

# **Episode 172 - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 25 - Chapter 12 - The New Hedonism 01**

**Post by "Cassius" of April 28, 2023 at 8:43 PM**

Welcome to Episode 172 of Lucretius Today. This is a podcast dedicated to the poet Lucretius, who wrote "On The Nature of Things," the only complete presentation of Epicurean philosophy left to us from the ancient world. Each week we walk you through the Epicurean texts, and we discuss how Epicurean philosophy can apply to you today. If you find the Epicurean worldview attractive, we invite you to join us in the study of Epicurus at [EpicureanFriends.com](https://www.epicureanfriends.com), where you will find a discussion thread for each of our podcast episodes and many other topics.

We are now in the process of a series of podcasts intended to provide a general overview of Epicurean philosophy based on the organizational structure employed by Norman DeWitt in his book "Epicurus and His Philosophy."

This week we begin our discussion of Chapter 12, entitled "The New Hedonism."

- The "Summum Bonum" Fallacy
- Pleasure Identified As the Telos
- The True Nature of Pleasure
- The Dualistic Good
- The Natural Ceilings Of Pleasure
- Pleasure Not Increased By Immortality
- The Fullness of Pleasure
- The Unity of Pleasure
- The Root of All Good
- Pleasure Can Be Continuous
- Continuous Pain Impossible
- The Relation of Pleasure To Virtue

<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/53746564>

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**Post by "Don" of April 30, 2023 at 9:01 PM**

Here's a post I did last year about DeWitt's "summum bonum fallacy" and the thread includes a link to DeWitt's paper dedicated to the topic, too:

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3040-episode-172-epicurus-and-his-philosophy-part-25-chapter-12-the-new-hedonism-01/>

Post

## **RE: From The "Golden Mean" to tbe "Summum Bonum" - Useful or Deceptive Frames of Reference?**

Here are my thoughts on Norman DeWitt's "Epicurus: The Summum Bonum Fallacy" (1950).

Overall, I'm unimpressed with DeWitt's aim of using a linguistic quirk between Greek and Latin to make a larger philosophical point. Numerous languages get by with no definite article and can convey as complex and nuanced as any language with a definite article: "Linguists believe the common ancestor of the Indo-European languages, Proto-Indo-European, did not have articles. Most of the languages in this...



Don

February 13, 2022 at 7:27 PM

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### **Post by "Cassius" of May 4, 2023 at 10:19 PM**

Episode 172 of the podcast is now available!

<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/53746564>

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### **Post by "waterholic" of August 7, 2023 at 11:20 AM**

[Cassius](#) et al just wanted to say a huge (and belated) THANK YOU in general for the podcast, but also specifically for this episode. It contained a masterfully constructed string of arguments (by all participants) that covers the most essential, in my subjective view, part of the philosophy. Everything else before this is the basis required to understand the discussion. Everything after this is the "ornamentation".

I will bookmark this episode and use it as a source of readily available condensed katastematic pleasure 😊 .

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### **Post by "Cassius" of August 7, 2023 at 11:46 AM**

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3040-episode-172-epicurus-and-his-philosophy-part-25-chapter-12-the-new-hedonism-01/>

Thank you for commenting, Waterholic!

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### **Post by “shahabgh66” of November 18, 2023 at 5:38 PM**

I remember reading one of Leo Strauss's books. He was a famous classic philosopher, and also a Platonist.

The chapter was a transcript of Q&A between him and a student. At a point he was discussing about the subject of pleasure in Epicurean philosophy with a student. He said that what Epicurus meant by pleasure was actually not pleasure at all. He was interpreting the notion of absent of pain as the maximum limit of pleasure. But, here as it is discussed by Norman Dewitt, that's actually reversing the notion of pleasure in Epicurean philosophy. which was more inclusive toward the notion pleasure, let alone mixing different injunctions together. But this was not the only problem with this look. In academic world, people like Strauss, tend to have a reductive attitude in interpreting Epicurean philosophy that is aligned with this prevalent misinterpretation that Epicurus was advocating some sort of a passive way of life; A life that can be characterized as reducing the desires that normal people call pleasure. Even an untrained Epicurean who has read the doctrines once can disagree with that interpretation, but many academics easily fail to do so.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of November 18, 2023 at 5:52 PM**

Good to hear from you Shahab and hope you are staying safe.

Your interpretation of Strauss reflects my own understanding. Maybe Strauss was so used to looking for hidden meanings in Plato that he couldn't accept a straightforward meaning of pleasure as pleasure in Epicurus.

Or maybe he was just on Plato's side like Cicero was, and he wanted to make Epicurus incomprehensible. Either way, it's a sad situation but one we have to get past.