

Sunday November 16, 2025 - Zoom Discussion 12:30 PM EST - Discussion of Bernier's "Three Discourses of Happiness Virtue and Liberty" by Gassendi

Post by "Cassius" of November 9, 2025 at 3:22 PM

At the end of today's session we discussed the possibility of taking up prolepsis as it relates to divinity, and we'll put that on the list for attention soon.

However Robert's offhand comment about the Gassendi article has led me to realize that I don't think we've discussed that article at all in the past, and on quick reading of it I can tell we need to remedy that asap.

I will post more here as I read through the article. It has defects that we all should expect - Gassendi is a Christian and he believes in an active Providential God and an eternal soul. But at least a large part of the rest of his commentary on Epicurus seems very well grounded, so we should go through it at least enough to pick out the highs and lows to assist others reading it in the future.

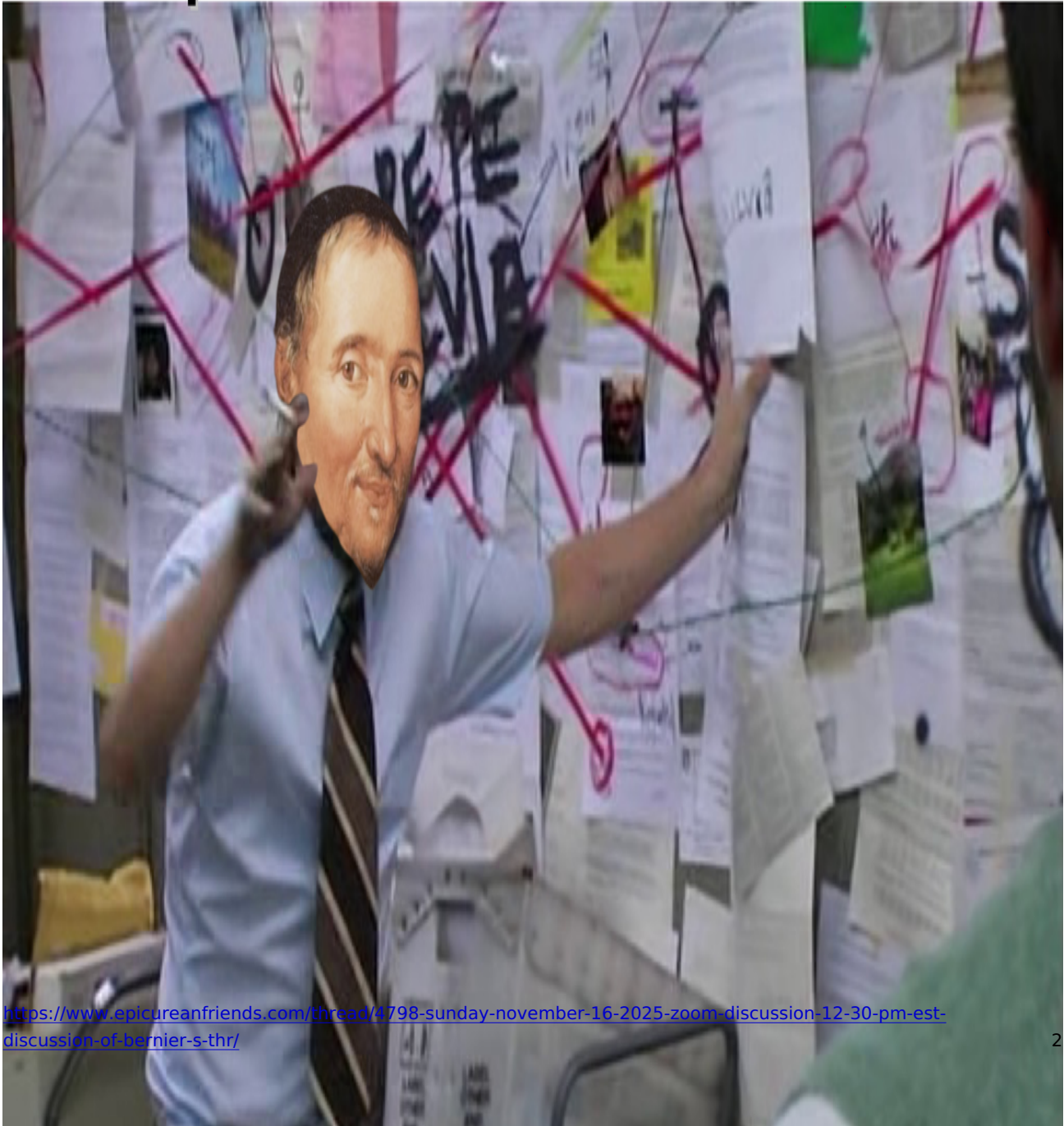
So let's go ahead and plan that this be the focus of the November 9 Zoom meeting.

Post by "Eikadistes" of November 9, 2025 at 7:27 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Gassendi is a Christian and he believes in an active Providential God and an eternal soul.

Pierre Gassendi trying to reconcile Christianity with Epicurean atomism...



<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4798-sunday-november-16-2025-zoom-discussion-12-30-pm-est-discussion-of-barnier-s-thr/>

Post by “Cassius” of November 9, 2025 at 7:57 PM

@Eikadistes you will find the link very interesting. I don't as yet have a fix on what he worked from and whether that original is accessible. it's clear that it's a "modern paraphrase" so that will entail hazards but there's a tremendous amount of interesting material so it will be good to get a fix on how much confidence to place in this version.

Post by “Cassius” of November 11, 2025 at 11:45 AM

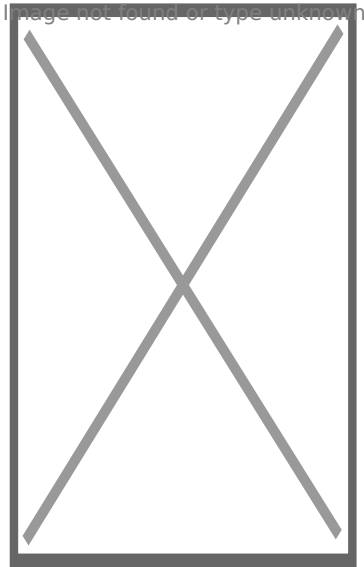
Now that I have scanned through once the entire book, I've refocused the title of the Zoom meeting. I am pretty sure that this is a work about which most of us are very unfamiliar, so let's just spend the meeting introducing ourselves to Bernier, Gassendi, and what's included in this work.

The paraphrase included at the [Early Modern Texts website](#) is useful, but now that I've reviewed the original PDF at Archive.org I'd say that we are better off going straight to the source, especially given that the EMT website glosses over or omits entirely part of the text.

We obviously aren't going to have time to go through this in detail, but I think most of us are going to want to add this to our reading list at some point, and we can usefully set the stage for that by talking about Bernier, Gassendi, and how the book is structured.

We're also going to want to make a list of caveats and/or criticisms that we can append to our links to it here at the forum so that new readers can have access to those into the future.

We'll probably refer mostly to the comments contained [in this thread](#) and of course to the Archive.org version of the book itself which is here:



[Three discourses of happiness, virtue and liberty. 1699 : Gassendi, Pierre. : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

Three discourses of happiness, virtue and liberty. 1699..Digitized from IA40313015-80.Previous issue:...

archive.org

Post by “Joshua” of November 12, 2025 at 11:13 PM

I continue to suspect that Bernier was not the English translator; he assembled these essays out of Gassendi's broader corpus, translating from Latin to French as he did so. And an anonymous translator (probably the author of the preface, who refers to both Gassendi and Bernier in the third person) translated Bernier's French into English. I can't find that Bernier ever wrote anything in English.

Edit; Unfortunately, this text does not appear in Halkett and Laing's [Dictionary of the Anonymous and Pseudonymous Literature of Great Britain](#). It would have appeared alphabetically between these two entries.

DISCOURSE (a) of government with relation to militia's. [By Andrew FLETCHER, of Salton.]

Edinburgh; MDCXCVIII. Octavo. Pp. 66.* [*Brit. Mus.*]

DISCOURSE (a) of money, being an essay on that subject, historically and politically handled, with reflections on the present evil state of the coin of this kingdom, and proposals of a method for the remedy. In a letter to a nobleman. [By J. BRISCOE.]

London: 1696. Octavo. Pp. 204. [*W.*]

Post by "Cassius" of November 13, 2025 at 5:17 AM

Excellent footwork Joshua. Hopefully over time we can develop more about this, because the English here is very readable and far better than the Gassendi rendering of the Life of Epicurus contained in Thomas Stanley's encyclopaedia