

From The "Golden Mean" to the "Summum Bonum" - Useful or Deceptive Frames of Reference?

Post by "Cassius" of February 15, 2022 at 7:43 AM

Another thought to add: I think DeWitts translation of the same span of time argument makes sense, but not so much his conclusion as to what it means.

VS42. The same span of time embraces both the beginning and the end of the greatest good.

Doesn't Epicurus say that Pleasure is the alpha and Omega of the blessed life, which is a fairly similar statement?

To me, Dewitts translation makes sense as part of the same argument we are having now about "the good.". It's not a statement that life is the greatest good, but that the greatest good (pleasure) takes place only while we are living and isn't an abstraction that is beyond our own lives. To me that's parallel also to the "escape from death" statement which also criticizes harping on "the good."

I would tentatively classify this as another example where DeWitt is going in a better direction than the standard commentators but misses just slightly in his wording of his conclusion.

And I think we are building up a considerable list of references from which the takeaway is that we should be careful about how and when we refer to "good" and "evil."

Given that I think Lucretius was doing his best to be a fundamentalist Epicurean, I'd like to see what we can get from him on this point beyond the already-mentioned "Divine Pleasure Guide Of Life."

At the moment I can't recall whether summum bonum appears in Lucretius at all.