

# VS11 - VS11 and Kinetic / Katastematic Pleasure

Post by "Cassius" of February 5, 2020 at 4:16 PM

## [Quote from Hiram](#)

One of the possible things that comes to mind is that Epicurus has been cited as saying "I call you to constant pleasures", and that this line of reasoning is that passive and active pleasures both complete a lifestyle of constant pleasures. We can not be always active (or else we'd be exhausted) or constantly idle.

And yes, I am good with that too!

I was just reacting initially to your title of the thread, which appears to place this in the kinetic/katestematic opposition analysis, which per the cites stated here is very misleading and essentially unEpicurean. So taken out of that context, I don't have any problem at all with this last conclusion.

Taking that further, your analysis helps provide a good construction of [VS11](#) which removes it as useful for the katastematic crowd, as long as people understand that background

So going back to this original statement, I agree that it "names a problem" but not one that is being addressed by "the kinetic/katastematic categories."

## [Quote from Hiram](#)

I think VS 11 does seem to name a problem that is being addressed by the kinetic/katastematic categories of pleasures

As to those categories themselves, it's really hard for me to find a useful reason for Epicureans to refer to them (especially in untranslated Greek form), except to acknowledge that they were likely invented by pre-Epicurean enemies of pleasure of the good as an argument to undercut pleasure, for which Epicurus prepared an effective reply when he endorsed **both** and made clear that one does not have primacy over the other.

That's what I see in this statement from Diogenes Laertius - a medicinal response that inoculates against the false view that pleasures of "rest" are superior to pleasures of "action":

***Epicurus differs from the Cyrenaics about pleasure. For they do not admit static pleasure, but only that which consists in motion. But Epicurus admits both kinds both in the soul and in the body, as he says in the work on Choice and Avoidance and in the book on The Ends of Life and in the first book On Lives and in the letter to his friends in Mytilene. Similarly, Diogenes in the 17th book of Miscellanies and***

***Metrodorus in the Timocrates speak thus: 'Pleasure can be thought of both as consisting in motion and as static.' And Epicurus in the work on Choice speaks as follows: 'Freedom from trouble in the mind and from pain in the body are static pleasures, but Joy and exultation are considered as active pleasures involving motion. '***

And of course, to repeat [Nikolsky](#)'s point, this is Diogenes Laertius, writing hundreds of years AFTER Epicurus, probably simply applying a rote formula which DL thought would be helpful to his readers of his own time, but which probably meant little more than a debating point to the Epicureans of Epicurus' time.

I think I want to really emphasize that last point, which is not mine but DeWitt's general argument. So much of Epicurus is really set of observations that inoculates the student against false ideas. Here, the inoculation is that once you realize that ALL pleasure is good, including both "active" and "resting" or any other categories you want to come up with, then you never get tempted to "Rank" those categories against each other, because you see that such categories are artificial and ultimately meaningless. Categorization like that is a trademark Aristotelian / Stoic / Platonic diversion, not something that is an inherent focus of Epicurean philosophy.

Even the "natural/necessary" distinction is ultimately nothing more than a rule of thumb and we don't have any significant examples of the Epicureans dwelling on it as as bright line test. Yes I know Torquatus praises it, and Epicurus cites it in the letter to Menoeceus, but if it were so critical there would be lots of examples of what activities fit in what categories, and there aren't such discussions -- for an obvious reason: context is king and what is "necessary" in one context is going to be absolutely "unnecessary" in another. The natural / necessary distinction is little more than a "rule of thumb" and as Torquatus explains, the principle behind the rule is nothing more than a call to evaluate how hard it is to achieve a particular pleasure in a particular context. And that in itself is nothing more than a call to examine the full consequences of any action action before you take it.