

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

Post by "Godfrey" of December 22, 2022 at 10:10 PM

[Quote from Todd](#)

1) There is no such thing as a good (or a bad) in nature. The concept of a good is a product of human reason. So first we need to define what a good is (or stop talking about them).

2) How would we define a good, using only the tools nature gave us? Pleasure and pain seem like the obvious tools for the job.

I'd like to dig into this, thinking out loud (as it were). If I'm not mistaken, Epicurus defined pleasure as what is conducive to life and pain as what is not conducive to life. Offhand, I don't recall if this is in his extant writing, or if I got it elsewhere. But this would apply to all life: single cells, plants, animals, babies, adult philosophy enthusiasts, etc. As pointed out in 2), this makes pleasure and pain obvious choices for defining good and bad.

What is conducive to life would be intuited by that life as good, not conducive as bad. I guess this is where the anticipation comes in. So pleasure = good, and pain = bad. Now what produces pleasure is also a good, and what produces pain is also a bad. By this way of thinking, "good" is pleasure and "a good" produces pleasure/good.

[Quote from Todd](#)

4) So is pleasure a good? Does it produce pleasure? No, it IS pleasure. Therefore, it is not a good.

So it seems to me that the word "good" has multiple meanings that are so intertwined as to resist this conclusion. It's a little bit like "read" in the phrase "read that book" v the phrase "they read that book." "Read" is both a command and a past tense verb, and also has different pronunciations. How would this apply to good/a good/the good? I'm not enough of a linguist to answer that, so I'll ask the question because I think this needs to be dealt with.