

# Inferential Foundations of Epicurean Ethics - Article By David Sedley

Post by "Cassius" of January 22, 2026 at 8:34 PM

## [Quote from Joshua](#)

How does he respond to Lucretius' use of *Summum Bonum* in the early lines of Book 6?

I don't recall that he mentions that. And in fact as I read it he's not really being critical of Cicero's choice to use "summum bonum." I gather what he's saying is that it makes perfect sense in Latin to do it the way Cicero did it.

The problem arises because in our English expectation anything translatable as "highest good" implies "the highest single good among many goods."

I gather Sedley is saying we should not infer that *summum bonum* is a statement as to one among many things. Rather Sedley is seeing it as a reference to "good" as a class, which is singular, without implying anything about how many particulars are in that class.

## Quote

Let us take it, then, that *summum bonum* in *Fin.* 1.40–1 just represents 'the good'. For an Epicurean, to call pleasure 'the good' is to label it, if not strictly as the only good thing, at least as the only underderivatively good thing, that by courtesy of which other things are good—in other words, the ethical end (*telos*).