

Neuroscience of Happiness and Pleasure -- Morten L. Kringelbach and Kent C. Berridge

Post by "Kalosyni" of June 27, 2022 at 7:53 PM

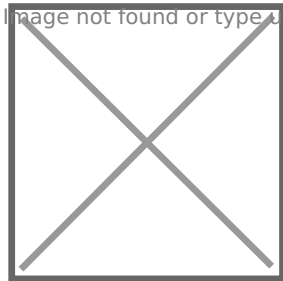
I just started reading this article "Neuroscience of Happiness and Pleasure" and here is an excerpt:

Quote

The available evidence suggests that brain mechanisms involved in *fundamental* pleasures (food and sexual pleasures) overlap with those for *higher-order pleasures* (for example, monetary, artistic, musical, altruistic, and transcendent pleasures) ([Kringelbach 2010](#)).

From sensory pleasures and drugs of abuse to monetary, aesthetic and musical delights, all pleasures seem to involve the same hedonic brain systems, even when linked to anticipation and memory. Pleasures important to happiness, such as socializing with friends, and related traits of positive hedonic mood are thus all likely to draw upon the same neurobiological roots that evolved for sensory pleasures. The neural overlap may offer a way to generalize from fundamental pleasures that are best understood and so infer larger hedonic brain principles likely to contribute to happiness.

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[The Neuroscience of Happiness and Pleasure](#)

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

Post by "Cassius" of June 27, 2022 at 8:45 PM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2581-neuroscience-of-happiness-and-pleasure-morten-l-kringelbach-and-kent-c-berridge/>

"From sensory pleasures and drugs of abuse to monetary, aesthetic and musical delights, all pleasures seem to involve the same hedonic brain systems, even when linked to anticipation and memory."

You mean there's no special mechanism involved in the pleasure of contemplating the majesty of Zeus, or considering yourself to be a flickering part of the Divine fire? That won't please the Stoics if they find out! 😊

Post by “Kalosyni” of June 27, 2022 at 8:53 PM

"All pleasures seem to involve the same hedonic brain systems" -- that would support PD 9.

Ha, I didn't get to the end of that article yet to see if it says anything about importance of meaning (but "Divine fire" would probably fall into that category). 😊

Post by “Matteng” of October 2, 2024 at 9:51 AM

I read the article today by chance and wanted to start a thread. But looked to see if there was already an article about neuro science and found it with exactly this article [1]. In positive psychology, a distinction is made between hedonistic, happiness(Pleasure) and Eudaimonia. Do I understand it correctly that Eumonia happiness is also hedonistic happiness at its core? That would really be a point on the side of the Epicureans against the Stoics. Then there would be no essential difference between pleasure and the Stoic joy (chara).

In Stoic groups it is often claimed that Stoics understand Human Nature better and that like in Ciceros „On Ends“(the Stoic parts) that Pleasure is only a delusionary byproduct of self preservation and that sociability / familiarization (oikeiosis) is an essential part of human nature and that Epicureans would deny that humans are social beings. I would like to discuss more about the current view of neuroscience/psychology of human nature to get clear how much it fits with Epicurean Philosophy (a further example would be the hedonic treadmill)

Post by “Don” of October 2, 2024 at 10:58 AM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2581-neuroscience-of-happiness-and-pleasure-morten-l-kringelbach-and-kent-c-berridge/>

[Quote from Matteng](#)

Epicureans would deny that humans are social beings

Oh, the Stoics...

Epicurus stressed the importance of friendship (φίλιας) throughout the extant texts and the history of Epicureanism. It seems to me that Stoics emphasized duty to the state as a virtue, whereas the Epicureans stressed interpersonal relationships as a virtue.

For example:

VS23. Every friendship is an excellence* in itself, even though it begins in mutual advantage.

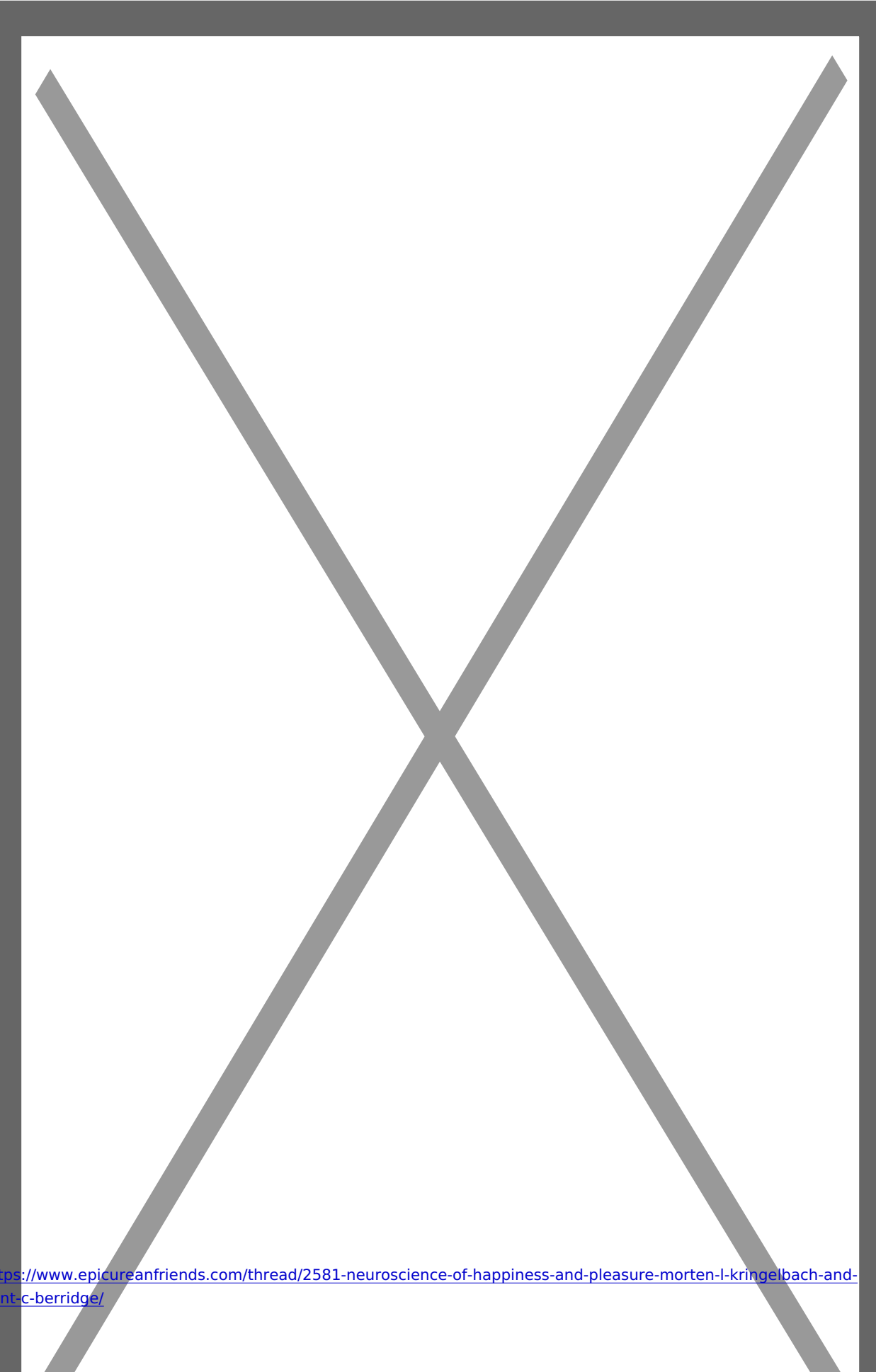
* The word used is ἀρετή aretē usually translated as "virtue" in other contexts.

Post by “Matteng” of October 2, 2024 at 12:06 PM

[Don](#), thanks. Another prejudice is that Epicureans friendship means to them to isolate with only some few friends from society.

But I understand friendship (Philia) in Epicureanism as a attitude / virtue like also Aristotles defines it.

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[Philia - Wikipedia](#)

en.m.wikipedia.org

And it is a form of love. That would challenge Senecas quote where he mentions that the Stoic school is the most kind:

<https://modernstoicism.com/the-stoic-love...Clemency%203.3>.

Post by “Eikadistes” of October 2, 2024 at 12:36 PM

[Quote from Matteng](#)

In positive psychology, a distinction is made between hedonistic, happiness(Pleasure) and Eudaimonia. Do I understand it correctly that Eumonia happiness is also hedonistic happiness at its core?

Most of the Hellenistic philosophers can be described as "*Eudaimonic*" in their ethics. Overwhelmingly, they agreed that "*happiness*" (being the general translation with which we are largely comfortable) was the goal in life. Their definitions of "*happiness*", *however*, (and how to obtain it) differed **drastically**, so the word was employed in differing, technical ways.

We might prefer to call Socrates "pre-Hellenistic", but, as per Plato's dialogues, he (and Plato) discuss *eudaimonia* often. For them, it was a function of temperance (in particular, I would argue, *self-restraint*, or *self-denial*). Socratic *happiness* strikes me as tending toward asceticism. From this, Plato argues that a *eudaimonic* person has an organized soul, in accordance with the Form of the Good, so this sort of happiness is highly abstract (and I question if it can actually be *felt*).

Aristotle saw *eudaimonia* as "**excellence**", exemplified by a Man of Action, an engaged, public figure (typically male; he wasn't convinced that females were intellectually capable of pursuing philosophical excellence). The *excellent* Aristotelian can be evaluated as a function of their moral adherence to the Golden Mean, and the utility they provide to their *polis*. For Aristotle, a person could not enjoy *excellence* without engaging in a reputable, profitable occupation. Simply clearing one's mind of anxiety, and enjoying simple pleasures of life was not enough.

Epicurus, of course, thought this was all malarky. *Eudaimonia* for the Epicureans was "**pleasure**", pure, unadulterated, unapologetic pleasure, fearlessness of the mind, and painlessness of the flesh. The happy Epicurean was not limited by political duties or occupational obligations. Of course, nature compels a happy person to be practical, have integrity, and treat others with decency, so he was not alien to civic engagement. However, having a prosperous career was

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not seen as being necessary to happiness, and politics was seen as being (usually) anti-thetical.

Pyrrho (the Skeptic) said this was all nonsense. Eudaimonia for him was a kind of epistemological "**tranquility**" and was only attainable by suspending all alleged judgments, having concluded that no dogma can be justified. He doesn't trust sensation, pleasure, or, for that matter, the possibility of reliable knowledge through logical inference. His type of eudaimonia strikes me as being *unpleasant*, or, perhaps, cold, unfeeling, and unrewarding. That bring me to the Stoics.

For the Stoics, *eudaimonia* is "**virtue**", cold, calculated *virtue* (I don't think they'd like the "cold" description, so forgive my clear, Epicurean bias). The happy life of the Stoics may not be a pleasurable life, but is definitely a life in which one's behavior is governed by the conclusions of logical propositions, and never by the pleasurable or painful consequences of actions.

Of all of these philosophers, few equated "*happiness*" with "*physical pleasure*". Largely, *happiness* was associated with *prosperity* or *self-denial*, and usually not "*feeling happy*".

Post by “Don” of October 2, 2024 at 1:27 PM

[Quote from Matteng](#)

Another prejudice is that Epicureans friendship means to them to isolate with only some few friends from society.

See my article somewhere on this site on the location of the Garden. It was not a convent cut off from society. Supposedly, there was even a sign welcoming passers-by. There was no isolation.

Post by “Don” of October 2, 2024 at 6:21 PM

FYI

File

[Where was the Garden of Epicurus? The Evidence from the Ancient Sources and Archaeology](#)



While we will probably never know the exact location of Epicurus's Garden in ancient Athens, we can take a number of educated guesses.



Don

April 19, 2023 at 11:10 PM