

Epicurus And Pleasure As The Awareness Of Smooth Motion

Post by "Cassius" of May 10, 2023 at 9:36 AM

Text references to smooth motion or smoothness:

Diogenes Laertius [Book II Aristippus](#)

"He laid down as the end the smooth motion resulting in sensation."

Lucretius Book Two (Bailey):

[398] There is this too that the liquids of honey and milk give a pleasant sensation of the tongue, when rolled in the mouth; but on the other hand, the loathsome nature of wormwood and biting centaury set the mouth awry by their noisome taste; so that you may easily know that those things which can touch the senses pleasantly are made of smooth and round bodies, but that on the other hand all things which seem to be bitter and harsh, these are held bound together with particles more hooked, and for this cause are wont to tear a way into our senses, and at their entering in to break through the body.

[408] Lastly, all things good or bad to the senses in their touch fight thus with one another, because they are built up of bodies of different shape; lest by chance you may think that the harsh shuddering sound of the squeaking saw is made of particles as smooth as are the melodies of music which players awake, shaping the notes as their fingers move nimbly over the strings; nor again, must you think that first-beginnings of like shape pierce into men's nostrils, when noisome carcasses are roasting, and when the stage is freshly sprinkled with Cilician saffron, and the altar hard by is breathing the scent of Arabian incense; nor must you suppose that the pleasant colours of things, which can feed our eyes, are made of seeds like those which prick the pupil and constrain us to tears, or look dreadful and loathly in their hideous aspect.

For every shape, which ever charms the senses, has not been brought to being without some smoothness in the first-beginnings; but, on the other hand, every shape which is harsh and offensive has not been formed without some roughness of substance. Other particles there are, moreover, which cannot rightly be thought to be smooth nor altogether hooked with bent points, but rather with tiny angles standing out a little, insomuch that they can tickle the senses rather than hurt them; and of this kind is lees of wine and the taste of endive. Or again, that hot fires and cold frost have particles fanged in different ways to prick the senses of the body, is proved to us by the touch of each.

For touch, yea touch, by the holy powers of the gods, is the sense of the body, either when something from without finds its way in, or when a thing which is born in the body hurts us, or gives pleasure as it passes out, or else when the seeds after collision jostle within the body itself and, roused one by another, disturb our sense: as if by chance you should with your hand strike any part of your own body and so make trial. Therefore the first-beginnings must needs have forms far different, which can produce such diverse feelings.

[444] Or, again, things which seem to us hard and compact, these, it must needs be, are made of particles more hooked one to another, and are held together close-fastened at their roots, as it were by branching particles. First of all in this class diamond stones stand in the forefront of the fight, well used to despise all blows, and stubborn flints and the strength of hard iron, and brass sockets, which scream aloud as they struggle against the bolts. Those things indeed must be made of particles more round and smooth, which are liquid with a fluid body: for indeed a handful of poppy-seed moves easily just as a draught of water; for the several round particles are not checked one by the other, and when struck, it will roll downhill just like water.

Lastly, all things which you perceive flying asunder, like smoke, clouds and flames, it must needs be that even if they are not made entirely of smooth and round particles, yet they are not hampered by particles closely linked, so that they can-prick the body, and pass into rocks, and yet not cling one to another: so that you can easily learn that, whatever we see [borne asunder by the tearing winds and] meeting our senses [as poison], are of elements not closely linked but pointed.

But because you see that some things which are fluid, are also bitter, as is the brine of the sea, count it no wonder. For because it is fluid, it is of smooth and round particles, and many rugged bodies mingled in it give birth to pain; and yet it must needs be that they are not, hooked and held together: you must know that they are nevertheless spherical, though rugged, so that they can roll on together and hurt the senses. And that you may the more think that rough are mingled with smooth first-beginnings, from which is made the bitter body of the sea-god, there is a way of sundering them and seeing how, apart from the rest, the fresh water, when it trickles many a time through the earth, flows into a trench and loses its harshness; for it leaves behind up above the first-beginnings of its sickly saltness, since the rough particles can more readily stick in the earth.

Lucretius Book Three (Bailey)

[177] Now of what kind of body this mind is, and of what parts it is formed, I will go on to give account to you in my discourse. First of all I say that it is very fine in texture, and is made and formed of very tiny particles. That this is so, if you give attention, you may be able to learn from this. Nothing is seen to come to pass so swiftly as what the mind pictures to itself coming to pass and starts to do itself. Therefore the mind bestirs itself more quickly than any of the things whose nature is manifest for all to see. But because it is so very nimble, it is bound to be formed of exceeding round and exceeding tiny seeds, so that its particles may be able to move

when smitten by a little impulse. For so water moves and oscillates at the slightest impulse, seeing it is formed of little particles, quick to roll.

But, on the other hand, the nature of honey is more stable, its fluid more sluggish, and its movement more hesitating; for the whole mass of its matter clings more together, because, we may be sure, it is not formed of bodies so smooth, nor so fine and round. For a light trembling breath can constrain a high heap of poppy-seed to scatter from top to bottom before your eyes: but, on the other hand, a pile of stones or corn-ears it can by no means separate. Therefore, in proportion as bodies are tinier and smoother, so they are gifted with nimbleness. But, on the other hand, all things that are found to be of greater weight or more spiky, the more firm set they are. Now, therefore, since the nature of the mind has been found nimble beyond the rest, it must needs be formed of bodies exceeding small and smooth and round. And this truth, when known to you, will in many things, good friend, prove useful, and will be reckoned of service.

Lucretius Book Four (Bailey)

[542] Now roughness of voice comes from roughness in its first-beginnings, and likewise smoothness is begotten of their smoothness. Nor do the first-beginnings pierce the ears with like form, when the trumpet bellows deep with muffled tones, and when the barbarous Berecyntian pipe shrieks with shrill buzzing sound, and when the swans at night from the cold marches of Helicon lift with mournful voice their clear lament.

...

[617] First of all we perceive taste in our mouth, when we press it out in chewing our food, just as if one by chance begins to squeeze with the hand and dry a sponge full of water. Then what we press out is all spread abroad through the pores of the palate, and through the winding passages of the loose-meshed tongue. Therefore, when the bodies of the oozing savour are smooth, they touch pleasantly, and pleasantly stroke all around the moist sweating vault above the tongue. But, on the other hand, the more each several thing is filled with roughness, the more does it prick the sense and tear it in its onslaught.

[627] Next pleasure comes from the savour within the limit of the palate; but when it has passed headlong down through the jaws, there is no pleasure while it is all being spread abroad into the limbs. Nor does it matter a whit with what diet the body is nourished, provided only you can digest what you take, and spread it abroad in the limbs, and keep an even moistness in the stomach.

[633] Now how for different creatures there is different food and poison I will unfold, or for what cause, what to some is noisome and bitter, can yet seem to others most sweet to eat. And there is herein a difference and disagreement so great that what is food to one, is to others biting poison; even as there is a certain serpent, which, when touched by a man's spittle, dies and puts an end to itself by gnawing its own body. Moreover, to us hellebore is biting poison, but it makes goats and quails grow fat.

[642] That you may be able to learn by what means this comes to be, first of all it is right that you remember what we have said ere now, that the seeds contained in things are mingled in many ways. Besides all living creatures which take food, just as they are unlike to outer view and a diverse outward contour of the limbs encloses them each after their kind, so also are they fashioned of seeds of varying shape. And further, since the seeds are unlike, so must the spaces and passages, which we call the openings, be different in all their limbs, and in the mouth and palate too. Some of these then must needs be smaller, some greater, they must be three-cornered for some creatures, square for others, many again round, and some of many angles in many ways. For according as the arrangement of shapes and the motions demand, so the shapes of the openings must needs differ, and the passages vary according to the texture which shuts them in. Therefore, when what is sweet to some becomes bitter to others, for the man to whom it is sweet, the smoothest bodies must needs enter the pores of the palate caressingly, but, on the other hand, for those to whom the same thing is sour within, we can be sure it is the rough and hooked bodies which penetrate the passages.

[663] Now from these facts it is easy to learn of each case: thus when fever has attacked a man, and his bile rises high, or the violence of disease is aroused in some other way, then his whole body is disordered, and then all the positions of the first-beginnings are changed about; it comes to pass that the bodies which before suited his taste, suit it no longer, and others are better fitted, which can win their way in and beget a sour taste. For both kinds are mingled in the savour of honey; as I have often shown you above ere now.

Lucretius Book Five (Bailey)

[1379] But imitating with the mouth the liquid notes of birds came long before men were able to sing in melody right through smooth songs and please the ear. And the whistling of the zephyr through the hollows of reeds first taught the men of the countryside to breathe into hollowed hemlock-stalks. Then little by little they learned the sweet lament, which the pipe pours forth, stopped by the players' fingers, the pipe invented amid the pathless woods and forests and glades, among the desolate haunts of shepherds, and the divine places of their rest.