

Preuss - "Epicurean Ethics - Katastematic Hedonism"

Post by "Cassius" of July 12, 2025 at 10:46 PM

A pleasure to engage with you in this....

[Quote from DistantLaughter](#)

Furthermore, the katastematic/kinetic distinction itself is a later philosophical construct imposed retrospectively on Epicurus's

Now that is essentially the position taken by [Nikolsky](#) in concluding that Epicurus did NOT put a great deal of emphasis on the kinetic / katastematic position. Do you agree with that ?

[Quote from DistantLaughter](#)

Ironically, this very dispute over categorical precision—arguably a kinetic agitation of the mind—may itself undermine the Epicurean ideal of peace of mind (ataraxia) that these concepts aim to clarify.

This is why I reject the idea that "peace of mind" is the ultimate goal of Epicurean philosophy. I would say the goal is "pleasure" and that pleasure entails a great deal of mental and physical activity.

When Lucretius understood to explain the philosophy to Memmius, he did not say "give up all your possessions and goals, live ascetically, eat simply, and just breathe - get out of the way and clear your mind and all will be sweetness and light."

Instead, he launched off on six books of highly polemical argument about what knowledge and training is needed to live the best life. Just like Epicurus devoted himself to 37 books on nature and Diogenes of Oinoanda built his wall.

What I object to most strenuously is the idea that Epicurus calls us to disengage with all normal activity of the mind and body, and to consider that at best to be a necessary requirement of some kind of ineffable mental state that no one can really explain other than as a kind of neostoic or neobuddhist mental detachment from the way the world and all other living things in it really operate.

Granted the conclusion of the book is not quite so stark, and draws back from such a conclusion as if we are not good enough to achieve it, but setting that kind of thing up as a goal seems to me to be much more appropriate for the aforementioned Stoics and Buddhists than for someone who is convinced that this life is the only one we have.

And that's why I was particularly surprised to see the expression of doubt as to death being nothing to us and an apparent favorable reference to reincarnation.

You have clearly thought of these things before so I look forward to your further thoughts.

But I am afraid our time zone issues will now slow us down. 😊