remembered that the phrase "kinetic pleasure" isn't *actually* what Epicurus says. What he says is (as literally as I can make it):

"Peace of mind (ataraxia) and freedom from pain (aponia) are condition/state pleasures; joy (khara) and delight (euphrosyne) are seen in relation to (κατὰ) motion (κίνησιν) by means of activity (ἐνεργεῖα)."

ἢ μὲν...



Don

July 2, 2023 at 11:04 PM

εὐφροσύνη occurs in Diogenes Laertius, Book 10 in the 10.136, but also occurs in the μᾶλλον τε εὐφρανθήσεσθαι τῶν ἄλλων ἐν ταῖς θεωρίαις.

"He will find more delight than other men in contemplation/consideration/speculation."

See my website on the characteristics of the sage:

[Epicurean Sage - ...enjoy themselves more than others in contemplation](#)

Hicks: He will take more delight than other men in state festivals. Yonge: ...and he will find more pleasure than other men in speculations. Yonge appears to...

sites.google.com

The word is also used in another form as the title of the book that Timocrates wrote, Εὐφραντοῖς, to slander Epicurus, mentioned at DL 10.6.

A form is in VS48:

While you are on the road, try to make the later part better than the earlier part; and be equally happy when you reach the end.

πειρᾶσθαι τὴν ὑστέραν τῆς προτέρας κρείττω ποιεῖν, ἕως ἂν ἐν ὁδῷ ὦμεν· ἐπειδὴν δ' ἐπὶ πέρας ἔλθωμεν, ὁμαλῶς εὐφραίνεσθαι. (lit. to make merry, to cheer; so here "equally merry")

I've also found εὐφροσύνη in [the inscription of Diogenes of Oenoanda](#):

Fragment 215, column 1

[5 lines missing]

[- ca.6 -]ἀπελέν[χ]ε-

ται. □ vac. 1□ τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν

αἱ μὲν εἰσιν κεναί,

αἱ δὲ φυσικαί. □ vac. 1□ αἱ μὲν

οὔν φυσικαὶ τὰ τοσαῦ-

τα ζητοῦσιν ὅσα εἰς

τὴν τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν

εὐφροσύνην ἐ[στίν]

[ἀνανκαῖα, αἱ δὲ κεναί]

[5 lines missing]

In English:

Of the desires some are vain, others natural. Now those that are natural seek after such things as [are necessary] for our nature's enjoyment, [while those that are vain]

fragment 10, column 4

[τοσ]όν[δε προστίθημι].

[ἐπει]δῆ [ὄναρ] τελοῦμεν

τᾶ ἀφροδείσια, ὡς καὶ ὕ-

παρ, οὐδέν ἐστι τὸ μά-

την ἀπ' αὐτῶν εὐφρο-

σύνην λαμβάνειν

ὅτι καθεύδομεν. □

...we perform sexual acts (ἀφροδείσια aphrodeisia), it is no good arguing that the pleasure we derive from them is unreal because we are asleep.

Those are the texts I had readily at hand this evening. I don't think I searched for euprosyne before, and I'm curious if there are more. I think khara (the other "kinetic" pleasure) has more references.

Getting back to the discussion, I find it interesting that Diogenes of Oenoanda uses euprosyne to describe the pleasures of sex. The famous fragment of Epicurus's includes sex:

67. I do not think I could conceive of the good without the joys of taste, of sex, of hearing, and without the pleasing motions caused by the sight of bodies and forms.

οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔγωγε ἔχω τί νοήσω τάγαθὸν ἀφαιρῶν μὲν τὰς διὰ χυλῶν ἡδονάς, ἀφαιρῶν δὲ τὰς δι' ἀφροδισίων, ἀφαιρῶν δὲ τὰς δι' ἀκροαμάτων, ἀφαιρῶν δὲ καὶ τὰς διὰ μορφῆς κατ' ὄψιν ἡδείας κινήσεις.

The "sight of bodies and forms" is actually ὄψιν ἡδείας κινήσεις, lit. "seeing pleasant movements" and that last word is kineseis, directly related to the word in DL 10.136: "(pleasures) consisting in motion and activity"

Could it be that pleasures, writ large, can be categorized as either katastematic and "those consisting of motion and activity" and within those, sub-categorized as either forms of ataraxia and aponia or khara and euprosyne? The Oenoanda inscription seems to imply that the pleasures of sex are a form of euprosyne. Diogenes Laertius seems to imply that

contemplation (or festivals if you take the other tack) consist of euphrosyne. VS48 implies one should have euphrosyne on the road of life.

I'm just throwing this out as food for thought for now. For now, it's after midnight so... 🤔

Morning Postscript...

In looking at my other post referenced above, I noticed that I said Epicurus also uses the word ἐνεργεία from DL10.136 in the Letter to Herodotus:

[37] "Hence, since such a course is of service to all who take up natural science, I, who devote to the subject my continuous **energy** (τὸ συνεχὲς **ἐνέργημα** (energēma)) and **reap the calm enjoyment of a life** (ἐγγαληνίζων) like this, have prepared for you just such an epitome and manual of the doctrines as a whole."

[37] "Ὅθεν δὴ πᾶσι χρησίμης οὔσης τοῖς ὠκειωμένοις φυσιολογία τῆς τοιαύτης ὁδοῦ, παρεγγυῶν τὸ συνεχὲς ἐνέργημα ἐν φυσιολογία καὶ τοιοῦτω μάλιστα ἐγγαληνίζων τῷ βίῳ ἐποίησά σοι καὶ τοιαύτην τινὰ ἐπιτομὴν καὶ στοιχείωσιν τῶν ὅλων δοξῶν.

The - let's call it - "kinetic/energetic" pleasure of *studying* natural science leads to ἐγγαληνίζων "the calm enjoyment" of life which to me sounds like a katastematic pleasure. ἐγγαληνίζων literally means "spend calmly." Which interestingly enough is related to γαληνός "calm, especially of the sea"! There's that ocean/sea metaphor again in relation to stable katastematic pleasure.

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, γαληνός](#)

Post by "Godfrey" of October 26, 2023 at 1:36 AM

[Quote from TauPhi](#)

everything that is alive, has senses and a brain (or the corresponding organ) capable of translating sensory inputs into experiences, is equipped with katastematic pleasure at birth. This pleasure is, simply put, background noise to life.

As such, katastematic pleasure has nothing to do with intensity, location and duration. These can be descriptors of kinetic pleasures. If one really wants to apply these

descriptors to human katastematic pleasure, they would look something like this:

intensity: subjective and unquantifiable

location: somewhere between one's ears

duration: lifespan

This is interesting, but in pondering it, I keep coming back to Epicurus' wording. To paraphrase: *the healthy functioning of the body and lack of disturbance in the mind*. But, to me, this mustn't be considered simply background noise, and it still consists of intensity, location and duration.

For something to be a pleasure, by definition it must be *felt*. With this in mind, a "background state" could easily be misconstrued (and typically is, outside of this forum) as a "neutral state", even though I don't think that's what you're saying [TauPhi](#) .

By being in either the body or the mind, these felt pleasures have a location. They have duration, which can be anything from fleeting to long lasting. (Think of times when your body feels really great or your mind is really clear. For me, these times are fleeting. If they're long lasting for you, tell me how you do it!) And they have varying intensities, depending on the particular situation.

So apparently where this is leading me is to the conclusion that *ataraxia* and *aponia* are most likely the katastematic pleasures. But they are like all other pleasures in that they vary in intensity, location and duration. If there is anything that categorizes them as separate from other pleasures (notice that I studiously *didn't* say "makes them special") it's the breadth of their locations: *aponia* being throughout the body at a given moment and *ataraxia* being throughout the mind at a given moment. Unless, of course, you're a god. (Which kind of sounds similar to a Stoic sage as I write this... but I digress.)

Post by “Don” of October 26, 2023 at 7:45 AM

To bring this back to [burninglights](#) ' original question:

The Greek word for gratitude is *χαρις* (kharis) which is directly related to *χαρα* (khara), the specific kinetic/energetic pleasure in DL10.136. And both words are related to *χαίρω* (khairō), rejoice, take pleasure in a thing, etc.:

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, χαίρω](#)

So, to provide a response to the original question, in light of the etymology of the words, "gratitude" is a kinetic/energetic pleasure.

Post by "Don" of October 26, 2023 at 3:55 PM

I'm so conditioned to just say "kinetic pleasure" that I wanted to once again, for my own peace of mind (pun intended), to look again at what Epicurus is quoted as saying in DL 10.136:

ὁ δ' Ἐπίκουρος ἐν τῷ Περὶ αἰρέσεων οὕτω λέγει: "ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀταραξία καὶ ἀπονία καταστηματικά εἰσιν ἡδοναί: ἡ δὲ χαρὰ καὶ ἡ εὐφροσύνη κατὰ κίνησιν ἐνεργεῖα βλέπονται."

That last line:

ἡ δὲ χαρὰ καὶ ἡ εὐφροσύνη κατὰ κίνησιν ἐνεργεῖα βλέπονται

has some interesting constructions.

κατὰ κίνησιν (accusative)

along/through/in motion, as opposed to "rest" (στάσις; related to katastematic)

ἐνεργεῖα (dative) by means of activity/action (opposite of dynamie)

There's a lot of to-do in philosophical discourse of the time about energeia vs dynamie that is beyond me for now. It seems to do with actual action vs potential power/strength?

In any case, just saying "kinetic vs katastematic" masks a whole lot of stuff going on under the surface.

Post by "Cassius" of October 26, 2023 at 5:03 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

In any case, just saying "kinetic vs katastematic" masks a whole lot of stuff going on under the surface.

That's my thought too, and that's why I also think that the ultimate crux of the issue is that Epicurus is extending the word "pleasure" to cover both the exciting/stimulative type of

activities that everyone acknowledges to be pleasure, plus what I would call - if I were German - EveryOtherExperienceOfLifeThatIsNotPainful.

It's the sweeping inclusion of normal everyday healthy non-painful existence (which is what is being referenced in response to Chysippus' hand argument) under the word "pleasure" that is the revolutionary issue and which makes "a life of pleasure" an attainable goal.

Within that sweeping overall term there are all sorts of pleasurable experiences, including (referencing Don above) "ataraxia ... the tranquility of mind that results from ridding one's mind of fears of death and the gods and obtaining a proper understanding of natural phenomena, and so on." Within that big picture framework I can see the usefulness of discussing k/k matters as a means of being sure we understand every detail. But the big picture is not established by the k/k detail, and any valid interpretation of a k/k distinction is going to have to fit within the big picture that all non-painful life experience is "pleasure."

I think we're all in agreement as to the importance of the Epicurean focus on the importance of freedom from fear of the gods and fear of death. What I don't know that we are all together on is that (1) if there are only two feelings, and (2) if someone is alive they are aware of feeling something(s), and (3) each and every one of those feelings is *either* pleasure or pain but not both in the same part of the person's body or mind.

I actually think most all of us *are* together on that last paragraph, but we're not together on the ramifications of what that last paragraph means. Cicero wouldn't accept that pleasure can embrace both stimulative pleasures and normal ordinary healthy feelings of proper functioning, and I am not sure that we (like Cicero) are all together in accepting it either. It would be surprising if all of our readers here, new and old, *were* all together, because it's a dramatic redefinition of the normal use of the word.

Post by "TauPhi" of October 26, 2023 at 5:42 PM

Thank you for your post [Godfrey](#). I'll try to clarify few things and explain in more detail where I suspect our points of view differ.

Firstly, this:

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

For something to be a pleasure, by definition it must be felt. With this in mind, a "background state" could easily be misconstrued (and typically is, outside of this forum) as a "neutral state", even though I don't think that's what you're saying TauPhi .

I am strongly opposed to the idea of a "neutral state". I agree with Epicurus that there are only two distinct states (pleasure and pain). Katastematic pleasure, in my understanding, has nothing to do with neutrality. Quite contrary, it's felt constantly throughout one's life and is sometimes disturbed by pain caused mainly (but not only) by fear which distorts our perception of life's experiences. So, in my mind, katastematic pleasure is synonymous to background noise to life or a will to live or healthy release of dopamine in our brains. It is close to @Don's metaphor of an ocean (if I read it as intended) or mine of a forest which I made sometime in the past. It's what makes us want to experience life.

Which brings me to your next observation. Here we definitely see things differently.

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

But, to me, this mustn't be considered simply background noise, and it still consists of intensity, location and duration.

"Background noise" might not be perfect description of katastematic pleasure but I hope my clarification above gives better picture of how I see this kind of pleasure. I treat it separately from every other pleasure (for me every other pleasure is kinetic) and I deprive katastematic pleasure of duration for a reason. The duration is there but the pleasure lasts exactly as long as our lives and ends with our death.

If katastematic pleasure would be fleeting and unstable and lasted only for some time, k/k division would make no sense and would be reduced to an absurd. I mean, how much time do we need to declare a pleasure long-lasting so it's katastematic and no longer kinetic? 15 minutes? Two days? 5 years? At this point we might as well start discussing which superhero is better, Superman or Spiderman?

As far as the remaining two descriptors are concerned (location and intensity), I have my reservations as well.

Location is simpler, so I start with this one. Katastematic pleasure, the way I understand it, is located in our minds. By that I mean our minds, if they are healthy, interpret our lives as a pleasurable phenomenon.

Intensity is the descriptor I have the most problems with. And it applies to both katastematic and kinetic pleasures. In my eyes, this descriptor is too vague to be considered a good descriptor of pleasure. Which pleasure is more intense? Eating strawberry ice cream or watching sunset at the seaside? There is innumerable variety of pleasure and all of it is unquantifiable. How can we say that one variety of pleasure is more intense than the other? Ice cream is 5 and sunset is 3?

Even if we consider only one variant of a pleasure, let's say watching sunset, and try to establish intensity levels we hit the wall quite quickly. Watching sunset for 2 seconds is less

pleasurable than watching it for the whole minute? If yes, by a factor of what?

So, I say yes to variety of pleasures but I'm not too sure about intensity of pleasures.

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

(Think of times when your body feels really great or your mind is really clear. For me, these times are fleeting. If they're long lasting for you, tell me how you do it!)

I wish I could tell you how I do it but, unfortunately, I don't so I can't. And I hope I was clear about that katastematic pleasure is neither of these things, in my humble opinion. I treat both clarity of mind and healthy body as kinetic pleasures. No matter if they last a day or a year. (Well, a year in my case is just wishful thinking at this point. I'm too old for that kind of privilege.)

Post by “Don” of October 26, 2023 at 8:49 PM

I think you're on to something, [burninglights](#) , especially in light of what Epicurus says in the letter to Herodotus (to paraphrase):

[37] "I devote my continuous energy to the study of natural science and reap the calm enjoyment of a life like this."

A. "my continuous energy to the study of natural science" (pleasure through motion)

B. "the calm enjoyment of a life like this." (katatematic pleasure)

C. reap: A leads to B

You just to put the work in on A to live the calm life of B.

Post by “Don” of October 26, 2023 at 10:58 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

C. reap: A leads to B

The actual word used is:

ἐποίησα (epoiēsa)

1st person singular aorist indicative active

from ποιέω (poieō, from which we actually get the word poet)

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, ποιέω](#)

In this case:

I created

I brought into existence

I produced

I made

So, "reap" is a more poetic but entirely acceptable way of saying "From the pleasure of my study of natural science, I produced my calm life."

Post by "Godfrey" of October 26, 2023 at 11:51 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

You just to put the work in on A to live the calm life of B.

[TauPhi](#) , I think that [burninglights](#) ' post #32 above does a good job of clarifying what I was trying to describe as to how my understanding of katastematic pleasure differs from what you are describing. And I find this understanding of it useful in using our reasoning and agency to craft our most pleasant life.

[Quote from TauPhi](#)

I am strongly opposed to the idea of a "neutral state".

  We're definitely in agreement there.

[Quote from TauPhi](#)

it's felt constantly throughout one's life and is sometimes disturbed by pain caused mainly (but not only) by fear which distorts our perception of life's experiences.

My main question is whether or not this is correct. Whether there is actually a background state, or a constant fluctuation between pain and pleasure in all parts of the body and mind. I'm beginning to see it as the latter.

[Quote from TauPhi](#)

If katastematic pleasure would be fleeting and unstable and lasted only for some time, k/k division would make no sense and would be reduced to an absurd. I mean, how much time do we need to declare a pleasure long-lasting so it's katastematic and no longer kinetic? 15 minutes? Two days? 5 years? At this point we might as well start discussing which superhero is better, Superman or Spiderman?

Ataraxia and *aponia* have no inherent time component as far as I can determine as a non-Greek speaker. If they define katastematic pleasure, there is no reason why katastematic pleasure would have to have a particular time component, let alone last a lifetime. The only reference to time is the secure knowledge of their continuance, which depends on prudent choices and avoidances. In this case, they're "stable" because you've done the work necessary and can tap into the particular feeling of pleasure at any time, even though you don't feel it all of the time.

It does seem to me that kinetic pleasures, in general, have less breadth of location than have *ataraxia* and *aponia*. But that depends on the exact definitions of *ataraxia* and *aponia*.

I hope I'm making sense and not driving people crazy with this line of thought! My own thinking is evolving, and we have so few sources to go on that it seems necessary to do the digging to really try to get a handle on the deeper ideas. And as always I welcome frank speech!

As for Superman and Spidey, I have my opinions. 😊 But those belong in another corner of the internet (a corner to which I never go 😊)

Post by “Don” of October 27, 2023 at 8:22 AM

I had further thoughts this morning on the importance of what's going on under the surface of DL 10.136. I think I've stumbled on this idea before but never explicitly formulated it.

In that citation from Epicurus's *On Choices and Rejections* (sorry, I really dislike "Avoidances"), he posits two kinds of pleasure:

A. "katastematic" pleasures which I think we agree has something to do with "stability," however we're defining that for the moment.

B. pleasures derived from motion by means of activity.

Here's my morning thought:

Pleasures of the B variety are initiated or are derived through motion by means of activity. I get the impression that κατὰ κίνησιν ἐνεργεία refers to motion initiated both by voluntary action of oneself and activity acting upon a person.

LSJ has ἐνέργεια defined, in part, as the opposite of ἐξις (exis): "a being in a certain state, a permanent condition as produced by practice (πρᾶξις)."

That ἐξις "a permanent condition as produced by practice" sounds a lot like what I and others have been trying to say about "katastematic" pleasures. Epicurus himself wrote that he produced the permanent condition of his calm life through his practice of studying natural science. And I interpret that "calm" as referring to his mind being calmed from fears, anxieties, etc. of gods, death, etc. by internalizing - by *knowing* - the natural explanation of phenomena.

So, my offering is that katastematic pleasure is the pleasure derived from slowing down and experiencing the "permanent condition as produced by practice." If we want to describe it as "background" that could work, but that seems now to me to shortchange the experience. Katastematic pleasure derives from practice, study, work, activity, ἐνεργεία, but once you have that stable foundation, no one can take it away.

I need to think about this more, but this is off the top of my head on a Friday morning.

Post by "Cassius" of October 27, 2023 at 3:24 PM

[Quote from burninglights](#)

One thing I'm not clear on with katastematic pleasure being "a permanent condition as produced by practice" is whether this implies that the practice must be ongoing for the permanence to remain.

Is Don or anyone saying that Epicurus classified katastematic pleasure as "permanent?" Are we beginning to tread on "once saved always saved" theology?

Post by “Don” of October 27, 2023 at 3:36 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from burninglights](#)

One thing I'm not clear on with katastematic pleasure being "a permanent condition as produced by practice" is whether this implies that the practice must be ongoing for the permanence to remain.

Is Don or anyone saying that Epicurus classified katastematic pleasure as "permanent?" Are we beginning to tread on "once saved always saved" theology?

I suppose yes, for my part... Without all the Christian baggage. And it's not just saying "I believe"!!

If you root out false beliefs, superstitions, fears of divine retribution, anxiety about death, etc., yes, those are gone and permanent, IF you've really put the work in to pull them out, root and branch (to stick with the agricultural metaphors). It's the work of really studying, thinking on it, and internalizing that's the hard part.

Post by “Godfrey” of October 27, 2023 at 3:59 PM

Well said [Don](#) .

One of the values of thinking of katastematic pleasure as "a permanent condition produced by practice" is thinking of practice as an action or actions that we can and must take to benefit our well-being. I like that, at least for me, this seems more active than passive. I'm on the fence as to whether to think of KP as a permanent state, however. Stable, yes. But stability doesn't necessarily imply permanence. A volcano can be stable for ages, and then erupt. An illness can be stable until it gets better or worse.

[TauPhi](#) has referred to KP as the will to life, which is a permanent thing. I'm not denying that there is a will to life, in fact I agree that there is. But I question whether that is what KP is referring to. I'm thinking that life presents each of us with long term challenges (financial stability, stable good health, stable food and shelter, aging, caring for loved ones, and other things that come up). Doing prudent work of planning and preparation to address these challenges, and others, results in a stable freedom from fear and worry (i.e. pleasure) with

respect to each individual challenge. This type of pleasure is quite different from the Cyrenaic type of pleasure which needs to be constantly replenished.

(Cross-posted... this post is in reponse to [Don](#) 's post #37.)

Post by “Titus” of October 27, 2023 at 7:21 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Are we beginning to tread on "once saved always saved" theology?

You could go even further and define hell as "absence of god"... um... katastematic pleasure 😊 😊

Post by “Don” of October 31, 2023 at 11:30 PM

Quote from burninglights

Compare Epicurus's description:

“Joy and delight are seen to consist in motion and activity.” (DL 10.136)

With the following from Lucretius:

“This will whereby we move forward, where pleasure leads each one of us, and swerve likewise in our motions neither at determined times nor in a determined direction of place, but just where our mind has carried us. For without a doubt it is his own will which gives to each one a start for this movement, and from the will the motions pass flooding through the limbs.” (2.251ff)

From my perspective, you are spot on.

Remember, too, that "consist in motion and activity" is not technically what the Greek says. It's [an instrumental dative](#) there with "activity" being ἐνεργεία which means "by (means of) 'energeia'." It's pleasures through "kinesis" by means of "energeia." Well, that's clear as mud, right? It seems this is Epicurus again wrestling with the current philosophical debates and terms

of his day, as *energeia*, *kinesis*, *dynamis*, etc., go back to Aristotle. And if you were a Greek philosopher in Athens *after* Aristotle, you had to contend with that environment. At its basic sense (to the best of my ability right now), *Energeia* is the putting into action of some potential (*dynamis*).

See also

[Aristotle: Motion and its Place in Nature | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

There seems to be in the "pleasures consisting in motion by means of 'being-at-work'" a sense of bringing about pleasure through the actual work of motion of the individual. The motion, through the work/activity/actuality of the individual, brings about the pleasure.

Look at the words in the Lucretius translation: move forward, swerve in our motions, will, gives to each one a start, movement, motions.

Those are all active working words there.

I am becoming more convinced that the banal "kinetic pleasures" translation hides SO much that Epicurus was trying to get across here.

Post by “burninglights” of November 1, 2023 at 2:47 AM

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Post by “Cassius” of November 1, 2023 at 5:22 AM

[Quote from burninglights](#)

All of this does actually align pretty well with the 'traditional' interpretation of these terms as reported by Cicero -- that a kinetic pleasure would be the pleasure of drinking when thirsty and *katastematic* being the pleasure of having fulfilled that desire. I think that, probably to hone his attack, he just picked a really banal and myopic example.

Yes - Cicero's discussion isn't unreasonable. No one - including Epicurus - seems to have ever alleged that (1) *acting toward a desire* and (2) *fulfilling a desire* are exactly the same thing. You'd have to be pretty obtuse to argue that those are exactly the same in every respect and

that it isn't at least somewhat reasonable to distinguish them from each other.

The bigger questions include:

1 - Do both of these concepts (1) and (2) deserve to be included under the label of "pleasure?"

2 - Are (1) and (2) the the **only** type of pleasures, or are there (3) other activities / actions / conditions that also fall within pleasure which are not related to desires being acted toward or fulfilled?

3 - Do any of these concepts (1) or (2) or (3) stand intrinsically or by some absolute standard as superior, hierarchically, to the other(s), such that they separately deserve to be considered to be the "ultimate pleasure" or "highest pleasure" or the "best pleasure" or "real pleasure" for all people at all times and at all places?

As I understand it Epicurus would answer:

1- Yes.

2 - No.

3 - No.

Post by “Don” of November 1, 2023 at 6:41 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

(1) **acting toward a desire** and (2) **fulfilling a desire** are exactly the same thing.

Call me pedantic, but I wouldn't characterize the two kinds of pleasure in exactly that way. Both "acting toward" and "fulfilling" are action words from my perspective. Maybe "experiencing pleasure while acting on a desire" and "resting in the experience of a fulfilled desire"? But even that doesn't sound right to me. The key concepts from my perspective are action and rest. Maybe - maybe! - mirroring Aristotle's idea of *energeia* and *dynamis* although I'm still REALLY shaky on my understanding of those terms.

Post by “Don” of November 1, 2023 at 7:11 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

1 - Do both of these concepts (1) and (2) deserve to be included under the label of "pleasure?"

While I'd say "yes" to [Cassius](#) 's question posed here, I refer the reader to my pedantic post no. 48 above.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

2 - Are (1) and (2) the the *only* type of pleasures, or are there (3) other activities / actions / conditions that also fall within pleasure which are not related to desires being acted toward or fulfilled?

It seems to me that there are only two types of pleasure, but I'd again characterize them as "action" and "rest" (with obvious more explanation needed to flesh out those two words). I may also use "change" and "stability" (NOT "static") but also something like unreliable pleasures vs. those pleasures one can be confident in having. Pleasures that depend on *energeia* are subject to being able to perform the actions necessary to experience them, while the other kind are available without putting forth the effort of activity. *That's* the importance of a word like *aponia*. It's not painlessness (as far as I can see), it's effortlessness, from *ἄπονος* (*áponos*, "without toil or trouble, effortless, painless").

Post by "Cassius" of November 1, 2023 at 9:02 AM

Yes I agree Don's pointing out an improvement on the fulfillment aspect, so I would reword:

Cicero's discussion isn't unreasonable. No one - including Epicurus - seems to have ever alleged that (1) *acting toward a desire* and (2) *being fulfilled* are exactly the same thing. You'd have to be pretty obtuse to argue that those are exactly the same in every respect and that it isn't at least somewhat reasonable to distinguish them from each other.

The bigger questions include:

1 - Do both of these concepts (1) and (2) deserve to be included under the label of "pleasure?"

2 - Are (1) and (2) the the *only* type of pleasures, or are there (3) other activities / actions / conditions that also fall within pleasure which are not related to desires being acted toward or being fulfilled?

3 - Do any of these concepts (1) or (2) or (3) stand intrinsically or by some absolute standard as superior, hierarchically, to the other(s), such that they separately deserve to be considered to be the "ultimate pleasure" or "highest pleasure" or the "best pleasure" or "real pleasure" for all people at all times and at all places?

As I understand it Epicurus would answer:

1- Yes.

2 - No.

3 - No.

[Quote from Don](#)

It seems to me that there are only two types of pleasure, but I'd again characterize them as "action" and "rest" (with obvious more explanation needed to flesh out those two words).

As for this part I'd say "if we want to talk in terms of action and rest there are only two, but there are many ways to categorize and describe forms of pleasure."

And making the whole issue a question of "movement" being the key question bakes into the cake doubt about the status of "stillness." It becomes very difficult to see how the status of "health" of body or mind is a pleasure if "movement or stillness" is elevated as the defining criteria.

I see issues of movement as one of many ways to slice and dice aspects of pleasure, but I wouldn't elevate movement to the core issue. The core issue is whether whatever we are talking about is pleasing to us or not, and it's not necessary to specify anything more than "being alive and without pain." If we specify that we are alive and what we aren't feeling in a particular experience is pain, then what we're feeling at that experience is pleasure, regardless of how fast or slowly that thing is "moving."

Post by “burninglights” of November 1, 2023 at 9:05 AM

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Post by “Kalosyni” of November 1, 2023 at 1:47 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

3 - Do any of these concepts (1) or (2) or (3) stand intrinsically or by some absolute standard as superior, hierarchically, to the other(s), such that they separately deserve to be considered to be the "ultimate pleasure" or "highest pleasure" or the "best pleasure" or "real pleasure" for all people at all times and at all places?

Dropping into the middle of this thread (no doubt my comment will be too many cooks stirring the pot, but anyway...) ...so these questions could be applied to kinetic and katastematic. Right now as I type this, I think I am currently in the process of experiencing kinetic pleasure, which is pleasurable but there is a sense that I can't be fully satisfied and a niggling feeling of a lack of completion (ever so slight agitation...hint: it involves eating something sweet). Where as katastematic pleasure has a deeper sense of fulfilment and a sense of being at peace (and at rest). So it is an inner felt experience that will be different for everyone depending on the situation, so there is no absolute regarding this. Life is one big mix of both kinetic and katastematic and that just how it is --- so why distinguish between the two?...because you are acknowledging the truth of your own subjective feelings and this will help you make better choices.

Post by “Godfrey” of November 1, 2023 at 3:01 PM

I like where I think [burninglights](#) is going with this.

One question to add into the mix of classifying pleasures into two types: how would a pleasure that doesn't fulfill a desire be classified? If active/passive, moving/still, fulfilling/fulfilled desires relate to k/k, where do pleasures like happening across a pleasant smelling flower, or feeling warm sunshine on a cool day fall in terms of k/k? I think of these as passive, moving (in that they're fleeting), and unrelated to desire. To me, these are kinetic, but I'm not sure how they relate to [Cassius](#) ' question 2:

[Quote from Cassius](#)

2 - Are (1) and (2) the the *only* type of pleasures, or are there (3) other activities / actions / conditions that also fall within pleasure which are not related to desires being acted toward or being fulfilled?

Post by “Don” of November 2, 2023 at 10:43 AM

[burninglights](#) is onto something again and I think I like where he's going! 👍

My perspective is that Epicurus, to the extent that he may be doing it, "prioritizes" katastematic pleasure because of the confidence that we can have it accessing it. It's not dependent on *energeia*.

Post by "Cassius" of November 2, 2023 at 11:41 AM

[Quote from burninglights](#)

"When, therefore, we maintain that pleasure is the end, we do not mean the pleasures of profligates [...] but freedom from pain in the body and from trouble in the mind. (Men. 131)." This point is pretty clear, in my opinion.

This is a key statement. This is "clear," in my opinion, in relating to "katastematic pleasure," only if you previously and firmly have a position that "freedom from pain" is linked to katastematic pleasure.

If Epicurus is, as Torquatus asserts, using the term "freedom from pain" to be an exact synonym of "pleasure," then there is no necessity to read anything whatsoever into the statement in terms of "katastematic pleasure" other than that freedom from pain - which means any experience whatsoever that is not painful - "kinetic," "katastematic," or "supercalifragilistexpealidocius" is a pleasure.

That's the point [Nikolsky](#) and Gosling and Taylor make at length -- there is no reason to read any presumptions about katastematic or kinetic whatsoever into the nature of "freedom from pain" other than that the term "freedom from pain" is interchangeable as a synonym for pleasure.

Every time we go down the road of saying "it's a particular TYPE of pleasure that really is important" then the red warning bells ought to be clanging full force. Pleasure is pleasurable because it is a feeling like snow is white and sugar is sweet. Once you start applying additional qualifiers to "what kind of pleasure you really want" then you've got a major logical dilemma. It's 100% logical to talk about choices and avoidance in terms of what kind of results that they bring, and I think that's where this discussion really goes. You choose and avoid your actions in terms of the total pleasure and pain that result. And yes mental pleasures are often (but not always) more easily in reach than mental ones. But that's not *always* true, nor does it mean that one type of pleasure is *better* than another.

[Quote from burninglights](#)

All this is to say that I think his point is that it's 'pleasure all the way down.' 😊

With that I fully agree, and that takes us back to whether and how to pursue the K/K discussion in a way that doesn't take our eye off the ultimate objective, which is a life of "pleasure."

As to DL 10:137, that's a statement that's reflected in Torquatus at greater length in On Ends Book One XVII. I agree that in general it means that mental feelings are going to be more significant than "bodily" ones, but again that doesn't resolve anything as to katastematic and kinetic because those terms don't map straight to mental and bodily. So again we have a situation where it's clear and productive to observe that mental feelings can be used to overcome bodily pains, and that's graspable and easy to understand. But dividing them katastematically and kinetically is not at all the same observation.

XVII. And I will now explain in a few words the things which are inseparably connected with this sure and solid opinion.

There is no mistake with respect to the ends themselves of good and evil, that is to say, with respect to pleasure and pain; but men err in these points when they do not know what they are caused by. But we admit that the pleasures and pains of the mind are caused by the pleasures and pains of the body. Therefore I grant what you were saying just now, that if any philosophers of our school think differently (and I see that many men do so, but they are ignorant people) they must be convicted of error. But although pleasure of mind brings us joy, and pain causes us grief, it is still true that each of these feelings originates in the body, and is referred to the body; and it does not follow on that account that both the pleasures and pains of the mind are not much more important than those of the body. For with the body we are unable to feel anything which is not actually existent and present; but with our mind we feel things past and things to come. For although when we are suffering bodily pain, we are equally in pain in our minds, still a very great addition may be made to that if we believe that any endless and boundless evil is impending over us. And we may transfer this assertion to pleasure, so that that will be greater if we have no such fear.

This now is entirely evident, that the very greatest pleasure or annoyance of the mind contributes more to making life happy or miserable than either of these feelings can do if it is in the body for an equal length of time. But we do not agree that, if pleasure be taken away, grief follows immediately, unless by chance it happens that pain has succeeded and taken the place of pleasure; but, on the other hand, we affirm that men do rejoice at getting rid of pain even if no pleasure which can affect the senses succeeds. And from this it may be understood how great a pleasure it is not to be in pain. But as we are roused by those good things which we are in expectation of, so we rejoice at those which we recollect. But foolish men are tortured by the recollection of past evils; wise men are delighted by the memory of past good things, which are thus renewed by the agreeable recollection. But there is a feeling implanted in us by which we

[pg 119] bury adversity as it were in a perpetual oblivion, but dwell with pleasure and delight on the recollection of good fortune. But when with eager and attentive minds we dwell on what is past, the consequence is, that melancholy ensues, if the past has been unprosperous; but joy, if it has been fortunate.

Post by “Cassius” of November 2, 2023 at 11:42 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

My perspective is that Epicurus, to the extent that he may be doing it, "prioritizes" katastematic pleasure because of the confidence that we can have it accessing it. It's not dependent on *energeia*.

But in Epicurus' own example at the end of his life, it's the kinetic pleasure of the memory of his associations to which he refers as overriding the pain, correct?

Post by “Don” of November 2, 2023 at 12:02 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from Don](#)

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Touché! 😊

Back to the drawing board!

Post by “Don” of November 2, 2023 at 1:06 PM

[Quote from burninglights](#)

128: The right understanding of these facts enables us to refer all choice and avoidance to the health of the body and the soul's freedom of disturbances, since this is the aim of the life of blessedness.

Keywords

the health of the body

τὴν τοῦ σώματος ὑγίειαν (tēn tou somatos hygieian)

the soul's freedom of disturbances

τὴν <τῆς ψυχῆς> ἀταραξίαν (tēn (tēs psychēs) ataraxian)

[Quote from burninglights](#)

131: When, therefore, we maintain that pleasure is the end, we do not mean the pleasures of profiligates [...] but freedom from pain in the body and from trouble in the mind.

but neither to be pained throughout the body

ἀλλὰ τὸ μήτε ἀλγεῖν κατὰ σῶμα (alla to mēte algein kata sōma)

nor to be troubled throughout the mind.

μήτε ταραττεσθαι κατὰ ψυχὴν·

(mēte tarattesthai kata psychēn)

Post by “Cassius” of November 2, 2023 at 3:04 PM

[Quote from burninglights](#)

what Plato calls pleasure, Epicurus calls kinetic pleasure, and what Plato calls the neutral state, Epicurus calls katastematic pleasure!

And that labeling would be important to emphasize IF we saw that Epicurus himself in his letters, or Lucretius in his poem, or Diogenes of Oinoanda on his wall were insisting on that

labeling as a clear point. [Nikolsky](#) and Gosling and Taylor says we don't see that, and that Lucretius and Epicurus and Diogenes of Oinoanda are all using the word "pleasure" as the best term to describe tightly integrated word referring to all possible types of pleasure.

As I see it the best argument that Epicurus did insist on that labeling is the list of articles that Diogenes Laertius cites. However contrary to that argument is [Nikolsky's](#) observation that Diogenes Laertius was writing as a cataloger who (just like we may be doing today) was looking at Epicurus with the expectation to apply these labels to Epicurus' framework - a framework that does not necessarily turn on "motion" at all.

Where I think we all agree is that it is very important to emphasize that the normal natural state is one of pleasure, even in the absence of active stimulation.

What we don't agree on, or at least I don't see us being sure of, is that the key issue in discussing this natural state involves "motion." Both "kinetic" and "katastematic" appear to focus on "motion" vs. "rest," while "Pleasure" entails both. And I'd be open to the idea too that "motion" and "rest" probably do not describe all the possible types of pleasure, and that whether "in motion" or "at rest" or "otherwise," any experience that is not painful falls under "pleasure."

Post by “Godfrey” of November 2, 2023 at 4:06 PM

Interesting discussion!

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I keep putting "temporarily" in brackets only because we all know that we'll get hungry and thirsty and want more pleasures every couple of hours so long as we continue to live. That observation doesn't matter to Epicurus, because he identifies *both* the state of acting to fulfill those desires, and the state of fulfillment, as pleasure, so the general condition of life is pleasure.

Using this example it seems to me that you could consider kinetic pleasure to be eating as well as relieving hunger and the temporary state of not being hungry. Katastematic pleasure would be the secure knowledge that you don't have to worry about where your next meal is coming from.

Referring to a prior point by [burninglights](#) , with this reading of k/k, katastematic pleasure doesn't necessarily arise from kinetic pleasures, particularly those of eating. It may involve pain and struggle to arrive at a point where you have the confidence that you don't have to worry

about going hungry: activities such as planting crops, harvesting &c.

The actions that you might take to reduce this pain and struggle might include such things as cultivating a social order to provide a division of labor and a state of security. These two things would potentially provide additional pleasures such as friendship.

Post by "Don" of November 3, 2023 at 12:01 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from Don](#)

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But in Epicurus' own example at the end of his life, it's the kinetic pleasure of the memory of his associations to which he refers as overriding the pain, correct?

Just had to see how it was worded...

"On this blissful day, which is also the last of my life, I write this to you. My continual sufferings from strangury and dysentery are so great that nothing could augment them ; but over against them all I set gladness of mind at the remembrance of our past conversations. But I would have you, as becomes your life-long attitude to me and to philosophy, watch over the children of Metrodorus."

"Τὴν μακαρίαν ἄγοντες καὶ ἅμα τελευταίαν ἡμέραν τοῦ βίου ἐγράφομεν ὑμῖν ταυτί. στραγγουρία τε παρηκολουθήκει καὶ δυσεντερικὰ πάθη ὑπερβολὴν οὐκ ἀπολείποντα τοῦ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς μεγέθους. ἀντιπαρετάττετο δὲ πᾶσι τούτοις τὸ κατὰ ψυχὴν χαῖρον ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν γεγονότων ἡμῖν διαλογισμῶν μνήμη. σὺ δ' ἀξίως τῆς ἐκ μειρακίου παραστάσεως πρὸς ἐμὲ καὶ φιλοσοφίαν ἐπιμελοῦ τῶν παίδων Μητροδώρου."

gladness of mind

τὸ κατὰ ψυχὴν χαῖρον (to kata psykhe khairon), lit. "the rejoicing throughout (my) mind"

χαῖρον is indeed related to the "kinesis/energeia" pleasure χαρά "joy"

To enjoy [+dative = something] = μνήμη (dative) "remembrance, memory"

So, τὸ κατὰ ψυχὴν χαῖρον ἐπὶ τῆ ... μνήμη "the enjoying throughout (my) mind... of the memory"

Post by "Don" of November 3, 2023 at 12:17 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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As I see it the best argument that Epicurus did insist on that labeling is the list of articles that Diogenes Laertius cites. However contrary to that argument is [Nikolsky's](#) observation that Diogenes Laertius was writing as a cataloger who (just like we may be doing today) was looking at Epicurus with the expectation to apply these labels to Epicurus' framework - a framework that does not necessarily turn on "motion" at all.

Diogenes Laertius is *citing* Epicurus himself when the term *katastematic* is quoted! (With editing added)

[136] Διαφέρεται δὲ πρὸς τοὺς Κυρηναϊκοὺς περὶ τῆς ἡδονῆς: οἱ μὲν γὰρ τὴν καταστηματικὴν οὐκ ἐγκρίνουσι, μόνην δὲ τὴν ἐν κινήσει: ὁ δὲ ἀμφοτέρων : : ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος, ὡς φησιν ἐν τῷ Περὶ αἰρέσεως καὶ φυγῆς καὶ ἐν τῷ Περὶ τέλους καὶ ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ Περὶ βίων καὶ ἐν τῇ πρὸς τοὺς ἐν Μυτιλήνῃ φιλοσόφους ἐπιστολῇ. ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Διογένης ἐν τῇ ἑπτακαιδεκάτῃ τῶν Ἐπιλέκτων καὶ Μητρόδωρος ἐν τῷ Τιμοκράτει λέγουσιν οὕτω: νοουμένης δὲ ἡδονῆς τῆς τε κατὰ κίνησιν καὶ τῆς καταστηματικῆς. ὁ δ' Ἐπίκουρος ἐν τῷ Περὶ αἰρέσεων οὕτω λέγει: "ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀταραξία καὶ ἀπονία καταστηματικάι εἰσιν ἡδοναί: ἡ δὲ χαρὰ καὶ ἡ εὐφροσύνη κατὰ κίνησιν ἐνεργεῖα βλέπονται."

[136] [Epicurus] differs from the Cyrenaics with regard to pleasure. They do not include under the term the pleasure which is a state of rest (καταστηματικὴν *katastematiken*), but only that which consists in motion (ἐν κινήσει *en kinesei*). Epicurus admits both ; also pleasure of mind as well as of body (ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος), as [Epicurus] states:

- in [Epicurus'] work *On Choice and Avoidance*
 - and in [Epicurus'] *On the Ethical End*,
 - and in [Epicurus'] first book of his work *On Human Life*
 - and in [Epicurus'] epistle to his philosopher friends in Mytilene.
 - So also Diogenes in the seventeenth book of his *Epilecta*,
 - and Metrodorus in his *Timocrates*, whose actual words are : "Thus pleasure being conceived both as that species which consists in motion and that which is a state of rest."
 - The words of Epicurus in his work *On Choice [and Avoidance]* are : "Peace of mind and freedom from pain are pleasures which imply a state of rest ; joy and delight are seen to consist in motion and activity."
-

Post by “Don” of November 3, 2023 at 7:48 AM

And, since we've noted pleasures of mind and body don't map directly into katastematic and kinetic; Diogenes Laertius states that, too:

[Quote from Don](#)

Epicurus admits both (pleasure which is a state of rest and consists in motion).; ALSO pleasure of mind as well as of body,

Post by “Don” of November 3, 2023 at 11:19 AM

Good call, [burninglights](#)

Just to confirm your suspicion, the letter begins:

Τὴν μακαρίαν... ἡμέραν

The blessed day ..

That μακαρίαν is the same word used in PD1 to describe the blessed state of the gods.

Post by “Pacatus” of November 4, 2023 at 5:13 PM

The more I think about (and we talk about) kinetic and katastematic pleasure, the more I am convinced that they are best described by example than by attempts at formulaic definition – and that descriptive definition ought to be treated only as aids to eliciting such experience in our personal lives (rather like the Zen concept of words as “fingers pointing to the moon”: let’s not get caught up worrying over the “fingers” – they are a useful, perhaps even necessary, pedagogical ploy, that’s all -- and enough).

A couple of illustrations:

1. I enjoy the kinetic pleasure of preparing and eating a meal (in terms of the aesthetic pleasure of preparing, the removal of hunger, and the gustatory pleasure of the taste – all of that). Afterward, I enjoy the lingering katastematic pleasure of satisfaction and contentment.
2. I enjoy the kinetic pleasure of a climactic sexual experience. Afterward, I bask in the lingering katastematic pleasure of contentment (often called “the afterglow”).
3. I enjoy the kinetic pleasure of a certain mental activity – such as playing a game of chess – and afterward enjoy the lingering memory (without necessarily trying to activate that memory: just letting it be).

Other than specific instances, I’d add a general feeling of good health and wellbeing as katãstema – as a lingering (more or less stable) background pathé of pleasure, no doubt the result of various kinetic pursuits of various pleasures.

At bottom, I think that hardline distinctions are not necessary – rather they can blend, one into the other. Anyway, that is the way I have come to think of it. 😊