

Cicero Attributing To Epicurus The View That Virtuous Action Is Itself Pleasurable

Post by "Cassius" of September 3, 2023 at 10:17 PM

Yes I think he is right there in what is stated on the face of it, but Cicero is ridiculing the concept as if no Epicurean (or anyone else) should believe it.

As I see it Cicero is continuing his argument stated nearby that it is ridiculous to argue that reading history and literature and poetry is pleasurable -- he is building up his argument on the premise that pleasure means only "sex, drugs, and rock and roll."

That's why I think this is revealing. Cicero is basing a LOT of his argument all the way through the whole book on making people believe that pleasure means only bodily and immediate sensory stimulation.

And that's why I think this is a great sentence to contemplate -- an Epicurean needs to understand that ALL action which isn't painful is pleasurable, including what Cicero likes to think of as worthy and virtuous action that Cicero likes to reserve as a "higher" way of life.

As for the worthy and virtuous actions that are immediately painful, like in the wartime examples, an Epicurean would perform those, just as Torquatus eventually answers, because sometimes we choose painful actions when they lead to more less pain or more pleasure later.