

Tips On Offsetting Pleasures Against Pains

Post by “Don” of November 28, 2023 at 11:51 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

If I recall correctly Thomas Jefferson picked up that line and put it in his outline:

That was an incredible display of recall, [Cassius](#) . Well done!!

I was curious to check out the *Oxford English Dictionary* to see what definition Jefferson would have been working with (as well as maybe those translators):

From 1603-1723: † Insensibility or indifference to pain; want of feeling. *Obsolete*.

From 1656-1751: Freedom from pain; a state of rest or ease, in which neither pain nor pleasure is felt. *Obsolete*.

Quotations (This definition actually uses quotes about Epicurus):

1656

Indolence, which Epicure held, they esteem not pleasure, nor want of pleasure,..for Indolence is like the state of a sleeping man. (T. Stanley, History of Philosophy vol. II. iv. facing p. 5)

1702

D'you know, said I, what Hieronymus Rhodius has allotted for the Summum Bonum? I know, said Torquatus, he resolves it into Nihil dolere, Mere Indolence. (S. Parker, translation of Cicero, Five Books De Finibus ii. 56)

1713

I cou'd rather call it an Indolence. It seems to be nothing more than a Privation of both Pain and Pleasure. (G. Berkeley, Three Dialogues Hylas & Philonous i. 14)

1751

That tranquility of mind, and indolence of body which he made his chief ends. (Earl of Orrery, Remarks Swift (1752) 113)

From the Historical Thesaurus entries for this definition:

non-feelingness 1650 Absence of sensation.

indolence 1656-1751 Freedom from pain; a state of rest or ease, in which neither pain nor pleasure is felt. Obsolete.

dispassion 1690- Freedom from passion; dispassionateness; apathy.

dryness 1748 figurative. Absence of emotion, feeling, or fervour; lack of cordiality; coldness of feeling; distance of manner.

dispassionateness 1842- A dispassionate condition or quality.

passionlessness 1867- The state or condition of being or appearing passionless.

emotionlessness 1873- The quality, state, or condition of being emotionless.

(My Note: Those all sound more Stoic than Epicurean!)

Finally, definition from 1710-

The disposition to avoid trouble; love of ease; laziness, slothfulness, sluggishness.