

## PD09 - Condensed Pleasure

Post by “Elayne” of March 25, 2019 at 2:57 PM

Condensed Pleasure

This is my work in progress on condensed pleasure, with several parts remaining to be filled in. I thought maybe before I go too much farther, it would be good to get some outside evaluation, in case I’m headed down a dead end somewhere. It’s long so I thought this was a better place for it for now than FB.

I am aware writing this that it may be longer than it needs to be. I am having to divide in sections because of the word count limit. My ultimate goal is to make this as simple as possible, for the clearest communication—but not simpler than necessary (paraphrase of quote which may or may not have been from Einstein <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2011/05/13/einstein-simple/>). I My apologies for this messy intermediate state of things!

PD 9 states “If every pleasure were alike condensed in duration and associated with the whole organism or the dominant parts of it, pleasures would never differ from one another.” Is there another quote in which Epicurus uses that word “condensed”?

DeWitt says “condensed” refers to “intensity” (Epicurus and His Philosophy, p 233). DeWitt also says “at one time the pleasure is condensed, at another, extended. In other words the same pleasure may be either kinetic or static. If condensed it is kinetic; if extended, it is static.”

DeWitt gives this as an example of condensed pleasure “[t]hat which occasions unsurpassable joy is the bare escape from some dreadful calamity” and this as the corresponding extended pleasure, “the stable condition of well-being in the flesh and the confident hope of its continuance means the most exquisite and infallible of joys for those who are capable of figuring this problem out.” DeWitt says “[n]evertheless, the two pleasures differ from one another and it was in recognition of the difference that Epicurus instituted the distinction between kinetic and static pleasures.” (Epicurus and His Philosophy, p 233). DeWitt also says that static pleasure “describes the return to normal after the joy of escape from the peril of life” (p. 243). Does Epicurus say this himself?

One thing that confuses me when DeWitt contrasts those pleasures is that using the word “exquisite” for the static pleasure seems like a fairly intense pleasure. Not knowing the Greek, I do not know whether Epicurus used words for that second example of pleasure which would imply less intensity, but at least in the English translation DeWitt uses, both sound intense.

This is all that I have seen so far about condensed pleasure, and I hope some of you will have some additional quotes to add.

There appear to be two conclusions DeWitt is making. First, about intensity and second about static vs kinetic. Do you agree these are two separate conclusions? Must one follow from the other?

All I see clearly said in PD 9 is condensed referring to duration. DeWitt is adding on the idea of intensity as if that follows inescapably from condensation of duration—I take this as something like: take the pleasure you might have over 24 hrs and experience all of it in an hour, and it will be more intense. Does anyone know if there is further evidence to substantiate this conclusion, that this was Epicurus' meaning?

The application of condensed and extended to mean not just intense and less intense but also kinetic and static is a second assumption that does not necessarily follow from the first. Is there any text evidence that this must be the case?

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