

Seneca - General Background

Post by "Cassius" of January 10, 2025 at 11:07 AM

I completely agree, Bryan, and I see in this one of the most obvious problems with stoicism and all sorts of rationalism. Setting up "virtue" (in this case honesty) as an end in itself, never to be secondary to any other goal, is a prescription for disaster if what you value is a human life of pleasure rather than some arbitrarily selected abstract goal. It is absurd to think that you must be honest with the burglar who asks for the location of the keys so he can invade your house and murder your family.

"Pleasure" is not an arbitrarily selected abstract goal because it is based on a feeling given by nature, and even when the term "pleasure" is used as an abstraction, it can be immediately tested against the feeling.

And the whines of the past and current Ciceros and Senecas who push asceticism and virtue are especially easy to see through once you demolish their "pleasure = sex drugs and rocknroll" definition and realize that pleasure is *everything* in life that is desirable.

Both Cicero and Seneca preserved some important information about Epicurus so I give them credit for that, but I see in Cicero a greater willingness to be frank even in disagreement. And toward the end of his life Cicero maybe even made a few steps in the right direction by giving credit to Cassius for showing Cicero more vigor in Epicureanism than Cicero had expected to see. I would trade a hundred Senecas for one Cicero any day of the week.