

# Cultivating our own garden [Voltaire Discussion]

Post by “Mathitis Kipouros” of September 17, 2020 at 8:54 AM

In the Wikipedia page for Voltaire Epicurus appears listed as one of his influences.

I think we both saw the same elements of Epicureanism, [Cassius](#); that emphasis on what you can and cannot control, I learned about first while I was studying stoicism. I understand now that Epicurus came before and thus could've been the proponent of this. Do we have any evidence of this in the extant documents ?

I would like to understand better, [Cassius](#) , what you mean by quietism and why do you regard it as such a bad thing. What I understand of it is not something that is at odds with seeking pleasure as the greatest good. Heck, even to “sit down, give up, tune out, give in”, if it's the only thing you can control, and after your calculations is what could give you the most amount of pleasure, I don't see why we would judge people who decide to act these way. It's analogue to the belief in legends bringing you peace of mind. I'm not on a fixed stance here, so I'd love to hear what you have to say about this.

What I do agree with you on straightforwardly is that De Botton is not the best; he is trying to gain adepts by being easily digestible. Thus, I don't think his focus is on empowering to improve your thinking and ability to gain control over your experience, but rather to get you hooked to his “wisdom pills”, and for this, a message of “letting go” is very convenient.

The reason I think the story is the Turk is very Epicurean is precisely for the reasons you state. Tending the garden the way he has, with his family, providing food for their self sufficiency while engaging in commerce with Constantinople, and looking after their 10 acres doesn't seem particularly quiet to me. This would require a lot of labor and care and a desire to not let go. The fact that he was able to sit and enjoy a quiet time underneath the orange tree for whatever pleasure he was getting from it is a fruit of all the previous labor.

And I know your critique is not directed at me, dear [Cassius](#) , but I appreciate you caring to clarify it. ☐