

# Modern Neuroscience And The Katastematic / Kinetic Debate

Post by “TauPhi” of July 3, 2023 at 1:07 PM

## [Quote from Don](#)

the katastematic pleasure is the preferred background condition of being. Kinetic pleasure is the moment by moment awareness of individual pleasures. Katastematic pleasure is the calm ocean, kinetic pleasures are the waves.

[Don](#) This metaphor of yours is pretty similar in essence to how I understand katastemic pleasure. My understanding is probably not even close to what Epicurus had in mind, but I kind of like it. Especially, because I came up with my metaphor thanks to one of my favourite dreams from the past. Anyway, here it is (the metaphor for katastemic pleasure, not the dream).

I like to imagine myself as a lonely child in a deep forest for the first time. Inexperienced, ignorant and scared of my present surroundings. The forest is full of ghosts, screams and shadows. Everything seems hostile to me. Everything wants to hurt me. So I crouch up trembling next to the closest tree, praying for my life. And it seems to work. I'm still alive. And I eventually stop praying and I'm still alive. So I get up and get the courage to open my eyes and look around. I forgot for a moment that I'm scared and I start to investigate my surroundings. Enough time passes and I know now that the ghosts and shadows are caused by the sun and leaves. They are quite beautiful, in fact. Screams don't come from human flesh hungry beasts but animals living peacefully in the forest. I know the forest. I understand it. And one day when I'm comfortable and confident enough I close my eyes, spread my arms, smile and inhale in awe my beautiful forest. And from now on nothing is going to take that feeling of connection, harmony, inner peace and joy from me until I die. I know how to sustain that feeling because I know and understand enough.

This is how I imagine katastemic pleasure and the ideal progress in life. It's quite close to ataraxia, I guess. As you said [Don](#), katastemic pleasure is ever present background and it's there for grabs if one puts enough effort to understand how to get it. Kinetic pleasures are all the little things in between. In my metaphor, these are trees, leaves, sun and animals. They are temporary excitations that bring variety to life. And maybe I'm wrong imagining it this way but even then, it's a pleasant thought.