

"Epicurean Philosophy: An Introduction from the 'Garden of Athens'" edited by Christos Yapijakis

Post by "Cassius" of January 12, 2023 at 9:14 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

My take has always been that Democritus is laughing because he doesn't take himself too seriously, in the end we're all atoms and void. I think he can laugh about people who get caught up in the rat race (to use a modern metaphor) and take themselves too seriously. People - all things! - really are *ultimately* nothing more than "whirling windbags of atoms." That doesn't mean in any way that we don't enjoy our lives at the level we experience them! But chill out! Take a breath! Carpe diem - pluck the fruit of each moment.

Yep the issue is that we have to both not take ourselves and our lives *too* seriously, while at the same time avoiding the pitfall of not taking ourselves and our lives seriously enough. Sort of like the perspective required in:

[VS63](#). Frugality too has a limit, and the man who disregards it is like him who errs through excess.

To me this relates to the ongoing "metaphor" discussion in a [nearby thread](#). In the end it might not be possible for many people to keep that proper balance between "not-too-serious" and "not-serious-enough" using purely intellectual analysis. Getting the result right seems to require metaphors/art/literature/music/etc to allow people to get an emotional grip on the situation in addition to an intellectual grip. And of course "health" is required too.