

Perspectives On "Proving" That Pleasure is "The Good"

Post by "Todd" of December 21, 2022 at 12:22 PM

I think there is one non-semantic disagreement between Nate and I.

That is use of the term "highest good". I'm not calling pleasure any sort of good. Nate is calling it The Good, but by that he means something in a different category than "goods". Fine by me, I just think his word choice is confusing.

But then he goes on to say that the highest good is prudence. It seems that Epicurus said this, so he's on solid ground there.

Nevertheless, I think it is useless and counter-productive to even discuss a "highest good" once you have established that pleasure is not it.

The problem I have is that whatever good would provide the most pleasure to one person is probably not the same for another person. If I'm already a very prudent person, being even more prudent would probably not provide me much additional pleasure. Going to a casino might, though. More prudence might even be a *bad* in that situation, rather than a good (you could argue that excessive prudence is something other than prudence. Fine, (Aristotle?) but I think the point is valid. I can come up with examples all day long.)

And providing the most pleasure is the only criteria we have to consider a good "highest", right?

And even if you could find one "highest good", so what? Are there some important goods that almost everyone will want to have? Sure. And Epicurean ethics should talk about those. But there is no need for a universal ranking to apply to everyone in all circumstances.