

# Is Romantic Love a Vainglory

Post by "Cassius" of November 29, 2020 at 5:04 PM

BW --

Thanks for engaging on this. You're coming at the issue from the normal perspective, so I understand why you reached the conclusions about Epicurus that you did. If you have the time and inclination to get started on the DeWitt book, you will see there is a different perspective on "pleasure" which involves the observation that what might be called "the faculty of pleasure," being Nature's ultimate stop and go signal, is not properly divided in to "good pleasures" vs "bad pleasures" or any other categories. There is only "pleasure" which covers a vast spectrum of pleasurable experiences, and there is only "pain" which also covers a vast spectrum.

In Epicurean philosophy it is fundamental that all pleasures are desirable, and all pains are undesirable, but it is also fundamental that there is no absolute standard as to how you as an individual (or humans as a group, for that matter) must always choose from among the available pleasures and pains. The "natural" and "necessary" divisions are totally pragmatically based -- there is no "list" by which nature approves or disapproves of any set category.

I don't want you to take what I am saying on my or DeWitt's authority - unfortunately there is no way for someone like you to be sure who is right without reading both sides of the argument and the texts for yourself. I cite DeWitt so strongly because his summary is the most concise and persuasive of which i am aware, but the articles I cited also provide much additional documentation for the same conclusions.

Also I have to note that I think that you are off on a significant detour by talking in terms of "vainglories" -- which is not an Epicurean term in any way, and rather conveys the implication that there is a set category of prohibited pleasures, which I am contending, and think you will eventually find - there is not. 😊

For example, this from [Epicurus' letter to Menoecus](#):

Quote

"Every pleasure then because of its natural kinship to us is good, yet not every pleasure is to be chosen: even as every pain also is an evil, yet not all are always of a nature to be avoided. **Yet by a scale of comparison and by the consideration of advantages and disadvantages** we must form our judgment on all these matters. For the good on certain occasions we treat as bad, and conversely the bad as good."