

# Thoughts on continuous pleasure, hedonic regimen

Post by “Godfrey” of August 29, 2019 at 8:45 PM

I’m working on digesting DeWitt, Gosling & Taylor (having some indigestion with this one) and Wenham regarding katastematic and kinetic pleasure. Trying to get beyond the academic and into the practical day to day. So I’m putting some thoughts down to help me in the process and putting them here to see if they hold up.

Wenham seems to be spot on in describing pleasure as “experiential” as opposed to “attitudinal”, and supporting this with the fact that pleasure is a Feeling and a part of the Canon.

Regarding katastematic and kinetic pleasures and whether or not Epicurus defined them in this way, I confess that I’m a bit lost. Since I’m not writing this for academia but for my own pleasure and it’s growth, now I’m just putting down ideas (hopefully coherently) that came up while reading DeWitt’s The New Hedonism.

What is definitely attributable to Epicurus seem to be the ideas of continuous pleasure and unity of pleasure. Thinking about my experience of continuous pleasure leads me to times when I have been troubled by something and have, usually through extended effort, managed to solve the problem. Examples: 1) I spent years trying to figure out the most prudent way of saving and investing. It was (and still is) a great relief when I finally did a period of intense research and decided on and implemented a strategy that works for me. 2) Similarly for chronic health challenges: after extended periods of trial and error, finally arriving at a solution provides mental as well as physical relief/pleasure. 3) Being at a transitional period of my life, I embarked on an extended period of reading and introspection and in the process discovered Epicurus’ philosophy which has relieved much mental disturbance and brought much pleasure.

Is there a point where kinetic pleasure becomes continuous pleasure? Each of these examples (finances, health and philosophy) involves continued maintenance. If the maintenance is neglected the pleasure eventually vanishes. This is how I am understanding condensation (or more accurately extension, as it’s opposite) of pleasure.... A natural and necessary desire by it’s nature is recurrent (eating, drinking, etc.); autarchy is achieved when prudently considered continued effort, carried out through a what could be called an hedonic regimen, allows one to reach a place of continuous pleasure. At this point the natural and unnecessary pleasures provide the icing on the cake.

In other words, continuous pleasure requires continued effort and action. Over time, I think, the effort diminishes although the action involved may continue. Using my examples above: 1) Having settled on a strategy for my finances, there are “chores” which I perform weekly, some which I perform quarterly, and some that I do every six months. Notably the chores aren’t

necessarily pleasurable in themselves, but they do lead to pleasure/peace of mind. 2) Having found a solution to a chronic health problem, one must continuously monitor one's diet, exercise, sleep, take one's meds if applicable, etc. 3) Similarly, philosophy requires continued reading, contemplation and ideally discussion to really take root and flourish.

So pleasure is pleasure. Some pleasures are the result of continuous effort, some are more immediate. Some are mental, some are physical. Some pleasures are attained by removing things (fear of the gods, fear of death, other mental disturbance, illness, etc.) and some by obtaining and/or consuming or doing things (food, water, reading a good book, going skiing). Some are necessary for life, some make life more fun. Taking care of things that pain our bodies or disturb our minds brings us pleasure: health and serenity are our natural states and feel good. When our bodies and minds are free of pain and disturbance we can especially enjoy other pleasures, particularly if they outweigh any pain involved. As the sky has much variety but is all the sky, so goes pleasure.