

Practical Pleasure-Pain Perspectives: How Different is 99% Pleasure From 100% Pleasure?

Post by "Godfrey" of October 6, 2023 at 1:51 AM

I interpret these PDs slightly differently, especially [PD09](#). I see each as listing things that Epicurus considers to be of key importance in his ethics, even though they're expressed as counterfactuals.

[Don](#) , the way that you interpret [PD09](#) seems to be the way that many translators interpret it, but to me this is incorrect. I say this as somebody who knows no Greek: I'm reasoning out the ramifications of the English wording as they apply to my experience. I think that it's incorrect to separate "condensed" from "time" and "parts". I think that the conclusion that pleasures differ from one another is common to both interpretations and is correct, but I think that it's incorrect to say that pleasures cannot be condensed (I read "condensed" as "intensified").

I paraphrase the PD as "the three components of pleasures are intensity, duration and location. If every pleasure was the same in these three ways, all pleasures would be the same. Pleasures are not the same in these three ways, but in fact these three components are the most useful ways of analyzing pleasures." In fact, the translation in post #8 reads to me as being interpreted in this way (although far less verbose!)

PDs 10 & 11, to me, are similarly structured but not open to misinterpretation in the way that #9 is. They're listing things that are important to understand for Epicurus' ethics, but they're expressed as counterfactuals, which allows them each to be read in two ways.

I guess my primary quibble, then, is with separating "condensed", and saying that pleasures cannot be condensed. Other than that, the use of counterfactuals allows each of these three PDs to be read in two ways: 1) that the things listed are important to understand, and 2) that it's very unusual for the "ifs" to occur.