

# A Useful Analogy: The Preflight Checklist

Post by "Cassius" of September 15, 2019 at 9:20 PM

## [Quote from JJElbert](#)

He explains the substitution of Superstition for religio in a footnote, but I don't think it adequate.

Yes I have that version too, and yes I have always thought that "superstition" was a copout.

I don't think I have ever read the Stallings version, and I don't think I have a copy. I've eventually come to the view that for me there's probably not a single "best" version, and what makes the most sense is to be sure to check a literal one (Martin Ferguson Smith, or Bailey, or Munro) and then compare the other editions to see which option seems most consistent with what seems to be the main thrust of the philosophy. I've grown particularly pleased with the 1734 "Daniel Brown" edition due to some of its editorial decisions.

For example this line has always bothered me from Book 2:

## Quote

Munro: "But if we see that these things are food for laughter and mere mockeries, and in good truth the fears of men and dogging cares dread not the clash of arms and cruel weapons, if unabashed they mix among kings and caesars and stand not in awe of the glitter from gold nor the brilliant sheen of the purple robe, how can you doubt that this is **wholly the prerogative of reason**, when the whole of life withal is a struggle in the dark?"

Bailey: "But if we see that these thoughts are mere mirth and mockery, and in very truth the fears of men and the cares that dog them fear not the clash of arms nor the weapons of war, but pass boldly among kings and lords of the world, nor dread the glitter that comes from gold nor the bright sheen of the purple robe, can you doubt that all such **power belongs to reason alone**, above all when the whole of life is but a struggle in darkness?"

I have always been suspicious of those two on the grounds that I think Epicurus would have been very slow to praise "reason alone" given his views of the role of reason vs the senses. It might be explainable by concluding that Lucretius was referring to "true reason" in the sense of reason tied to the senses, but I think I recall reading that there are instances where he refers to "true reason" but this Latin doesn't include that modifier.

For that reason I prefer the Daniel Browne version:

#### Quote

But if these things are vain and all grimace, and the truth is that nor the fears of men, nor following cares fly from the sound of alarms or cruel darts, but boldly force their way among the kings and mighty of the earth; nor do they homage pay to shining gold, nor the gay splendor of a purple robe. Do you doubt but all this stuff is **want of sense**, and all our life is groping in the dark?

I can't recall tonight that I have looked back to see what the Latin looks like, and I am not good enough at Latin to have a strong opinion, but the Daniel Browne translator seems to have my same concern and came up with wording that avoids implying that "logic" or "reason in the abstract" are the things to which to look for a final answer.