

Modern Neuroscience And The Katastematic / Kinetic Debate

Post by “Godfrey” of July 28, 2023 at 2:17 AM

You make some good points [Don](#) ... I'm definitely still percolating as well!

The 80/20 part needs a lot more explanation and clarification and is probably best left out for now. It also is a modern idea and is just confusing things at this point. (Having said that, the 80/20 Principle by Richard Koch is an excellent book on the subject, and one theme of the book is maximizing happiness.)

[Quote from Don](#)

the one thing that strikes me as askew is comparing desires with pleasure. Desires to me are one thing; pleasure and pain are another thing. Desires imply cognition and rational decision-making, whereas pleasure and pain are sensations which we can't decide not to feel.

Excellent point! I'm basically seeing the pursuit of pleasure and analysis of desires as two mental models to help achieve the goal of pleasure. In order to maximize our pleasure, we can focus on either or both. For the moment let's ignore the categories to get to the "higher level" thoughts. Thinking out loud, the moment that we "pursue" a pleasure we have created a desire that we are attempting to satisfy. By experiencing the pleasure, we have satisfied the desire. So any choice or avoidance is, I think, subject to this process as you rightly describe.

OK, so, working with choices and avoidances, let's now look at categories. I guess what I'm trying to get to is using PDs 15, 21, 26 and 30 as a boardwalk to the ocean of katastematic pleasure, and in so doing to demystify katastematic pleasure and make it a practical idea. The way that I'm trying to do this is by thinking in terms of efficiency: thinking through the things in our lives that give us the most lasting pleasure and/or the most nagging pain, and determining the most effective ways to address these things so as to maximize our pleasure. By no means would this mean eliminating the "icing on the cake" (or the cake), but it's a way to organize our time to provide the greatest pleasure, whatever that may be for each of us. It's also a way to dig into some of these issues like pleasure v desire, katastematic v kinetic, intensity and duration of pleasure....

[Quote from Don](#)

you're proposing that the bulk of our "baseline" pleasure is going to come from meeting our "natural and necessary" desires, but the kinetic pleasure is ...to make up a new

metaphor... the icing that really makes the cake delicious?

Yes, but I'm reading natural and necessary as defined as "those that bring pain when unfulfilled and that don't take undue effort to fulfill." There is no pre-determined list of these things, they are only things described by this definition. And, to me, this definition describes desires that, when fulfilled, give us "a lot of bang for our buck", that bang for our buck being katastematic pleasure. So Epicurus isn't laying down some mystical dogma, he's describing the most efficient way to maximize our pleasure. Very practical and medicinal.

Katastematic pleasures then are those that result from specific (to each individual) natural and necessary desires as just defined. Referring to the examples in post #57 above, two of these could be (for a particular individual, and possibly changing over time) the pleasure of financial stability, and the pleasure of awe combined with a sense of belonging in the material universe.