

Pleasure and Reality

Post by "Cassius" of April 8, 2019 at 11:05 AM

[Quote from Elayne](#)

We have had several threads lately on FB addressing the principle that pleasure is pleasure-- no higher or lower pleasures.

Elayne I consider this to be a very complicated subject and your discussion of how pleasure works is very helpful. However before I dive in to the medical side of what you are saying, I don't know that we (me included) are totally clear on the philosophical side.

When I read the Epicurean quotes, and when I read what DeWitt thinks they mean, ultimately I think we are headed in the direction of something like:

There are many different types of pleasures, and they differ in intensity and duration and probably other attributes as well, but the reason we call them pleasure is that our feeling of pleasure tells us that they are pleasurable.

I say this because when you say "no higher vs lower" I think that needs to be understood in the sense of "noble vs ignoble" or "worthy vs unworthy" or "virtuous vs unvirtuous." In other words what I am thinking is being said is not that all pleasure is essentially the same in every respect, but more simply that we recognize something as pleasurable simply because our "feelings" tell us it is.

As with the color analogy that I made on the recent graphic, in "the feeling of pleasure" i am thinking that we are talking parallel with saying "the sights that we see" or "the sounds that we hear."

We see birds, trees, airplanes, and houses, through our eyes, which convey the various colors, shapes, sizes, etc. All of these are "sights" but there is really not very much in common between birds, trees, airplanes, and houses. A similar statement could be made about sounds.

So where i am going is that I think the focus here is on the "faculty by which we know them" rather than the individual sensations themselves. We know pleasures because we feel them to be pleasurable, but that doesn't tell us much about the details of the feeling except that they are pleasurable.

I am thinking that the main importance of this is to continue to push away the false notion that there are gods, ideal forms, essences, or any kind of outside absolute standard whatsoever.

So when you say:

[Quote from Elayne](#)

. There is still often some contrast made between pleasures which involve altered states,

... that gets us to the question of to what extent all pleasures are similar in nature between themselves, and thus your investigation into the nature of the pathways and how pleasures are processed physically.

Maybe in the end the question is similar - Does all "pleasure" and "pain" end up being a particular type of chemical/electrical reaction? - but I thought I would make this comment first.