

# I'm back.....:-)

**Post by "Cassius" of November 13, 2020 at 1:56 PM**

## [Quote from Susan Hill](#)

Lucretius is a slow slog for me

There is no doubt about this Susan. It took me years and many separate tries to make it through the full poem. Had I not listened to the Charlton Griffin version on audible (the Rolfe Humphries translation) I would never have made it. There are parts that are outstanding and well suited for motivational work, but those parts are surrounded by loads of relatively dry material from which they must be pulled and highlighted. Presumably that is why Lucretius himself started each of the six books with what might be considered to be an inspirational passage, before diving in to the details.

it's going to be up to us to devise ways to make best use of the good parts while reserving the majority for people who are really interested in the details.

## [Quote from bdws](#)

I do think that the key for EP is to have a lively and POSITIVE social presence that allows for friendships to form and practices and 'slogans' to help folks simply and effectively implement EP in their lives on a daily basis.

I think this is definitely true. One of my favorite quotes from all aspects of the work of Thomas Jefferson, which I have combed over for Epicurean material, is his letter to Madison where he has the phrase "the earth belongs to the living." Word on a page or on a computer screen are worthless unless they are being used by living breathing people. The best book in the world is useless if it isn't read and discussed.

I don't think Epicurean philosophy can or should ever be organized too much on a "hierarchical" approach, but at the same time unless there is teamwork and cooperation it can never get anywhere against the hyper-organized opposition.

So networking is essential, and in a positive way as you say, but at the same time there have to be fairly clear boundaries so we know who "we" are.

We've had some recent back and forth on the subject of a "spiritual aspect" (to which you, Brett, will want to weigh in, hopefully after you've glanced at the "Reverence and Awe" thread 😊 ) and I think that gives us a good recent experience with figuring out where lines need to be drawn.

Personally, I have to draw my own line at a patient but firm understanding that the "absence of pain" material does not lead to asceticism and stoicism. I recognize that that is always going to be a subject that needs discussion, and I think that discussion is very valuable, but we have to recognize that there are those who for various reasons are simply not convertible over to a non-ascetic viewpoint, and at some point we have to limit that public debate so as to prevent demoralization of the whole project.

"Spirituality" has some of the same issues, but I see that as different because the term is nebulous, the texts are unclear, and there are many implications of the texts that do exist that require discussion to even see where the lines might be drawn. There is very little that is more central to Epicurean philosophy more so than the position that Nature has no Supernatural God over her, and that's a line that in my view can't even really be approached without losing "the essence" of what Epicurus was all about. But within that line there is wide opportunity for further development that I also think is key to a vigorous Epicurean movement. I see that as part of the big mix of issues involved in clarifying what is really being meant by "pleasure" and also proper application of the precise meaning of the elimination of the supernatural. Eliminating the supernatural is sort of like "absence of pain" - what matters is what DOES exist, and simply stating that nothing supernatural exists doesn't tell us anything more about what does exist than "absence of pain" tells us about the pleasure that a particular person is experiencing when pain is eliminated.

So those are brief comments on balancing being clear about who "we" are against the desire to "keep things positive."

But back to the main thread, I think each of us has to think about the likelihood that "finding others who think like we do" is only the start of the answer, and the larger part of the answer comes in generating the day to day activity of life in which we work together with those who are like us to achieve projects that we find pleasurable and which expand our circles of like-minded friends.