

An Epicurean Understanding of Valentine's Day: Love, Romance, and Free-will

Post by "Kalosyni" of January 16, 2022 at 12:32 PM

Thank you [Don](#) for sharing your "Epicurean Sage" translations...very helpful to read.

So...we could do an intellectual assessment of the historical context of male/female (or even male/male) relationships back in Epicurus' time...because it's quite fascinating how different things were, for people in ancient Greece and ancient Rome.

But for now maybe let's stay with love and romance in modern times...

Here is an interesting song by a band called "Sweet" that I came across just last year (this song was shortly before my generation of music)...I am focusing specifically on the chorus (and not on the verses).

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=zRgWvvkSvfk>

"Love is like oxygen,

You get too much,

You get too high,

Not enough,

And your gonna die."

So thinking about just these words...this talks about a human need. And also the need for having the best amount of love. But there is "sexual love" and "non-sexual love"...romance or friendship...and in modern times we can sometimes have a mix of both (a very rare thing in the form of a "situationship"). And certainly for married couples the best hoped for situation is a mix of romance and friendship.

Since we are talking about Valentine's Day, I am excluding from this discussion "family love" which would be a type of friendship, such as between siblings, or adult parents being friends with adult children. I am also excluding the "non-sexual" -- "love-as-a-duty"...when there is a mix of the feeling of duty and caring...the feeling of caring but not necessarily loving. (Yet there could be a mix of caring and loving).

The word "love" itself becomes very complicated because of all it's forms.

Also it is important to exclude "love as infatuation" since this is based on the imagination and is not based on reality...except...wait a minute

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2342-an-epicurean-understanding-of-valentine-s-day-love-romance-and-free-will/?postID=16007#post16007>



...isn't this what Valentine's Day is all about??? And so many millions of modern love songs, are all describing the "love as infatuation" kind of romantic love. Is this "passionate love" the very thing of human sexual reproduction...we must submit to this inaccurate mixed up state of mind in order to procreate? Perhaps this is how it is for us now, but back in Epicurus' time marriage was not for love and romance, but only for having children.

Now popping back into thinking about the original Epicurean Garden...was there an emphasis on friendship as a substitute for "romantic" entanglements? Was there an emphasis on friendship based on the study of philosophy? Were there rules against the kind of romantic entanglements that might have been going on back then...romantic relationships with courtesans and also pederastia (yikes! way too complicated for me).

So maybe we better bring it back to modern times...would a modern Epicurean think: if you are married, then that's fine...stay married (if your marriage is working out fine) and if you are single, then stay single because you will find more "love" (of the friendship variety) amongst a group of friends than by going off with one person.

But then this does bring up the question of friendship. As in modern times we can have very deep friendships, or just very shallow superficial friendships.

Does anyone know if Philodemus wrote anything on friendships?

Would love to hear comments on anything I have written here 😊