

On "Happiness" As An Abstraction / "Pleasure" As a Feeling

Post by "Elayne" of January 12, 2021 at 8:43 AM

[Don](#) I think maybe I see what you are doing. Yes, a mental process, cognition, can _also_ cause pain or pleasure! That was one of Epicurus' major themes, that pleasure is both through the sense organs and through various thoughts, such as memories. If the reaction to thoughts is desirable, something we enjoy, it is a felt sensation-- a feeling. Not the thought itself but a response to the thought. Happiness for most is a feeling of pleasure, whether or not a thought is what triggered it. I feel happiness as a strong wave of pleasure in my body.

Here is the cause of pleasure with painful hot peppers-- it is not cognitive. The pain fibers are being stimulated and this triggers the release of endorphins. For some people more than others. I'm not a fan, lol. I get enough pleasure in ways that don't make me cry ☹️.

It's possible that the apparently simultaneous feeling of pleasure in one part of the body and pain in another is just extremely rapid attentional task-switching-- but if so, it is so rapid that it is too fast for us to consciously experience sometimes, and feelings are experiential. I have felt simultaneous pain and pleasure-- not mixed (a different thing), but both seemingly at once. It is similar to vision-- neurologically, I am not really seeing the wide field of objects I experience seeing simultaneously. But because that very rapid process of filling in the whole field is impossible to experience consciously, I experience the act of seeing the whole visual field.