

Threads of Epicureanism in Art and Literature

Post by “Joshua” of November 24, 2019 at 8:11 PM

*Note; If I have Cassius' permission, I wanted a place to simply **list** minor treatments of Epicurean characters, motifs, and themes in works by **Non-Epicureans**. The purpose is a simple reference; if you find something interesting, add it to the list. If something on the list merits attention and/or discussion, start a thread and we'll talk about it! Entries should include Author, Title, Year/Period, Brief Description of Relevance.*

Walter Pater; "Marius the Epicurean"; 1885; Victorian Historical Novel set in Imperial Rome

Alfred Tennyson; "Lucretius"; 1868; Victorian Poem treating the alleged madness of Lucretius

Sir Francis Hastings Doyle; "The Epicurean"; 1841; A Poem that actually takes Epicureanism seriously! [Here](#)

George Eliot; "Romola"; 1863; A Novel. By reputation, the character of Tito Melema is an unsympathetic portrayal of an Epicurean.

Pierre Jean de Beranger; "The Epicurean's Prayer"; ~1850; A difficult poem. I suspect it loses something in translation? [Here](#)

Piero di Cosimo; "The Forest Fire"; 1505; A painting, said to be inspired by *De Rerum Natura*.

I hope this thread works out! Someone (I think Charles?) planted the seed in my head a few weeks ago. Once we've got something good going we could work on arranging by period and artistic movement.

Edit; To clarify, "Non-Epicurean" here just means a figure that we don't already know to be Epicurean. It's ok—and welcome!—if the figure is sympathetic to the school.

Post by “Cassius” of November 24, 2019 at 9:27 PM

Great idea Joshua! Let me know if you'd like subdivisions or other structure that the forum software can help with. Like you said it probably makes sense to just list things first, then we

can break down by category and maybe provide more in depth descriptions.

Post by “Joshua” of December 1, 2019 at 8:04 AM

Thomas Moore (no, not THE Thomas More); "The Epicurean"; 1827; Irish novel about a fictional Epicurean scholar converting to Christian monasticism.

Post by “Cassius” of December 1, 2019 at 8:57 AM

I know nothing about that Thomas Moore novel. Have you read any of it?

Post by “Joshua” of December 1, 2019 at 9:45 AM

No, I haven't. I was reading about Byron for reasons mentioned in the other thread, and this one turned up. He was Byron's literary executor. Apparently he is regarded as the National Bard of Ireland, so it's somewhat surprising that he's never crossed my radar (possibly his memory is eclipsed by James Joyce).

Post by “Joshua” of December 5, 2019 at 12:10 AM

Desiderius Erasmus; "The Epicurean"; 1545; Dialogue by the famous Dutch Christian Humanist, arguing that Christianity is the only way to a life of real pleasure.

Robert Burns; "Contented wi' Little and Cantie wi' Mair"; 1795; Poem in Scottish dialect blending Epicurean and Stoic themes.

Robert Frost; "Lucretius Versus the Lake Poets"; 1947; A poem on the meaning of the word *nature*, contrasting Lucretius with the British Romantics

Post by “Charles” of December 30, 2019 at 12:33 PM

Ben Jonson; "The Alchemist"; 1610; A comedic play about conmen and the philosopher's stone. With a character named "Sir Epicure Mammon", who is a rich man funding the conman purporting to be researching the means to produce The Philosopher's Stone. Mammon has exorbitant desires and is extremely extravagant, clearly he isn't Epicurean, as he is an ultra-hedonist, but his name is quite obviously a call to Epicurus.

Post by “Elayne” of December 30, 2019 at 12:39 PM

Yay, I love this thread! I have a feeling there are more Epicureans who never heard of Epicurus than among those who have. Thanks for starting this section.

Post by “Charles” of December 30, 2019 at 1:53 PM

Julien Offray de la Mettrie; "System of Epicurus" 1750; A short treatise of 31 independent paragraphs explaining the origins of animals and of other human mechanisms. Paragraphs 10 and 11 bring up Epicureanism and Lucretius.

Paragraph 10

"If humans have not always existed as we see them today (and how can we believe they came into the world grown up as mother and father, and perfectly capable of procreating beings like themselves!), the earth must have acted as the uterus of mankind. It must have opened up its bosom to seeds of humans, already prepared so that, given certain laws, this proud animal could come forth. Why, I ask you, modern Anti-Epicureans, why should the earth, that mother and nurse of all objects, have refused to seed the animal when she has allowed the vilest, most useless, and most pernicious of plants?"

Paragraph 11

"But the Earth is no longer the cradle of humanity! We do not see it produce men! Let us not reproach him for his present sterility; she made her reach on this side. An old hen does not lay anymore eggs, an old woman does not lay anymore children; that's pretty much Lucretius's answer to this objection."

I know I said I was finished with the translation, but the break in the holidays and the revision and editing process has been rather slow.

Post by "Charles" of January 2, 2020 at 3:14 PM

Charles de Saint-Évremond; "Discours sur Épicure" 1613-1703; No idea what it's about and its in French, maybe I need to start a translation if I can't find one online.

Evremond was a very reclusive writer who never allowed to have his works be published unless he had died, but he was a libertine and a student of Gassendi, spending the later half of his life frequenting a hedonist salon.

Lucilio 'Giulio Cesare' Vanini; "De Admirandis" 1616; Full title being "*De Admirandis Naturae Reginae Deaeque Mortalium Arcanis*" or "*On the Marvelous Secrets of Nature, the Queen and Goddess of Mortals*"

Vanini, despite being a pantheist, rejected much of Aristotle and sought to explain everything through the teachings of Epicurus and Lucretius, but developed his own view of mechanistic-materialism.

Post by "Cassius" of January 2, 2020 at 3:17 PM

I seem to remember that Saint-Evremond was the one who was corresponding with Ninon De Lenclos and there is material from him mixed in with that material. The Ninon material is highly interesting but I just haven't had time to go through it or really to pin her down on how "Epicurean" she was in anything but ethics.

Post by “Charles” of January 2, 2020 at 3:23 PM

Another book by Evremond

"Pensées d'Épicure précédées d'un Essai sur la morale d'Épicure" which translates directly into "Thoughts of Epicurus preceded by an Essay on the Morals of Epicurus"

Post by “Charles” of January 2, 2020 at 3:42 PM

I'll be crossposting between here and on my new thread [here](#). What I post in here will be expanded on the glossary, as well as having download links to the texts.

Post by “Charles” of March 18, 2020 at 4:30 PM

Marquis de Sade; "Aline and Valcour"; 1793.

Supposedly the island paradise of Tamoé is heavily inspired and based off of Lucretius. Worth noting its not overtly explicit like much of his work. 4th volume has yet to be translated as opposed to the first 3 volumess translated for the first time in 2019.

Post by “Cassius” of March 18, 2020 at 4:36 PM

Good to hear from you Charles - hope you are well!

Post by “Charles” of March 18, 2020 at 4:58 PM

I've been fine, work has been slow because of the virus but I've been lurking here each day and reading a ton of material and teaching others about Epicurus in various group chats and DMs online.

Post by “Charles” of March 24, 2020 at 1:25 PM

My copies of the 3 volumes of Aline and Valcour arrived at the same time, likely due to covid-19 interrupting Amazon's schedule.

It opens up with a line from Lucretius, in Book 3

*"Just as children in the night tremble & fear everything,
so we in the light sometimes fear
what is no more to be feared than the things
children shudder at in the dark
and imagine will come true. This terror,
this darkness of the mind's eye must be scattered,
not by the rays of the sun & glistening shafts of daylight,
but by a dispassionate view of the inner laws of Nature."*

Post by “Joshua” of March 25, 2020 at 7:27 AM

Sir William Temple; *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus*; 1692; English essayist and statesman who "Celebrates Epicurus and his philosophy." I have not evaluated this claim.

Text is [Here](#).

Post by “Cassius” of March 25, 2020 at 8:45 AM

I am pretty sure I at least glanced at "Upon the Gardens of Epicurus" and I remember not being particularly impressed. However that was in a phase when I was trying to identify and skim

through material to organize for future readings, so I may have misread it -- would be happy to find that I did.

For some reason this calls to my mind how someone on facebook asked me if I had ever read "A Few Days In Athens." I thought at that point that I had identified most of the important material out there, so I was prepared to be disappointed once again, and then - pow - AFDIA turned out to be in my view phenomenally good.

I am sure there are many good works out there still to be identified.

Post by “Joshua” of June 2, 2020 at 1:26 PM

Pío Baroja; *Youth and Egotry*; 1889; Spanish Novelist who gladly adopts Horace's motto for himself—A swine out of Epicurus' herd.

Post by “Joshua” of January 15, 2021 at 11:40 PM

Bevil Higgons; "In Imitation of Lucretius"; 1736; English poem by a Jacobite historian, which attempts a Christian refutation of Lucretius' Epicureanism.

Post by “Charles” of January 16, 2021 at 4:10 AM

I forgot to put Sade's Lucretian poem in here.

Marquis de Sade; "La Verite" 1787. My thread and translation of it is [here](#).

Post by “Charles” of January 16, 2021 at 4:30 AM

Erasmus Darwin; "The Temple of Nature Or, The Origin of Society: A Poem, With Philosophical Notes" 1803 (posth.)

Post by "Charles" of March 11, 2021 at 12:07 AM

John of Salisbury; "Policraticus" c. 1159. The first work of political theory in the Middle Ages, a mirror book for Princes. He advocates for divine right and necessary tyrannicide from the will of the people

[In reference to the four rivers of Eden] 'four rivers which spring for Epicureans from the fount of lustfulness'.

Post by "Charles" of March 11, 2021 at 12:10 AM

Huge find.

Peter Abelard; "Dialogue Between a Philosopher, a Jew, and a Christian" c. 1136/1139

Will cover more tomorrow as I read the text.

Post by "Charles" of March 11, 2021 at 12:18 AM

Worth noting too that John of Salisbury was a student of Abelard.

Edit: I see these two were first mentioned in this thread [Aurelian Robert and his book](#).

Post by "Cassius" of March 11, 2021 at 7:19 AM

I googled for "Philosopher / Jew / Christian " but didn't find a good free text. Please post a link if you find one Charles - thanks.

Post by “Joshua” of October 31, 2021 at 8:43 AM

George Santayana; *Three Philosophical Poets*;1910. Contrasts Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe.

John Tyndall; *The Belfast Address*; 1874. A history of atomism, and an argument against the 'God of the Gaps'.

James Parks Caldwell; *Diary*; 1863-1864. Prison diary of a Confederate soldier, praises Lucretius.

Post by “Don” of November 1, 2021 at 7:13 AM

I hope you don't mind, but I couldn't resist trying to find the books you mentioned online. The Tyndall one of far more detailed about Epicurus than I expected.

[Quote from JJEIbert](#)

John Tyndall; *The Belfast Address*; 1874. A history of atomism, and an argument against the 'God of the Gaps'.

[Address delivered before the British association assembled at Belfast.](#)

[Quote from JJEIbert](#)

George Santayana; *Three Philosophical Poets*;1910. Contrasts Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe.

[Three philosophical poets: Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe, by George Santayana...](#)

[Quote from JJEIbert](#)

James Parks Caldwell; Diary; 1863-1864. Prison diary of a Confederate soldier, praises Lucretius.

I wasn't able to find this one freely available. It appears the diary was first published in book form in *A Northern Confederate at Johnson's Island Prison: The Civil War Diaries of James Parks Caldwell*, George H. Jones, Ed. 2010. 277 pages.

"A college graduate at 16 and a founder of the Sigma Chi fraternity, Caldwell entered the Confederate Army as an artillery lieutenant. He fought at Shiloh, Port Hudson and other campaigns before being captured in 1863 and imprisoned on Johnson's Island, in Lake Erie, near Sandusky, Ohio. He kept a daily diary for 18 months, describing the prison food and conditions, as well as his classical and intellectual interests. The book features letters, a poem, notes, and an index."

Post by "Cassius" of November 1, 2021 at 7:29 AM

I would particularly like to track down the Lucretius excerpts from the prison diary as I have a number of friends with whom those would be very useful.

Post by "Joshua" of November 1, 2021 at 7:32 AM

The Belfast Address should be required reading around here!

And I'd like to read that diary in general.

Post by "Cassius" of November 1, 2021 at 8:52 AM

I have never read the Belfast address and will try to do so today. It would be a lot easier for me personally if we had audio copies read by someone sympathetic - I wonder who that might be?



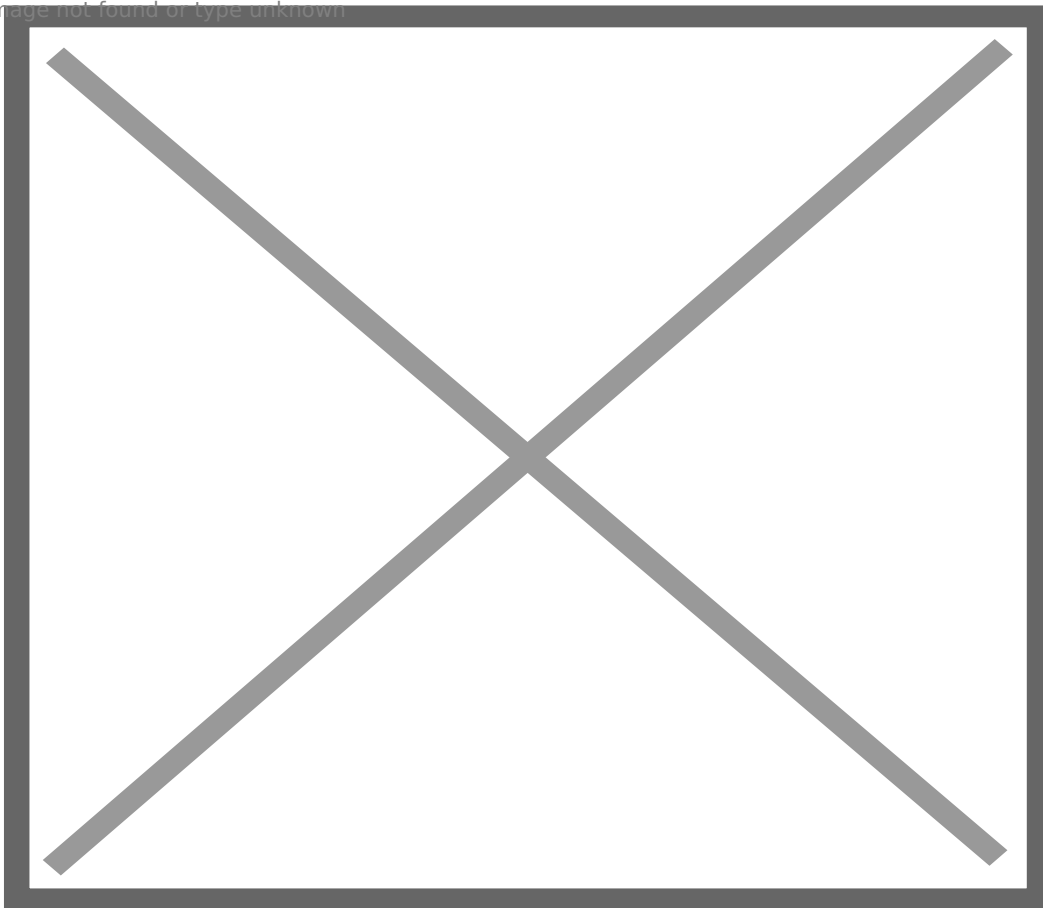
Failing that (and no doubt for good reason) we can always run some of these through one of the better text-to-speech engines, but that probably means have it in good "text" form from which an engine can translate.

I downloaded from Don's link several different formats. The PDF version is a series of images and this likely unusable. The Epub and txt versions are in decent shape, but will need editing to correct errors where the scanning and OCR failed.

I have done one run-through and uploaded a cleaner TXT version here: [Tyndal - Address at Belfast](#)

I also placed a copy here where collaborative editing can be done:

Image not found or type unknown



[Tyndall - Address at Belfast - Epicureanfriends.com](#)

www.epicureanfriends.com

That's not efficient to have two copies, but I realize that for someone who knows what they are doing, having the TXT file for use in a Text editor is a lot easier than trying to edit online.

I will work with this today and find a way forward.

Already the version in the lexicon might be usable if someone calls up that page and has a "text reader" application on their telephone.

Post by “Cassius” of November 1, 2021 at 9:30 AM

If someone wants to try listening to this, here is an effort:

it's not great, but it's better than nothing, and can be improved.

Wow that was a terrible first effort. I will improve it and repost

Post by “Don” of November 1, 2021 at 3:50 PM

Ask and ye shall receive... The Lucretius bits of the Caldwell diary (attached)

Post by “Cassius” of November 1, 2021 at 4:19 PM

Except for the Biblical allusion thank you very much!!!! 😊

Post by “Cassius” of November 1, 2021 at 4:25 PM

Joshua after quickly scanning through what Don sent I think I am going to have to defer to you to assess the significance of it. Please let me know what you think whenever you get around to it. I want to get that text from Tyndal into better shape for an mp3 version and i will upload a new effort soon.

Post by “Don” of November 1, 2021 at 4:41 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Joshua after quickly scanning through what Don sent I think I am going to have to defer to you to assess the significance of it. Please let me know what you think whenever you get around to it. I want to get that text from Tyndal into better shape for an mp3 version and i will upload a new effort soon.

I got the impression while I was scanning that this would be more of a curiosity than anything. He certainly didn't seem to have any great insights, just wanted to read the poem.

Post by “Joshua” of November 1, 2021 at 6:56 PM

Quote

I got the impression while I was scanning that this would be more of a curiosity than anything. He certainly didn't seem to have any great insights, just wanted to read the poem.

^This is reasonable appraisal, and I'm not certain I wholly disagree with it.

However, if I can be permitted to step out onto a limb or two, I do see a few features of interest.

First, this quote;

verses. Very excited about what he had read, he was effusive. I am delighted with him though sometimes he shows too much of the philosopher (& that too, of an obscure philosophy) & too little of the poet for my taste. Among the many dicta he sets forth are to be found the germ of a true philosophy than any other ancient, or at least any other Roman dreamed of. Inspired, he apparently attacked the text in earnest. On September 15, he disclosed that he read Lucretius every morning. He also apparently became more familiar with Lucretius's style and mannerisms, for on September 21 he wrote that

Is it not somewhat remarkable how closely this opinion maps onto Thomas Jefferson's? To wit:

Quote

I consider the genuine (not the imputed) doctrines of Epicurus as containing every thing rational in moral philosophy which Greece and Rome have left us.

Perhaps more than coincidence? I wonder when Jefferson's letters became public.

I also personally find it fascinating that he was a staggeringly voracious reader, with a clear and powerful intellect, who gave in his diary the impression of total devotion to the Confederate cause. Cassius has made the point elsewhere that there were Epicureans on both sides of the Roman civil war; it's unclear to me from these fragments how deep Caldwell's interest was in Epicurean philosophy, but he does represent an interesting, if uncertain, data point here.

Thoreau was one of the great abolitionists of the antebellum period; like Caldwell, he also kept a journal. Like Caldwell, he approached Lucretius in the Latin text.

But unlike Caldwell, he stopped reading after the first hundred lines—he had absorbed the image of Epicurus 'traversing the flaming ramparts of the world' and returning with a boon for mankind, but he curiously identifies him not as Epicurus, but as Prometheus!

This strikes me as hugely important—is there something about the Epicurean conception of justice (as not morally absolute) that appeals to the slaveholder, but repulses the abolitionist?

As I suggested, I'm out on limb.

And while [Don](#) was very helpful with his scans, I think he missed this one;

Friday, November 4, 1864

Finished **Lucretius**: I am very much pleased with "De Rerum Natura;" I think it the finest of the latin poems, the grandest achievement of the Roman Muse. Well has Bulwer pronounced the eloquence of **Lucretius** "like ebony, at once dark and splendid." His errors were those of his age, his greatness is his own. Many passages are obscured by the jargon of the school & the use of scientific or technical terms, but there is enough in the polished & melodious effusions of this preëminent Poet of the Garden, to constitute him henceforth one of my prime favorites. Wood was issued to-day, 1st time this week. Many rooms are as yet without stoves: Wood was withheld that we might be compelled to burn that which we were permitted to cut for ourselves a few weeks ago.

High praise here—but "Poet of the Garden"?

Caldwell *must* have read Cicero, and possibly even the Torquatus; he read Bulwer, who evidently wrote on the subject (put a pin in that thought...).

I begin to suspect that Mr. Caldwell knew rather more than his diary lets on.

Post by “Joshua” of November 1, 2021 at 7:44 PM

Quote

As for this particular writer/prisoner, what else do we know about him? Was he sympathetic to slaveholding? Did I read something about him being a northerner, or was he just in a northern prison?

Born and educated in Ohio. Moved to Mississippi as an educator, joined the Confederate army, imprisoned (ironically) in Ohio, offered his freedom in exchange for a renunciation of the Confederate cause; refused, and after the war returned to Mississippi where he died.

Quote

So probably the same observation about the Roman Civil War applies to the American version. You had people on both sides who were moral absolutists appealing to divine right (the South's Deo Vindice and the North's "Battle Hymn")

I see upon rereading my post that I never got around to stating this point, but ^this is where I was going with that.

I don't think Caldwell is going to revolutionize our understanding of anything, but here's another point I neglected to make; if not for the war, his interest in Lucretius would likely not even be remembered. He's a fragment from the wreckage, swept up with the tide of a particular moment in history. It will take more work to dig up the references that are even more obscure.

Post by “Cassius” of November 1, 2021 at 7:59 PM

Probably we're bearing too close for comfort to politics, at least without knowing where some of the answers lead -- if you do discover more about his philosophic dispositions let us know!

Post by “Joshua” of November 1, 2021 at 8:04 PM

Yes; and I almost think those posts should be moved out of this thread into their own, but I'll leave that up to you.

Post by “Cassius” of November 1, 2021 at 8:22 PM

Ok Will do. I did already set up a separate thread on John Tyndall.

EDIT: Rather than move to a new thread I just deleted most of my comments, which were the ones that were really over the line. It's highly unlikely we need to discuss the War Between The States here any further than we already have, or might in the future, other than as Frances Wright's pre-war comments might be of interest. Too little to be gained and too much danger to go into that unless we find some figure who specifically discusses Epicurus.

As for Caldwell let's just focus on Caldwell's philosophical views and if we find enough there to talk about we can create a separate thread just on him.

The point of this thread is to "identify Epicurean figures of the past," and that's another limitation as to Caldwell -- if he was just commenting briefly he probably merits more the "general discussion" group anyway.

Post by “Don” of November 1, 2021 at 10:56 PM

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

And while Don was very helpful with his scans, I think he missed this one;

Doh! My bad! Guess I should have another go at it and reload 😞

Post by “Cassius” of November 1, 2021 at 11:37 PM

[Quote from JJElbert](#)

This strikes me as hugely important—is there something about the Epicurean conception of justice (as not morally absolute) that appeals to the slaveholder, but repulses the abolitionist?

I think that comment deserves a reply, just not the one I gave it before I moderated myself 😊

I think that regardless of the specifics of the context in which Caldwell was involved, the American Civil War, it is widely true is that the Epicurean concept of justice is always going to appeal to the minority, to the dissenter, to the rebel --- to basically everyone who finds himself or herself in a minority position.

If we happen to find ourselves part of the majority and the establishment, then we like to think that such is the natural order of things, and we tend toward Platonism or Stoicism.

People who find themselves "on the outs" from society are always going to be searching for answers to questions about whether the views of the majority are "right" and "just" for some cosmic reason, or simply because the majority is numerically stronger.

Every time we get tempted to let our emotions pull us in the direction of thinking that one moral position or another is so compelling that it "ought" to be universally received, we've got to remember - I think - that the nature of the cosmos in the Epicurean worldview is that such absolute standards of authority don't exist. We can and we should act as vigorously as possible to see that we surround ourselves with things and relationships that please us, and we separate ourselves from things and relationships that cause us pain, so we get involved where it is reasonable to do so and we fight to defend what we think is just. But we shouldn't make the mistake of thinking that there is any absolute universal law or absolute justice that is behind our decision. Presumably across the species pain and pleasure does spring from a common background and we can expect that we aren't the only ones who measure pain and pleasure as we do, but I think it's fair to say that human experience is very wide on that score, and we have to expect that there are lots of people who disagree with us in most facets of life.

I think the bottom line is that no matter how much we may want there to be some cosmic force that writes our conception of justice and enforces it, Epicurus would say that such a cosmic force doesn't exist. That's true in the case of your question for both the slaveholders who thought god was on their side and the abolitionists who thought god was on their side. But we could also pick any other age and context and dispute, no matter how hotly contested, and analyze it in the same way.

I think something like that is the ultimate philosophic lesson. Whether we are part of the "in crowd" or the "out crowd" is not the determining factor - there's no fate and no human necessity. But that circumstance likely influences who it is who finds themselves motivated to study Epicurus and other views that justify "outsiders" and non-conformists, and who it is who stays closer to home and to "establishment" views like for example the Stoics.

Post by “Don” of November 1, 2021 at 11:52 PM

The Epicurean view of justice is still something I wrestle with (and I mean to get back to [our previous thread](#)... at some point in the future). Probably because we are inculcated from culture, tradition, etc., that there IS some over-arching, absolute authority from which our "rights" come - whether that be from a conservative/right view or a liberal/left view. Even the [UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) - lofty as it is - one has to ask by what authority these rights are imposed, protected, and enforced. Grappling with Epicurus's contractual nature of justice is not easy. Intellectually, it makes sense. Accepting it... that's another kettle of fish.

Post by “Cassius” of November 2, 2021 at 6:44 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Grappling with Epicurus's contractual nature of justice is not easy. Intellectually, it makes sense.

And I am not even sure that "contractual nature of justice" really conveys his views accurately either. I can see how it can be interpreted that way, and he does talk about agreement being involved. But when a particular agreement can at one moment be just but another moment become unjust (due to a change in circumstances) then it isn't just a simple question of "Did you make the agreement?" And "Did you break it?" (which I think is the way we tend to think of contract law.)

Justice is definitely one of the more difficult doctrines for us to understand, but I agree with Don that the problem is that our cultural attachment to contract and the idea of absolute right and wrong is so great today. Quite possibly if we looked at this from the perspective of a "family," (or at least friends) where we don't view agreements so formally and we release people from agreements easily, we might find it easier to understand Epicurus.

Because remembering [PD39](#) he is saying that we try to make people into one family (or friends? Depending on the Greek) and for those who can't be made that successfully we to an extent separate from them. Maybe this is another situation like gods where he is stating that the common definition of the word needs to be understood differently.

So maybe we ought to be thinking about [PD39](#) when we discuss the justice doctrines.

Post by “Don” of November 2, 2021 at 7:19 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Because remembering [PD39](#) he is saying that we try to make people into one family (or friends? Depending on the Greek)

It doesn't appear [PD39](#) is even that clear cut. Several translators have taken the "things" approach and talk more about circumstances:

“The man who has made the best arrangements for the confidence about external threats is he who has made the manageable things akin to himself, and has at least made the unmanageable things not alien to himself. But he avoided all contact with things for which not even this could be managed and he drove out of his life everything which it profited him to drive out.” Inwood & Gerson (1994)

“The person who has put together the best means for confidence about external threats is one who has become familiar with what is possible and at least not unfamiliar with what is not possible, but who has not mixed with things where even this could not be managed and who has driven away anything that is not advantageous.” Saint-Andre (2008)

“The person who is the most successful in controlling the disturbing elements that come from the outside world has assimilated to himself what he could, and what he could not assimilate he has at least not alienated. Where he could not do even this, he has dissociated himself or eliminated all that it was expedient to treat in this way.” Strodach (2012)

Thanks again to Nathan for his list!!

Post by “Cassius” of November 2, 2021 at 5:04 PM

Very interesting - I was not aware of those takes. This is probably going to be one of those situations then where I think it is best to read everything together as if the doctrine numbers

did not exist. A "things" approach would make sense too but I am going to bet that the closing paragraphs of the document were probably directed at relationships to other "people" for lots of reasons.

Post by “Cassius” of November 2, 2021 at 5:06 PM

HA -- I want to say this for the record. Lately I am getting worried about saying "I was not aware." I am mostly joking and I don't think there is really anything wrong with my memory but with the forum software available I am getting to think I need to do a search here every time I get ready to write "I am not aware" or anything like that, because I bet in a good number of cases i i did the search I would find myself talking about the very subject a few years ago! 😊 I am sure no one else has that problem but we're going to need to be tolerant of each other on that score.

Post by “Martin” of November 3, 2021 at 7:02 AM

It happens at any age but more often the older we get. Upon discussing a specific topic with a fellow student in 1989, we noticed only at the end of the discussion that we already had a similar discussion a year before.

Post by “Joshua” of June 11, 2022 at 9:47 PM

Charles Lamb; *Motes in the Sunbeams*; 1775-1834; a poem referencing a well-known passage in Lucretius.

I am doggedly pursuing a poem that I remember from college but cannot find; during the chase I stumbled on this, which is mildly interesting:

Quote

The motes up and down in the sun

Ever restlessly moving we see;
Whereas the great mountains stand still,
Unless terrible earthquakes there be.
If these atoms that move up and down
Were as useful as restless they are,
Than a mountain I rather would be
A mote in the sunbeam so fair.

Display More

There's a long-standing tradition in British literature on the comparison of value between 'use' and 'beauty'. This seems to me a very muddled take on the matter.

Now, back into the salt mine!

Post by “Don” of June 11, 2022 at 9:53 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

I am doggedly pursuing a poem that I remember from college but cannot find

Can I be any help?

Post by “Joshua” of June 11, 2022 at 10:10 PM

Maybe! The problem is I remember so little--only the rough outline of a passing vignette...

I think;

-That it was a poem (rough start, I know!)

-The poem was written by a British man.

-And was written in the Victorian period or earlier.

-The speaker of the poem is intoxicated, possibly by opium or laudanum, or *maybe* by absinthe or wine. In any case, there's delirium.

-The speaker meets an 'exotic' man, and tries to speak to him.

-When English fails, the speaker switches to ancient Greek, possibly by reciting a few lines from Homer.

That's all I've got! I *thought* it was Thomas de Quincey (1785-1859), who wrote *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, but he was an essayist. His Greek, however, was very good.

Quote

[I] was very early distinguished for my classical attainments, especially for my knowledge of Greek. At thirteen, I wrote Greek with ease; and at fifteen my command of that language was so great, that I not only composed Greek verses in lyric metres, but could converse in Greek fluently, and without embarrassment-- an accomplishment which I have not since met with in any scholar of my times, and which, in my case, was owing to the practice of daily reading off the newspapers into the best Greek I could furnish extempore: for the necessity of ransacking my memory and invention, for all sorts and combinations of periphrastic expressions, as equivalents for modern ideas, images, relations of thing, &c. gave me a compass of diction which would never have been called out by a dull translation of moral essays, &c. "That boy," said one of my masters*, pointing the attention of a stranger to me, "that boy could harangue an Athenian mob, better than you or I could address an English one."

Post by “Joshua” of September 18, 2022 at 10:18 PM

Robert Botine Cunninghame Graham; *Mogreb-el-Acksa: A Journey in Morocco*; 1898; a travelogue describing the conditions that gave rise to the Greek->Arabic loan-word *bikouros*, a pernicious title given to lazy Christian missionaries by reference to the name of Epicurus.

Post by “Eikadistes” of February 24, 2023 at 9:08 AM

(RE-POST): I wanted to include a few classical references (or direct theft) of Epicurus. We'll start with Virgil's ode:

*"He sung the secret seeds of Nature's frame -
How seas, and earth, and air, and active flame
Fell through the mighty void, and in their fall
Were blindly gathered in this goodly ball.
The tender soil then stiffening by degrees
Shut from the bounding Earth the bounding seas.
Then earth and ocean various forms disclose,
And a new sun to a new world arose.
And mists condensed to cloud obscure the sky:
And clouds dissolved the thirsty ground supply.
The rising trees the lofty mountains grace,
The lofty mountains feed the savage race,
Yet few, and strangers in the unpeople place.
From hence the birth of man the song pursued,
And how the world was lost and how renewed." (Virgil, Eclogues, vi.31)*

Following this (much, much later), Edmond Halley wrote an ode to Newton in the forward of *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687). While it is not necessarily Epicurean, the historical link is interesting:

*"...Then ye who now on heavenly nectar fare,
Come celebrate with me in song the name
Of Newton, to the Muses dear; for he
Unlocked the hidden treasures of Truth:
So richly through his mind had Phoebus cast
The radiance of his own divinity.*

Nearer the gods no mortal may approach." (Edmund Halley, *Ode To Isaac Newton*)

And I may as mention Horace, since Virgil made the list:

"Treat every day that dawns for you as the last.

The unhoped-for hours' ever welcome when it comes.

When you want to smile then visit me: sleek, and fat

I'm a hog, well cared-for, one of Epicurus' herd." (Horace, *The Epistles* 1.4.13-16)

Next, Edmund Spenser steals Lucretius' invocation to Venus from the beginning of Book I, and then, later, in the same poem, makes an allusion to *DRN* V:747.

"Great Venus, Queene of beautie and of grace,

The ioy of the Gods and men, that vnder skie

Doest fayrest shrine, and most adorne thy place,

That with they smyling looke doest pacifie

The raging seas, and makst the stormes to flie;

Thee goddesse, thee the winds, the clouds doe feare,

And when though spreadst thy mantle forth on hie,

The waters play and pleasant lands appeare,

And heauens laugh, & al the world shrews ioyous cheare." (Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* 4.10.44)

"Lastly, came Winter cloathed in all frize,

Chattering his teeth for cold that did him chill." (Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* 7.7.31.1-2)

The following is Lord Byron's rendering of *DRN* I-33-41:

"In all thy perfect goddess-ship, when lies

Before thee thy own vanquished Lord of War?

And gazing in thy face as toward a star,

Laid on thy lap, his eyes to thee upturn,

Feeding on thy sweet cheek! while thy lips are

With lava kisses melting while they burn,

Showered on his eyelids, brow, and mouth, as from an urn!" (Lord Byron, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage 4.51)

I am now **convinced** that Shakespeare was quite familiar with ancient Greek philosophy:

"LEAR: Why, no, boy: nothing can be made out of nothing." (King Lear 1:4.106)

"MERCUTIO: She is the faeries' midwife, and she comes

In shape no bigger than agate-stone

On the forefinger of an alderman,

Drawn with a team of little atomi

Over men's noses as they lie asleep." (Romeo and Juliet 1.4.52-56)

"CELIA: It is as easy to count atomies as to resolve the

propositions of a lover. But take a taste of my

finding him, and relish it with good observance. I

found him under a tree like a dropped acorn." (As You Like It 3.2.1332-1335)

"OTHELLO: ...like to the Pontick Sea,

Whose icy current and compulsive course

Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on

To the Propontick at Hellesport." Othello 3.3.453-456; allusion to DRN V:506-508)

There are a number of contemporary thinkers who have translated parts of DRN into English prose. For example, the French metaphysician Gilles Deleuze translates lines 633-634 from *De Rerum Natura*:

"...out of connections, densities, shocks, encounters, occurrences, and motions." (Deleuze [1990a] 267)

In *The Advancement of Education* the English philosopher Francis Bacon translated DRN II:1-10:

"In is a view of delight ... to stand of walke vpon the shoare side, and to see a shippe tossed with tempest vpon the sea; or to bee in a fortified Tower, and to see two Battailles ioyie vppon a plaine. But is a pleasure incomparable for the minde of man to be settled, landed, and fortified in the certaintie of truth; and from thence to descrie and behould the errors, perterbations,

labours, and wanderings up and downe of other men." (1605)

Of special note, French philosophy Denis Diderot invoked a line from *De Rerum Natura* as his personal motto. He paraphrases *DRN* IV:338 as an emblematic, rallying cry for the entire Enlightenment period:

"Now we see out of the dark what is in the light." (*Philosophical Thoughts* 1746)

While they do not provide direct translation, we have notable reflections on Lucretian evolution from Erasmus Darwin (the less-famous grandfather of Charles) in *The Temple of Nature, or the Origin of Society* (1803) as well as David Hume in *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779), regarding the poetry of *DRN* V:772-878.

Even one of my personal heroes, Carl Sagan makes commentary on *DRN* II:1090-1092.

"As Lucertius summarize [the Ionian philosophers'] views, 'Nature free at once and rid of her haughty lords is seen to do all things spontaneously of herself without the meddling of the gods." (Carl Sagan, *The Demon-Haunted World*)

The English poet George Sandys offers a translation of *DRN* II:14-19.

"O wretched minds of men! Deprived of light!

Through what great dangers, o[n] hou dark a night,

Force you your weary lives! and cannot see

How Nature onely craues a body free

From hated paine; a chearefulle Mind possest

Of safe delights, by care not feare opprest." (1632)

Of the beginning Book III, Frederick II is posthumously recorded as having said that *"There are no better remedies for maladies of the mind."* We then note that Lord Tennyson translated *DRN* III:18-24.

"...The Gods, who haunt

The lucid interspace of world and world,

Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,

Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,

Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,

Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar

Their sacred, everlasting calm!" (Lord Tennyson, Lucretius 104-110)

England's first Poet Laureate, John Dryden provides a brief reflection of *DRN III:831*.

*"What has this Bugbear death to frighten Man,
If Souls can die, as well as Bodies can?"*

The poet Thomas Grey seems to appropriate the tone and imagery of *DRN III:895-897*.

*"For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share." (Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard 21-24)*

The poet Percy Shelley provides a beautiful rendition of *DRN IV:415-420*.

*"We paused beside the pools that lie
Under the forest bough,
Each seemed as 'twere a little sky
Gulfed in a world below;
A firmament of purple light
Which in the dark earth lay." (Shelley, To Jane: The Recollections 53-58)*

William Wordsworth provides us with a version of *DRN V:222-227*.

*"Like a shipwrecked Sailor tost
By rough waves on a perilous coast
Lies the babe, in helplessness
And in tenderest nakedness
Flung by laboring Nature forth
Upon the mercies of the earth
Can its eye beseech? No more
Than the hands are free to implore:*

Voice but serves for one brief cry;

Plaint was it? or prophesy

Of sorrow that will surely come?

Omen of man's grievous doom!" (William Wordsworth, *To-Upon the Birthday of Her First-Born Child* 1-12)

In Book VII of *Paradise Lost*, John Milton elaborates on Lucretian evolution from DRN V:772-878. I recommend reading further in Book VII because Milton (to my surprise) appropriates a significant amount of Lucretian imagery.

"Then Herbs of every leaf, that sudden flour'd

Op'ning thir various colours, and made gay

Her bosom smelling sweet..." (*Paradise Lost*, Book VII)

Diogenes of Oinoanda borrows **heavily**, *directly* from Lucretius. While he does not write in verse, the fact that he cites lines from DRN justify to me that he should be included in this list. I will just list the connections:

- Diogenes' fr. 47.III.10-IV.2 corresponds with Lucretius' *DRN* III:953-955
- Diogenes' NF 126-127.VI-IX, fr. 20 corresponds with *DRN* V:156-173
- Diogenes' fr. 12.II.11-V.14 corresponds with *DRN* V around line 1040.

This is what I have compiled in terms of Lucretian references in my most recent read-through.

There was **one** other discovery I wanted to share (*somewhat off-topic, but just humor me...*). In Book VI, Lucretius alludes to the largest seismic event in Antiquity (*besides the earlier eruption of Mt. Etna and the later eruption of Mt. Vesuvius*). This event occurred on the North side of the Peloponnesian peninsula, almost directly West of Athens. Presumably, a number of Athenians would have experienced this event ... Athenians like Plato. This occurred in c. 373 BCE, and led to the complete destruction of the ancient city of Helike as well as all of its inhabitants. So what exactly happened? From records, ancient authors describe what we might call as a "collapse" of a plate. In this instance, such an event would lead to the complete collapse of land above the event. Uniquely, it would have appeared that an entire mass of land fell straight downward, dozens of feet over the duration of only a few seconds. As I mentioned, we would have expected Athenians (like Plato), who were just East of this event, to have been very aware of it. Exactly 13 years later, Plato published his dialogue *Timaeus* in which he (and he alone) describes the fabled allegory of Atlantis, which collapses into the sea.

Coincidence? I propose that the destruction of the fictional city of Atlantis was inspired by the collapse of Helike.

Post by “Joshua” of August 20, 2023 at 9:33 PM

H. G. Wells; *The New Machiavelli*; 1911; An autobiographical novel whose themes (according to Wikipedia) are sex and politics, and whose chief polemical target was Victorian and Edwardian moralism.

Quote

And we also began, it was certainly before we were sixteen, to write, for the sake of writing. We liked writing. We had discovered Lamb and the best of the middle articles in such weeklies as the SATURDAY GAZETTE, and we imitated them. Our minds were full of dim uncertain things we wanted to drag out into the light of expression. Britten had got hold of IN MEMORIAM, and I had disinterred Pope's ESSAY ON MAN and RABBI BEN EZRA, and these things had set our theological and cosmic solitudes talking. I was somewhere between sixteen and eighteen, I know, when he and I walked along the Thames Embankment confessing shamefully to one another that we had never read Lucretius. We thought every one who mattered had read Lucretius.

Post by “TauPhi” of August 21, 2023 at 5:16 PM

I've been recently going through my stuff from the past due to a move and I came across my diploma paper based on Oscar Wilde's plays and it occurred to me that Mr. Wilde could have found Epicurean ideas very attractive. I don't know if he was familiar with Epicurus as I definitely wasn't almost 20 years ago so I never paid any attention to this side of Oscar Wilde's writings but I might investigate this in the future.

Anyway, it's just a random thought that popped into my head the other day. And for those who have never read Oscar Wilde, give it a go. You won't regret it.

Post by “Don” of August 21, 2023 at 5:33 PM

[Epicurus \(342-270 B.C.E.\) and Victorian Aesthetes](#)

Post by “Joshua” of August 21, 2023 at 7:11 PM

Thank you both, that is an excellent suggestion!

Post by “Joshua” of August 30, 2023 at 11:35 PM

Francis Bacon; *Of Truth*; 1625; an essay from a collection in which Bacon paraphrases Lucretius, while at the same time condemning Epicureanism.

Quote

The poet that beautified the sect that was otherwise inferior to the rest, saith yet excellently well, "It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tossed upon the sea; a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle, and to see a battle and the adventures thereof below; but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth (a hill not to be commanded [that is, by higher ground], and where the air is always clear and serene), and to see the errors and wanderings and mists and tempests in the vale below"

Thread; [An Essay by Francis Bacon "Of Truth"](#)

Source; <https://www.thoughtco.com/of-truth-by-francis-bacon-1690073>

Post by “Joshua” of May 9, 2024 at 11:41 AM

Quote

Maybe! The problem is I remember so little--only the rough outline of a passing vignette...

I think;

-That it was a poem (rough start, I know!)

-The poem was written by a British man.

-And was written in the Victorian period or earlier.

-The speaker of the poem is intoxicated, possibly by opium or laudanum, or maybe by absinthe or wine. In any case, there's delirium.

-The speaker meets an 'exotic' man, and tries to speak to him.

-When English fails, the speaker switches to ancient Greek, possibly by reciting a few lines from Homer.

That's all I've got! I thought it was Thomas de Quincey (1785-1859), who wrote *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, but he was an essayist. His Greek, however, was very good.

Display More

I finally found it, and it was in De Quincey's book.

Quote

My knowledge of the Oriental tongues is not remarkably extensive, being indeed confined to two words—the Arabic word for barley and the Turkish for opium (madjoon), which I have learned from Anastasius; and as I had neither a Malay dictionary nor even Adelung's *Mithridates*, which might have helped me to a few words, I addressed him in some lines from the *Iliad*, considering that, of such languages as I possessed, Greek, in point of longitude, came geographically nearest to an Oriental one. He worshipped me in a most devout manner, and replied in what I suppose was Malay. In this way I saved my reputation with my neighbours, for the Malay had no means of betraying the secret.

Post by “Joshua” of November 13, 2024 at 10:17 PM

The story of [Michael Marullus](#) drowning in a river with a copy of Lucretius in his pocket will be familiar to many here. I learned recently that one of France's preeminent poets ([Pierre de Ronsard](#)) wrote an epitaph in his honor. It took me ages to track down even the French text of this epitaph, and I'm posting it here against the day I decide to learn French.

Epitafe de Michel Marulle Tar
chaniot, de Constantinnople,

Dites bas de bonnes paroles
Musés, & avec mes chansons,
Acordés foiblement les sons
De vos Luts, & de vos Violes.
Voici de Marulo la Tombe,
Priés, qu'a tout iamais du ciel,
La douce manne, & le doux miel,
Et la douce rosée y tombe:
Je faus la Tombe de Marulle,
De lui sa Tombe n'a sinon
Les veines lettres de son nom,
Il vit la bas avec Tibulle,
Dessus les riués Elysées,
Et sous l'ombre des myrtes vers,
Au bruit des eaux chante ses vers
Entre les ames bien prises.
Pincetant sa lyre cornue,
En rond, au beau meillieu d'un val,
Tout le premier guide le bal
Foullant du pié la riue herbüe
Lors que ces doux fredons respèndent
Les douces flames de la mour,
Les Heroines tout au tour
De sa bouche latine pendent:
Tibulle avecque sa Delie
Dance, le tenant par la main,

Corynne l'amoureux Rommain,
Et Porperse tient sa Cynthie.
Mais quand ses graues vers reueillent
Les vieilles louenges des Dieus,
Les poetes Rommains les plus vieux
Beans a son Luc s'emerueillent,
Dequoy lui né sur le riuage
D'Helesponte, a si bien chanté
Que sa Thalie a surmonté
La leur, en leur propre langage.
Chere ame, pour les belles choses
Que dans ton liure i'ay compris,
Pren ces ouillets de petit pris,
Ces beaux liz, & ses belles roses.
Toujours legere soit la terre
A tes os, & sur ton tombeau,
Se refaisant de meint rameau
Toujours grimpe le vert Lhierre.

Epitafe de Hugues Salel.

Les rochers Capharés (où l'embusche traitresse
De Nauple, fit noyer la flotte dompteresse
Du mur Neptunien, quand l'ireuse Palas
Destourna son courroux d'Ilion, sus Ajax)
Te deuoient faire sage, & te deuoient aprendre
Salel, a plus n'oser le sang Troyen esandre,
Et ne rensanglanter tes vers au sang des filz
De tant de puissans Dieus a Troye desconfitz.

The source of the epitaph is a book of verse called [Le Bocage](#) (The Grove), published 1554. Marullus was also a poet, and there are probably fertile fields for exploring his reception of Lucretius. [This book](#) might be a good place to start.

Post by "TauPhi" of November 22, 2024 at 9:02 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

It took me ages to track down even the French text of this epitaph, and I'm posting it here against the day I decide to learn French.

You got me curious, [Joshua](#). And since I find French accent quite annoying, I'm pretty sure the day I decide to learn French will be the same day the hell freezes. Therefore, there's no point in resisting the temptation to know what the poem is about. I decided to butcher the poetry via machine translation.

I took the transcript from here: https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Page:Rons...e,_1554.djvu/36

I took the liberty of replacing all 'long eses' with regular 'eses' and butchered the poem into what follows. I fully expect Mr. Ronsard's ghost to poke holes in all white sheets I conveniently don't possess and use them for dramatic effects during his infernal howls while floating over my bed. What can I say? I'll have a night to remember tonight.

Anyway, here it is if anyone's interested:

Epitaph for Michel Marulle Tarchaniot, from Constantinople.

*Speak good words
Muses, & with my songs,
He faintly agreed with the sounds
From you Luts, & from you Violes.*

*Here is Marulle's Tomb,
Prayed, what ever from heaven,
The sweet manna, & the sweet honey,
And the sweet dew falls there:*

*I hit the Tomb of Marulle,
From him Tombe didn't sin
The veins letters of his name,
He lives there with Tibulle.*

*Above the Elysées rivers,
And under the shade of the myrtle trees,
An noise of waters sings its verses
Between well-prized souls.*

*Pincetant to lyre cornüe,
In a circle, in the beautiful middle of a valley,
All the first guide the ball
Digging through the grassy wheel*

*When these sub hums shine
The sweet flames of love,
The Heroines all around
From his Latin mouth hang:*

*Tibulle and more and more sa Delie
Dance, holding his hand,
Corynne lover Rommain,
And Porperse holds his Cynthia.*

*But when its gray worms gather
The old praises of the Gods,
The oldest Roman poets
Beans a son Luc s'emerueillent,*

*Dequoy him born on the riuage
D'Helesponte, sang so well
That his Thalia has overcome
Theirs, in their own language.*

*Dear soul, for beautiful things
That in your book there is understood,
Take these small prized eyelets,
These beautiful liz, & its beautiful roses.*

*Always light be the earth
To your bones, and to your tomb,
curling up with my own branch
Tousiours climbs the Lhierre green.*

Post by “Don” of November 22, 2024 at 9:13 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

I'm posting it here against the day I decide to learn French

Nice, [TauPhi](#) . Here's what I got from ol' Google Translate 😊

Epitafe of Michel Marulle Tar chaniot, from Constantinnople,

There are good words
from the Muses, with my songs,
Weakly tune the tunes of
your Luts, of your Violes.

Here is the Tomb of Marulle,
Pray, that from heaven always,
The sweet manna, the sweet honey,
And the sweet rofes fall there:

the fans of the Tomb of Marulle,
From his Tomb there are no
veins of his name, He lives
there with Tibullus, Defuse the
Elysian vines, And under the
shadow of the myrtles verses, To
the sound of the waters sings his verses
Between the well-prized souls.

Plucking the horned lyre, In
a circle, in the beautiful meillen of a valley, Al
the first guide the ball Trampling
the grassy rine of the pie

When these sweet hums reverberate
The sweet flames of death,
The heroines all around
From his Latin mouth hang:
Tibullus with his Delie
Dance holding him by the hand,

Corynne loves Roman,
and perfects Cynthia.

But when his great verses gather The
old lowenges of the Diem,
The most vienm Beans Roman
doors at fon Luc are amazed,

Of which he born in lerinage
Of Heleneponce, has sung so well
What Thalia has done
Theirs in their own language. Dear
soul, for the beautiful things That
I have included in your book, Take these
little notes of small price, These
beautiful lines, these beautiful quotes.

The earth is always light On
your bones, on your tomb,
Cooling itself from my branches,
Always climbs the green yew.

Epitaph of Hugues Salel.

I Esrochers Capharés (or the traitorous
ambush Of Naples, drowned the fleet
domptereffe Of the Neptunian wall,
when the ireuse Palas Destourna fon
courroux of Ilion fus Ajax) the Trojan mud
spread, And do not bleed your words
to the mud of son, Of so many
princes We say to Troy defconfitz

Post by “Joshua” of November 30, 2024 at 8:36 AM

[Alexander Ross](#); *Arcana Microcosmi*, [Book II, Chapter 16](#); 1652; A rather choleric response to Gassendi's reception of Epicureanism. The text is of no use at all, but the footnotes by James Eason of the University of Chicago elevate the reading experience to high art.

Ross was in an ongoing literary and intellectual feud with this man;

[Sir Thomas Browne](#); *Hydriotaphia*, [Chapter 4](#); 1658; A curious meditation on life and death, with a few lingering paragraphs on Epicurus entombed in the sixth circle of Dante's *Inferno*:

Quote

Pythagoras escapes in the fabulous hell of Dante, among that swarm of Philosophers, wherein whilest we meet with Plato and Socrates, Cato is to be found in no lower place then Purgatory. Among all the set, Epicurus is most considerable, whom men make honest without an Elyzium, who contemned life without encouragement of immortality, and making nothing after death, yet made nothing of the King of terrors.

Were the happiness of the next world as closely apprehended as the felicities of this, it were a martyrdom to live; and unto such as consider none hereafter, it must be more than death to dye, which makes us amazed at those audacities, that durst be nothing, and return into their Chaos again. Certainly such spirits as could contemn death, when they expected no better being after, would have scorned to live had they known any. And therefore we applaud not the judgment of Machiavel, that Christianity makes men cowards, or that with the confidence of but half dying, the despised virtues of patience and humility, have abased the spirits of men, which Pagan principles exalted, but rather regulated the wildnesse of audacities, in the attempts, grounds, and eternall sequels of death; wherein men of the boldest spirits are often prodigiously temerarious. Nor can we extenuate the valour of ancient Martyrs, who contemned death in the uncomfortable scene of their lives, and in their decrepit Martyrdomes did probably lose not many moneths of their dayes, or parted with life when it was scarce worth the living. For (beside that long time past holds no consideration unto a slender time to come) they had no small disadvantage from the constitution of old age, which naturally makes men fearfull; And complexionally superannuated from the bold and couragious thoughts of youth and fervent years. But the contempt of death from corporall animosity, promoteth not our felicity. They may sit in the Orchestra, and noblest Seats of Heaven, who have held up shaking hands in the fire, and humanely contended for glory.

Mean while Epicurus lyes deep in Dante's hell, wherein we meet with Tombs enclosing souls which denied their immortalities. But whether the virtuous heathen, who lived better then he spake, or erring in the principles of himself, yet lived above Philosophers of more specious Maximes, lye so deep as he is placed; at least so low as not to rise against Christians, who beleeving or knowing that truth, have lastingly denied it in their practise and conversation, were a quæry too sad to insist on.