

# When Epicurus says that death is the end of sensation, does "end of sensation" in and of itself mean that consciousness ends at death?

Post by "Cassius" of January 20, 2026 at 7:12 AM

OK I read it. I won't echo "fascinating" but I'll certainly give it credit for "well-written" and "holds interest."

That said, I don't see why the whole issue isn't pretty much the same question as something like "what is the physical nature of thought or dreams?" or "does the brain work electrically, and if so, how long can the electrical function continue after the heart stops pumping?"

The article stays largely neutral, but even entertaining certain questions about the supernatural gives some of the positions a credence I don't think they deserve.

The field of studying the physical nature of thoughts and dreams is certainly valid and fascinating, and could lead to identifying consciousness as something in the brain that could lead to all sorts of "brain transplants to vats" and "vats to robots" and all sorts of possibilities that has in the past been explored in science fiction.

There's a section in the article about brain activity being stimulated by waves or something coming from outside, and I can see that possibility as being involved at least in part analogously to a form of magnetism or other radiation that is being received and processed by the brain:

*That is a key tenet of the parapsychologists' arguments: ~~if there is consciousness without brain activity, then consciousness must dwell somewhere beyond the brain.~~ Some of the parapsychologists speculate that it is a "non-local" force that pervades the universe, like electromagnetism. This force is received by the brain, but is not generated by it, the way a television receives a broadcast.*

The brain being stimulated by something outside the brain like the eyes are by light or ears by sound seems to me to be reasonable. In fact being influenced from the outside seems not only reasonable but likely, and that seems to me to be pretty much what Epicurus was saying about the brain receiving "images" directly. I gather there is already a lot of reproducible science about the brain being affected by cell phone radiation and other "electrical" influences.

But to take that outside stimulation and jump to the conclusion that "consciousness must dwell somewhere beyond the brain" seems to me to be going way too far and to be a non-starter.