

Gassendi On Happiness

Post by "Cassius" of November 9, 2025 at 5:08 PM

OK I finished it. The article tails off into an overly-long praise of frugality and simple living, even managing to finish with some praise of walking around naked and shoeless, but the lack of a rousing ending does not diminish what a generally interesting and helpful article this is.

I'd like to know what Karl Marx's criticism was to see how it comports with mine, but as I see it on first reading the defects are pretty limited but clear:

1- Gassendi won't abandon or examine the implications of the absence of a supernatural god.

2 - Ditto as to there not being an immortal soul.

3 - He doesn't seem to appreciate fully that the mental pleasures of rest that he praises are in addition to, and not solely for the sake of, his pleasures of rest. But he actually does catch himself and goes on relatively at length to insist that Epicurean pleasures do not entail inaction, so he's not as bad on that score as some.

In general, my summary would be that this is an essential article for anyone who wants to understand Epicurus and how we got to where we are today in appraising him.

There are lots and lots of anecdotal quotes that I've never seen referenced before.