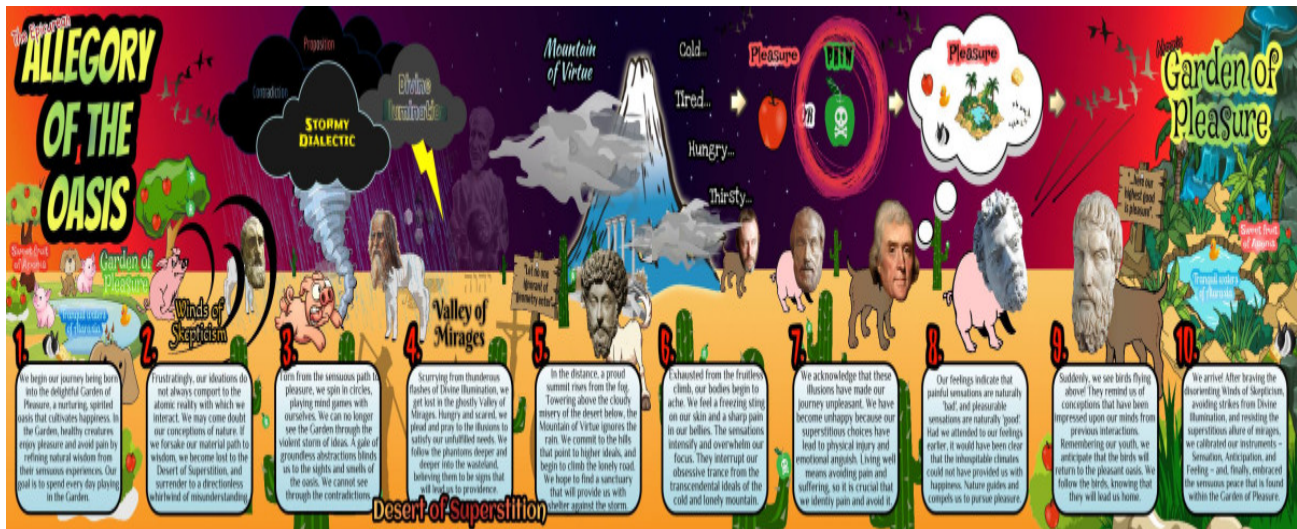


# Nate's "Allegory of the Oasis" Graphic

Post by "Cassius" of December 19, 2018 at 10:56 AM

UPDATE: The most recent version of the graphic, discussed in the posts at the end of this chain, is this one:



The following thread discusses the evolution of this graphic. Each panel describes its significance, but in case you don't recognize the characters portrayed above each one, here's a quick description:

1. Nothing but young animals here, representing (among other things) the unperverted source of information to which Epicurus looks for the guidance of Nature.
2. Zeno the Stoic
3. Transition panel
4. Plato
5. Marcus Aurelius, an eclectic who preserved some Epicurean views but was mostly Stoic.
6. Transition panel
7. \_\_\_ and Thomas Jefferson
8. ????
9. Epicurus
10. Garden of Pleasure



This post is for

discussion of Nate's "Allegory of the Oasis" graphic. Comments to it can also be posted in the gallery, but this thread is for discussion of the details and changes over time.

Here is the most well-developed summary of its content, but this needs revision:

In the garden, we have self-described Epicureans, with Christopher Hitchens on the left, and then Horace, Virgil, Lucretius, and Thomas Jefferson going right. Continuing into the Desert, we have influential Stoics and Platonists including Chrysippus, Plato, Plotinus, and Zeno of Citium.

Each of the Epicureans is related to an "unclean" animal. Each "unclean" animal is engaging one of the five sensual activities, such as Lucretius the vulture seeing, Jefferson the desert owl clasping the sign with his talons, and Christopher Hitchens the pig smelling a mushroom.

Each of the Idealist philosophers is depicted as a shadow, unconcerned with their physical bodies, believing themselves only to be a mind/soul. They are glorifying ideas, and worshiping mathematical forms. The two Stoics are praying and the Platonists are contemplating formal mathematics.

The mirages (we reject) include the Platonic Forms, a male deity holding the Earth (suggesting omniscience and sovereignty), a crucifix (suggesting immanence), and the name of the Jewish deity in Hebrew (ineffability and incorporeality). The Hebrews get a special shout-out in the diagram for bastardizing the name of our founder into their word for 'heretic' ('epikoros' or '????????'). Consequently, you will find the Tetragrammaton fading in the horizon.

Our protagonist is a camel ♦ inherently carrying the placid waters of Ataraxia through the desert. The hero begins to dehydrate, and grows thirsty. By trusting the judgment of his feelings, the camel follows his natural anticipations to a place that will satisfy his hunger and quench his thirst. The desert Idealists are hallucinating from fasting. There's a fairly good chance Plotinus is about to have a heat stroke.

There are pleasurable mushrooms, and painful, poison apples all around! The Garden, having been cultivated by the animals living within, is mostly filled with mushrooms, though some poison apples are growing at the outskirts of the oasis. The desert is the opposite ♦ it almost exclusively grows poison apples. Such are the consequences if one ignores their physical needs.

The Epicureans have constructed a dwelling in the Garden that contains an observatory ♦ see the telescope at the top of the castle. Supported upon the foundation of the Garden, it has the clarity and stability to observe the physical working of the world; the telescope sees through the mirages of the desert.

The water is 'Ataraxia' as opposed to the fruit, being 'Aponia.' I equate taking a bath or swimming to be more of a 'mind-easing' activity, and eating or drinking to be more of a 'body-pleasing' activity. Consequently, lack of mental disturbance is represented by a smooth pond, and lack of physical disturbance is represented by juicy fruit.

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## **Post by “Cassius” of December 20, 2018 at 11:32 AM**

Here is the original discussion which took place in 2017 about this graphic. Names have been changed except for Cassius and Nate himself:

Cassius Amicus July 18 at 6:25pm

One of the memorable aspects of Plato's philosophy is his "allegory of the cave," which illustrates his fundamental view that you have no knowledge of reality unless you're part of the Academic Elite. The cave picture neatly conveys the kind of "path to true knowledge" that abstract theories offer, and Epicurus' reaction to that approach was the origin of critiques such as the "Epicurean Critique of Mathematics" recently discussed in another post.

If we are going to explain clearly the Epicurean response to Plato's cave, we ought to be able to illustrate the Epicurean view with some similarly-compelling analogy, and not just by saying "Plato was wrong."

It would be a good creative challenge to sketch out Epicurean illustrations of the correct alternative(s) to Plato's Cave. I grabbed a screen shot of a very basic diagram of the cave, as well as a graphic of atoms to bodies, just to have a basic graphic for this post, but I don't want to suggest that a simple atoms-to-universe progression is the right approach. The Cave analogy addresses multiple issues, not only the nature of knowledge but other aspects of man's place in the universe, and so an Epicurean diagram might address these or other issues separately, or together

We have some very creative people here, and much of the job of Epicurean advancement is to confront errors like that of Plato with a substitute orientation of our own. Can anyone come up with suggestions (in the form of sketches or diagrams would be nice) to help get us thinking about how to present these arguments graphically?

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Poster1 Why not use the metaphor from Lucretius about sculpting and building one's self as a fortress of self sufficiency, wisdom and pleasure? A sort of tower that we can see the world from a vantage point of philosophy.

Also the act of building is active, pragmatic, involved moral reform and habituation and not just aligning our views w nature, whereas Plato is merely theoretical. We can then ask things like: what is the architecture of this fortress? And compare it with people who live at the whims of fortune (storms, by sea, building on sand, and other allegories) while we have the stability of philosophizing with our feet on the ground, on terra firma, on good foundation.

Poster1 Also, I think the rudiments of architectural analogy can be found in some explanations of the canon regarding building the foundation of a construction. So perhaps it may be a matter of putting the entire analogy together and giving it coherence.

Poster2 Nice. Have him (show his brain and nervous system too) navigating a path (or tracking down prey) in the woods by a starlit cosmos and add tags "senses, anticipations, feelings".

smile emoticon:)

Cassius Amicus Yes I think an architectural analogy might work. And that brings to mind DeWitt's comment in his book that it is important to distinguish "the stones of the wall" from the "tools of precision."

Image may contain: text

Poster3 I just heard Plato's cave also used in favor of philosophical idealism, along with some other things. Honestly it baffles me that anyone can take it seriously. The idea "we create our reality" is very appealing to people I guess, no matter how absurd.

Cassius Amicus I see we don't have any takers in designing an Epicurean graphic so far, but what Michael has just observed is also I think a key component of such a graphic. We definitely don't create our own reality, nor does anyone else create it for us. And yet as Haris has been remarking in the nearby thread, we (or at least our faculties of sense, including pain and pleasure) do play a large role in our perceiving that reality. So we need a graphic that emphasizes BOTH the role of "outside reality" plus the role of our faculties plus our own evaluative role, while discarding the gods and the "geometers-only" assertions.

Poster4 I'm not sure that we can make a single picture of this... because the world and the stuff in it, is much too complicated. Unlike plato Epicurus wasn't hiding from the fact that knowledge is hard.

Maybe we could make it a short comic strip... Well, someone could. I can't draw.

"How to know things? Go out of the cave and find a thing. Look at it [sight]. Poke it with your hand [touch]. Pick it up and smell it [scent]. Put it back down and see what it does... While you wait, talk with others about this new thing you found. Invite them to look at it with you. Write down what you think about it."

Side note: an outline of the Philosophy could be a map of a village.

Poster3 I don't know enough of Platonism to do this, but it would be good if some refutations toward Platonist arguments were made here.

Cassius Amicus Focusing a graphic on epistemology would probably make sense. Perhaps even as simple as portraying the Platonists as the ones who put / keep the ordinary people in chains in the first place!

Poster4 "Break your chains and leave the cave."

Poster5 Not sure that is how I would interpret Plato's Cave.... Academic Elite??? Where the heck did that come from?

Poster4 Academic elite = philosophers of the Academy.

Poster5 That answer just made things worse for me. Plato was not writing his philosophy for any small, specific audience. He was simply philosophizing! The cave allegory is his way of explaining much of his thought. Detractors of Plato often misrepresent his ideas and philosophy. Recently, after decades of study, I have dumped Aristotle and am revisiting Plato in earnest. So far, I am having no trouble in still studying Epicurus as I believe we have to look at any Philosopher in light of modern discoveries and what effect these would have on them.

Poster2 [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allegory\\_of\\_the\\_Cave](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allegory_of_the_Cave)

Cassius Amicus As this article discusses, it might not be reliable that "let no one ignorant of geometry enter" was placed over the door to the academy. But as even this defensive article says, "If the late character of our sources may incite us to doubt the autheti...See More

Plato FAQ: "Let no one ignorant of geometry enter"

Did plato write : "Only the dead have seen the end of war"?

[plato-dialogues.org](http://plato-dialogues.org)

Cassius Amicus This could go in this thread, or the one discussing geometry/math, but here is a good graphic on a basic point which Epicurus disputed (the number of shapes of the fundamental elements): [http://www.storyofmathematics.com/greek\\_plato.html](http://www.storyofmathematics.com/greek_plato.html)

Contrast this to Epicurus - Letter to Herodotus (Bailey): "Besides this the indivisible and solid bodies, out of which too the compounds are created and into which they are dissolved, have an incomprehensible number of varieties in shape: for it is not possible that such great varieties of things should arise from the same atomic shapes, if they are limited in number. And so in each shape the atoms are quite infinite in number, but their differences of shape are not quite infinite, but only incomprehensible in number."

Image may contain: text

Poster2 Does Plato say that these shapes are composed with each other in order to explain more complex shapes? That is ... complex shapes by composition of these "basic" 12 shapes.

The standard model of physics has twelve elementary particles of matter (fermions) which are composed, and those are composed again to what we call chemical atoms. The composers are the 4 bosons types which bind the fermions together (binding is the same as orbiting... caused by both attractive and repulsive "forces"... emissions/absorbptions of bosons... 4 forces).

Nathan Bartman We'll have the Allegory of the Stars.

Plato begins by suggesting that we are all prisoners, having been forcefully chained to an area reminiscent of a dungeon, and that our ascent out of the dungeon is reminiscent of our development as an intellectual being. This is a fair analogy for any philosophy to exploit, and even Epicurean philosophy could appropriate 'The Cave' and re-label it's components: the 'Cave' as religion, and the 'imprisonment' as anxiety. The 'chains' are fear, and the 'shapes' of the shadows are dogmatic belief. By 'sensing' the cold, hard touch of our chains, we 'feel' that it is painful. We then 'anticipate' a need to be warm, soft, and unchained; we 'anticipate' the open sky and the bright sun, unburdened from the stale cave of mysticism. We can suppose that the remaining prisoners are 'followers,' still chained with dogma, still staring at mysticism. This would mean that the final stage of the allegory, the rescuing of the other prisoners is like trying

to convince devout, religious dogmatists that a larger world exists outside of the confines of their own mysticism.

Turning the 'Cave' on its head can be profitable, but, like I said, I take issue with Plato's suggestion that we are prisoners, that we are chained, or that 'someone' put us there (it sounds very Stoic). Dreary imagery like 'prisoners' and 'chains' doesn't seem quite right for an Epicurean Allegory.

So, Behold! The Allegory of the Stars!

In the Epicurean allegory, sensory faculties are represented by a telescope, and sensory organs are represented by the mirrors of the telescope. The starlight that enters our telescopes is completely real, even though it depicts objects as they were millions of years before our existence. Even though there is a difference between the image of the star as we see, versus the actual body of the star itself, millions of light-years away, the photons we collect through the telescope are not 'shadows of a real thing,' and are not pieces of a 'false reality.' What is real is neither 'the Form of the star,' or 'our Idea of the star,' but, rather, the real-world atoms that both comprise the photons which we are currently receiving, as well as the protons and neutrons that are contained within the radius of the object, millions of light-years away. The images of the stars through our telescope are not merely 'imperfect forms' of the stars, but are, in fact, the atoms of the star, itself

If the telescope is perception, and the mirrors of the telescopes are sensory organs, and the starlight is thin layers of atoms, then our 'feelings' are the calibration of the telescope we don't want a blinding telescope that damages our lenses (unlike the Cyrenaics)! We also don't want a telescope that is so dark the moon appears dim (unlike the Stoics!). We neither want over-exposure nor under-exposure: the 'goldilocks zone' of pleasure is our aim. We don't want to look directly into the core of the sun, nor do we want to stare a cold, dark, empty space. Too much pleasure leads to pain, and too much pain... also leads to more pain. If we are rightfully struck with awe, intellectually-engaged, we 'anticipate' there to be more beauty if we point our telescope in a different direction; perhaps we'll see more beautiful, colorful, pleasurable clouds of gas and dust.

Finally, let us suppose (to finish my counter-analogy of Plato's allegory) that the 'prisoners' in 'chains' from the 'Cave' allegory have now been morphed into 'people who are simply unwilling to look into the telescope' because of dogma. A good, real-world example of this is the trial of Galileo; his accusers were so perturbed by his disturbance that they refused to look through his telescope. The only 'prisoners' in the Epicurean Allegory are people who are too obsessed with their fear of the telescope to be willing to look through it. And, sometimes, even when they do, they mistake the image of the mirror for the mirror itself, and either accuse the manufacturer of deception, or else, wage a war against the idea that mirrors reflect light.

I'm interested in generating a diagram to illustrate this Allegory of the Stars, but I'd like some input first. Is this a reasonable allegory?

Cassius Amicus Great start - yes let's get comments! One fine point is that I would not omit reference to active prison guards - not all (or most?) of the chains and bars and restraints are self or naturally imposed.

Poster6 Nathan Bartman, It sounds great to me.

You might want to fix a few inaccuracies:

Galileo's telescope was made with lenses, not mirrors.

"The images of the stars through our telescope ... are, in fact, the atoms of the star, itself" is physically wrong. The photons emitted by the star create the image which we perceive. Neither the images nor the photons are the atoms of the star. (In Epicurean terms, we may call the photons the "atoms" of the light without contradicting modern physics.)

Poster7 Often Eastern and Western idealist philosophies love the idea of reality being not "real" or an illusion. This is always an interesting, but an entirely unprovable assertion. When someone like Plato makes the claim that this reality is but shadows upon the wall it is based on ungrounded opinion. To say that this reality is a hologram or matrix simulation is to say that you KNOW there is some higher base or parent reality...otherwise it is fanciful opinion. If this is Plato's Cave and everything is an illusion then we must accept the illusion as reality because there is no other known reality to base it on.

Parmenides was supposed to have said that the "opinions of mortals have no warranty" and ultimately that is true. The world is full of relative mortal opinions (including Plato) Epicurus says to trust your faculties. I'm more inclined to trust Epicurus simply because he's handing me my authority back...my natural ability to judge what is good and bad based on what I feel.

Poster3 Plato made many arguments for it, but I'm not very familiar with them. I don't think the idea holds up even for a moment though. Hindu philosophers also argue for this. I encountered one who claimed consciousness is all we have knowledge of, since it's...See More

Poster7 You can literally stand on the edge of a vortex that will suck you in to relativistic idealistic speculation. I don't know how people do it...it makes me dizzy.??

Poster3 I could never even take the "brain in the vat", matrix, or "is it all just a dream" stuff seriously. Sure, yes, thought experiments, whatever. Why worry if it's just a mere theoretical possibility (assuming that's even the case) without any real evidence?

Poster7 Exactly. Thought experiments are fine, but let's not all dive off a cliff because we believe "reality isn't real." That's the true danger of idealism.

Poster3 Besides Epicurus had some very good arguments against this skeptical blather. Like it's inconsistent, lazy and completely undermines the very concepts they use to begin with.

Poster3 Yes, "reality isn't real" would be a perfect example. There is a complete self-contradiction.

Poster3 Honestly that annoyed me about the Matrix film itself. The whole "If reality is just things you can sense, that's only the electrical signals". Well what else would it be exactly? They never say.

Poster3 To me the Matrix (if such existed) is an example of a reality that isn't the entirety of things. Which just means we don't know it all automatically. Much like now.

Poster5 I politely and respectfully disagree. I am actually leaning the other way. Throwing complex words like "reality" around loosely as if we know what it is invites assumption upon assumption. And we all know that to "ass-u-me" just makes asses out of y...See More

Poster2 You will trust your senses. No matter what you say. You will open your eyes today, and not keep them closed.

The information they provide will help you navigate life and people and find food. You will not plug up your ears, for long, especially as you ..

Cassius Amicus Going back to Nathan I do think a telescope or some similar figure is a major component as a way of highlighting the role of the senses. Even in disagreeing Tommy helps us focus on the main issue being whether we have the courage and the nerve to trus...See More

Poster5 Thank you Cassius. I understand the automatic or natural conclusion that our senses are the only thing given us by Nature to discern "reality". However, I believe jumping to that seemingly obvious conclusion is near-sighted. I am not sure of the termin...See More

Cassius Amicus "consider the equally natural ability of our consciousness or mind to discern patterns, forms, ideas, absolutes, etc.?" Since those things do not exist outside our minds, one possible term for that would be "imagination"! wink emoticon;-)

Cassius Amicus With the usual caveat of nonendorsement of much of the rest of her viewpoint, I do believe in terms of illustration that the opening "astronaut" analogy in the "Address to West Point" usefully conveys in figurative form many of the same issues we are talking about in responding to Plato on this point. If you have not read it (only a few paragraphs long) it is worth reading:

<https://books.google.com/books?id=pUQNrl79WrkC&pg=PT10...>

Image may contain: text

Cassius Amicus And speaking of astronaut analogies and prisons with "gates" and "bars" there is no analogy that comes to us with greater authority than this one. The picture almost draws itself:

When human life, all too conspicuous,  
Lay fowly groveling on earth, weighed down  
By grim Religion looming from the skies,  
Horribly threatening mortal men, a man,  
A Greek, first raised his mortal eyes  
Bravely against this menace. No report  
Of gods, no lightning-flash, no thunder-peal  
Made this man cower, but drove him all the more  
With passionate manliness of mind and will  
To be the first to spring the tight-barred gates  
Of Nature's hold asunder. So his force,  
His vital force of mind, a conqueror  
Beyond the flaming ramparts of the world  
Explored the vast immensities of space  
With wit and wisdom, and came back to us  
Triumphant, bringing news of what can be  
And what cannot, limits and boundaries,  
The borderline, the bench mark, set forever.  
Religion, so, is trampled underfoot,  
And by his victory we reach the stars.

Cassius Amicus And not one but two more obvious pictures from the same source:

1 The pit or canyon or ditch:

Not only reason, but our very life,

Unless we have the courage and the nerve

To trust the senses, to avoid those sheer  
Downfalls into the pits and tarns of nonsense.  
All that verbose harangue against the senses  
Is utter absolute nothing.

2. The architecturally flawed building:

If a building  
Were planned by someone with a crooked ruler  
Or an inaccurate square, or spirit-level  
A little out of true, the edifice,  
In consequence, would be a frightful mess,  
Warped, wobbly, wish-wash, weak and wavering,  
Waiting a welter of complete collapse -  
So let your rule of reason never be  
Distorted by the fallacies of sense  
Lest all your logic prove a road to ruin.

Poster7 The realm of idealism is real. The realm of imagination and dreams are real too. They exist in THIS universe.

My dreams are real because they belong to my mind and my mind is a real and physical thing belonging to this dimension. Other than these ideas of holograms and Platonic Caves being nice thought experiments, what value are they without evidence? Should I just take Plato's word and trust his theory? Why him?

All we have are our senses and analogies to this universe. Everything that we imagine has its genesis in this world and in this dimension. If someone wants to claim that is not true they must come bearing evidence.

Cassius Amicus When I wrote above I wrote "Since those things do not exist \*\*outside our minds\*\* one possible term for that would be "imagination." From a very practical point of view we have to decide what it means to say something is "real".....

Poster7 Think of it this way...Plato's Cave REQUIRES us to visualize a cave, fire, shadows and a starry night outside. All things that belong to this universe and the realm of experience. He's trusting that we all have senses and a shared experience. He needs ...See More

Cassius Amicus It is very easy to use the word "real" loosely and then to get caught in hopeless confusions and contradictions about what we are talking about. That is an area where we ought to flesh out an Epicurean definition of "true" and "real" so that we don't fall into either total relativism or thinking that there are universal absolute concepts (like triangles).

Poster7 Idealists ask for the impossible. All the while requiring their audience to utilize their natural senses for reference. Plato's idealistic realm doesn't contain ineffable qualities. I.e. He never brought up an object or thing that hasn't already been t...See More

Poster2 Real: consisting of elementary particles, in motion, and interactions between them including, collisions, emissions, absorbtions, binding/breaking. These lead to bodies and emanations. The interactions we call events. The events and succession of events are ordered and this leads to "time".

Poster2 True: in agreement with what is real.

Cassius Amicus We're immediately put on the defensive when the religious / idealist crowd suggests that they have access to a universal truth which we do not. We can't just let the game be played on that field. We have to clearly state that universals don't exist i...See More

Cassius Amicus smile emoticon:-) We're far from it yet, but at some point the day may come that someone will have to say in kindly Epicurean counseling: "TH, repent! Because you sir are at risk of becoming a FLATTERER OF DIONYSUS! ??

Cassius Amicus Dewitt EAHP, page 298:

Poster3 "Real" is usually defined as that which isn't dependent solely on our minds. So dreams and pure ideas aren't real (although not valueless). I'm not sure how an Epicurus would define it.

Cassius Amicus I agree Poster3 This is something that would be nice to look up some references and post them somewhere, because it's ALWAYS going to be a core question.

Poster3 Well, the dictionaries and philosophy generally follow the usage that I gave above, if that helps.

Philip K. Dick also put it thus: "Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away."

Cassius Amicus Scanning through the posts so far, we have at least the following list of "word pictures" that might be usable for graphic memes responsive to Plato's cave, the first several all from Lucretius:

- 1) Epicurus as the conquering hero who has broken the bars separating us from nature.
- 2) Epicureans as viewing the world below from a safe fortress of wisdom, immune to the problems of those wandering in hopelessness afar.
- 3) The architectural analogy of a building that is infirm because it is built on false premises.
- 4) The canyon/ditch analogy of avoiding pitfalls that come from the nonsense of not trusting the senses.
- 5) Changing the cave analogy 1 - "break your chains and leave the cave"
- 6) Allegory of the Stars with telescope and other instruments (as elaborated by Nathan's post with suggestions by Martin)
- 7) The astronaut crashed on a distant planet analogy (hazardous to use due to Rand connections, but might lend itself to other scenarios)

Any one, several, or all of them could be used to develop a graphic meme, but the missing element so far is graphics talent to even sketch a scenario. Any ideas how we can find someone or some art program or whatever that might be able to help with that? In the end it is going to take a single person with vision to push through to visualization - this kind of thing does not work well by committee, but the discussion ought to be helpful to get creative ideas flowing.

Nathan Bartman Cassius, I posted an initial draft below. I discovered [<https://sketch.io/sketchpad/>] and found it very easy to use. I'm sure that many of us can take advantage of this program.

Sketchpad 4.1 - Draw, Create, Share!


Sketchpad; multi-touch, multi-user, non-destructive drawing application written in HTML5.

sketch.io

Poster2 Cassius Amicus Try this

<https://quickdraw.withgoogle.com/>

Quick, Draw!

Can a neural network learn to recognize doodles? See how well it does with your drawings and help teach it, 

quickdraw.withgoogle.com

Cassius Amicus interesting site!

Poster2 Is it useful?

I heard about it but have not tried it yet.

Cassius Amicus it seems to be the opposite - you draw and it tells you what you drew

Poster2 Oh. Maybe I sent you the wrong link. They have another where they guess what you drew and then they show you a palette so you can choose more professionally done ones, and composite them.

Poster2 Try this Cassius Amicus

<https://techcrunch.com/.../googles-autodraw-uses-machine.../>

Google's AutoDraw uses machine learning to help you draw like a pro

Drawing isn't for everyone. I, for one, am definitely not very good at it. But with AutoDraw, Google is launching a new experiment today that uses machine.. techcrunch.com

Nathan Bartman Here's what I came up with! I used the following online tool to generate this image: [<https://sketch.io/sketchpad/>].

Nathan Bartman Perhaps I should also include a narrative, much like the narrative of the 'prisoner escaping the cave and transcending their ignorance by embracing the light of truth.' I suppose that our protagonist could simply be a person in the desert, deprived of their biological needs, malnourished, dehydrated, and delusional. Our hero chooses not to give into the hallucinations caused by their physical deterioration, and, instead, presses onward, knowing that they will only reach their destination by searching for water; those who wander the desert too long will find themselves lost. Our hero begins to recognize helpful oases from perilous mirages. They notice philosophical quicksand before getting caught in it, therein being condemned to needlessly struggle against the sand. In the desert, our hero finds that the simplicity of 'water' is more pleasurable (and useful) than precious metals and delicacies. Eventually, perhaps by following the guiding, scientific light of the stars, they emerge from the desert to a lush oasis, and, using the natural elements of the oasis, constructs a domicile, cultivates a garden, and invites their friends, so as not to lead others into a desert. (Isn't there a story somewhere about a certain group of monotheists being lost in the desert for several decades? All they needed to do was keep going straight, and they would've been out in a few months. That is religion: trying to get to a destination right in front of you by constantly making turns.) Anyway, let me know what you guys think!

Cassius Amicus GREAT START!Cassius Amicus Nathan Bartman Wow that must have taken a lot of work!

Nathan Bartman It was fun! wink emoticon;)

Cassius Amicus Did you draw all that freehand?

Poster1 Love this. Plus the reference to water and simplicity which has Taoist resonance. Add a fortress of peace, friends and pleasure and the saga is complete

Nathan Bartman I only drew the 'sand' freehand. Everything else was either from a piece of clipart that the website provides, or else, I uploaded a few images I found through Google, namely, Epicurus smiling, the dog, the pig, the mirage crucifix, and the telescope. Everything else the fonts, the stars was a tool they provide.

Poster3 Very good.

Nathan Bartman I would also like to include Epicurean vocabulary into the diagram. I think it would be useful to include the ancient Greek. Here, I've represented 'atomi' and 'eidola.' (Does our concept of 'Void' come from the word 'kenon?' I'm not familiar with the ancient Greek there). Perhaps I could re-label the pig 'aponia,' implying bodily pleasure, and re-label the dog 'ataraxia,' implying freedom of anxiety. Perhaps they could live in a pen labelled 'katastematic,' while a hummingbird, labelled 'kinetic' hovers outside the pen, sucking honey from the blossom. I can illustrate the 'atom' moving in spirals and curves labelled 'parenklisis' or 'clinamen' (I suppose the ancient Greek would be preferred to Latin?). I can rename the telescope 'aisth?sis,' for sensation. A thought bubble with a green [+] and a red [-] called 'path?' could float above Epicurus' head. I'd like to link the creatures' smiling with 'hedone' and 'eudaemonia.' I'm not sure how to include 'prolepsis' maybe some illustration of the influence of 'the gods?' Are there any other concepts or important vocabulary we should try to emphasize (or de-emphasize)?

Poster2 prolepsis... anticipating/predicting/expecting

not sure how to advise...

Poster2 how to add wisdom/prudence/planning?

Poster2 how to add choosing/avoiding via pain/pleasure consequences?

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## **Post by “Cassius” of December 21, 2018 at 6:01 AM**

Part 2 ---

Nathan Bartman ALLEGORY OF THE DESERT (or of the GARDEN. Or of the OASIS. That sounds nice: ALLEGORY OF THE OASIS).

Prolepsis can be healthy birds flying over the desert, leading the wanderer to the garden. We can extend the metaphor to equate the cultivation of the...See More

Cassius Amicus Excellent.

Poster8 You guys are such boffins, I LOVE IT! wink emoticon;)

Poster6 Just a few minor points, more for fun than as objections:

Directing the telescope to the sun is a bad idea. Looking through it would damage the eyes. At least older types of digital cameras would be permanently damaged as well.

Labelling the dog with "ataraxia" would appear odd for people who are afraid of dogs.

At least in Germany, there is currently a lot of fear about an imminent mass extinction of insects and the grave consequences. So, labelling insects with "anxiety" would be even more odd.

Cassius Amicus Regardless of the labeling, I **\*\*strongly\*\*** like the idea of incorporating Dogs, pigs, and every other kind of "unclean" animal we can find a way to incorporate. Eagles and Hawks are unclean??? ARGH List:

Explicit list[edit]

Main article: Kosher animals

The following animals are considered to be impure according to Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, based on Rashi's identification:

Bat

Camel

Chameleon

Coney (hyrax)

Cormorant

Cuckow (cuckoo)

Eagle

Ferret

Frog

Gier eagle[16]

Glede[16]

Great owl[16]

Hare  
Hawk  
Heron  
Kite  
Lapwing  
Little owl  
Lizard  
Mole  
Mouse  
Night hawk[16]  
Osprey  
Ossifrage  
Owl  
Pelican  
Pig  
Raven  
Snail  
Stork  
Swine  
Tortoise  
Vulture  
Weasel

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unclean\\_animal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unclean_animal)

Cassius Amicus Hmm I see dogs are not in that list. Where did islam get its dislike of dogs?

Cassius Amicus Same article: "Dogs[edit]"

Main article: Islam and animals Dogs

Saluki dog

According to the majority of Sunni scholars, dogs can be owned by farmers, hunters, and shepherds for the purpose of hunting and guarding and the Qur'an states that it is permissible to eat what trained dogs catch.[35] Among the Bedouin, the saluki dogs are cherished as companions and allowed in the tents.

Nevertheless, many Islamic teachers state dogs should be considered unclean and that Muslims licked by them must perform ritual purification. According to a Sunni Islam Hadith, a plate that a dog has used for feeding must be washed seven times, including once with clean sand mixed with the water, before a person may eat from it.[citation needed]

Nathan Bartman All right, I give you the Epicurean Allegory 2.0.

Poster1 Cassius Amicus will you be writing about this on your page, or should I write about this in my pages? I think you've followed the discussion far closer and might more accurately explain this, and I can mention the discussion in the next 20th blog

Cassius Amicus Hiram I think we can and should both write about this, and encourage others as well.

Cassius Amicus 1) We always ought to keep in mind that this is just one helpful illustration useful for discussing major comments, not a final word in itself. This one is very useful but there are other that will be very useful as well. We will all never agree on details and so the artist (Nathan in this case) needs to make the final call on all details of his own work. We can and will develop other illustrations to make other points.

2) With that having been said, the labeling of the garden raises for me personally old issues of "isms" in general and "hedonism" in particular, which I do not gather was terminology the Epicureans used - I gather it was always "Epicurean garden."

Cassius Amicus Nathan does dropping the telescope make it harder to see the point that the canon is focused on nature (as it is now does the diagram "flow" from the atoms to the garden)?

Cassius Amicus I may have missed what Martin was referring to as I didn't see the dog labeled with ataraxia. labeling the dog with "Friendship" as in the first diagram does a good job of referencing "man's best friend"


Poster1 The Dog should be called Fido which means "loyalty"


Poster6 Cassius Amicus , Nathan mentioned the idea to "re-label the dog 'ataraxia,' implying freedom of anxiety" in one of his comments to the first allegory. Fido is probably the most

universal attribute for a dog.

Nathan Bartman I'd like to continue shaping and refining the image so it is succinct without being misleading. I'm very comfortable omitting unnecessary items, adding new concepts or themes, and altering the illustrations for coherence. Suggestions welcome!

At first, I supposed calling it the 'Garden of H?don?,' but the program I was using isn't fond of the '?' character. In this case, I agree that dropping 'Hedonism' is appropriate. I like the 'Epicurean Garden,' or, also, the 'Garden of Pleasure' (or use 'H?don??')

I think the telescope reinforces the idea that our focus is toward nature, but I'm not sure if it's necessary within the context of the allegory  would an emphasis on Epicurus' (1) eyes, (2) ears, and (3) nose, demonstrating him to (1) see the colors of the oasis amidst the blinding, empty desert, (2) hear the song of the bird above, and (3) smell the flavor of the fruit be sufficient to illustrate that sensation guides us toward pleasure? That being said, having a telescope in the Garden help does make the connection between the Epicurean physics, briefly summarized at the top, and epistemology, also grounded in the Garden of Pleasure. I think we'll keep the telescope.

I want to expand the oasis a bit and include a human structure upon which the telescope rests. The dog can definitely be Fido  that's a great idea. I'll also include more images of interaction between people and creatures to demonstrate friendship.

Nathan Bartman Crap. I just deleted a big post.

Let me try to summarize what I was going to suggest: (1) the desert silhouettes will have the heads of Platonists and Stoics, (2) the religious iconography will include Platonic Solids, (3) the Garden will include Virgi...See More

Cassius Amicus My preferences on words are both, or English, to avoid implying that there is a secret language that only initiates can understand. I like all the suggestions a lot.

Related to my question about the telescope, I was wondering if you think the diagram...See More

Nathan Bartman My friends, here is the Epicurean Allegory 3.0.

Image may contain: 8 people

Nathan Bartman Cassius, if you think we're getting closer to a good image such that our community would utilize it, I'd be honored to stamp it with our Society's logo in a corner.

Poster8 Nathan. my friend, you are too funny, this sort of image would definitely appeal to the younger market. I love your style!

Cassius Amicus Nathan Bartman great work! I'll PM you and post elsewhere about the stamping. I think we need to plan for a series of these, so maybe rather than refer to it as the Epicurean Allegory 3.0 at least I myself will probably refer to the "Allegory of the Oasis" 3.0 and hopefully we will accumulate others to make other points. Again great work!

Cassius Amicus Also Nathan, who are the other faces in the garden? Have you reworked your list of the allegorical points in one place?

Nathan Bartman In the garden, we have self-described Epicureans, with Christopher Hitchens on the left, and then Horace, Virgil, Lucretius, and Thomas Jefferson going right. Continuing into the Desert, we have influential Stoics and Platonists including Chrysippus, P...See More

Nathan Bartman I think it may also be funny to include a little cave called "Plato's" in the far, bottom-right corner, suggesting that Plato didn't make it too far out of the cave (not far enough).

Cassius Amicus Oh my gosh Nathan this diagram and commentary is great. Perhaps when you rework to add the cave and maybe systematize the commentary, we should start a new thread with the diagram as the main photo, with all commentary under that? It probably is not good for this to be buried too far in nested comments. if you agree, please do that whenever you are ready.

Cassius Amicus nathan I am still thinking about the "layout" or progression, from this point of view: the "starting point" for everyone is the cosmos/reality as you have portrayed at the top. Then for the epicureans you have the three legs of the canon focusing on interpreting that so that we can arrive at the oasis. The others, on the other hand, do not focus on the cosmos with the right tools, so they end up in the desert. Where I am going with this is I am wondering if it is possible to reposition or otherwise indicate that the underlying focus/ source of everything is the reality section of the diagram, while the Epicureans split off from everyone else due to their use of the canon as their means to interpret the cosmos, while the others substitute their own visions / words / dialectical logic / divine revelation... ?

Cassius Amicus Do you see where I am going with that last comment? The cosmos makes sense to be at the top, while the two divergent camps at the bottom reach their locations due to their divergent tools for interpreting the cosmos. That makes it appropriate to use...See More

Cassius Amicus Following on, the three canonical legs as you have them are the bridge from the cosmos to the Epicurean oasis. The bridge to the desert is the divine revelation, dialectical logic, radical skepticism, or other appropriate terms.....

Cassius Amicus Maybe "bridge" is not a good metaphor to use; maybe it is; maybe other tools such as the telescope, microscope, or magnifying glass are better analogies, but one of the central points of this can be to illustrate how Epicureans can use their tools to look at reality to end up in an oasis of pleasurable living, while the others can use their tools to look at the same

reality and wind up wandering in a desert.....

Nathan Bartman I see what you mean make an explicit comparison between the different methodologies and the conclusion to which they lead. Perhaps we could show each camp gazing at the stars, and one camp seeing atoms, and the other camp seeing signs, like Constanti...See More

Cassius Amicus Looks like I forgot possibly good word choices like "idealism" for Plato, "essentialism" for Aristotle, dialectical logic, (Socratic method?) radical skepticism... but this word choice for their methodology to contrast to the Epicurean canon of truth i...See More

Cassius Amicus Nathan Bartman Excellent Nathan!

Cassius Amicus I know you are putting tremendous time into this but it is much appreciated!!!!

Nathan Bartman It's my pleasure! smile emoticon:)

Haris Dimitriadis Super!

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Nathan Bartman with Poster9.

July 24 at 10:43pm

In the garden, we have self-described Epicureans, with Christopher Hitchens on the left, and then Horace, Virgil, Lucretius, and Thomas Jefferson going right. Continuing into the Desert, we have influential Stoics and Platonists including Chrysippus, Plato, Plotinus, and Zeno of Citium.

Each of the Epicureans is related to an "unclean" animal. Each "unclean" animal is engaging one of the five sensual activities, such as Lucretius the vulture seeing, Jefferson the desert owl clasping the sign with his talons, and Christopher Hitchens the pig smelling a mushroom.

Each of the Idealist philosophers is depicted as a shadow, unconcerned with their physical bodies, believing themselves only to be a mind/soul. They are glorifying ideas, and worshipping mathematical forms. The two Stoics are praying and the Platonists are contemplating formal mathematics.

The mirages (we reject) include the Platonic Forms, a male deity holding the Earth (suggesting omniscience and sovereignty), a crucifix (suggesting immanence), and the name of the Jewish deity in Hebrew (ineffability and incorporeality). The Hebrews get a special shout-out in the diagram for bastardizing the name of our founder into their word for 'heretic' ('epikoros' or '????????'). Consequently, you will find the Tetragrammaton fading in the horizon.

Our protagonist is a camel ♦ inherently carrying the placid waters of Ataraxia through the desert. The hero begins to dehydrate, and grows thirsty. By trusting the judgment of his

feelings, the camel follows his natural anticipations to a place that will satisfy his hunger and quench his thirst. The desert Idealists are hallucinating from fasting. There's a fairly good chance Plotinus is about to have a heat stroke.

There are pleasurable mushrooms, and painful, poison apples all around! The Garden, having been cultivated by the animals living within, is mostly filled with mushrooms, though some poison apples are growing at the outskirts of the oasis. The desert is the opposite ♦ it almost exclusively grows poison apples. Such are the consequences if one ignores their physical needs.

The Epicureans have constructed a dwelling in the Garden that contains an observatory ♦ see the telescope at the top of the castle. Supported upon the foundation of the Garden, it has the clarity and stability to observe the physical working of the world; the telescope sees through the mirages of the desert.

The water is 'Ataraxia' as opposed to the fruit, being 'Aponia.' I equate taking a bath or swimming to be more of a 'mind-easing' activity, and eating or drinking to be more of a 'body-pleasing' activity. Consequently, lack of mental disturbance is represented by a smooth pond, and lack of physical disturbance is represented by juicy fruit.

Nathan Bartman Let's continue from here.

Image may contain: text

Poster7 Great work! Ironically Plotinus did nearly die as a soldier on a desert campaign march to Persia, under Emperor Gordian, trying to make his way to consult the Magi of Iran and the yogic sages of India. He somehow managed to survive and return to Italy. Per Porphyry. Nice work putting that all together.

Nathan Bartman I had no idea about Plotinus! That's great. wink emoticon;) I may want to include an 'Om' mirage around him.

Poster7 He was obsessed with India. Some believe his mentor Ammonius Saccas was a 3rd generation Indian living in Alexandria. Hence why his mystical platonism agrees with hindu vedanta.

Poster1 When I saw the camel I immediately thought of Nietzsche's designation of the camel as a beast of burden and as the unthinking believer in the god of the desert. The second stage in Nietzschean philosophical development is the lion, who roars against ty...See More

Nathan Bartman Good to know! The camel might be an ambivalent or misleading symbol. Maybe we could start with a camel at the crossroads, and then we'll have a lion entering the oasis? The lion can make the choice to 'feel' ♦ is there an animal that can demonstrate th...See More

Poster1 well, as for trusting belief, the quintessential Christian metaphor is the sheep, which is contrasted with the wolves as more trustworthy (however, sheep only serve to be led to the sacrificial table, while wolves are loyal and know friendship, but also hierarchy). The main similarity I see here with camel and lion is that the lion is a predator, the camel is vegetarian, also that both lions and wolves do not feature on the human menu. Of course, including Nietzsche's three tiers of philosophical development would rely on the extent to which we consider N an ally of Epicurean philosophy.


Cassius Amicus On the animal discussion we also have the animals who were in the cave with Zarathustra - eagle and snake? The camel is unclean and fits that category, but if associated with Epicurus then the animal probably needs to be a more widely respected "aggressive" type such as lion or eagle or hawk or maybe even boar or whatever....

Nathan Bartman I like the boar for Epicurus. It seems less picky about it's diet than a lion. Also, was Epicurus a vegetarian? Or did he recommend a vegetarian diet? If so, we may want to avoid certain carnivores. The 'bird' figure doesn't necessarily have to be a vulture, but could be an eagle or hawk.

Poster7 Use a Triceratops for Epicurus. tongue emoticon:p

Cassius Amicus Poster7 FWIW - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triceratops>

Triceratops - Wikipedia

Triceratops is a genus of herbivorous ceratopsid dinosaur that first appeared during the late   
[en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org)

Poster7 That's what I'd consider a formidable herbivore. wink emoticon;) )

Nathan Bartman I'm COMPLETELY for it. Humorous though it is, it expresses Epicurus on a number of levels. Among other things, 'lizards' fall in the category of 'unclean animals.' It's formidable, vegetarian, and it has three horns, representing [...] HOLY SHIT MATT YOU'RE A GENIUS. Each horn is a leg of the Canon.

Poster7 And....dinosauria bridges the gap between birds and reptiles. So there you have it. Epicurus the Triceratops, the Cretaceous hedonistic dinosaur.

Nathan Bartman There are a few items I think need to be collectively addressed.

(1) What are opposing methodologies of the Stoics and Platonists that contrast with our Canon? Specifically, (a) if one were to reject materialism, what faculty would one use besides 'sensation?' Here, we might answer 'dialectical logic.' Or not, or, any suggestions? (b) If we reject our natural Anticipations, that seems to lead us to skepticism. (c) What would a Platonist suggest we rely on to judge happiness if not feelings?

2. I like the idea of having Plato's "Let none enter [...] Geometry" quote outside of their desert. Hell, I may as well put them the ruins of a stone Academy in the desert, devoid of natural features (much like the Cosmopolitan Stoics).

3. Beginning at the top, with physics, and showing how the interactions of the atoms are 'interpreted by each group is one way to show a visual flow. They Photons can be demonstrated to be observed by the Epicureans (using sensation) for what they are, while the Platonists misinterpret the 'Photons' for astrological phenomena, symbolized through the mythic imagery they imagine.

4. Another way we can create visual flow is to (simultaneously) begin in the very middle, at the bottom, with two divergent paths, one leading to the Academy, one leading to the Garden. The paths diverge when the wanderer begins to become overheated, thirsty, and uncomfortable. The Epicurean camel trusts that the discomfort is caused by physical circumstance. The Platonist/Stoic rejects this explanation, and supposes that the desert is inevitable, and true happiness means learning to survive in the desert. Maybe Socrates could be this second wanderer? (I place Socrates less as a Platonist, and more as a proto-Cynic/Skeptic. I think Plato appropriated Socrates like Paul appropriated Jesus). Then again, maybe not. Either way, some figures feels thirsty, and says, "I'm not thirsty. I'm lacking virtue. If I find virtue, I won't have physical needs."

(5) I'll highlight the sensual faculties of each animal. The pig will be smelling the mushroom, one dog will more clearly be listening to the butterfly, his friend, the other dog, will be eating a mushroom, Lucretius the vulture will be observing more obviously, and Jefferson's talons will be largely to demonstrate 'touch.' On the other side, the Platonists/Stoics are concerned with mirages.

(6) Should anything be re-named? Should any concepts / names be added? While I added 'quarks,' I intentionally left out 'leptons' and 'bosons,' because of most people's unfamiliarity with this jargon. People are, however, familiar with examples of these two categories (being electrons and photons), so I used them, instead. I like keeping 'Atomi,' because the nuclear 'atom' at this point is not indivisible, and not a good candidate for the 'atomon,' despite it's name. Also, should any symbols be changed?

Poster1 1. The Stoics had their own Canon which included Logic. As for Plato, I imagine he would think the only way to commune with the ideal form of "Happiness" is by meditating on it, by contemplating on it.

Cassius Amicus "(1) What are opposing methodologies of the Stoics and Platonists that contrast with our Canon? Specifically, (a) if one were to reject materialism, what faculty would one use besides 'sensation?' Here, we might answer 'dialectical logic.' Or not, or, ...See More

Cassius Amicus "3. Beginning at the top, with physics, and showing how the interactions of the atoms are 'interpreted by each group is one way to show a visual flow. They Photons can be

demonstrated to be observed by the Epicureans (using sensation) for what they are, while the Platonists misinterpret the 'Photons' for astrological phenomena, symbolized through the mythic imagery they imagine." Not everything can be included, but as per Diogenes Oinoanda, there is the "flux" issue, with some saying that the flux moves so fast that nothing can be grasped, but Epicurus saying that things move, but not so fast that they cannot be grasped. Maybe that is something for the explanatory commentary on the cosmos rather than for the picture though.....

Nathan Bartman There definitely needs to be commentary. There are a few succinct quotes from the Principal Doctrine and from De Rerum Nature that express thoughts nicely. Also, I'd like to include something that ties climamen with indeterminism 💎 probably commentary.

Poster6 I like the dinosaur (if it is shown fully reconstructed) but the dinosaur is often understood as a symbol for something which is obsolete.

Socrates should not be in the allegory because there are no authentic texts from him and most of what he has supposedly said has most likely been invented by Plato. There should be a more explicit cynic or skeptic.

Cassius Amicus Martin makes good points but I think these are the kind of issues that the artist has to decide for himself. Dinosaurs do have a rap for being obsolete, but the public rap on something does not have to be given heed in every case, and it is often a go...See More

Poster6 Agreed.

Cassius Amicus I followed up as to dinosaurs in the new thread with a question for Matt.... wink emoticon;-)

Nathan Bartman Martin, I didn't get a chance to read this before generating the image 💎 you and I were on the exact same page. I decided that Socrates wouldn't be an appropriate fit, so I just went ahead and selected the founder of Skepticism, himself, Pyrrho.

Poster7 Dinosaurs and Paleobiology has always been close to my heart. I hope that generations of children will be awe inspired by the study of Paleontology as I was... and even more of those children will become scientists and unlock the hidden biological mysteries hidden by eons of time. Plus...dinosaurs are pretty cool.

Cassius Amicus all of that is true, and i agree, but it might be that the narrative will need to include that kind of explanation to head off the "dinosaurs are obsolete" slam wink emoticon;-)

Poster7 Dinosauria is becoming a misnomer nowadays. It should be dino-aves. ??

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Poster7 OMG. It's like a dream come true. A dinosaur now shares an illustration that contains Thomas Jefferson, Chris Hitchens and Zeno. The end of the world is clearly happening soon. grin

emoticon:D

Cassius Amicus More excellent work Nathan!

Cassius Amicus I just made a couple of comments in the earlier thread, after Martin's comments. One that I ought to repeat here - Matt Are you thinking of something in particular in regard to allegory with the dinosaur that overrides the "obsolete" tag that Martin points out?

Cassius Amicus Again an issue for the artist, but I note the background colors are noticeably darker. Any reaction to "Darker" vs 'lighter'?

Nathan Bartman My direction with the color scheme is to move away from 'finish the puzzles on the back of a cereal box,' toward a more 'diagram in a National Geographic illustrating spacetime curvature.' Hopefully I'm closer to the mark! wink emoticon;)

Cassius Amicus LOL wink emoticon;-)

Poster7 The dinosaur in my opinion represents the triumph of evolution, science and and the study of natural history. The dinosaur is a transitional manifestation of life on this planet. There are no more Triceratops, but their distant relatives (aves) have su...See More

Poster7 That is my defense to keep a dinosaur in the picture. tongue emoticon:P

Nathan Bartman To add to his defense, (1) lizards are Biblically "unclean" animals, and (2) the possibility of there being such a creature as an ancient triceratops directly contradicts the historical dogma of world religions. I do want to add though that Martin brings up a good point, and I would definitely consider another animal / image that expresses those same metaphors.

Poster7 WE WANT DINOSAURS! WE WANT DINOSAURS! WE WANT DINOSAURS!!

Cassius Amicus Well I am pretty slow to recognize that the Triceratops has three horns, but now I see that relates in a subtle kind of way to our three legs of the canon wink emoticon;-) Now that i am clued in I am fine myself, but again that might be something for the explanation to be sure everyone gets it wink emoticon;-)

Poster7 If we had 5 legs of canon we could use the Pentaceratops. grin emoticon:D

Cassius Amicus OK I have another comment in form of question. As much as I love Thomas Jefferson, does the placement of his head in color make him look too prominent in the Garden, in a place that ought to go to Epicurus himself? I am a big believer in using Jeffer...See More

Nathan Bartman That's a good suggestion 💎 I agree that Epicurus (or, at least, Lucretius) should be the gatekeeper.

Cassius Amicus The problem with Lucretius is the questions as to his real face, so if you do choose to add Lucretius I would suggest adding the ring portrait that we have, rather than the

standard middle-age portrait drawing that's probably total fiction.

Cassius Amicus And we don't want to get too crowded, but of course we do have reliable portrait busts of Hermarchus and Metrodorus if we need any more clear-cut occupants of the garden, plus Plotina if needed

Nathan Bartman Plotina would be a great addition. I specifically looked for more women to include, but, alas, the annals of recorded history weren't terribly interested in the lives of our sisters. I must have missed her. She'll make it on there.

Cassius Amicus Perhaps the winds of skepticism should be blowing from the opposite direction(?)

Cassius Amicus Are we missing a third colored arrow coming from the head of the triceratops? Is the triceratops becoming sort of the anchor for the diagram, indicating that he is the one choosing between the diverging paths?

Poster7 We should also consider placing an "Asteroid of impending death" and show that the Triceratops is not concerned by it, though we all know how it turned out. The creatures of the Mesozoic were not concerned or worried about death, though death was a reality and the conclusion to their existence, they did not needlessly worry....

Cassius Amicus A very good idea if it can be fit in to an already-crowded scene wink emoticon;-)

Poster7 It's getting wild. Lol

Cassius Amicus In thinking about the arrows coming from the triceratops, it occurred to me that we are not really projecting using the faculties as much as we are receiving. However it is crucial to highlight that **\*\*UNLESS WE ARE ALIVE\*\*** those functions do not exist...See More

Nathan Bartman What if we had some kind of indicator of a stomach gurgling, and a little voice coming from the stomach to the brain saying "We're hungry! Find 'food!' Expect 'food' to smell good and look appealing!"

From that anticipation, arrows from the mushrooms ...See More

Cassius Amicus Nathan that is probably going to take you on so much detail and even controversy that I would not suggest that. Some (maybe me if I thought about it?) might argue that expecting the food to be appealing would not be an anticipation. But don't let my ...See More

Cassius Amicus General comment - I like the larger prominence of the castle in the oasis, since that is a pretty direct analogy from the opening of book two of Lucretius. Even though that is the title of the diagram, I would not want to see too much focus on the "o...See More

Cassius Amicus The more that gets added, the more the focus of the diagram becomes less "The allegory of the oasis" and more "an allegory of the epicurean view of life" or something more broad than just the oasis.... (as far as I am concerned that is fine.... and the...See More

Cassius Amicus Just throwing this out there - I don't see the word "idealism" or "rationalism" or something similar, at least very large. I wonder if we are capturing the one word best describing the "enemy" when we use "superstition" (??)

Nathan Bartman This is an important point. I wanted to make it accessible, like you mentioned, without being full of philosophical jargon. That being said, 'Idealism' and 'Rationalism' are definitely the culprits here. I'd like to convey the idea to the average perso...See More

Cassius Amicus Yes, "Mirage" is a more focused term. Deserts exist in nature and are real independent of our acceptance of them or not. Mirages are mental constructs that aren't real outside our minds.

Cassius Amicus I can't say this often enough for myself so I will say it again and maybe say it for others who don't - THANK YOU NATHAN for all the effort you are putting this! You do this the way you want it and if any suggestions seem irritating, please ignore them! wink emoticon;-)

Nathan Bartman This is all great stuff! As an illustration, it's important that it is accessible to the most amount of people while being as accurate as possible. The only way to do this is for a lot of brainstorming, and a lot of revision. We're coming up with great...See More

Nathan Bartman What do we think if I included a horizontal legend at the bottom, and linked little descriptions with numbers, and paste those numbers on corresponding scenes in the diagram?

Cassius Amicus Yes I think that is one method. I know when I have done diagrams in the past I found it close to impossible to contain all the commentary on the same diagram, even though that is desirable. Using numbers or letters some other method of labelling makes it much easier to find the description and also talk about it separately.

Cassius Amicus Also, use of the crossroads sign as you have, with signs pointing in different directions, is already a good means of conveying that the tricepteros has a decision to make. Added to that are the respective signs, which also play into the road/crossroa...See More

Elli Pensa This is an amazing graphic. Bravo Nathan !!!

Nathan Bartman Thank you, Elli!


Nathan Bartman It would also be helpful, as well, to gather a list of suggestions of excerpts from De Rerum Nature, the Principle Doctrines, and Epicurus' letters that succinctly express the bullet points of his philosophy.

Cassius Amicus (EDIT - You are asking about the bullet points that you are illustrating, I think after rereading your question. Rather than delete what i wrote I will leave these here as cites to outlines, but I am thinking that the list of your annotations obvious...See More

[summary\\_of\\_epicurean\\_philosophy](#) [Epicurean Friends Wiki]



The following outline has been prepared by paraphrasing excerpts from the ancient texts and organizing them in a sequence calculated to be of benefit to new students of Epicurus. The hyperlink at the end of each passage provides a citation to where a more detailed discussion of each topic can be fou...

Cassius Amicus Another format I did was here, with a shorter outline format contained in the first three bullet points (Nature, Knowledge and Ethics) but again probably not the format you need - <http://newepicurean.com/outline/>

Fundamentals of Epicurean Philosophy  An Outline

This outline represents my latest aid to  newepicurean.com

Cassius Amicus Nathan did you get this into pretty much a final form that we could circulate further? Sorry I have been distracted and not paying as close attention as I should.

Nathan Bartman Hey   I've been a little preoccupied lately. I'd like to rollout a final form, now that I have a list of finalizations. Give me a few days, and I can definitely have that finished. wink emoticon;)

Cassius Amicus Take your time, but this is one of the best things we've put together here in a long time, so I didn't want us to forget about it wink emoticon;-)

Cassius Amicus Nathan do I recall correctly that the site which you are using to produce this keeps the elements in discrete units so that they can be easily rearranged? What I am thinking about is that the diagram lends itself to conversion into a set of slides, or...See More


Cassius Amicus In other words, although we don't have the capacity (yet!) to duplicate the structure of the animation here, it would be an excellent "compare and contrast" presentation to be able to show the Plato Cave allegory and then a slide-show response featuring construction of your allegory diagram <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6LUptADIww>

PLATO - Allegory of the Cave(animated)

The content of this video is over 2,500 

[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

Nathan Bartman I'll do that! It's a good way to organize the diagram, too. I'll take screenshots as I build the diagram, and add elements according to the progression of the narrative. If we

narrate the slides, let's agree on a script  someone may want to put together...See More

Cassius Amicus Great Nathan! I think the answer to your question is what is often debated about Lucretius, and what DL says about the approach - that the epistemology and the physics go hand in hand -- But for purposes of the diagram I think we either (1) start wi...See More

Cassius Amicus Also as you think about the progression, you might get some ideas from the progression sequence I followed here, where I started with Lucretius and largely tracked his sequence. I first made the observation from book 1 about things directly in front ...See More

[summary\\_of\\_epicurean\\_philosophy](#) [Epicurean Friends Wiki]

The following outline has been prepared by paraphrasing excerpts from the ancient texts and organizing them in a sequence calculated to be of benefit to new students of Epicurus. The hyperlink at the end of each passage provides a citation to where a more detailed discussion of each topic can be fou...

[epicureanfriends.com](http://epicureanfriends.com)

Poster7 I'm always willing to lend my voice to Epicurus.

Poster7 You just drop a script and it'll be recorded.??

---

### **Post by “Matt” of December 21, 2018 at 8:28 AM**

I remember this project. Nate is a creative guy.

---

### **Post by “Matt” of December 21, 2018 at 9:02 AM**

Maybe it's explained somewhere, but what is Plotinus holding in his hands?

---

### **Post by “Cassius” of December 21, 2018 at 9:13 AM**

Yes, LD, that is a good question. Also, I gather you are probably not checking the FB location (and that is wise for all the reasons we have discussed) but Nate is motivated to do a revision, so that's why these recent posts here.

I think he is sort of rethinking the whole "motif" (right word?) to see if he can improve it. In that regard I am remembering that you were a fan of the dinosaur, of which I approve too, but I am suggesting as currently posed it might not be clear to a lot of people why they should put themselves in the place of, and identify with, the dinosaur."

Of course that comes naturally to me personally, superannuated as I am, but possibly not to the younger people. So if you have any comments on that, they might be good to add here and I will make sure @Nate sees them.

---

### **Post by "Matt" of December 21, 2018 at 9:38 AM**

Oh absolutely! I'd be happy to help. And yes I am fully away from FB. As easy and convenient a platform it is, it's just better being here than there.

I would say that it might be wise to change the dinosaur to an animal that is similar to humans. Maybe an Orangutan, Bonobo, Chimp etc. or perhaps an animal such as a dolphin that we know is extremely intelligent.

---

### **Post by "Matt" of December 21, 2018 at 9:44 AM**

Or even consider using an image of early man Cro Magnon or another homonid.

It would serve two purposes, one to help a person identify with a similar being and two to serve as a Visual representation of evolution. Early man making a choice to either go to the idealist philosophers or to the materialist ones.

Just a thought.

---

### **Post by "Eikadistes" of December 26, 2018 at 5:53 PM**



(I'll re-post the following within the Facebook group to keep everything organized.)

Here's a brainstorm of what I've been working on:

The allegorical image could be setup like a board game, a mix between the never-endingness of 'Monopoly' mixed with the choice-making, divergent paths of 'The Game of Life'.

The pathway around the board is the flow of life through a natural world. Part of the world is pleasurable lush, part of the world is painfully arid. If true pleasure is pursued with consistency, the path will keep you close to the 'Gardens of Pleasure', a moderate, regular path without extreme dips, bends, and descents.

The center of the image is a habitable, green area. Within this area are several points of congregation called 'Gardens of Pleasure'. They'll be inhabited by Epicurus, Jefferson, Hitches, etc. (Not included in the brainstormed image): a small, desert stream that will flow along the orange line, between the 'Gardens of Pleasure', indicating a path to follow. I'll still call the peaceful water 'Ataraxia', and the fruit on the bushes as 'Aponia'.

Around the edges of the path are philosophical extremities, all of which are associated with systems that show indifference to pleasure and pain (usually resulting in more pain). These include 'pure logic', 'virtue ethics', 'divine illumination' the 'dialectic', and religious dogma. These areas will be inhabited by Platonists, Stoics, and religious figures. Of course, I'll include mirages in the shape of 'the Forms', and religious symbology.

The 'Winds of Skepticism' create paths of divergence. If one is skeptical of 'sensation', one may rely on ungrounded logic instead of physical experience. If one is skeptical of 'Feelings', one may look to virtue to help them judge their experiences instead of their emotional compass. If one is skeptical of 'Preconceptions or 'Anticipations', they may turn to an absolutist, religious dogma to organize their understanding.

(If we were to make an actual board game, we'd roll dice, and land on squares that provide us

with some kind of token. Perhaps we'd hit a 'Read Sextus Empiricus and Doubt Your Existence. Lose One Turn', or 'Spent the night eating with friends. Take four tokens'. I'm not sure that any of these are required for the visual).

We'll use game pieces, regardless, to represent us, as animals, making decisions around the board. Our main piece is a dog (or pig), who will consistently make the pleasurable choice. His opponents will include (kosher animals) sheep and goats, who often get lost in religion and virtue. We'll see them losing tokens and turn in the desert areas of superstition.

As usual, on top, I'll summarize Epicurean (meta)physics and cosmology with "atomi" (leptons, bosons, quarks) versus "void", denoting that everything which exists below is also made of these constituent pieces.

---

**Post by "Cassius" of December 26, 2018 at 5:56 PM**

Wow very interesting and good! This is quite a difference in approach from the first one! A "board game" analogy. Is there a "starting point"? Where would you suggest that someone looking at it for the first person would rest their eyes first?

---

**Post by "Cassius" of December 26, 2018 at 5:58 PM**

Thinking back to the Platonic allegory, if I recall it starts focused on the people chained in the cave, then has the movement of one of them to the outside, and then the same guy back again.

Is there any parallel movement going on here, or what would be the substitute for the "story line"?

---

**Post by "Eikadistes" of December 26, 2018 at 7:30 PM**

The starting point, I think will be in the bottom right corner, and loop around the board in a clockwise motion.

I want to avoid a linear story with a clear ending, to avoid the perception that we're trying to 'get' to a Kingdom (of God) or a final providence. I think we can emphasize that, no matter where we are in the game, we always are around a Garden of Pleasure if we only make the right choices to get there.

---

## **Post by “Eikadistes” of December 26, 2018 at 7:32 PM**

Things to edit/emphasize:

The skeptical, idealist paths should be much longer, twisted, and asymmetrical than the pleasurable orange path.

The orange areas after the paths converge lead right through the Gardens, and not around them.

The orange path between the gardens may disappear into underground streams, contrasted with some 'alluring thing' that draws people into the desert: A lightning bolt for religious illumination, mirage-like forms for those who doubt sensation, and a mysterious cave for those who doubt feelings.

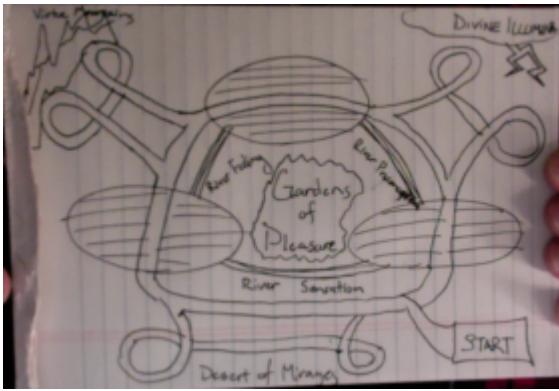
Another suggestion:

The 'short' paths will run along the 'rivers' between the Gardens. The [a.1] River Sensation, the [b.1] River Anticipation, and the [c.1] River Feeling. If we don't take the [a] River Sensation, we trudge through the [a.2] Valley of Mirages. If we don't follow the [b.1] River Anticipation, we get lost in the [b.2] Stormy Dialectic. If we don't follow the [c.1] River Feeling, we climb the [c.2] Mountains of Virtue. The [x.2] trecherous paths will be visually looped, and twice as long as the [x.1] river paths. The [c.2] mountain path will wind around the mountain, and the [b.2] stormy path will wind around a tornado produced by the 'Warm [Front of] Proposition' and the 'Cold [Front of] Contradiction'.

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## **Post by “Eikadistes” of December 26, 2018 at 7:41 PM**

To summarize the layout, here's a rudimentary drawing of general placement.



---

### Post by “Cassius” of December 26, 2018 at 8:00 PM

All sounds good to me Nate! Also, here is a thought that I am not sure fits in with this theme, but I was reminded of it by the TED talk that [JAWS](#) posted tonight:

It's always seemed to me that what can get lost in epistemology discussions is the \*importance\* of getting it right. The TED talk was - to me - was right on with every technical conclusion that he was making, but he still insisted on calling the whole thing an "hallucination." Whenever I hear someone talk like that, it makes me think that no matter how correct he may be on the details, he's essentially a sad hopeless kind of guy who is really "digging" the technical processes because in the end he doesn't think that his own life is worth very much. What I hear is a chain that goes from "everything's a hallucination" straight to "so nothing really matters" --- but I think that's the furthest thing from the truth. Everything that we experience may in fact be a movie assembled in our minds, but that doesn't mean that the people and things outside us don't exist, and it doesn't mean that we totally create our own reality. It means this is the way Nature made us and we darn well better make the best use of our time because we aren't going to have any more after we are dead!

So like I said that really may not apply to the schematic you are drawing, but I wanted to say it because you're the creative guy and who knows where a thought may lead 😊

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### Post by “Eikadistes” of December 27, 2018 at 5:42 PM

Here's where my brainstorm has lead (v 5.0)



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### Post by “Cassius” of December 27, 2018 at 5:45 PM

Once again this is great - I particularly like the ghost behind the "desert of illusion"! Is it time to start working on a "legend" or description, or do you think major changes are yet to come? I see you have dropped the "pathways" and that may lead to more questions about how to follow the "progression"

---

### Post by “Cassius” of December 28, 2018 at 5:01 AM

So maybe the title "Allegory of the Oases" is itself in need of change, if this is essentially a "Map" of \_\_\_\_\_

---

### Post by “Eikadistes” of January 5, 2019 at 5:08 PM

I think I've got the perfect flow. I'll make a few different images that will have a clear, linear, arrow-pointing, 1-2-3 flow to them.

1. Animals are born in the the Garden of Pleasure, birds circling above, within the center of the Atomic Oasis.
2. Over time, we get misdirected by the Winds of Skepticism into the Desert of Superstition.

3. We become scared and confused in the Stormy Dialectic, fleeing from thunderous bolts of Divine Illumination.
  4. Completely lost into endless, dry plains, we begin to hallucinate icons and symbols in the arid Valley of Mirages.
  5. We then see the Mountains of Virtue in the distance, and strain our bodies trying to climb them.
  6. Aching, cold, thirsty, craving nourishment, we follow a preconceived inclination to correct our painful experiences.
  7. An animal called 'Sensation' distantly sees the colorful gardens, hears sounds of life, and visually follows a stream flowing from the mountains.
  8. An animal called 'Preconceptions' remembers the circling birds from youth, and anticipates the oasis by following new birds above.
  9. An animal called 'Feelings' (maybe a blind animal) judges that the stream flowing from the mountain is pleasant, and so feels their way home.
  10. Ultimately, the animals find their way back into the Garden of Pleasure by trusting (and cultivating!) their natural wisdom.
- 

### **Post by “Cassius” of January 5, 2019 at 5:41 PM**

That sounds excellent Nate! It's a shame that in reality we humans aren't as smart, or we fall into the temptations that they don't, and so we go off the track where they don't. I think your theme has a lot of potential!

For some reason this reminds me of -

. If then the doctrine I have set forth is clearer and more luminous than daylight itself; if it is derived entirely from Nature's source; if my whole discourse relies throughout for confirmation on the unbiased and unimpeachable evidence of the senses; **if lisping infants, nay even dumb animals, prompted by Nature's teaching, almost find voice to proclaim** that there is no welfare but pleasure, no hardship but pain—and their judgment in these matters is neither sophisticated nor biased—ought we not to feel the greatest gratitude to him who caught this utterance of Nature's voice, and grasped its import so firmly and so fully that he has guided all sane-minded men into the paths of peace and happiness, calmness and repose?

---

## Post by "Eikadistes" of January 6, 2019 at 7:46 PM

All right, folks.

I'm getting close to feeling good about a finished product.

From these last two images, I'll make minor physical adjustments, and I am TOTALLY OPEN to re-writes.

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## Post by "Eikadistes" of January 6, 2019 at 7:47 PM



## Post by "Eikadistes" of January 6, 2019 at 7:49 PM



## Post by "Cassius" of January 6, 2019 at 8:52 PM

Oh wow this is great I am reading now!

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## Post by "Cassius" of January 7, 2019 at 1:31 PM

Nate I see the title "Allegory of the Oasis" is still there.... which is fine....I wonder if some other general label or box might still serve to tie the whole thing together and explain the scenario --- for example box 1 starts with "We" -- who is "we" and how might it be conveyed to the viewer what role the viewer should assume in reading through the progression?

---

## Post by "Eikadistes" of January 7, 2019 at 3:12 PM

I've been going back-and-forth, trying to decide if I want to include the word "Epicurean" in the title, or if it would be sufficient to stamp a 'Society of Epicurus' emblem on it.

I want to make it known that this is the allegory of a philosophical school with specific historical implications, but also, I don't want that to make it inaccessible in any way to anyone turned off by philosophical names and words with which they are not already familiar. Some people may take "Epicurean" to mean cuisine or gluttony, so, if I leave the word off of the image, it reinforces the idea that the 'path to pleasure' is for everyone, and not just Epicurean initiates.

I'm open to suggestions, though. Nothing is set in stone.

Also, here's a better First Panel:



## Post by "Cassius" of January 7, 2019 at 3:37 PM

I think what you're going back and forth on is part of the issue. Somebody looking at panel one at first glance might think the entire theme is "Stormy Dialectic" due to the placement of that term in the center.

Maybe we're so close to the details that we need some fresh eyes to ask some fresh questions like "What is this all about?" or whatever. Maybe it might be a good idea to start a new post at FB with some kind of general question like "Give me your general thoughts on seeing this for the first time?" (not good phrasing) or something that would help us get an idea of what a new person would ask in order to get oriented.

And maybe that plays into the issue of how to fit the two panels together. One above the other with some kind of huge arrows pointing out the pathway? Or side by side?

I think somehow we're missing an in-your-face method of telling people what this is.

---

### **Post by "Cassius" of January 7, 2019 at 6:52 PM**

You know, the second panel has the Epicureans lined up facing toward the oasis with Epicurus at the end, and that works well I think. The first panel, however-- I'm not sure that it has the same kind of "theme" that pulls it together in the same way or shows that it is a progression (still thinking)

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### **Post by "Cassius" of January 8, 2019 at 8:31 AM**

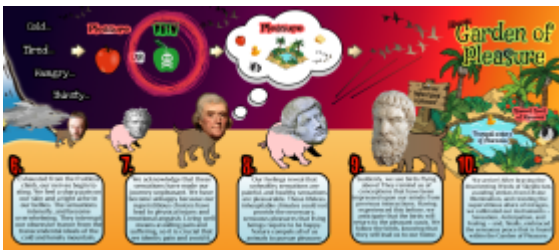
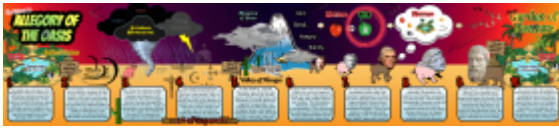
Nate I'm still wondering if things would be more clear if there was a character in the picture representing the "We" who is referenced in first bubble of panel one. On panel two, you have animals moving toward the oasis, but not one thing representing the "we." Would it be more clear if the "we" were represented by a uniform someone/something moving through the diagram and encountering those people? To some extent that's the way the cave analogy worked, with the main character moving from place to place in the landscape.

---

### **Post by "Eikadistes" of January 8, 2019 at 9:00 AM**

I tweaked a few things this morning.

I wonder if the simple emphasis on the title, and de-emphasis on the obstacles and competing philosophies will help things.



---

### Post by "Eikadistes" of January 8, 2019 at 10:46 AM

Check out these changes for the 'First Panel'. We have (1) a unique, less developed garden with little animals, (2) the pitfalls of the journey populated with Epicurus' opponents, (3) additional pig images that show his emotional journey, (4) a Grim Reaper as one of the 'mirages', and (5) a much enlarged Father Creator in the back.



## Post by “Eikadistes” of January 8, 2019 at 10:47 AM

Wait, that one isn't right. Hang on...

Here we go.



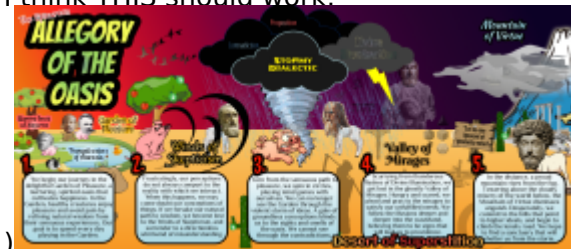
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## Post by “Eikadistes” of January 8, 2019 at 10:48 AM

This is really weird. I keep uploading the correct, updated file, but the image I see is just a repeat of the old one.

I'll try this again (it's working OK on the Facebook thread).

I think THIS should work.



---

## Post by “Eikadistes” of January 8, 2019 at 11:09 AM

Here's the updated full rendering:



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### Post by “Cassius” of January 8, 2019 at 11:50 AM

I think this is coming along VERY well! Let me check your other posts.

I hope others will comment! One minor thought going through my mind is that our stoic friends might quibble with the wording of the mountain of virtue description - they probably see their mountain not as much of a "dismissal of anguish" or a "sanctuary from the storm" as much as glorious height to be scaled or a "better" or "more worthy" way....

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### Post by “Eikadistes” of January 8, 2019 at 3:33 PM

Most recent update to Panel 1:

The two big things I did are to have (1) generalized the language of the fifth, 'Stoic' description, and (2) added Lucretius' head, (since I was in need to an extra!).



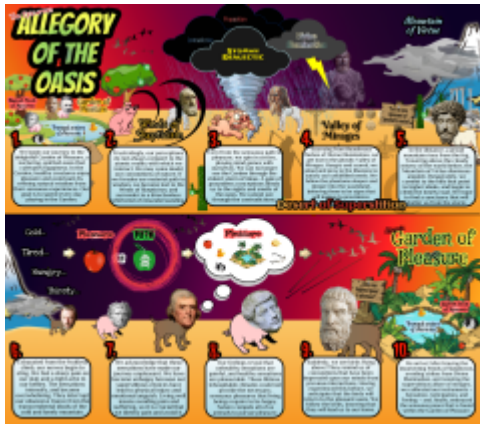
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### Post by “Eikadistes” of January 8, 2019 at 3:34 PM

I'm still missing the word "to" in the second description. I'll fix that on a later update.

## Post by "Eikadistes" of January 8, 2019 at 3:55 PM

Here's a squared version of both panels:



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## Post by "Cassius" of January 8, 2019 at 4:26 PM

Ok only very minor edits at this point.

Panel 2 - "We may come doubt" should be "We may come to doubt..." [[[ Sorry - now I see you commented on that already]]]

Panel 3 - this is not a correction but a thought -- might "groundless conceptions" be better as "groundless abstractions"?

Ok, now back to panels one and two for conceptual questions:

- If I were explaining this diagram to someone, I would emphasize that when we say "we begin" we are referring to "at birth" / "as children" etc. I might still look for more in the diagram to emphasize this connection to explain why this is our starting point.

- OK, and this might be more important, the next panel introduces the fact that we are leaving / have left the initial garden of pleasure in our childhood. But what is it that causes us to do that? Is it because we are frustrated that "our perceptions do not always comport with the atomic reality with which we interact"? Someone might argue that an Epicurean might say the opposite, that indeed our PERCEPTIONS will NEVER contradict the reality with which we interact. Isn't it not so much that our perceptions contradict reality but that our IDEAS of what life "should be" conflict with the reality. Is it in fact not often true that the reason our ideas / ideals

conflict with reality is that they are perverted/corrupted by the outside influences in the next several panels.

Might it be better to indicate that the winds of skepticism are what blow us as children out of the garden? Probably, but we are also blown out of our original peacefulness by the storms of dialectic, the mirages of religion, and the false heights of virtue.

In other words, I am addressing here - Should we make more clear what it is that causes us to leave the garden in the first place?

---

### **Post by “Eikadistes” of January 8, 2019 at 5:04 PM**

I'll correct Panel 2 and 3 on grammar and verbiage. I think you're right that the first panel should include a line "at birth" to emphasize the grounding in biology.

I wasn't sure how to communicate the opposing philosophies in a linear narrative ('Winds...', and 'Valley...' and the 'Mountain...') other than how they visually fit together. Topically, like you mention, any one of them can come first, and follow, or precede each other in no particular order. The linear nature makes it seem like 'If You Give An Epicurean Skepticism, He'll Turn Into a Platonist, and Then Become a Virtue Ethicist.' I'm not sure if it was the best way to go, but it at least fits in the narrative of the story.

Maybe I can textually reinforce this idea that the 'Winds' come from, or lead to the 'Storm' which precipitates from the 'Mountain', all features that distract from the 'Garden', in no particular order?

---

### **Post by “Cassius” of January 8, 2019 at 5:09 PM**

i think you are correct nate that any order will work, but it did occur to me to say that Skepticism might logically be the LAST one, because I think it is a common problem that people bounce to skepticism AFTER they see how the various schools totally disagree with each other - and they give up thinking that any one could be correct.

But i didn't suggest that earlier because I was thinking that the 'winds of skepticism" made a

good link to why one would lead the garden in the first place. But if you came up with something else to explain leaving the birth garden, then yes skepticism might actually fit best right before the hero "comes back to his senses"

---

### Post by “Cassius” of January 8, 2019 at 5:10 PM

Following that last thought, it is possible that when we are young and strong that we particularly fall prey to climbing mountains for the challenge, then we fall back to religion as we fall off the heights.

i guess part of the answer is whether you prefer to go with the analogy that we leave the garden voluntarily (to climb the mountain) or whether we are deceived to leave it.

---

### Post by “Eikadistes” of January 8, 2019 at 5:14 PM

Here's the first panel with some minor edits.

1. I finally hit the 'to' preposition!
2. 'Abstractions' is better than 'Conceptions'
3. I added 'at birth' in the first description. (Note: all of the cartoons of animals are actually baby animals that seem much older now that they have the heads of male philosophers. We could consider removing the heads and using the cartoon baby animals).
4. On the second description, I changed 'Winds of Skepticism' to 'Desert of Superstition', with the intention of making the 'Winds', 'Storm', 'Illumination', and 'Valley' all part of the same wasteland.



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### Post by “Cassius” of January 8, 2019 at 5:42 PM

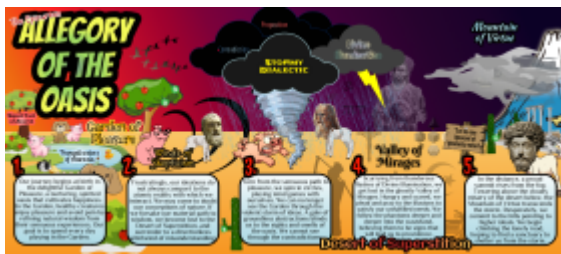
" I do think the baby animals without adult heads might reinforce the point" ... without heads being the logical precursor to eventually developing heads like Jefferson, Hitchens, Lucretius etc 😊

---

### Post by “Eikadistes” of January 8, 2019 at 5:54 PM

Here we go!

Baby animals, an emphasis on 'superstition' instead of 'Skepticism' and, also, I plopped Plotinus on the Creator for for 'Divine Illumination'.



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### Post by “Eikadistes” of January 8, 2019 at 6:01 PM

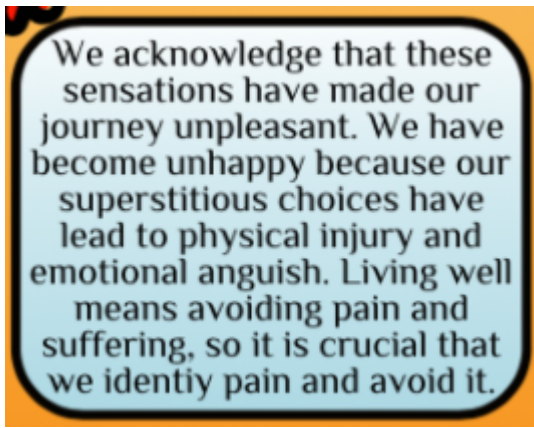
For effect, to see the maturation:



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### Post by “Cassius” of January 8, 2019 at 6:16 PM

Here, I wonder if it is not the ILLUSIONS that have made our journey unpleasant ---- ? In fact perhaps the transition from the prior slide is that once we reach the summit of the mountain we found nothing but another illusion ??



---

**Post by "Cassius" of January 8, 2019 at 6:23 PM**

Nate I really think that the transition from the baby animals to animals with adult Epicurean heads adds a lot! In the analogy we gain all the benefits of our adult mental powers while never leaving behind the part of us that remains strictly physical / animal. It's really an illusion to think that birth to death is the same as growing from physical to pure mind.

It is as if the allegory of the oasis in animal terms has a reverse negative allegory -- the allegory of the illusions that we can or should turn into pure mental beings devoid of physics / action.

To some extent that is what Plato's cave stands for -- Plato wants to persuade us that we can leave our senses behind and become purely mental beings in touch with some illusional mental world.

Also: I probably shouldn't say this because I don't want to be negative about him, but I like the placement of Hitchens as the first of the mature correct heads -- as Hitchens did make some Epicurean statements but probably wasn't nearly as far along as Jefferson or certainly Lucretius or Metrodorus or Hermarchus. In that way he serves as a sort of transitional figure.

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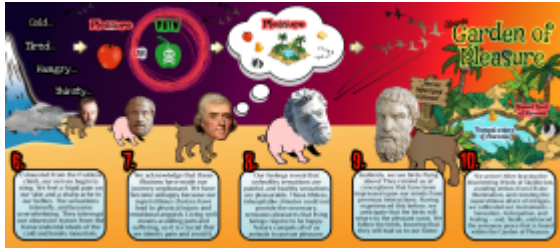
**Post by "Cassius" of January 8, 2019 at 6:27 PM**

Actually I realize that I don't recognize the faces on either side of Jefferson? If you need verified busts of Hermarchus or Metrodorus or a couple of other definite Epicureans those are readily available

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**Post by “Eikadistes” of January 8, 2019 at 7:04 PM**

(Here's where this ended up, just to keep track of our Facebook exchanges.)



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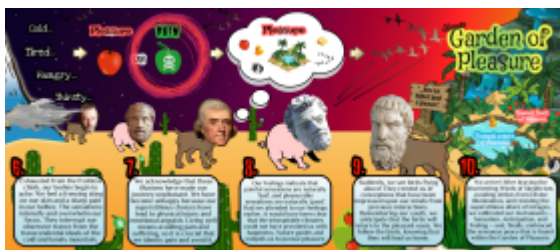
**Post by “Cassius” of January 8, 2019 at 7:06 PM**

Excellent Nate!

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**Post by “Eikadistes” of January 8, 2019 at 11:48 PM**

What about a much more developed 'Finished' Garden? (I made small cosmetic changes, too).



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**Post by “Eikadistes” of January 9, 2019 at 12:12 AM**

Here's where I ended up for the night



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## Post by "Cassius" of January 9, 2019 at 9:21 AM

Definitely the much more mature garden at the end adds to the allegory that this is a sort of "stages of life" illustration.

I am very pleased with the way it is going.

We probably need to prepare a list of the people who are portrayed, so at the moment it is (by panel)

1

2 - Zeno the Stoic

3 - Plato (?)

4 - Unclear to me - (the face in the mirage)

5 - Marcus Aurelius

6 - Christopher Hitchens

7 - Diogenes Laertius and Thomas Jefferson

8 - Lucretius

9 - Epicurus

10

Maybe time for a new FB thread to highlight the project as is now?

---

### **Post by “Eikadistes” of January 11, 2019 at 8:01 PM**

I just saw the link to the picture on the main page!

I hope that spurs some conversation.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of January 13, 2019 at 5:47 PM**

Nate thanks again for all your work on this. I am sure over time we'll find ways to improve it, but this version is very usable as is. I am trying to set up my office to get ready to make a series of audio-visual presentations and I am definitely planning on using this for one of them. I hope to get to that soon.

---

### **Post by “Cassius” of January 15, 2019 at 11:40 PM**

Nate I just had an idea. Just like I think it is attractive for people to set up their own outlines of Epicurean philosophy, I wonder if at some point it might also be interesting and helpful if people wrote their own commentary to each step of your diagram. Perhaps we could generate an alternate version of the diagram with blank boxes and ask people what they would write at each step.

What do you think of that? And if we did use it that way, I doubt it would require any change in the diagram, unless you've come up with any new ideas.

It might take some time to get this off the ground and maybe some examples (like with the outlines) but I think this might be a useful twist. What do you think?

---

### **Post by “Cassius” of January 15, 2019 at 11:44 PM**

OK I am thinking too that each major point on the diagram represents a challenge to which there is an Epicurean response for overcoming it.... And filling out a blank box helps to reinforce to each person what that response is.

---

### **Post by “Cassius” of January 16, 2019 at 8:03 AM**

Nate I woke up this morning thinking further. Yes it will be good to have a final product with blank boxes to allow sort of like a "coloring book" effect -- people can write out their own description.

But I also realize that the graphics lend themselves to breakdown into individual panels, each of which illustrate some aspect of the Epicurean story. And the bubbles can effectively be what the lead character is thinking (or a description of the scene).

In other words, as you have said, the first panel illustrates the young animal at birth. The important thing here is that all animals pursue pleasure and avoid pain at birth, before they are corrupted by false religion and false philosophy.

Then each panel along the way, the animal (animalS????) confront a hazard and then deal with it using an Epicurean doctrine. They confront the scary Grim reaper, but defeat him (move past him) by realizing that [death is nothing to us](#)/absence of sensation, and so on.

That's the main thought, but not I realize another thought. Perhaps this is not possible/doable, but maybe the answer to the theme that draws everything together is to carry through the progression that what we have here is a GROUP of young animals, and it is the GROUP that goes through the progression, and that throughout the progression it is the PIG (representing Epicurus) who calls out the answer to each challenge.

In other words the fear/incorrect view could be placed in the mouth of some other animal, while the hog/Epicurus points out the answer, all the way through. I say hog because perhaps the best image for the Epicurus/hog as the panels progress is not some chubby round pig but a

Razorback hog, or other obviously strong and fearless hog, that the young pig grows into over



The drawing of Gullenbursti as pointed out to me by Jason -

<https://newepicurean.com/slashing-anoth...of-a-norse-god/>

I think you are probably limited by the program in terms of the Graphics that you can use, but I'm mainly just thinking out loud.

Already your graphic can be used in this way ; i am thinking in terms of how we can capture individual parts and then post those regularly as separate illustrations, which then can also be added together into the big picture.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of January 16, 2019 at 11:14 AM**

Nate I am concerned my suggestions are probably too much work, so don't worry about them of course if you don't have time. I just wanted to post these thoughts for future use when we have time. I particularly think it will be good for future use to be able to clip out "scenes" from within the total, and that way regularly post parts that point back to the whole.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of June 16, 2022 at 4:08 PM**

@Nate I forgot until now to post that this "Oasis" graphic came up in discussion last night on Zoom and the person who brought it up mentioned that they got a lot of use out of it and

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/637-nate-s-allegory-of-the-oasis-graphic/>



[Quote from Cassius](#)

just updating the thread with the current graphic

That. 😊

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### **Post by “Root304” of June 23, 2022 at 12:28 AM**

Hello! Yes I had brought the Allegory of the Oasis up in the previous Wednesday meeting. I have been meditating on it and thinking about ways to use the image as a graphic to explain Epicureanism in brief to friends and family, as well as a tool to use in exploring the topic of Ideas with my children. I always come back to that second step. That notion of our ideas not comporting to the true nature of things and that heart-broken flight into ideas to save something of that worldview. I have made many missteps into the Neo-Platonic systems of my youth when religion crumbled and into political ideology when my sense of justice crumbled. All very hard lessons to learn for me. It's such a powerful process of mind to point out and offer a better solution to.