

Aristotle's God as Epicurean Ideal

In this paper, I argue that Aristotle's definition of the Unmoved Mover coincidentally has an Epicurean nature. Through his discourse of pleasure, ἡδονή, in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle creates an imprecise definition of what pleasure is and how it operates. When he refers to the identity of human nature in NE 7.14 and compares it to the god, he aligns this potential ideal of living a godly life with that which Epicurus describes in the *Letter to Menoeceus*. As a result, there is a synthesis of Aristotelian and Epicurean philosophy through the concepts of pleasure and its relationship with happiness, εὐδαιμονία.

Aristotle's Unmoved Mover and Epicurean philosophy share a common emphasis on tranquility and simplicity as pathways to true pleasure and contentment. The Unmoved Mover, according to Aristotle, embodies perfect and immutable existence, experiencing perpetual pleasure through divine contemplation and self-sufficiency. This mirrors Epicurean ideals of ataraxia, achieved through the absence of bodily pain and mental disturbance. Both Aristotle's god and Epicurus would seek for moderation and self-control in the pursuit of pleasure. The Unmoved Mover enjoys a single, simple pleasure perpetually, aligning with Epicurean teachings on sustainable forms of pleasure rooted in inner tranquility and fulfillment of natural desires. While Aristotle ultimately focuses on virtue as the highest good, Epicurean philosophy centers on mortal happiness and well-being. Despite these differences, both traditions critique hedonistic excess and emphasize the importance of prudence (φρόνησις) or temperance (σωφροσύνη) in pursuing genuine pleasure and avoiding pain.