

Is pleasure as the natural goal of life falsifiable?

Post by "waterholic" of December 8, 2022 at 6:08 AM

I have a nephew who tends towards stoicism. A lot of talk about virtue.

As an alternative, I gradually introduce the Epicurean notions. The big hurdle for him is to accept that pleasure can be a valid natural goal.

Many components of Epicurean thought are logically weaved into a consistent framework. But this framework has its axioms and unless I am mistaken, pleasure as a goal in life is a critical one.

If I require my nephew to accept that "pleasure is the valid natural goal in life", I would need to provide a falsifiability test: is there a hypothetical argument that if proven correct, my statement would be false?

I treat religion with the same approach: is there anything that I can demonstrate that would make you accept that your god does not exist? If there isn't, you are in the realm of blind faith and the discussion is pointless (the Popper approach).

Is there such a test for an Epicurean assertion that pleasure is the goal? Should I look for such a critical approach to the philosophy that best defines me as a person?

PS: I can't say that this question bothers me in terms of changing my own opinions. We are a product of evolution, which means by chance we have developed the pleasure/pain chemical reactions that guide us, so I accept it as a fact of evolutionary joke - same way as I have a nose. Still, this may not be enough.