

Threads of Epicureanism in Art and Literature

Post by "Charles" of December 30, 2019 at 1:53 PM

Julien Offray de la Mettrie; "System of Epicurus" 1750; A short treatise of 31 independent paragraphs explaining the origins of animals and of other human mechanisms. Paragraphs 10 and 11 bring up Epicureanism and Lucretius.

Paragraph 10

"If humans have not always existed as we see them today (and how can we believe they came into the world grown up as mother and father, and perfectly capable of procreating beings like themselves!), the earth must have acted as the uterus of mankind. It must have opened up its bosom to seeds of humans, already prepared so that, given certain laws, this proud animal could come forth. Why, I ask you, modern Anti-Epicureans, why should the earth, that mother and nurse of all objects, have refused to seed the animal when she has allowed the vilest, most useless, and most pernicious of plants?"

Paragraph 11

"But the Earth is no longer the cradle of humanity! We do not see it produce men! Let us not reproach him for his present sterility; she made her reach on this side. An old hen does not lay anymore eggs, an old woman does not lay anymore children; that's pretty much Lucretius's answer to this objection."

I know I said I was finished with the translation, but the break in the holidays and the revision and editing process has been rather slow.