

Welcome Philia!

Post by "Cassius" of August 8, 2021 at 12:20 AM

As i see it I don't disagree with Don's perspective and it is largely what I am trying to convey in my "both are true" comment. Yes I do think it is possible to generalize, but it is generalizing within a context, and the generalization is going to hold true only so long as the facts supporting it are true. And the main fact which is at the starting point is that there is no universalizing supernatural force or extradimensional ideal which can take the place of a contextual analysis.

I feel sure that people like Don and I would have no difficulty agreeing on many generalizations, and that have no issue with seeing the limits of our generalizations. But I think world human history shows that there is a great danger that these limits are very easy to forget, so my perspective is to stress the warnings that I think are even today very frequently needed.

And a large part of my view is influenced by some Latin that I used to think was exactly the right view until I saw it as the polar opposite of Epicurus, the part from Cicero's Republic which I think speaks directly to why we started discussing humanism. I believe this view was known to Epicurus and helps us see how his views are in opposition. Here is a version of the quote which I found at the link below, though I usually see it translated "True law is right reason in accord with nature...."

<https://scholarship.law.nd.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4104&context=ndlr>

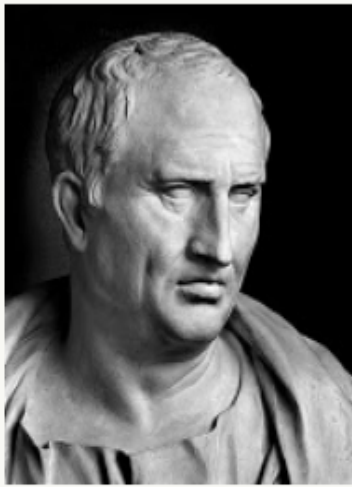
11 Thus in his work *De Republica* (Bk. III, ch. 22), Cicero wrote: "Right reason is indeed a true law, in accord with nature, diffused among all men, unchangeable, eternal. By its commands, it calls men to their duty, by its prohibitions it deters them from vice. For the upright, its commands and prohibitions are not in vain, but neither by commanding nor by prohibiting does it move the wicked. To pass laws contrary to this law is impious, to derogate from it is unlawful, to do away with it is wholly impossible. Neither the Senate nor the people can dispense from it, nor is any ulterior expounder and interpreter to be sought for. There shall no longer be one law at Rome and another at Athens, nor shall it prescribe one thing today, and another tomorrow, but one and the same law eternal and immutable shall be prescribed for all nations and all times, and the god who shall prescribe, introduce and promulgate this law shall be the one common lord and supreme ruler of all, and whosoever will refuse obedience to him shall be filled with confusion, as this very act will be a virtual denial of his human nature; and should he escape a present punishment, he shall have to endure heavy chastisement hereafter." In the *Pro Milone*, he stated: "There is a law, judges, not written, but born within us, which we have not learned or received by tradition, or read but which we took in and imbibed from nature itself, which we were not trained in, but which is ingrained in us."

12 For example, he wrote in his *Philippics* (xi, 12): "Law is nothing else than right reason derived from the gods, commanding what is honorable and forbidding the contrary."

This below is the version I usually see, and to which I would point as the common thread of there being a "**one eternal and unchangeable law [that] will be valid for all nations at all times.**" Of course Cicero wrote this long after Epicurus' time, but as Cicero fancied himself part of the "New Academy" I would think that some similar statement, or at least the seed of the idea, comes down from at least as far back as Plato himself.

It is almost as if the last ten PD's were written with the view of exactly refuting such a "one law for all people at all times" point of view.

What is Right Reason?



Marcus Tullius Cicero

“True law is *right reason* in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting; it summons to duty by its commands, and averts from wrongdoing by its prohibitions...It is a sin to try to alter this law, nor is it allowable to repeal any part of it, and it is impossible to abolish it entirely. We cannot be freed from its obligations by senate or people, and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it.

And there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and at all times, and there will be one master and ruler, that is God, over us all, for he is the author of this law, its promulgator and its enforcing judge. Whoever is disobedient is fleeing from himself and denying his human nature, and by reason of this very fact he will suffer the worst punishment.” – Marcus Tullius Cicero