

Modern Neuroscience And The Katastematic / Kinetic Debate

Post by “Don” of July 1, 2023 at 3:10 PM

(I realize this thread has strayed waaaaay off the original topic 😊 but this is a good conversation, so I'll let Cassius decide if it needs to be branched off or not)

In thinking about this a little more...

We always have to remember not to confuse desires with feelings. I don't think we're doing that here, but just putting that notice up again.

It also seems to me that ataraxia ((tranquility), aponia* (see footnote), chara, (joy) and euphrosyne (delight) could be described as *emotions* that is how we *experience* pleasure in our body and mind. Pleasure and pain are the two valents available to us to describe our affect with level of arousal the other axis. I go back to the circumplex model of affect:

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Euphrosyne and xhara would be positive (pleasant) valence with high arousal (in the Happy Quadrant); ataraxia and aponia would be high positive valence and low arousal (in the Content(ment) Quadrant).

Maybe katastematic and kinetic were simply Epicurus way to describe the quadrants on the right (NOTE: Knowing fully well he didn't have a circumplex model of affect!! This is just a modern way of diagramming affect). Cyrenaics ONLY accepted the upper right quadrant as "Pleasure"; Epicurus accepted everything to the RIGHT of the vertical axis. I've stated this before (I think on one of the podcast threads, so sorry if this is duplicating what you've already read there.)

I have no trouble accepting that some people, ancient and modern, would only use PLEASURE to describe active pleasures one engages in with their body. I'd still call those kinetic pleasures... a pleasurable feeling *caused* by a external circumstances in which one engages. To describe it another way, people can SEE you engaging in activities from which you derive kinetic pleasures. Katastematic pleasures are those engaged in INSIDE your head (or in your chest if we're using the "your mind is in your chest/abdomen" paradigm of Epicurus). People can't SEE you engaged in those activities although they can be very powerfully felt by you.

Again, running the risk of thinking out loud but trying to add fuel to the fire for further conversation... or maybe that's fire to the minefield to paraphrase Little Rocker 😊 .

*aponia - I don't see - and don't think it's interpreted correctly - aponia as "being free from pain" in the sense of just "not feeling any pain." The word is "a + ponia (ponos)". Ponos includes:

πόνος (πόνος)

- work, especially hard work; toil
- bodily exertion, exercise
- work, task, business
- the consequence of toil, distress, trouble, suffering
- anything produced by work, a work

It seems to me that aponia is to the body as ataraxia is to the mind. Ataraxia is a tranquil, well-functioning, calm mind. Aponia is the sense of your body working perfectly, the sense/feeling that athletes (And I wouldn't know this from first-hand experience 😄) get when they're in the flow and their bodies are just acting effortlessly. That's my sense of aponia.