

Against using the word "corrosive" for the "unnatural/unnecessary" category

Post by "Adrastus" of November 18, 2025 at 1:02 PM

I agree that using "unnatural" versus "natural" is a superior framework precisely because of what Cassius has quoted. The "Unnatural-ness" of Unnatural desires is that they lack limits and boundaries. They are "vain ideas" or ideals that stretch into infinity as we see in Principal Doctrine 15. Ideas unhinged and more often defying concern for Natural and Material things. I think equating this lack of boundaries for hedonistic, security and transcendental desires or fears being given the impious or unvirtuous label of "unnatural", while the "natural" being equated with satiation, satisfaction, limits, suavity, pleasant living seen as virtuous; is a powerful tool for the therapeutic quality of the philosophy that aids in achieving the states of mind and being like ataraxia and aponia, and ethical reasoning generally, within an Epicurean worldview.

I can't quite remember the argument given for using "corrosive" over "Unnatural" in the book but corrosive seems to hint at eating away at a "Good Form" (that is likely artificial rather than something coming "from nature"); rather than a type of transgression against Nature that limitless desires/fears drive us to and that drives bad Politics. I'm sure one could deconstruct away at "Natural" until it's rendered useless; but if we are interested in constructing a sense and definition of what is Natural equated with what should be pursued ethically and therapeutically, then I think Natural/Unnatural is a useful and historic term to build an ethical and soulful sense around.