

# **Carl Sagan, the 4th dimension, episode 20 of Lucretius Today, physics**

**Post by “Godfrey” of August 18, 2021 at 4:01 AM**

For a non-Greek allegorical anecdote about the good as a noun:

I recently purchased a small ceramic sculpture. One day as I was observing and thinking about it, it occurred to me that it was precious in a certain way and that it could be instructive to compare it to "the good." How would I respond to it as something "precious?" Observe it, treat it with care, contemplate it, place it somewhere that I can maximize my opportunities to appreciate it.... Considering it precious, should I stress out over damaging or losing it or maximize my pleasure regarding it? I also realized that while it may seem precious to me, to someone else it may seem like junk! (But this realization digresses from my point.)

Well, naturally I arrived at the conclusion that the best thing to do is to maximize the pleasure that I can gain from this object. In this particular case the pleasures are primarily mental: observing the object, thinking about other pieces by the sculptor and the ideas she may be working with, trying to understand how it was constructed, thinking about what it is that I enjoy about it, noticing the various textures, remembering the pleasant circumstances in which I first encountered it, &c.... (I guess if I had a different disposition I may have concluded that it's my virtuous duty to care for it, but that's not where I ended up.)

My point is that it's possibly useful to think of the sculpture as a proxy for "life itself," and to think of my conclusion of the best thing to do as "the goal." Of course one may arrive at their own conclusions....

(For the record, the sculpture isn't all that precious but, personally, I'm enjoying it greatly.)