

Who Was Bernard Mandeville and Was He Truly An Epicurean?

Post by “Cassius” of August 26, 2021 at 10:37 AM

Only time right now to mark this for further research: Who Was Bernard Mandeville referenced here?

Clip from this article: <https://www.academia.edu/19860151/Rouss...=download-paper> I note that it puts the "Epicurean" in quotes.

philosophes (to use Jonathan Israel’s characteristic terminology), a number of these seem to be bound up with what we might associate with popular understandings of Epicureanism. But, from his time down to our own, Rousseau has repeatedly been identified as being a kind of Epicurean. An early critic, Jean Castillon, for example, wrote in 1756 of the *Second Discourse* that

It is almost a year since he [Rousseau] revived the Epicureans’ delusions concerning our origins; that he reduced our earliest ancestors to the ranks of the stupidest beasts; that he accused us of being the most wicked and ferocious of all animals.⁵

In the same year, Adam Smith published his anonymous “Letter to the Authors of the *Edinburgh Review*,” which, if it did not identify Rousseau specifically as an Epicurean, argued that the reader of the *Second Discourse* “will observe, that the second volume of the Fable of the Bees has given occasion to the system of Mr. Rousseau,” thus aligning him with the most notorious “Epicurean” author of the eighteenth century, Bernard Mandeville.⁶