

# **Response to Donald Robertson Question: "Was Thomas Jefferson More Stoic Or Epicurean?" (Answer: Epicurean!)**

**Post by "Cassius" of February 8, 2020 at 2:54 PM**

I can't speak much about Montaigne, but in addition to being self-declared I would say that he next step in indicating how seriously someone takes Epicurus is whether they take the time to articulate Epicurean doctrine with any accuracy. In Jefferson's case, the letters cited above do indicate to me that he was serious about Epicurus. In the case of Montaigne (and many others of similar style) I am not aware that much can be documented in favor of their understanding of the full sweep of Epicurean physics, epistemology, and ethics, much beyond the fact that they spoke in general terms about pleasure and/or opposed standard religion in some often ambiguous sense.

Also as for digging too deeply into any individual's *application* of Epicurean philosophy, as opposed to their *understanding* of it, that's even more perilous. How people actually live rarely reflects closely on how they say they *should* live, although in Epicurus' own case the aspiration and the practice seems to have been closer than most.