

"The Philosophical Mind" enters the skull of Epicurus (Benjamin de Casseres)

Post by "EricR" of July 19, 2023 at 9:05 AM

I am reading a book by an obscure author named Benjamin de Casseres about Spinoza. I came across this passage below and thought of you folks. I love the writing so wanted to share it with you.

The first chapter is a lightning quick tour of ancient philosophy up to 1632 (Spinoza's birth). de Casseres uses a literary device of making "The Philosophical Mind" an actual entity that enters the heads of various thinkers. I thought you'd find his paragraph on Epicurus interesting:

Trapped between the contradictions of Plato and Aristotle, Mind fell into the pits of self-mockery - the autumnal beauty of Scepticism and the winter of grim Stoicism. Aristotle bred Pyrrho and Sextus Empiricus, who said there were not only no trails to Truth but there was no Truth. "How shall ye know her?" All speculation is nightmare. All "facts" are phantasmal. There is no Great Detective or Great Director. There is only sensation.

"But I can live!", shouted Mind. "Truth may not exist but Pleasure does!" And Mind entered the skull of Epicurus, the Goethe of antiquity - "the meaning of life is life itself"!

Mind sprawled in the colossal inn of the visible universe and took its pleasure. To hell with Truth! To hell with the Veiled Mystery! To hell with Nirvana! To hell with Plato and Aristotle! Knowledge for knowledge's sake! Art for beauty's sake! Thought for thought's sake! The flesh for the flesh's sake! There is no Truth. All is permitted.

The mind of Epicurus had made a tremendous discovery, the greatest that had ever been made - that the will-to-live and the will-to-pleasure are one!