

Episode One Hundred Thirty Eight - Letter to Menoecus 5 - Pleasure Part One

Post by "Cassius" of September 7, 2022 at 1:09 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

We don't necessarily choose which desires arise within us. Many - most? - of our desires arise from things outside of ourselves.

As to the arising of desires (thoughts?) there is of course also the Epicurean theory of images:

[15.16] **Cicero to Cassius**

[Rome, January, 45 B.C.]

I expect you must be just a little ashamed of yourself now that this is the third letter that has caught you before you have sent me a single leaf or even a line. But I am not pressing you, for I shall look forward to, or rather insist upon, a longer letter. As for myself, if I always had somebody to trust with them, I should send you as many as three an hour. For it somehow happens, that whenever I write anything to you, you seem to be at my very elbow; and that, not by way of visions of images, as your new friends term them, who believe that even mental visions are conjured up by what [Catius](#) calls spectres (for let me remind you that Catius the [Insubrian](#), an [Epicurean](#), who died lately, gives the name of spectres to what the famous [Gargettian](#) [Epicurus], and long before that [Democritus](#), called images).

2 But, even supposing that the eye can be struck by these spectres because they run up against it quite of their own accord, how the mind can be so struck is more than I can see. It will be your duty to explain to me, when you arrive here safe and sound, whether the spectre of you is at my command to come up as soon as the whim has taken me to think about you - and not only about you, who always occupy my inmost heart, but suppose I begin thinking about the Isle of [Britain](#), will the image of that wing its way to my consciousness?

3 But of this later on. I am only sounding you now to see in what spirit you take it. For if you are angry and annoyed, I shall have more to say, and shall insist upon your being reinstated in that school of philosophy, out of which you have been ousted "by violence and an armed force." In this formula the words "within this year" are not usually added; so even if it is now two or three years since, bewitched by the blandishments of Pleasure, you sent a notice of divorce to Virtue, I am free to act as I like. And yet to whom am I talking? To you, the most gallant gentleman in the world, who, ever since you set foot in the forum, have done nothing but what bears every mark of the most impressive distinction. Why, in that very school you have selected I apprehend there is more vitality than I should have supposed, if only because it has your

approval. "How did the whole subject occur to you ?" you will say. Because I had nothing else to write. About politics I can write nothing, for I do not care to write what I feel.