

Collecting Ancient Instances of the Argument: "Pleasure Cannot Be The Highest Good Because It Has No Limit"

Post by "Cassius" of December 28, 2021 at 8:07 AM

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

But why are "limits" a sign of imperfection? (That 2nd quote seems to be question-begging.) It can be recognition of t

Right I think Godfrey has this correct. Though it may be counterintuitive at first glance, the Seneca/ Platonic argument is that a thing must have a limit to be perfect. - i.e. being the "best" is itself a limit, according to the argument.

And in case it's not clear, the argument is that pleasure can always be made better by adding more to it, thus it cannot ever reach the state of being "best."

Epicurus shows the fallacy of that argument. -- shows that pleasure indeed has a limit -- by pointing out that there are only two kinds of feelings, and as soon as ALL OF YOUR FEELINGS are pleasurable, you have hit that limit.

Over time I am coming to see that some people think this argument is so trite and abstract that they don't think the ancients could possibly have been consumed with its importance, so they dismiss this and go back to "Epicurus must be talking about a different kind of pleasure when he refers to absence of pain."

I think those people are wrong, and in failing to see how much importance Plato placed on it, they fail to accept that this is likely the entire reason for the absence of pain discussion.

We're it not for the need to refute Plato's argument Epicurus would never have had need for the absence of pain argument and he could have stopped with "Look at the newborn of all species" and "we perceive pleasure to be desirable just as we perceive honey is sweet and snow is white."