

"Objection Your Honor! Attorney Cicero Is Mischaracterizing the Testimony To Mislead The Jury! The Evidence Is Clear: Not Only Is "Ataraxia" Not The Highest Pleasure - Ataraxia Alone Is Not A Pleasure At All!

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MARY N. PORTER PACKER. Cicero's Presentation of Epicurean Ethics. New York, The Columbia University Press, 1938. Pp. 127. Columbia Diss.

This study is most commendable. It is clearly written and well printed, acutely reasoned and amply documented. The treatment confines itself to *De Finibus* I-II and is divided into two chapters: 1. Cicero's Presentation of Epicurean Philosophy in *De Finibus* I. 2. Cicero's Critique of Epicurean Philosophy, Presented in *De Finibus* I and II. Each chapter concludes with a summary, and the text of Epicurus himself is abundantly cited. The conclusion is that Cicero failed "to understand Epicureanism as a consistently unified philosophy (p. 81)," but is acquitted of having been "deliberately and intentionally unfair (p. 119)."

It is only to this acquittal that I take exception. Every debater has the choice of arguing to reveal the truth in its entirety or of arguing to make points. The former method is adapted to the Supreme Court, the latter to a trial by jury. Cicero was a crafty old trial lawyer and he deliberately argued to make points, because he was pleading before a reading audience, which functions like a jury, and his shrewd legal mind had long discerned the vulnerability of Epicureanism before this style of attack. His attitude was that of William J. Bryan toward biological evolution, and his pleadings are comparable to a Scopes trial, but I do not believe he could have misrepresented the truth so successfully had he not understood it completely. In the Scopes trial, the crafty old lawyer was on the opposite side—Clarence Darrow.

NORMAN W. DEWITT.

VICTORIA COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO.

g! I like many aspects of Cicero, e could have misrepresented the

And I think that conclusion applies to at least a significant number of the modern commentators who can see the same thing that [Nikolsky](#), Wenham, and Gosling & Taylor see, yet who still argue that the Epicurean goal of life amounts to an absence of pleasure as that term is ordinarily understood.

