

Marcus Tullius Cicero
(106-43 B. C.)

DE FINIBUS BONORUM ET MALORUM
(II. Iv. 13-v. 15; 45 B. C.)

To convince you that I understand what Epicurus means, I say that the Latin word, *voluptas*, is the same as his Greek word, ἡδονή. Granted, we often have trouble finding a Latin word exactly equivalent to one in Greek; but here there is no need to search far. For there is no Latin word which is more alike in meaning to the Greek than *voluptas* (pleasure). To this word any Latin speaker anywhere assigns two elements: joy in the heart and a congenial surge of delight in the body. That character is Trabea [see *Tusculan Disputations* 4.25] means by “his exceeding pleasure of mind” the same happiness that is described by a character from Caecilius, when he says that he is happy with every happiness (*laetitia*). But there is this difference between these words; *voluptas* can denote sensations of the mind as well (and this the Stoics take as evil, defining *voluptas* as “elevation of spirit without cause under the irrational impression that it enjoys some great good), whereas happiness (*laetitia*) and joy (*gaudium*) do not occur in the body. But, according to the usage of all who speak Latin, *voluptas* means a pleasant sensation in the body whenever it affects some sense. And, if you wish, this pleasure is also felt in the mind. For *iuvare* (to give pleasure) is said of either mind or body; and from it is derived *iucundus* (pleasant).

Now compare the character who says, “I am so filled with joy that I am not myself”, to another who says, “Now my heart burns within me”. The first is overjoyed, the other is tortured with sorrow. And there is a third element in the comparison, the one in the middle who says, “Though we have just come to know each other”. He neither rejoices nor grieves. In the same way in life, between the person who has attained all the bodily pleasures he has sought and he who is wracked by the worst of pain, there stands the person who experiences neither.

Is it obvious that I am keeping the force of his words? Or am I still to receive lessons in Latin and Greek.
