

Francois Bernier's "Three Discourses of Happiness, Virtue, and Liberty." - digital reconstruction of the book

Post by "TauPhi" of November 22, 2025 at 5:08 PM

This is an obscure book but it can be valuable for anyone interested in the studies of Epicureanism. On top of that, the book is historically interesting as it was published at the very end of the 17th century when Epicurus' philosophy was being introduced into the English-speaking world.

Until now, there were two ways of reading the book:

- 1) 200MB pdf scan of a 300-year-old book printed with a typeface containing an archaic, long s via archive.org - not much fun there
- 2) digitized but unformatted and incomplete transcription containing random OCR conversion artifacts - even less fun there

I decided to remedy the situation so I cleaned the transcription, filled in the missing bits, corrected any errors I could find and typeset the whole thing creating a new edition of the book.

During the process of typesetting I tried to be as faithful to the original as possible. Every chapter, paragraph and even inline text highlighting is exactly as in the 1699 edition of the book. I just got rid of an archaic, long s. so the text is easier to read by modern audience. That said, I'm just one guy and this is a 400 pages long book, so it's highly probable that I missed some errors or even created some of my own during typesetting. If anyone notices anything off, please let me know and I'll make sure to fix the problem.

I also added a new title page and an interactive Table of Contents which can take the readers directly to every section of the book.

[Cassius](#) Every resource used in the creation of the document is in Public Domain. I listed the sources at the very end of the book. My work is also in Public Domain as indicated at the end so if you find this worthwhile, feel free to add the pdf to the 'Files' section of the forum so the book is easily accessible to anyone interested.

Without further ado, after a short period of 325 years or so, here's the unofficial, second edition of Bernier's "Three Discourses".*

[*] The third edition is scheduled for release in year 2350 - stay tuned.]

Post by “Cassius” of November 22, 2025 at 5:32 PM

This is outstanding Tau Phi. I will post in the files section and think about ways to publicize this. We have to keep in mind the compromises Gassendi made on religion and death and perhaps other things, but even with that I think his treatment of happiness, virtue, and determinism are extremely helpful. His broad overview of these issues probably places this in the category of DeWitt or Emily Austin or even Diogenes Laertius as a broad overview of important topics, with comparison to other philosophers.

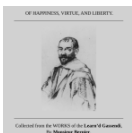
The formatting looks excellent as well. Do you mind sharing what intermediate programs you used to produce the final PDF? did you use some kind of Latex generation or something else that is accessible to others. I can imagine that others here might tackle similar projects in the future and it would be good to know if you've got a particularly useful methodology that others can duplicate.

Post by “Cassius” of November 22, 2025 at 5:37 PM

Here's the link in the files section:

File

[**Bernier - Gassendi's Three Discourses on Happiness, Virtue, and Liberty**](#)



This book is focused on Epicurean philosophy and explaining it in context with other philosophers.



Cassius

November 22, 2025 at 5:37 PM

And I have added this to main the "Reading Recommendations" page here:

[Reading Recommendations](#)

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4816-francois-bernier-s-three-discourses-of-happiness-virtue-and-liberty-digital-reco/>

Post by “TauPhi” of November 23, 2025 at 4:28 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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Programs:

pdftotext - extracting a text layer from pdfs

neovim - text processing and spellchecking

typst - typesetting and pdf compiling (similar to Latex but I prefer this markup system)

zathura - pdf viewing

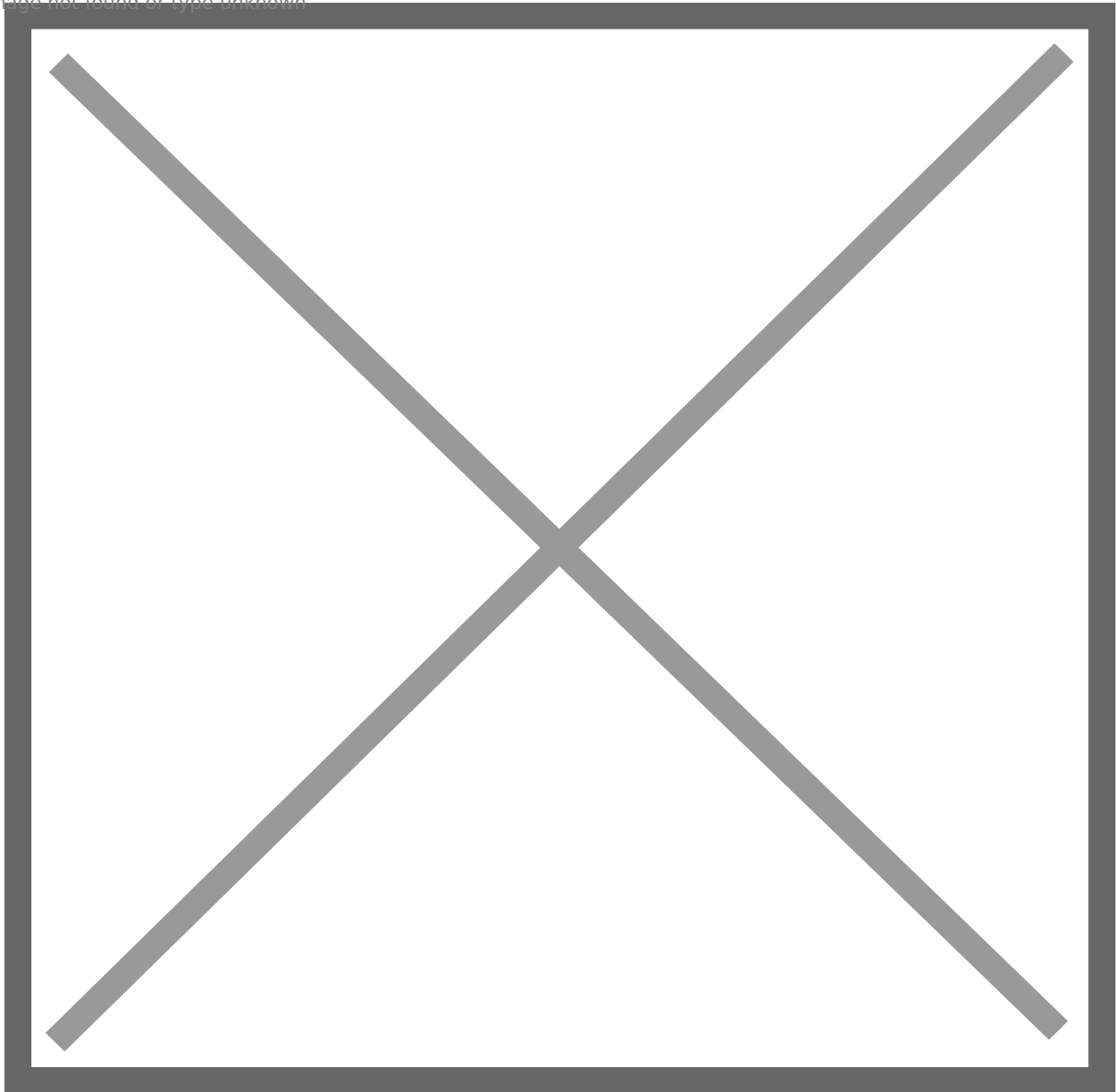
Methodology:

I instruct Neovim to send the file I work on to Typst to generate pdf and show the end result in Zathura. This way I can instantly see the end product with one press of a button.

Post by “Cassius” of November 23, 2025 at 8:49 PM

Thank you! Much of this, especially TYPST, is totally new to me:

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Download the Typst compiler for free. The Typst language and its compiler are developed in the open. Learn how you can contribute.

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