

Episode 298 - TD26 - Facts And Feelings In Epicurean Philosophy - Part 1"

Post by "Cassius" of September 16, 2025 at 8:48 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Epicurus is on record for including both kinetic and katastematic pleasures within his definition of "pleasure." I have now come to understand kinetic pleasures as those arising from factors and circumstances and that "stand out" from our "background" state of katastematic pleasures within ourselves. A metaphor discussed at the EpicureanFriends forum for this was that katastematic pleasures are the calm ocean while kinetic pleasures are the waves which we can surf. We can enjoy both floating on the calm water as well as the catching of the waves and "shooting the curl." While Epicurus conveys (along with Metrodorus and Philodemus) that we can be more confident in katastematic pleasures, we continue to "delight" in kinetic pleasures when they are available. It is the exclusivity of "getting stuck in" only seeing kinetic pleasures as pleasure that Epicurus is objecting to here with τὰς ἐν ἀπολαύσει κειμένας.

Don:

Would you say that the first and primary meaning that should be associated with the term "kinetic " is "something that arises from factors and circumstances that 'stand out,'" and that the term "katastematic" should be associated with "a background state within ourselves about which we can be more confident?"

If not, what would you say is the first and primary meaning that should be associated with the terms "kinetic" and "katastematic"?

Asked another way, if you are lecturing to a group of students who are new to Greek, what is the first and most important thing you would tell them that makes up the essence of the terms "kinetic" and "katastematic? Would you say that "foreground vs. background" and "less available vs. more available" and "calm vs wavey" would convey the essential meaning of kinetic vs katastematic?