

New (October 1 2019) Catherine Wilson Speech Video on Epicurean Philosophy

Post by "Cassius" of October 10, 2019 at 2:09 PM

Quote

I don't know about fire only, but re: fire plus iron, in Lucretius, an evaluation of the association between iron and warfare is explored. The passage ends explaining how Discord multiplies the horrors of war.

How nature of iron discovered was, thou mayst
Of thine own self divine. Man's ancient arms
Were hands, and nails and teeth, stones too and boughs-
Breakage of forest trees- and flame and fire,
As soon as known.

Hiram: I think Ben's point in raising the "fire" issue was the general one that Wilson seemed to be saying that Lucretius' pre-history discussion was sort of a validation of Marxist "class-struggle" history in a political sense. Or maybe in other philosophical terms she seemed to be implying that Lucretius was glorifying life before technology as a better time / golden age. And Ben was saying, and I agree with him, that I do not read Lucretius "glorifying" that period, or calling it a golden age, as much as he just seems to be stating the facts of what happened, with both the bad and good that went with it, to get us to where we are. Almost as if he were chronicling the movement of the atoms and telling us what brought about current conditions.

Ben was speculating that because Marxism is so prevalent in academia that that might be coloring her approach. Whether or not that is true may not be important, but if Wilson is going to make a habit of suggesting that Lucretius and Epicurus extolled pre-history as a golden age, that leads to the implication that all technology and "progress" is bad, and reinforces the viewpoint that Epicureanism if carried to a logical conclusion would endorse living in caves.

Do you have a different reading of Lucretius on that point? How do you read it?