

As To The Three Legs Of The Canon (Sensations, Feelings, Anticipations) Is it Possible to Experience (Receive Data?) From One Without The Others?

Post by "Cassius" of February 6, 2023 at 4:52 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Epicurus seems to treat the mental faculties of the mind as a sense organ picking up sensations from subtle images leading to thought and memory.

As I read things there is no doubt about that being part of the big picture of the operation of the mind. Clearly Epicurus says this.

I presume that a tricky part is per Joshua:

[Quote from Joshua](#)

but after he knows of it he stops requiring sensation to feel pleasure or pain about it.

Would this be consistent with PD2 relating to absence of sensation being nothing to us? Do the faculties operate so independently that "over here" we have the five senses operating on one set of data while "over here" the pleasure faculty is operating on an entirely different set of data or somehow operating without any data at all?

Are we talking about memory here, to the effect that once a memory is stored the five senses are no longer involved at all? Is not the pleasure or pain from our memory essentially a stored sensation?

In other words for purposes of PD2 and maybe other uses, should we be considering memory of a sensation to be the equivalent of a "new" or "contemporaneous" sensation?

Is "pleasure" like "yellow" - in that pleasure does not exist apart from sensations that are pleasurable just like yellow does not exist apart from things that are yellow? This question I think is particularly important.

Should we ask the same about anticipations? Do anticipations exist apart from sensations and feelings?

Can any of these three faculties be considered to have an independent existence apart from the others?

Would it be concerning if we were to admit that "pleasure" exists apart from "sensations that are pleasurable?" I sense that this question is closely related to the also-troubling contention that katastematic pleasure is some kind of special and higher pleasure, different in nature from any other "normal" type of pleasure, and somehow separate and apart from experience/sensation.

This reminds me of Dewitt's observation that pleasure has no meaning except to the living. "Pleasure" can exist outside the normal functioning living being no more than a soul or spirit can be considered to exist outside the living body, right?

Also: we can choose in our mind to consider yellow apart from a lemon if we prefer, but that doesn't mean yellow exists without our picturing in our mind's eye something that is yellow, does it? This phrase "mind's eye" may be related to the topic. Does our mind have an ear and a nose and a tongue too?

When we say "Imagine something..." Does that mean anything different than summoning up the "image" from storage rather than from the "current" eyeball input? Is summoning up the image from storage so conceptually different for our current purposes such that the result should not be considered to be a sensation? If we close our eyes for just a moment is the pleasure we are feeling from the stored picture in our mind (of the same object while our eyes are closed) so very different in kind? Does the blink of an eye while we are standing in the Louvre change how we should consider the pleasure we feel in appreciating the Mona Lisa?

Seems to me that we are in danger if we don't consider that this discussion has both "biological" aspects and "philosophical" or "conceptual" aspects. Can't (or shouldn't) we conceive of both stored and contemporaneous images as having exactly the same ability to be considered properly as sensations?

[PD02. Death is nothing to us](#), for that which is dissolved is without sensation; and that which lacks sensation is nothing to us.

Does that mean that we should consider ourselves to be dead when we stop receiving new sensations from functioning organs, or only after our minds have ceased to function and to be able to *both* receive new *and* operate on stored memories of sensations?

All this interrelationship is why I think it is ridiculous to single out and interpret "katastematic pleasure" or "tranquility" or "ataraxia" or "aponia" or any other particular word as something higher than, or special in kind, or anything more than one among many experiences of (or aspects of or perspectives on) the "Pleasure" that we use as a description of our general goal in living a full human life.

(And when I say I think it is ridiculous, what I mean is I think Epicurus would have thought this interpretation of his words to be ridiculous too.)

It makes much more sense that Epicurus was taking a very general and common sense perspective on life, so that when he was asked "What is the Goal of Life?" the discussion went

something like this:

- Can life be considered to have a goal, Epicurus?

- "If you would like to, Yes."

- Is the goal of life Virtue, or living nobly and virtuously?

- "No."

- is the goal of life Piety, or obedience to the Gods?

- "No."

- Is the goal of life Rationality, since the distinguishing factor of man is that he is the rational animal?

- "No."

- Is the goal of life constant partying, as people claim you do?

- "No."

- Is the goal of life Tranquility, or the elimination of pain?

- "No."

- "Is the goal of life Happiness, or eudaemonia, or flourishing, or well-being?"

- "No, not in the clearest manner of speaking."

- Then what do you say the goal is, Epicurus?

- "Pleasure - which includes the pleasure that comes from living virtuously, and the pleasure that comes from having holy opinions about the gods, and the pleasure that comes from using our minds rationally, and the pleasure that comes from partying, and the pleasure that comes from tranquility, and the pleasure that comes from eliminating pain, and the pleasure that comes from feeling happiness, and the pleasure that comes from many other types of experiences as well."