

Illustrations and Analogies For Explaining the "Two And Only Two Feelings" Argument

Post by "Cassius" of May 21, 2026 at 8:08 AM

Another aspect that is relevant to the discussion of comparing "happy" or "pleasure" as a comparative state to "happy" or "pleasure" as a superlative is the question of whether you can experience pleasure in one part of your experience while you are experiencing pain in another, or is your experience necessarily an "all-or-nothing" proposition.

We've debated that question a number of times on the forum but I think most of us have concluded that it IS possible to be experiencing pleasure in one part of our experience while pain in another. And most of us who have concluded that would cite Epicurus on his last day experiencing pain in his body (at least in his kidney area) while experiencing pleasure in his mind (brain).

So yes, it is necessary to distinguish in talking about pleasure whether you mean your whole experience is pleasure, or, as [PD03](#) would also imply, whether pleasure and pain are discrete in any part of your experience, but that you can be aware of different parts of your experience at the same time. That's exactly what Torquatus would seem to imply too when he said that the wise man always has "more reason for joy than for vexation" (implying that you have multiple reasons at once).

Even though at the same time Torquatus talks in terms of "if you are experiencing anything you are experiencing either pleasure or pain."

You have to look at pleasure/happiness both "in sum" as well as acknowledging its discrete binary relationship with pain/unhappiness.