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EPICURUS AND ANNIHILATION

BY STEPHEN ROSENBAUM

Steven Luper-Foy's recent article, 'Annihilation',¹ joins a steadily growing body of writings attacking the Epicurean view of death.² That view of death is the striking idea that 'death is nothing to us', in Epicurus' own insouciant words, that being dead is not bad for us. Being deeply convinced that annihilation is a terrible fate, Luper-Foy dismisses Epicurus' argument as 'inane' and 'absurd'.³ However inane and absurd he may feel Epicurus' reasoning was, he, like numerous others, takes the argument seriously enough to devote considerable intellectual effort to its defeat. He, like others, may believe that the view has a vague plausibility. However, not only is the Epicurean idea vaguely plausible but also it can be effectively defended.⁴ Furthermore, it has far-reaching implications for many moral issues concerning death and killing.⁵ Defending the view is not simply an engaging historical exercise, but an important philosophical enterprise. In this essay, I wish to do two things: first, to sketch the Epicurean view and the way in which one may support it; second, to reveal the misconceptions which Luper-Foy has and to use them as a basis on which to describe more fully the Epicurean view and what it entails.

The central principle in Epicurus' view about death is that one's own death is not bad for one. However poorly he may have expressed the idea, this reading is the only one that can make any sense of his various urgings about death. The

¹ Steven Luper-Foy, 'Annihilation', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 37 (1987), pp. 233–52.

² Thomas Nagel, 'Death', *Nous*, 4 (1970), pp. 73–80; Mary Mothersill, 'Death', in James Rachels (ed.), *Moral Problems* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 372–83; Bernard Williams, 'The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality', *Problems of the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 82–100; Harry Silverstein, 'The Evil of Death', *Journal of Philosophy*, 77 (1980), pp. 401–17; George Pitcher, 'The Misfortunes of the Dead', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 21 (1984), pp. 183–8; Anthony L. Brueckner and John Martin Fischer, 'Why Is Death Bad?', *Philosophical Studies*, 50 (1986), pp. 213–21; Palle Yourgrau, 'The Dead', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 84 (1987), pp. 84–101.

³ Luper-Foy, 'Annihilation', p. 234. Such an approach is not unheard of among contemporary commentators on Epicurus' view. Richard Rorty describes the Epicurean view as a 'vacuity', in 'The Contingency of Selfhood', *London Review of Books*, 8 (8 May 1986), 11. Mary Mothersill dismisses the Epicurean view as one that 'will hardly bear looking into, but may have been intended as little more than an eristic flourish', 'Death', p. 378. Philosophers have not explored Epicurus' view very deeply, and it is fair to note that Luper-Foy's reaction is not unusual in this respect.

⁴ O. H. Green, 'Fear of Death', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 43 (1982), pp. 99–105; also, Stephen E. Rosenbaum, 'How to be Dead and Not Care: A Defense of Epicurus', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 23 (1986), pp. 217–25.

⁵ Stephen E. Rosenbaum, 'The Harm of Killing: An Epicurean Perspective', in Baird *et al.*, *Contemporary Essays on Greek Ideas: The Kilgore Festschrift* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 1987), pp. 207–26.

expression 'one's own death', may, perhaps obviously, be taken in various ways. One should not understand Epicurus' view to be either of the following: (1) that the *process* of one's dying is not bad for one; or (2) that the *prospect* of one's dying or death is not bad for one. To take his view as the former would be an illegitimate way of making him appear foolish, since, so obviously, one's dying can be bad for one. Further, taking Lucretius as a useful source for interpretation,⁶ there is good evidence that rather than dying, Epicurus meant 'being dead'. Lucretius clearly did not understand Epicurus to have argued that dying is not bad for one. Additionally, Epicurus' own painful dying⁷ gave him opportunity to retract the view that one's dying is not bad for one, yet he did not retract, leading one to hypothesize that he did not take his argument to be about dying. Finally, if one took Epicurus to have argued against the badness of one's dying, one could never entertain the slightest hope of penetrating his somewhat cryptic comment that 'Death, therefore, the most awful of evils, is nothing to us, seeing that, when we are, death is not come, and, when death is come, we are not.'⁸

One should also not interpret him to have meant that the prospect of one's death is not bad for one, since he used death's not being bad for one to argue that the prospect of one's death should not disturb one, as follows:

Foolish, therefore, is the man who says that he fears death, not because it will pain when it comes, but because it pains in the prospect. Whatsoever causes no annoyance when it is present, causes only a groundless pain in the expectation.⁹

Also, to suppose that he might have been claiming that the prospect of death or dying is not bad for one or actually disturbs no one psychologically would be to attribute to him an insensitivity to psychological reality which he did not have. In fact, he argued precisely as he did in the endeavour to undermine what he knew to be actual human fears about death.

If Epicurus meant to argue neither that the process of one's dying is not bad for one nor that the anticipation of one's death is not bad for one, what did he mean? The only way to make sense of what he actually said and of what his disciples said is to understand him as having argued that one's *being dead* is not bad for one.¹⁰ One can thus easily comprehend not only the plausibility of the apparent argument Epicurus gave for the view, but also the other comments he made. It is useful to recollect a major portion of the passage in which Epicurus discussed death.

Accustom thyself to believe that death is nothing to us, for good and evil imply sentience, and death is the privation of all sentience; . . . Death,

⁶ Rosenbaum, 'How to be Dead and Not Care', p. 219.

⁷ Diogenes Laertius, Chapter X, 'Epicurus', *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 549. Hereafter cited in the usual way: 'D.L., X, 22,' but followed by a parenthetical page reference for this volume.

⁸ D.L., X, 126 (p. 651).

⁹ D.L., X, 126 (p. 651).

¹⁰ For a fuller development of this point, see Rosenbaum, 'How to be Dead and Not Care'.

therefore, the most awful of evils, is nothing to us seeing that, when we are, death is not come, and, when death is come, we are not.¹¹

Far from being 'absurd', this embodies an interesting argument, which bears reflection. The argument is roughly that since (a) something can be bad for a person only if the person can be affected by it; (b) a person cannot be affected by something after the person ceases to be; and (c) a person's being dead occurs after the person ceases to be; therefore, a person's being dead cannot be bad for the person.¹² Of course, one may well wonder just how psychologically effective this argument can be in assuaging the sentiments of those who are afraid of death. However, it is a philosophical view and worth consideration, even if it has only a limited, or no, psychological efficacy. The latter is a distinct issue.

The Epicurean view that one's death is not bad for one, that it is not an 'evil', does not logically entail that one's death (being dead) lacks other features. For example, it does not entail that one's death cannot occur prematurely or that one does not prefer that one not be dead. Hence, one who accepts the Epicurean point about death can consistently prefer not to be dead, want not to be dead, or, more positively, prefer to continue living, for various important reasons. One could take various attitudes toward one's being dead while still believing that it is not bad for one. In fact, Epicurus himself, shortly following his notorious argument, remonstrated with those who might be tempted to minimize the desirableness of life, and made it clear that he had a positive attitude toward life. He said:

The wise man does not deprecate life nor does he fear the cessation of life. The thought of life is no offence to him, nor is the cessation of life regarded as an evil. And even as men choose of food not merely and simply the larger portion, but the more pleasant, so the wise seek to enjoy the time which is most pleasant and not merely that which is longest. And he who admonishes the young to live well and the old to make a good end speaks foolishly, not merely because of the desirableness of life, but because the same exercise at once teaches to live well and to die well. Much worse is he who says that it were good not to be born . . .¹³

Epicurus' view is that one's death is not bad for one and that thus one should not fear it, since fearing that which is not bad or evil for one is baseless. It is compatible with this to take the attitude that living well is desirable and to prefer to continue living to being dead. Epicurean hedonists would prefer living to not living on the ground that one can have pleasure, the highest good, both of the active and passive sort,¹⁴ while one is alive, but that one is insentient and not able to experience any pleasures in death.

A consideration of the principal criticisms in Luper-Foy's paper will shed further light on the Epicurean view. (1) He takes the Epicurean expression that 'death is

¹¹ D.L., X, 126 (p. 651).

¹² For a defence of this argument, see Rosenbaum, 'How to be Dead and Not Care'.

¹³ D.L., X, 126 (pp. 651-3).

¹⁴ D.L., X, 136 (p. 661).

nothing to us' to mean that the prospect of being dead is necessarily a matter of complete unconcern and total indifference to one who accepts the Epicurean view. (2) He argues that being dead ('annihilation') is, contrary to Epicurus' conclusion, sometimes a misfortune for the one who dies. (3) He argues that one who consistently adopts the Epicurean view of death could only have certain types of limited, unfulfilling desires, and correlatively, that the consistent Epicurean would have to live an undesirable and inhumane sort of life. I shall consider each of Luper-Foy's three main critical points in order.

Because of Epicurus' expression 'death is nothing to us', Luper-Foy takes it that Epicureans must be unconcerned about and completely indifferent to their own prospective deaths, including the time at which they will die. That he so understands it is evident from several comments he makes, among which are these:

Those of us who are uncomfortable or even bitter about dying are appalled by the cheerful indifference of people who are capable of agreeing with Epicurus' absurd claim that 'death is nothing to us'.¹⁵

Also,

The fact that Epicureans are *completely* indifferent to dying means that they never under any circumstances either want to die or want not to die ...¹⁶

Taking the expression in this way is natural for one who takes it literally, and taking it literally is natural for one who does not try to place it in the context of a comprehensive understanding of Epicurean texts. However, understanding it correctly is to understand it as a rhetorically provocative and somewhat exaggerated way of expressing the basic idea about death. I have already explicated the Epicurean view about death and described it in a way that demonstrates the baselessness of Luper-Foy's supposition that Epicureans must be completely indifferent to their deaths, but it will be useful to comment explicitly on the expression 'death is nothing to us'.

This expression occurs at least four times in the 'Letter to Menoeceus'¹⁷ and at least once in the 'Sovran Maxims'.¹⁸ The use of this was important to Epicurus, and, so far as I can estimate, he used it to do several things. He used it (1) to express the idea that one's death (being dead) is not bad for one, the conclusion of the Epicurean argument, as I have interpreted it; (2) to express his own and others' acceptance of the view; (3) to express that he did not, nor did other Epicureans, regard the prospect of being dead as bad for them; and (4) to express the Epicurean lack of fear of death. Perhaps it was meant to do other things as well, but it clearly should not be taken to mean that Epicurus was completely indifferent to his death,

¹⁵ Luper-Foy, 'Annihilation', p. 236.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ D.L., X, 124–5 (p. 651).

¹⁸ D.L., X, 139 (p. 665).

especially in light of the remainder of the death passage in the 'Letter to Menoeceus', in which Epicurus expressed his positive view of the desirableness of life.¹⁹ Therefore, Luper-Foy's interpretation of the phrase, 'death is nothing to us', is too literal, and is not sufficiently sympathetic to the relevant texts.

Luper-Foy does not simply dismiss the core Epicurean idea that one's own death is not bad for one. He does argue directly against it by employing the principle that 'whatever prevents me from getting what I want [whatever thwarts my desires] is a misfortune for me'.²⁰ This principle seems reasonable to him, and he argues that

If something that thwarts my desires is an evil for me, then dying is an evil for me (though perhaps the lesser of all evils that are available in my circumstances), since it thwarts my desires²¹

thus trying to prove the falsity of the Epicurean view. There are two difficulties with using this principle here. One is that its applicability to the Epicurean view is so questionable that additional argument is needed. The other is that it is plainly untrue.

The question of its applicability to death is one of which Luper-Foy is aware, and he does seem to pause over the question. The problem is that death's thwarting our desires is so unlike common thwartings of our desires that even if it were true (which, I shall argue, it is not) that what prevents desire fulfilment is bad for the person whose desires become unfulfillable, it is questionable whether preventing the fulfilment of desire by something which also removes the desire is bad for one. Death is like this. Not only does it prevent the fulfilment of the desire, but also, it removes the desire, by removing the person. The person no longer exists to *have* the desire, fulfillable or not. The case of death is so very different from standard cases in which the thwarting of desire is bad for one that there should be some special argument that one's death is bad for one. Perhaps it can accurately be said that death thwarts desires we have at death. However, how can it be bad for us, since we then no longer exist to have those desires and to be frustrated in attempts to satisfy the desires? Luper-Foy does perhaps sense a problem here, and says that

An event can prevent me from fulfilling my desires not just by frustrating my attempts to fulfill them, but also by *removing* my desires. . . . It is in this sense that dying thwarts my desires. It is a misfortune for me for the same reason that being forced to swallow a drug that washes away my desires (including my desire not to have swallowed the drug) is a misfortune for me.²²

However, simply asserting that death is bad for me even though the desires it prevents me from fulfilling I no longer have (because I no longer am) is no proper

¹⁹ D.L., X, 126 (p. 651).

²⁰ Luper-Foy, 'Annihilation', p. 235.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

substitute for an argument that this is so. Nevertheless, some may take it that the example of being forced to swallow the drug could easily be turned into an effective argument, and Luper-Foy may have intended it as a sort of oblique argument. It is thus important to consider the case carefully. Is the case of being forced to swallow a drug which takes away one's desires, including the desire not to swallow the drug, really a case which shows that something is bad for us which thwarts our desires by removing them?

Suppose that the desire thwarted by taking the drug is the desire not ever to swallow any such drug or the desire to continue having all of one's present desires up to the time at which they are fulfilled. One might say that my being forced to take the drug thwarts, i.e., prevents me from fulfilling, the desire to continue having all of my present desires up to the time at which they are fulfilled by the acquisition of their objects. It is not clear that this is bad for me or a misfortune for me at all. It is certainly not very much like creating obstacles to one's fulfilling one's desires, where one realizes that one cannot then fulfil the desires, but one continues to have them, and is thereby frustrated. Clearly, that sort of thing seems bad for one, since one winds up having unsatisfiable or unsatisfied desires. However, in the case of death thwarting one's desires, one winds up, so to speak, without having any desires. How then could death thwart my desires in a way which is bad for me? I do not see how it could, so I think that we need special arguments why death is bad for us, even if it may be thought to thwart our desires. The case of the swallowed drug does not seem to me to be such a special argument, for it is also not clearly a case in which thwarting one's desires is bad for one.

Perhaps some will think me insufficiently sensitive to the drug case. If this case seems to persuade some, I would suggest that its persuasiveness lies in the victim's *being forced* to swallow the drug. The expression 'being forced' is highly tendentious, in that it seems obviously wrong to force someone to swallow a drug which would make such a significant alteration in the person. That it seems *wrong* is, I hypothesize, what makes it seem appropriate to characterize it as a misfortune or bad for the person to swallow the drug. To support this hypothesis, I offer a similar case in which a person voluntarily, but unwittingly, swallows a drug which has the effect of eradicating all the person's former desires, even the desire not to acquire any new desires until the old ones are satisfied. Suppose it also eradicates the person's memory of having had those old desires, so that the person will feel no frustration from the knowledge of having wanted to satisfy those old desires. As a result, the person comes to acquire new desires and new plans of action. It is not at all obvious that this act would be *bad for* the person, especially so, considering that the person might come to acquire desires which are, in an important sense, more appropriate, given the person's abilities and inclinations. We tend to think that persons to whom wrongs are done are thereby the subjects of misfortune, and this may be so. It is, however, a small but significant slip of logic to think that the act by which they are wronged is necessarily *bad* for them. It is quite possible to be wronged by a person committing an act which is good for one. The persuasiveness which Luper-Foy's case might have lies unsupported across this logical gap between wrong and bad.

Moreover, the principle on the basis of which he argues is itself mistaken. It is

not correct to think that whatever thwarts one's desire is bad or evil for one. The very concept of something being bad for one is in need of some careful examination. However, it seems plain that it is not generally correct that what thwarts a person's desires is bad for the person. Suppose that a person for some reason desires to avoid being vaccinated against various diseases to which the person could succumb if not vaccinated – polio, smallpox, typhoid fever, or others. Thwarting this desire would be good for the person, for it would reduce the likelihood of suffering later. Some desires persons have would not be good to fulfil, and it would be good for those persons that those desires be thwarted (though this would not necessarily make it morally all right for someone to thwart those desires).

Luper-Foy is, however, aware of this objection, and dismisses it on the ground that the sort of death that would prevent the satisfaction of unfulfilling desires would not be an 'important sort of death'.²³ His view is that

an important sort of death, it would seem, remains an evil, namely, one that prevents its victims from fulfilling *fulfilling* desires. Call such a death a *premature* one. Even prematurity as we have defined it is not an infallible sign of a regrettable end; however, it will serve us well enough.²⁴

Apparently, to secure the applicability of the principle on the basis of which he argues, he is willing to restrict his claim about the badness of death to the deaths of those persons who die with unfulfilled desires, the fulfilling of which would be good for them. Then, of course, given the basis for the restriction, the principle would need to be qualified so that it would read: whatever prevents one from getting what one wants is bad for one, *provided that what one wants would fulfil one or be good for one*. But this too is incorrect, for suppose that someone prevents you from getting what you want but at the same time also succeeds in replacing your desires for that thing with a desire for something which would, in fact, be *more* fulfilling to you. (This happens, for example, when parents thwart a child's desire and also, by benevolent trickery, are able to replace the thwarted desire by another, 'better' desire.) Then, I would judge, what has been done is not bad for you. The basic principle which Luper-Foy uses to argue against Epicureans is thus incorrect.

Having unsuccessfully tried to refute the Epicurean view, Luper-Foy goes on to describe the ways he thinks consistent Epicureans would have to think and to live, mistakenly thinking, as I have already pointed out, that Epicureans must be 'completely indifferent' to their deaths. The greatest part of Luper-Foy's article is devoted to an extended renunciation of what he takes to be the consistently Epicurean way of life. He takes it that

Epicureans . . . would *have* to regard it [dying] as a misfortune if dying thwarted desires whose satisfactions would be fulfilling. Hence Epicureans must not *have* any fulfilling desires that can be frustrated by death! Death for them can never be premature or else it *would* be a bad thing; therefore they must be so constituted that at any time death comes it is mature.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

Assuming that Epicureans *have* goals, then either they are unfulfilling ones, or else they are ones that cannot be thwarted by death.²⁵

The sorts of goals or desires to which Luper-Foy thinks consistent Epicureans are limited are three: (1) 'escape desires', to the effect that if living attains a certain degree of badness then death is preferable; (2) 'independent desires', the satisfaction of which is independent of how and whether one continues to live; and (3) 'conditional desires', that are somehow conditional on one's being alive.²⁶ The problem Luper-Foy sees with being restricted to desires of these types is that

in avoiding all aspirations that can be thwarted by death, Epicureans have had to avoid all desires which are capable of giving Epicureans a reason for living. In order to maintain their unconcern about dying, they must avoid having any reason whatsoever for not dying. . . . only if they avoid having any reason for living can they avoid having any reason for not dying.²⁷

Not only does he think that Epicureans can have no reason for living, but he also believes that they cannot consistently think their lives worthwhile or good.²⁸ This embodies a clever argument, and constitutes a very severe accusation which would indeed make the Epicurean view unattractive. Fortunately for the Epicureans, it rests on at least two incorrect premises. One I have already refuted. That is the principle that whatever prevents the satisfaction of fulfilling desires is bad for one.

There is, however, another mistaken assumption in this criticism, and it is important to expose it, for it bears on the conception of what gives one a (good) reason for living and of what makes one's life worthwhile. Luper-Foy believes that Epicureans have completely 'sabotaged their motivation for living', by adopting the view that death is not bad for one.²⁹ It is worth considering this idea, because it is one many thoughtful persons are likely to have when confronting the Epicurean view. If one's death is really not bad for one, why not just kill oneself, and get it over with? Why go on living if one's death is not bad for one?

The second problem with this condemnation of the Epicurean way of life is Luper-Foy's supposition that one can have a reason for living a good and worthwhile life, only if one has desires of which death can prevent the satisfaction. That this supposition is incorrect or at least highly dubious may be shown by considering desires in a category which Luper-Foy finds immune to being thwarted by death. Conditional desires, desires to do certain things or desires that certain things be true on the condition that one continue to live would, it seems clear to me, provide a motivation for living, and could serve to make life as worthwhile as anything else.

²⁵ Luper-Foy, 'Annihilation', pp. 238f.

²⁶ Luper-Foy, 'Annihilation', pp. 237–40.

²⁷ Luper-Foy, 'Annihilation', p. 242.

²⁸ Luper-Foy, 'Annihilation', p. 243.

²⁹ Luper-Foy, 'Annihilation', p. 243.

'Conditional desires,' Luper-Foy himself admits, 'do provide strong reason for action.'³⁰ He goes on to say that

Such desires can enable Epicureans to take an interest in things for which life is a precondition. While indifferent to the prospect of dying in their sleep, Epicureans may take the attitude that if they *do* wake, their wakeful days should be spent in vigorous pursuit of an exciting career, in raising a family, etc. And for this to be possible, they will need to seek an education and work long hours in pursuit of a career.³¹

By admitting this, which seems to me correct in its description of the desires Epicureans can have, he undermines a crucial premise in his condemnation of the Epicurean life as worthless and mean. For if Epicureans have, on the basis of those conditional desires, motivation to act in various ways which give them pleasure and satisfaction, then they can have good and worthwhile lives. And life's being good and giving them pleasure constitutes an excellent reason for continuing to live, a reason not to die. Thus, Luper-Foy's view that consistent Epicureans are incapable of worthwhile lives is without adequate support.

It is interesting and important to note, too, that Luper-Foy is mistaken in other beliefs he has about what desires consistent Epicureans can and cannot have. He appears inconsistent in his discussion at several points. For example, he asserts that Epicureans cannot be at all concerned (unconditionally) about what happens in the future, as follows:

They [the Epicureans] are capable only of indifference about the well-being of posterity, and an Epicurean mother could not care less about the welfare of her children after she believes she will die.³²

Apparently in haste to ridicule the Epicurean philosophy, he forgot that among the sorts of desires he rightly claimed Epicureans could consistently have were 'independent desires', desires whose satisfactions 'are not really affected by what we do in the course of our lives or even by whether or not we *are* alive'.³³ The desires for the well-being of posterity and for the well-being of one's children, like so many (though, of course, not all) of the desires one has for the future, are like this, independent. Our desires that our children be well can be *fulfilled* after we die, although, of course, we cannot be *satisfied* by the fulfilment of those desires. Therefore, it is not true that consistent Epicureans cannot desire the welfare of their offspring or of future generations.³⁴

³⁰ Luper-Foy, 'Annihilation', p. 241.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Luper-Foy, 'Annihilation', p. 245.

³³ Luper-Foy, 'Annihilation', p. 239.

³⁴ Epicurus' will shows that he was concerned with the welfare of future generations (D.L., X, 16–22 (pp. 545–9)). Diogenes Laertius reports, also, in his description of the Epicurean *sophos*, that the wise man 'will have regard to . . . the future' (D.L., X, 120 (p. 645)).

Furthermore, if Luper-Foy had attended more closely to what Epicurus himself said about desires and the life of pleasure, he would have seen one clear reason why Epicureans might care about the future and have desires thwartable by death. This could have prompted a careful rethinking of his initial impressions about Epicureanism. In the 'Letter to Menoeceus', when Epicurus discussed pleasure at length, he remarked,

since pleasure is our first and native good, for that reason we do not choose every pleasure whatsoever, but oftentimes pass over many pleasures when a greater annoyance ensues from them. And oftentimes, we consider pains superior to pleasures when submission to the pains for a long time brings us as a consequence a greater pleasure.³⁵

Epicurus himself recommended courses of action, plans for life, which were future-regarding, involving goals which could easily be thwarted by death. One who prudently accepted a long sequence of pains for the sake of acquiring great pleasure in the future is essentially adopting a desire, a goal, and a plan that could be defeated by death. One might die, miss the future pleasure, and be stuck with having had only the long sequence of pains, thus being defeated in one's plans. This suggests that even though Epicurus regarded one's death as not bad for one, he felt he could consistently adopt a prudent plan of life, relying upon the expectation of a continued existence in the future. That he could consistently do this is due to the belief that one's death is not bad for one, even if it prevents one from achieving one's important, fulfilling goals and desires.

In John Stuart Mill's famous discussion of various misconceptions of Epicurean hedonism, Mill wrote that 'such a theory of life excites in many minds . . . inveterate dislike'.³⁶ Luper-Foy's article illustrates that the view still does excite 'inveterate dislike'. His expressed attitude is one of contempt and ridicule. However, it is not based on conclusions drawn through understanding and careful philosophical analysis of the view. A review of Mill's positive discussion of the Epicurean view would help to dispel many of the common misconceptions about hedonism generally, although Mill does not discuss the controversial idea about death. The Epicurean view of death may be distasteful to many, and hedonism may seem a shallow view. Both views may be incorrect, but Luper-Foy's arguments neither prove the falsity of the views nor present obstacles to their adoption.

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³⁵ D.L., X, 129 (p. 655).

³⁶ John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1957), p. 11.