

Promising New Book ("Living For Pleasure") and Great New Article ("Are The Modern Stoics Really Epicurean?") Both By Emily Austin

Post by "Cassius" of November 18, 2022 at 3:33 PM

[Quote from Charles](#)

I think she left out an important aspect, namely justice and moral relativity and how specific Epicurus' advice can be applied to his own time period versus their application to today's world.

Yes I agree that she is definitely light on that aspect, and that probably also explains her willingness to be very free with her commentary on contemporary issues that are at least partly or even wholly political (as I have mentioned in regard to the John F. Kennedy and John McCain issues). I am reading into this that because she didn't highlight and bring out the "moral relativity" (or maybe calling it context-dependency would be accurate too) she is too free in implying that her own view of such issues is necessarily what every Epicurean would conclude. So yes I think that you're commenting on something I agree with.

Personally I have a pretty low expectation for this kind of thing, since I see it done so frequently. Seems like half the articles that get written about Epicurus are more psychology or political opinion that just brings in Epicurus as a justification for decisions the writer has already reached. That's the way I see the modern Stoics - they are really just CBT/pyschotherapists but they want to wrap their conclusions around some ancient writers for prestige purposes.

But I think in this case we're mostly coming up here with observations that might help serve as a preliminary comment to someone setting out to read it. Once you understand the point it's pretty easy to dismiss personal judgments as personal without undermining the credibility of the rest.

At this point in my thinking my attitude is still that we're going to come up with some preliminary comments that would be good for new readers to bear in mind as they read the book, but that the issue is not as serious as it often occurs, and its something that makes for a good discussion while reading the book.