

# Episode 195 - Cicero's On Ends - Book Two - Part 05

Post by "Godfrey" of October 10, 2023 at 8:21 PM

## [Quote from Cassius](#)

I think we could reword that this way:

A question is "why is absence of pain (which is the definition of pleasure) through the organism (at macro level) the limit of magnitude, whereas a more localized pleasure (at the micro level) can increase?"

If that is saying the same thing, which I think it is, the answer is pretty obvious: a macro level pleasure cannot increase by definition. because it has no more room to increase, while pleasure at any smaller degree than macro level can increase because it still has room to increase.

Sorry for disappearing... busy day!

Yes, that rewording of the question is the same thing.

The last paragraph in [Cassius](#) ' quote shows that, yet again, I wasn't clear enough in my overall analysis above. As far as it goes, what is presented in this paragraph *is* obvious. The components of location and duration obviously cannot increase at the macro level, but they can at the micro level.

What's not obvious to me is the role of intensity. If intensity can increase at the micro level beyond the absence of pain, why can it not increase at the macro level? Or is intensity the wrong description of this component of pleasure? Is it really just a two way switch that jumps from pleasure to pain? If this is the case, then the three components are feeling, location and duration. If so, "feeling" describes both the composite of the three components *and* one of the components, in which case I think it's a better description to say that pleasures and pains vary through the modifiers of location and duration, and avoid the word "intensity". Which might actually be the way the Greek texts are written: at least in [PD09](#), I've been understanding (as has at least one translator) "condensed" to be equivalent to varying intensity.

I don't have a problem with that, and that might be exactly the conclusion from [PD03](#) and [PD09](#) . This means that what is perceived as "intensity" is, in fact, an increase or decrease (condensing) in location and/or duration. My general sense is that I can increase the intensity of a pleasure or pain without increasing the location or duration. Is that actually incorrect? If one was to dig into the science, is a nerve ending (if that's the correct term) an on-off switch?

Imagine a pleasure or pain resulting from a pressure. Does increasing the pressure simply recruit more nerve endings (increase the location) rather than elicit a greater response from the original quantity of nerve endings? If I'm getting this right, that seems to be what Epicurus intuited and what he based his conception of maximum pleasure on.

Am I making a comprehensible presentation? If so, does it make any sense?

(Cross posted again...)