

PD09 - Condensed Pleasure

Post by "Cassius" of March 27, 2019 at 2:08 PM

Getting back to a point of the original post on which I have not commented, I think this is important:

[Quote from Elayne](#)

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"?

I haven't had time to check back in the sources, but I don't think there is much else - this seems to be the main and perhaps only use of the term. Let's tag [Elli](#) and see if she is aware of any other occurrences.

If indeed this is the only or main one, that would be another reason to be cautious about reading too much into it. I tend to think that in *most* cases Epicurean philosophy is pretty simple and direct and that words that might seem like they are obscure or technical (such as "ataraxia") really are NOT so obscure or technical. And what goes with that is that people who try to take a word and make it into something difficult are in dangerous territory.

It would seem to me that Epicurus might have used the word "extended" rather than "condensed" and meant pretty much the same thing, as what he seems to be talking about is "filling the experience" so that there's nothing sensed/felt except the pleasure that is under consideration.

Likewise the word translated as "every" -- would that be the same as "each" or "any" in this context?

What I am reading into this is pretty much something to the effect of:

If any single pleasure were to so expand/extend in time, and be felt throughout the whole organism, so that in terms of both time and intensity the organism felt nothing but this single pleasure, then the full experience of that pleasure would be no different than the full experience of any other pleasure. And as a result, for example, if the pleasure of eating an apple filled the entire human experience and crowded out every other feeling for the life of the person, then the person would never have any need for anything other than eating that apple.

It seems to me that its obvious that pleasures do differ in intensity, and in the duration over which we experience them. And I would think that they differ in many other respects as well, EXCEPT for the unifying point (and this is what I gather is what DeWitt is talking about in "Unity of pleasure") that all pleasures are the same in this one respect -- THEY FEEL GOOD.

Regardless of whether what I am saying is correct, I think we need to dig into the implications of the statement not only in respect of time and intensity, but in other terms as well. And we need to think about what it could mean to imply that sex and eating a cookie would not differ from each other if they filled the entire human experience. And we also need to keep in mind that when something doesn't appear to make pretty clear sense, we need to scrutinize various options for translating the text, or even question whether the text is really intact.