

Is gratitude a katastematic or kinetic pleasure?

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.