

# Summum bonum (Atheist & Bishop podcast)

Post by "Cassius" of June 24, 2023 at 9:42 AM

Thanks for the link!

## [Quote from Don](#)

Which is why I balk at Dewitt's "life is the greatest good" because it seems a tautology to answer why I do something as "because I'm alive."

**That framing of the question may be the most profound passage on the forum today.**



**I think I will ask [Elli](#) to weigh in on how considering "because I am alive" or "life" may be very relevant to the idea of a "greatest good."**

**And I bet she might have better quotes / ideas than I have below to explore the issue.**

**In Epicurean terms, is not "life without pain" so close to "feeling without pain" that "life" = pleasure just like "feeling without pain" = pleasure?**

**If we are focusing as Epicurus did on the fact that we have an eternity of nothingness before birth and after life, is not our brief opportunity to live and to find pleasure pretty much synonymous?**

**Does not "I want to live" mean essentially "I want to experience pleasure" in Epicurean terms?**

**And if in Epicurean terms "life" is pleasurable, might not DeWitt be onto something by his phrasing? (Once we translate life into pleasure through Epicurus analysis.)**

**Is the reasoning that Chrysippus was attacking with the hand analogy or Cicero was attacking with the "host pouring wine" analogy really very far from considering "life - in the absence of pain" to be best formulation? Is that very far from Torquatus saying "*I affirm that all who are without pain are in pleasure, and in that the fullest possible!*"**

**Is considering "being alive" to be the answer to why we do things very far from Nietzsche's formulations about saying "Yes" to life, in which he thinks he needs to go beyond Epicurus because Epicurus isn't "strong" or "forceful" enough about how to live (with which I think we would all here disagree)?**

**From [Wikipedia](#):**

**Nietzschean affirmation** ([German](#): *Bejahung*) is a concept that has been scholarly identified in the [philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche](#). An example used to describe the concept is a fragment in Nietzsche's [The Will to Power](#):

Quote

Suppose that we said yes to a single moment, then we have not only said yes to ourselves, but to the whole of existence. For nothing stands alone, either in ourselves or in things; and if our soul did but once vibrate and resound with a chord of happiness, then all of eternity was necessary to bring forth this one occurrence—and in this single moment when we said yes, all of eternity was embraced, redeemed, justified and affirmed.

— Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Will to Power: Selections from the Notebooks of the 1880s* (translated by R. Kevin Hill and Michael A. Scarpitti). Penguin Books, 2017, p. 566<sup>[1]</sup>

## Opposition to Schopenhauer

[Walter Kaufmann](#) wrote that Nietzsche "celebrates the Greeks who, facing up to the terrors of nature and history, did not seek refuge in "a [Buddhistic](#) negation of the will," as [Schopenhauer](#) did, but instead created [tragedies](#) in which life is affirmed as beautiful in spite of everything."<sup>[2]</sup> <sup>[3]</sup> Schopenhauer's negation of the will was a saying "no" to life and to the world, which he judged to be a scene of pain and [evil](#). "[D]irectly against Schopenhauer's place as the ultimate nay-sayer to life, Nietzsche positioned himself as the ultimate yes-sayer...."<sup>[4]</sup> Nietzsche's affirmation of life's pain and evil, in opposition to Schopenhauer, resulted from an overflow of life.<sup>[5]</sup> Schopenhauer's advocacy of self-denial and negation of life was, according to Nietzsche, very harmful.<sup>[6]</sup> For his entire mature life, Nietzsche was concerned with the damage that he thought resulted from Schopenhauerian disgust with life and turning against the world.