

Discussion of Article: "Caricatures to the Left of Them, Caricatures to the Right of Them, Caricatures In Front of Them, Volleyed and Thundered"


Post by "Cassius" of May 4, 2020 at 11:03 AM

Well this pretty much checks every box for "demoralizing response" to the article. 😊

- Only a small subset of people are "capable" of understanding how the feeling of pleasure operates and influences a philosophy based on nature?

- I would like to interpret the rest of the response in as charitable a way as possible, but is it not saying "Yes I am a 'spectator' and I'm glad to be one" which has connotations that are pretty easy to find alarming, given the shortness of life?

We charging through the "Valley of Death" indeed! 😊



I agree that it is "small subset of people" that understand or are capable of understanding it.

As to the spectator comment, this might be coming from a person that wants to have an Epicurean involved in w/e their belief, stance, or calling is.

I can see their side, it is often where I tell friends not to get overwhelmed or too involved in others actions or motives, as the outcome you seek through a 2nd or 3rd party, will likely not be what prevails. Thus as someone who follows our philosophy, I do put my own pleasures first, so perhaps I am a spectator, paying attention to how I make my next move as is what's best for me and my cares.

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Cassius response:

I would disagree with the word "capable" in "capable of understanding it," but given the premise of the article that we are surrounded on virtually every side with people who relentlessly upend Epicurus' definition of pleasure, at present it is probably true that only a relatively small number of people actually do see through the cannon fire. This issue is what DeWitt was referring to when he quoted Cicero as observing that people of "no great education" were those who embraced Epicurus "with gladness," since in Epicurus' and Cicero's

day the cannon fire was no so strong that ordinary people were prevented from seeing the truth. Today, the "higher" the education, the greater the likelihood that people will accept the absurdity that Epicurus did not understand "pleasure" the same way we can and do ourselves, before we are "perverted."

DeWitt: "It was not usual to call the possession of health a pleasure and still less usual to call freedom from pain a pleasure. It was this objection that Cicero had in mind when he wrote: "You Epicureans round up people from all the crossroads, decent men, I allow, but certainly of no great education. Do such as they, then, comprehend what Epicurus means, while I, Cicero, do not?" The common people of the ancient world, however, for whom Platonism had nothing attractive, seem to have accepted Epicurean pragmatism with gladness. Cicero, being partial to the aristocratic philosophy and having no zeal to promote the happiness of the multitude, chose to sneer."

Torquatus: "We are inquiring, then, what is the final and ultimate Good, which as all philosophers are agreed must be of such a nature as to be the End to which all other things are means, while it is not itself a means to anything else. This Epicurus finds in pleasure; pleasure he holds to be the Chief Good, pain the Chief Evil. This he sets out to prove as follows: Every animal, as soon as it is born, seeks for pleasure, and delights in it as the Chief Good, while it recoils from pain as the Chief Evil, and so far as possible avoids it. This it does as long as it remains unperverted, at the prompting of Nature's own unbiased and honest verdict."