

A Image Theme For Consideration: Images From A Parallel World That Took A Better Turn 2000 Years Ago



My "photoshopping" skills are abysmal - that hardly looks a picture frame hanging on the wall but it's the best I can do on short notice.

Maybe some of our creative people (perhaps with AI assistance) could do better to illustrate a theme of "how the world might have been if it had taken a better turn 2000 years ago" with people going about their normal affairs with the ancient images of Epicurus in the background in a place of honor, rather than other assorted historical characters.

This would be sort of pursuing the theme of Nietzsche's line: "Epicurus had triumphed, and every respectable intellect in Rome was Epicurean."

Which is an excerpt from the full section 58 of "The Antichrist"

Quote from Nietzsche's "AntiChrist"

58.

In point of fact, the end for which one lies makes a great difference: whether one preserves thereby or destroys. There is a perfect likeness between Christian and anarchist: their object, their instinct, points only toward destruction. One need only turn to history for a proof of this: there it appears with appalling distinctness. We have just studied a code of religious legislation whose object it was to convert the conditions which cause life to flourish into an "eternal" social organization,—Christianity found its mission in putting an end to such an organization, because life flourished under it. There the benefits that reason had produced during long ages of experiment and insecurity were applied to the most remote uses, and an effort was made to bring in a harvest that should be as large, as rich and as complete as possible; here, on the contrary, the harvest is blighted overnight... That which stood there aere perennis, the imperium Romanum, the most magnificent form of organization under difficult conditions that has ever been achieved, and compared to which everything before it and after it appears as patchwork, bungling, dilletantism—those holy anarchists made it a matter of "piety" to destroy "the world", which is to say, the imperium Romanum, so that in the end not a stone stood upon another—and even Germans and other such louts were able to become its masters...

The Christian and the anarchist: both are decadents; both are incapable of any act that is not disintegrating, poisonous, degenerating, blood-sucking; both have an instinct of mortal hatred of everything that stands up, and is great, and has durability, and promises life a future... Christianity was the vampire of the imperium Romanum,—overnight it destroyed the vast achievement of the Romans: the conquest of the soil for a great culture that could await its time. Can it be that this fact is not yet understood? The imperium Romanum that we know, and that the history of the Roman provinces teaches us to know better and better,—this most admirable of all works of art in the grand manner was merely the beginning, and the structure to follow was not to prove its worth for thousands of years. To this day, nothing on a like scale sub specie aeterni has been brought into being, or even dreamed of!—This organization was

strong enough to withstand bad emperors: the accident of personality has nothing to do with such things—the first principle of all genuinely great architecture. But it was not strong enough to stand up against the corruptest of all forms of corruption—against Christians... These stealthy worms, which under the cover of night, mist and duplicity, crept upon every individual, sucking him dry of all earnest interest in real things, of all instinct for reality—this cowardly, effeminate and sugar-coated gang gradually alienated all "souls", step by step, from that colossal edifice, turning against it all the meritorious, manly and noble natures that had found in the cause of Rome their own cause, their own serious purpose, their own pride.

The sneakishness of hypocrisy, the secrecy of the conventicle, concepts as black as hell, such as the sacrifice of the innocent, the unio mystica in the drinking of blood, above all, the slowly rekindled fire of revenge, of Chandala revenge—all that sort of thing became master of Rome: the same kind of religion which, in a pre-existent form, Epicurus had combatted. One has but to read Lucretius to know what Epicurus made war upon—not paganism, but "Christianity", which is to say, the corruption of souls by means of the concepts of guilt, punishment and immortality.—He combatted the subterranean cults, the whole of latent Christianity—to deny immortality was already a form of genuine salvation.—Epicurus had triumphed, and every respectable intellect in Rome was Epicurean—when Paul appeared... Paul, the Chandala hatred of Rome, of "the world", in the flesh and inspired by genius—the Jew, the eternal Jew par excellence... What he saw was how, with the aid of the small sectarian Christian movement that stood apart from Judaism, a "world conflagration" might be kindled; how, with the symbol of "God on the cross", all secret seditions, all the fruits of anarchistic intrigues in the empire, might be amalgamated into one immense power. "Salvation is of the Jews."—Christianity is the formula for exceeding and summing up the subterranean cults of all varieties, that of Osiris, that of the GreatMother, that of Mithras, for instance: in his discernment of this fact the genius of Paul showed itself.

His instinct was here so sure that, with reckless violence to the truth, he put the ideas which lent fascination to every sort of Chandala religion into the mouth of the "Saviour" as his own inventions, and not only into the mouth—he made out of him something that even a priest of Mithras could understand... This was his revelation at Damascus: he grasped the fact that he needed the belief in immortality in order to rob "the world" of its value, that the concept of "hell" would master Rome—that the notion of a "beyond" is the death of life. Nihilist and Christian: they rhyme in German, and they do more than rhyme.

Post by "Cassius" of December 23, 2023 at 2:51 PM

otherwise a little scary, but I guess this



Post by “TauPhi” of December 23, 2023 at 6:58 PM

I might be completely wrong about it but if Epicurus had gone mainstream we would have shortly after seen Epicurean churches, popes, bibles, schisms, wars, burnings at the stakes in the name of mighty Epicurus and all 'the good stuff'. I don't think there ever has been an idea, no matter how beautiful, that when adopted by masses were not transformed over time into a big pile of stinking poo.

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3601-a-image-theme-for-consideration-images-from-a-parallel-world-that-took-a-better/>

A parallel world that took a better turn 2000 years ago sounds great in theory but there were many turns over last two millennia caused by people that wanted to redo existing world into something better. 'Noble' attempts like that have one thing in common. They inevitably lead to genocide.

I realise I probably don't rate humanity too high and I sincerely hope I'm dead wrong in this case but I'm glad Epicurus was not proclaimed the saviour of humanity by and large and went down in history simply as a philosopher with beautiful ideas.

Post by “Don” of December 23, 2023 at 7:30 PM

I certainly can't say I disagree with [TauPhi](#) 's overall thoughts. It would certainly make for an interesting alternative history novel!

Post by “Cassius” of December 23, 2023 at 7:42 PM

It's certainly hard to disagree with the view that in fact people often make a mess of things! No doubt even if the Epicurean wave had continued to build after Cicero's time (and maybe in fact it did) lots of people would have found a way water it down for their own lesser goals. But I think we ought to also appreciate the approach of Diogenes of Oinoanda in erecting his wall and speaking publicly in favor of a future time when more people saw that Epicurean philosophy can help them reconcile their apparently-conflicting interests.

I analogize this in my own mind to the function of the [Epicurean gods](#) and the respect to be paid to people who are truly wise. The [Epicurean gods](#) couldn't care less about us, and the same goes for Epicurus and the other Epicureans we read who are now long dead and can't receive our appreciation.

But visualize the life of a blessed being helps us to work toward that ourselves, and thinking about what Epicurus would do or say if he were watching us also helps to improve our actions. And likewise I'd submit that visualizing a world in which the name of Epicurus doesn't evoke blank stares, but comes to be seen as a central part of Western traditions that everyone knows about, also helps us think about how we can move in the right direction in our own lives and with our own circles of friends.

Post by “TauPhi” of December 23, 2023 at 8:20 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

It would certainly make for an interesting alternative history novel!

That instantly brings 'The Man in the High Castle' by Philip K. Dick to my mind. I can't recommend it enough. Nothing to do with Epicurus but what a mind blowing alternative history novel it is.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

But visualize the life of a blessed being helps us to work toward that ourselves, and thinking about what Epicurus would do or say if he were watching us also helps to improve our actions.

I agree with the Epicurus part but visualization of life of something that we know nothing about is like visualization of beer pong game on five dimensional table. Not doable, I'm afraid. But I don't want to start another god topic so I'll try to silence my naughty, heretic side instantly. Bad, bad TauPhi. 😊

Post by “Cassius” of December 24, 2023 at 8:04 AM

In preparing for the podcast today I see this quote from Chapter 7 of A Few Days In Athens, which also seems relevant to recent posts in this discussion:

[Quote from Statement By Frances Wright's Epicurus in A Few Days In Athens](#)

Some few generations, when the amiable virtues of Epicurus, and the sublime excellence of Zeno, shall live no longer in remembrance or tradition, the fierce or ambitious bigots of some new sect may alike calumniate both; proclaim the one for a libertine, and the other for a hypocrite. But I will allow that I am more open to detraction than Zeno: that while your school shall be abandoned, mine shall more probably be disgraced. But it will be the same cause that produces the two effects. It will be equally the degeneracy of man that shall cause the discarding of your doctrines, and the perversion of mine. Why then should the prospect of the future disturb Epicurus more than Zeno? The fault will not lie with me any more than you: but with the vices of my followers, and the ignorance of my judges. I follow my course, guided by what I believe to be wisdom; with the good of man at my heart, adapting my advice

to his situation, his disposition, and his capacities. My efforts may be unsuccessful, my intentions maybe calumniated; but as I know these to be benevolent, so I shall continue those, unterrified and unruffled by reproaches, unchilled by occasional ingratitude and frequent disappointment.”