

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

Post by "Cassius" of December 21, 2022 at 1:31 PM

If I could think of a way I would bookmark this discussion under "cautions to think about when reading Torquatus.". Maybe all of us don't come to the same conclusion DeWitt does as to life rather than pleasure being the "highest good," but Torquatus himself labels his own view as not totally in accord with Epicurus, so we need to continue to question whether the way he sets up the dialogue (an inquiry into the highest good) is really the way Epicurus approached things at all. Maybe Dewitt started the ball rolling in questioning Torquatus but didn't go far enough.

I am getting more and more comfortable that it is Lucretius rather than Torquatus who is the more orthodox Epicurean, and I think we are better off looking to Lucretius' format (start with looking at what drives all of Nature) rather than launching off in a Platonic-style dialog on "what is the highest good" before answering all sorts of other questions first.

Starting the discussion in the middle of a complex semantic debate over the meaning of words seems to be very much what Epicurus' warned against.