

Can We Experience Pleasure in One Part of Our Experience and Pain In Another Part of our Experience At the Same Time?

Post by "Charles" of January 5, 2020 at 2:51 PM

A great thread Cassius, I've actually been grappling with the concept over the past week and a half, and was meaning to make a thread when I felt confident enough to present it

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I think it is correct Epicurean thought to point out that pleasure and pain are separate feelings and do not blend together.

This is specifically what I've been thinking about, and the concept its been has been whether or not pain and pleasure aren't on the black and white axis that almost everybody treats it as such, but rather a polarity where both can attach themselves to a center, what we define as experience. Thus, this leads to the possibility of feeling pain and pleasure simultaneously, hence the multiple interpretations of how we actually achieve pleasure, since it can either be through the removal or fulfillment of desire with that pleasure actually achieved through indulgence (both minimalist or "maximalist" hedonism combined with the calculus, which combines the latter for the calculus removes the pain ie VS 21), or pleasure achieved through the removal of pain and the ataraxia that follows (which I find it can be a slippery slope to asceticism, personally).

We have PD 3 and 4 and the two, at least for me seem to contradict, yet can be mended by VS 37.

PD 3: "The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal of all that is painful. **Wherever pleasure is present**, as long as it is there, **there is neither pain of body, nor of mind, nor of both at once.**"

PD 4: "Pain does not last continuously in the flesh, but the acutest pain is there for a very short time, and even that which just exceeds the pleasure in the flesh does not continue for many days at once. But chronic illnesses **permit a predominance of pleasure over pain in the flesh.**"

VS 37: "Nature is weak toward evil, not toward good: because it is **saved by pleasures, but destroyed by pains.**"

Now, PD 8 tells us that no pleasure is bad in itself but can lead to greater pain than the initial pleasure. But what about if the current pleasure continues when that new pain arises? A person at a party in the company of friends, could be suffering from mild alcohol poisoning (pain) yet be having the time of their life (pleasure) in the form of the music, atmosphere, the drink itself, or any other number of factors that culminate in a higher sense of pleasure than the pain of their liver and intoxication. The key here isn't determining the measurement of how much pleasure these other factors add up to, or how bad the pain from the intoxication is, its the quantity, as what is more pleasurable is superseding the current pain they are experiencing.

There are of course, a ton of other "situations" both hypothetical and completely grounded in reality, instead of a party-goer, we can look at a mountain climber admiring in awe, the summit they had just climbed and the view afterwards despite their sore feet and immense hunger/thirst. While I disagree that pain and pleasure can blend into a new feeling, we cannot deny that there are many instances in which pain and pleasure are both experienced simultaneously, and its up to us and the quantity, or magnitude of pain/pleasure to determine what we currently experience.

As I mentioned at the start of this comment, my thinking on this hasn't been polished enough, but upon seeing this thread I could not help but share my thoughts. I'd love to hear some feedback on this thread, of what Mike, Cassius, and I have said.