

AntiSeneca

Post by “Charles” of January 21, 2020 at 11:41 PM

Here's the opening statement to Anti-Seneca, its quite wordy but already so pleasing and promising.

"The Philosophers have come to no more agreement about happiness than about anything else. Some of them see it in the dirtiest and most brazen deeds; these are recognizable by their unblushing Cynical faces. Others would have it consist of voluptuousness, understood in various ways--whether the refined voluptuousness of love, or the same voluptuousness but tempered, rational, and tamed: not as dictated by the lusty whims of a fevered imagination, but only by the needs of nature: here we have the voluptuousness of the mind that is either addicted to the pursuit of truth, or entranced by its possession; there, finally, you have peace of mind, the grounding and aim of all we do, which Epicurus called “voluptuousness”: a is [sic.] dangerously ambiguous word, which led his disciples to carry home a fruit that is quite different from what this great personality had intended. Others have seen the highest good in the possession of every perfection of mind and body. In Zeno’s conception, it is found in honor and virtue. Seneca, the most illustrious Stock of all, said it could be found in knowing the truth, but he didn’t specify what truths he meant.

To live in tranquility, without ambitions, without desire; to use wealth, but not enjoy it; to keep all of it without anxiety, to lose it without regret, to be its master instead of its slave; to remain undisturbed and unmoved by any passion whatsoever or, even better, not to experience any passions at all; to be equally content with poverty or opulence: with pain, as with pleasure; to have a soul that’s strong and sound, in a body thats weak and sickly; to feel neither fear nor terror; to strip away all anxiety, to scorn pleasure and voluptuousness; to consent to have pleasure in the same way as to be rich, without reaching for these comforts; to despise even life: finally, to achieve virtue by knowing the truth; here we have the highest good, as per Seneca and the Stoics generally speaking, with the perfect beatitude that follows.

How Anti-Stoical will we be, then! These philosophers are severe, sad, and hardened--we’ll be pleasant, cheerful, and indulgent. They are all soul, ignoring their bodies; let’s be all body, ignoring our souls. They act like they don’t care about pleasure and pain; we’ll stride ourselves on feeling anything whatsoever. Striving for the sublime, they rise above all events, and they only call themselves to be men to the extent they cease to be human. As for us, we will not presume to regulate that which governs us; we will not command our sensations; confessing their authority and our slavery, we will try to make them pleasant for us, as persuaded as we are that that is where happiness in life is to be found: finally, we will think ourselves happier to the extent that we are human, or worthy to be such; how much of a feeling will we have for nature, humanity, and all the social virtues; we will accept no others, nor any life aside from this one only. So we see that the chain of truths that are necessary for happiness is shorter

than those forged by Hegesias, Descartes, and many other philosophers; that to explain the mechanism of happiness we need only consult nature and reason--the only two stars that can shine the way and guide us; but we must open our souls to their rays and seal all access to it against those poisoned miasmas that create, as it were, the atmosphere of fanaticism and prejudice. Let's begin."