

Would You Rather Live For A Week As (1) Epicurus During the Last Week of His Life or (2) An Anonymous Shepherd Laying In The Grass In The Summertime With No Pain At All?

Post by "Godfrey" of September 10, 2023 at 8:07 PM

Quote from Don

Pleasure do differ, that's my interpretation of [PD09](#) from the grammar. But I'm still not sure I understand where you're getting the specific parameters of intensity, duration, and breadth from the words that are in [PD09](#).

From what I read, Epicurus is specifically saying "Every pleasure *cannot* condensed nor be present at the same time and in the whole of one's nature or its primary parts." The "if.." clause cannot happen, and so the pleasures do differ from one another.

Intensity: Hicks uses the word "accumulation", Bailey uses "intensified", DeWitt uses "condensed", White uses "concentrated"; the other translations in Nate's compilation use variations of these. I'm interpreting these English words as describing intensity of pleasure, and, to me, it's clear that pleasures can vary in intensity.

Duration: all of the translations use "time", "duration", "lasted", or similar references to time. I'm calling these "duration".

Breadth: the translations all refer to "parts"; I'm using "breadth" to describe the idea that pleasures can vary in the number of "parts" that they affect. These include toes, tongues, mind: various body parts and various states of mind.

I don't interpret Epicurus' "if" as referring to "condensed". I interpret it as referring to maximizing particular pleasures in all three aspects of intensity duration and breadth. If this could be done, then the pleasures wouldn't differ from each other. They can't be maximized in such a way, so they do differ. But by using intensity, duration and breadth as the three criteria in this statement he is telling us that those are the three variables which affect pleasures and differentiate between them.