

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

Post by "Cassius" of September 16, 2025 at 3:35 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

To answer your question, I see katastematic pleasure as that which results, at least in part, from the weeding out of fear of the gods and death. Once those are truly rooted out - not just intellectually but viscerally - they don't come back. Without those fears and anxieties, the mind can remain untroubled. That's katastematic pleasure. A firm state of being.

Kinetic pleasure are all the pleasures that arise in the moment, from pleasant memories to drinking with friends to eating food.

That's the nutshell.

Yes, in this case I worded the question the way I did for a purpose, and added what seems to me to be the very understandable, and in this case likely correct interpretation of the specific phrases.

You're describing in your answer *kinetic pleasure* and *katastematic pleasure* but to my mind it's more important first to convey what kinetic and katastematic mean, so that there is no implication that the entire term is some kind of made up jargon that only Epicurus understood.

Kinetic is a word that has meaning in Greek just like katastematic. Is it not of first importance to understand what they mean separately before combining them with pleasure?

That's what the proposed summary does, and it seems to me that it's likely correct. Starting at that point would avoid the ambiguity that arises in talking about which attributes of a thing are primary, which are secondary, etc.

In this case, I do agree that "a firm state of being" is probably the primary sense of katastematic, and something surrounding "motion" is probably the primary sense of kinetic.

And I also agree that "*that which results, at least in part, from the weeding out of fear of the gods and death*" makes up a major component of what's being referenced as katastematic.

But with the word katastematic, in contrast with kinetic, we're using a word that has no clear English analog. With kinetic we can grasp intuitively why Cicero describes the pleasures as

those that "move" us. But there's no equivalent point of reference with "katastematic" to keep people from going off into any wild tangent that they might personally want to entertain as to what it means.

I'd say Grok's proposal of an analogy makes considerable sense. A *car in motion* versus a *car parked in a garage*. That's a down to earth example that - if valid - makes clear that we're talking about easily understandable concepts, and not just using a term that makes "absence of pain" even more difficult to understand.

And with that as background, I'd say that there's no direct and necessary relationship between absence of pain and "katastematic pleasure." I'd say the relationship that's important is that pleasure is the opposite of pain, so there's either pleasure or pain, not one of the other. Katastematic and kinetic are two types of pleasure, but "absence of pain" can arise from the presence of any kind of moving or continuous pleasures.

Right now, as 90%+ of the world is talking about it, they are saying or implying that absence of pain according to Epicurus is *katastematic pleasure*, when they should be saying simply that absence of pain is *pleasure*.

I know you're not doing that yourself, Don, I'm just pointing out that this confusion has very damaging consequences, and we need better ways to clear up this confusion. And probably that better way involves finding ways to de-mystify the word "katastematic."