

Lucretius on the emotions

Post by “Kalosyni” of June 6, 2026 at 2:04 PM

From Lucretius, 3-228 to 2-323:

Quote

Heat prevails in the mind when the creature is enraged, grows hot, and fire sparkles from its glowing eyes. Much vapor is cold, and the companion of fear, it excites horror in the body, and shakes the limbs; but air is of a calm and mild quality, it resides in a quiet breast, and a serene countenance. But those have most heat whose hearts are fierce, and whose angry mind are soon inflamed into passion. of this sort, in the first place, is the distracted Fury of lions, who, roaring, often burst their very breast, and are unable to contain the torrent of Rage that swells within. The cold temperature of the deer has more of vapor, and sooner incites a chillness in the limbs, which causes a trembling motion through the whole body. But the nature of the ox consists more of soft air, nor does the smoky firebrand of anger (that spreads a shade of black darkness over the mind) too much inflame him, nor is he stupefied by the darts of chilling fear, but his nature is placed between both, between the fierce lion and the deer."

The mind of man is formed of the same principles; though the discipline of philosophy may polish and correct some, yet it leaves behind the marks of the original nature of the mind, nor are we to think that the seeds of vice can be wholly rooted out. One man, we see, runs more rashly into passion, another is more disposed to fear, and a third is apt to be more merciful than just; It is impossible but the various tempers of mankind, and actions that follow them, must differ in many other instances, the reasons of which are at present out of my power to explain; nor can I find words to express that variety of figures by which the seeds are distinguished, and from which this variety of disposition is produced. This, however, may justly be asserted on this occasion: that the traces of original nature which cannot be corrected by the rules of reason are so very small that nothing hinders us from leading a life worthy of the Gods.

And for a comparison, this is an interesting article:

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[From Grumpy Old Man to "Irritable Male Syndrome"](#)

What some call "irritable male syndrome" may be better understood as a meaningful response to stress, loss, aging, or unmet needs.

www.psychologytoday.com

Quote

One reality often overlooked in conversations about men's mental health is this: Many men are raised with the implicit understanding that anger is the one culturally acceptable [emotion](#) they're allowed to express. Sadness, [fear](#), vulnerability, and [grief](#) are often discouraged—or worse, mocked. It should come as no surprise, then, that when life becomes heavier, anger and irritability are frequently the emotional languages men bring with them into later adulthood.

Fatigue, low mood, and reduced tolerance for stress can be understood not as signs of pathology, but as natural responses to cumulative stress, shifting roles, physical changes, and the felt decline of vital energy. Importantly, irritability is not the exclusive domain of older men; it appears across genders, cultures, and developmental stages.

...

Rather than asking whether IMS is a real condition, a more productive question might be: What are these experiences trying to tell us?

Instead of treating irritability, fatigue, and low stress tolerance as symptoms to be eradicated, we might view them as signals—messages from a system that deserves attention rather than correction. Aging, after all, is not a disorder. It is a developmental stage, complete with its own challenges, losses, and opportunities for meaning.