

Cicero Attributing To Epicurus The View That Virtuous Action Is Itself Pleasurable

Post by "Cassius" of September 3, 2023 at 10:51 PM

All leading toward a conclusion that seems to be pointed to from many directions, that Epicurus is telling us to consider being alive as itself an experience to identify as pleasurable and to take pleasure in, unless you are specifically in pain - and even then you can take pleasure because pain is short if intense and if long allows for pleasure to offset it.

Cicero is trying to twist that position into something absurd, and it's true that people are often so jaded that they no longer see the pleasure in life.

But this seems like a huge part of the Epicurean "attitude" toward life itself that explains an awful lot, and maybe even relates to this criticism of cynicism and jadedness in Lucretius:

Lucretius Book 2:1023 - "Now turn your mind, I pray, to a true reasoning. For a truth wondrously new is struggling to fall upon your ears, and a new face of things to reveal itself. Yet neither is anything so easy, but that at first it is more difficult to believe, and likewise nothing is so great or so marvelous but that little by little all decrease their wonder at it. First of all the bright clear color of the sky, and all it holds within it, the stars that wander here and there, and the moon and the sheen of the sun with its brilliant light; all these, if now they had come to being for the first time for mortals, if all unforeseen they were in a moment placed before their eyes, what story could be told more marvelous than these things, or what that the nations would less dare to believe beforehand? Nothing, I trow: so worthy of wonder would this sight have been. Yet think how no one now, wearied with satiety of seeing, deigns to gaze up at the shining quarters of the sky! Wherefore cease to spew out reason from your mind, struck with terror at mere newness, but rather with eager judgement weigh things, and, if you see them true, lift your hands and yield, or, if it is false, gird yourself to battle."