

Planning for Discussion of "Tusculan Disputations" (Lucretius Today Podcast)

Post by "Cassius" of January 24, 2025 at 7:17 AM

A discussion guide for the Epicurean sections of Tusculan Disputations is here:

Thread

[Episode 271 - TD01 - Understanding Epicurus Through Tusculan Disputations](#)

Welcome to Episode 271 of Lucretius Today. This is a podcast dedicated to the poet Lucretius, who wrote "On The Nature of Things," the most complete presentation of Epicurean philosophy left to us from the ancient world.

Each week we walk you through the Epicurean texts, and we discuss how Epicurean philosophy can apply to you today. If you find the Epicurean worldview attractive, we invite you to join us in the study of Epicurus at EpicureanFriends.com, where we discuss this and all of our...



Cassius

March 3, 2025 at 10:56 AM

Please feel free to make suggestions for additional citations within TD that are relevant to Epicurus but may not mention Epicurus's name specifically.

Here is a bullet-point list of sections within Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* where Epicurean ideas are discussed, along with brief summaries:

- **Book I, Sections 18-21**

- Cicero critiques the Epicurean view that death is not to be feared because sensation ceases with death. He argues that even if death entails the loss of sensation, this does not necessarily mean it is not an evil.

- **Book I, Section 33**

- Epicurus' position that death is "nothing to us" is revisited. Cicero questions whether this truly removes the fear of death, as he believes that the anticipation of future suffering can still be disturbing.

- **Book II, Sections 9-11**

- Cicero challenges the Epicurean view that pleasure is the highest good, arguing that virtue must be pursued for its own sake. He asserts that if pleasure were the highest good, moral excellence would be subordinated to bodily enjoyment.

- **Book III, Sections 17-22**

- Cicero critiques the Epicurean claim that pain is the greatest evil, arguing that a wise person can endure pain with fortitude. He asserts that mental distress caused by vice is a greater evil than bodily pain.

- **Book IV, Sections 6-7**

- The Epicurean approach to emotions, particularly their attempt to eliminate mental disturbances (*ataraxia*), is examined. Cicero argues that their focus on eliminating fear and anxiety does not sufficiently account for the role of reason and virtue in emotional well-being.

- **Book V, Sections 29-32**

- The Epicurean notion that friendship is based on mutual utility and the pursuit of pleasure is addressed. Cicero contends that true friendship must be based on virtue rather than a calculation of benefits.

Cicero generally critiques Epicureanism as inadequate for achieving true virtue and happiness, advocating instead for a Stoic or Platonic approach to ethics.