

Alt-tech outreach

Post by "Don" of February 20, 2021 at 11:51 AM

[Quote from Elayne](#)

Cassius , the point I'm trying to make is that ancient history and ancient physics wasn't part of Epicurus' philosophy in his day... nor was an absent historical figure. He didn't have to deal with that because he was right there, making current observations. He wasn't asking his students to study ancient history, ancient philosophers, or a different language. If he were here today forming groups, including online forums, I can't imagine any of those aspects would be the focus of his philosophy! He would definitely not be spending time arguing over what he said centuries ago, because if he were here now, he wouldn't have been alive centuries ago



I definitely see where [Elayne](#) is coming from! If Epicurus Neoclou was developing his philosophy in 21st-century Athens and building his school, he'd be addressing life issues using modern tools and contemporary language and contemporary knowledge. No question there. I wonder if he would seem that much different than other authors in the self-help aisle of the bookstore today (or the Self-help section of the online bookstore website) given our modern sensibilities.

On another topic: Did Epicurus have a name for his philosophy or his school other than The Garden? Other than just physiology "the study of what is natural"? I believe later Epicureans thought of themselves as Epicureans, but Epicurus didn't refer to his school that way. Would it be better to go back to his - if he had it - non-self-referential designation? Concentrate on the "what" not the "who"?

Topic 3: I will admit one thing that attracted me to Epicurus (and Stoicism - briefly - before that) was the idea of a lineage. I like my philosophies road-tested, stress-tested. That's what first drew me to Buddhism and prior to that some forms of Christianity. You see people who are kind, altruistic, calm, and they follow a particular tradition... I thought "Well, there must be something there there." And for a certain personality type, there seems to be something helpful in those traditions. I still think some forms of meditation have a place in Epicurus's Garden practice. I'm thinking [Elayne](#) may find my idea of lineage or tradition irrelevant to the value of a/the philosophy, but I'll let her speak for herself. I find the idea of a connection across time and space comforting? interesting? I don't know the exact words. I also found a practical outlet for my interest in language and history in studying Epicurean philosophy (just as I did with Buddhism and Christianity), but as [Elayne](#) pointed out, this isn't a "selling point" for everyone.

What makes Epicurus's philosophy relevant is not the historical context. It's the universal human experience. What makes me choose one path over another? What does a philosophy

have to offer to live *my* life "better" than I am right now? And how do I define "better"? Why do we still read Homer and Shakespeare? It's the universal human experience.

Epicurus also took part enthusiastically in the religious rituals and practices of his day. What possibilities does that open up for us in a predominantly Judeo-Christian environment? Could we commandeer some of their rituals for Epicurus (just like they did by building churches in temples)? As I remember reading somewhere, Epicurus took periodic fasts to experiment what would provide pleasure and true satiety. Sounds like Lent? I do NOT believe he lived on bread and water all the time, but I could see him gathering empirical evidence in this way periodically.

Okay, now I'm just musing out loud and getting far afield of the thread...