

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

Post by "Cassius" of June 30, 2022 at 8:35 AM

Maybe one of the most productive ways to grapple with this involves being very clear what kinetic(active) and katastematic(static) really means, using examples.

What Kalosyni said is part of the problem: unless you take the time to study what the Greeks were saying, as Gosling and Taylor do in detail, it is natural to think that "katastematic/static/ataraxia" translates into something like:

"I'm sitting on my porch meditating and clearing my mind and just feeling good without any troubles at all."

I am convinced that if you read Gosling and Taylor's description of the words and the history, you will conclude that even THAT example is an example of a "kinetic" pleasure. It is difficult or impossible to express in normal terms how a human being can experience anything that is unchanging and therefore "katastematic." That is because the Greeks were rigorously defining kinetic to include anything which involves any experience over time at all. Therefore ANY experience over time falls under "kinetic." As a result anything that you want to call "katastematic" loses that title if you can actually "experience" it. (I don't see this in the discussions but presumably you would need to divide PAINS into kinetic and katastematic as well as pleasures, which would also be an interesting way to get at the issues.)

To be katastematic/static under the definitions G&T pull out of Plato et al would involve true and absolute "rest" -- a state of no change whatsoever. That might almost be like a "freeze-frame" in a video -- where a particular set of circumstances exists in totally unchanging form. But such "states" do not exist in an Epicurean universe: everything is a combination of atoms whirling through space, and nothing is ever exactly the same for more than a moment in time.

All this would take a lot of work and study to document adequately, and this is too short an explanation without cites. But I know I remember G&T spending a lot of time on this, and if I recall correctly this aspect -- whether katastematic pleasure can be experienced - is a focus of Wenham's paper we have online here: [On Cicero's Interpretation of Katastematic Pleasure In Epicurus](#)

Wenham's abstract from that article:

Quote

The standard interpretation of the concept of katastematic pleasure in Epicurus has it referring to "static" states from which feeling is absent. We owe the prevalence of this

interpretation to Cicero's account of Epicureanism in his *De Finibus Bonorum Et Malorum*. Cicero's account, in turn, is based on the Platonic theory of pleasure. The standard interpretation, when applied to principles of Epicurean hedonism, leads to fundamental contradictions in his theory. I claim that it is not Epicurus, but the standard interpretation that generates these errors because the latter construes pleasure in Epicurus according to an attitudinal theoretical framework, whilst the account of pleasure that emerges from Epicurean epistemology sees it as experiential.