

A foodie ponders Epicurus the epicurean

Post by “Godfrey” of February 9, 2020 at 3:38 PM

https://www.academia.edu/11401667/Epic...es_philosopher

This essay was a nice accompaniment to my tea and dark chocolate this morning. I enjoyed the author's discussion of pleasure, food and friendship in the Garden. He also addressed Plato nicely. I'm not so sure about his linking Epicurus to liberalism, but I really haven't given that much thought so maybe I'm exposing my ignorance. All in all, I found it a very perceptive piece that, to me, conceives of Epicurus much as we do here and states the case very well.

Post by “Godfrey” of February 9, 2020 at 4:16 PM

BTW this is by Michael Symons in Australia. I don't think he's the Food Network guy....

Post by “Cassius” of February 9, 2020 at 5:55 PM

Godfrey I just started reading but already I am not sure if this is sort of tongueincheek. I agree with his contention that enjoyment of food has been misrepresented downward, but to place it at the CENTER of the philosophy? That seems almost like a joke. I will have to read more 😊

Post by “Cassius” of February 9, 2020 at 6:00 PM

I Still get the impression he is joking, but in this excerpt I think he is exactly correct in criticizing these "authorities":

either clearly distinguished Epicurus from lower-case epicureanism or just ignored the possibility. After recording 20 explicit denials, I gave up keeping a list, but to cite an influential student early in the century, Cyril Bailey claimed that the original Epicureans ate ‘nothing but bread as a rule with the occasional addition of a relish’. This for him was well ‘removed from the living of an “epicure”’. Epicurus ‘was no Epicurean sensualist’, John McDade explained in his [18-19] introduction to a more recent, gift-book version of Epicurus’ ‘Letter to Menoeceus’, retitled *Letter on Happiness*. ‘The use of the term “Epicurean” in the English language to mean “out-and-out hedonist” is, then, both unfortunate and mistaken.’⁴

Post by “Cassius” of February 9, 2020 at 6:09 PM

OK I finished it am and glad to see that he cites DeWitt, and I see several reflections of DeWitt in the text.

Yet i still can't shake the view that his praise of "Foodies" is largely un-serious.

I think you said it best Godfrey when you said:

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

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I'm not sure exactly what audience I would suggest this to, but I do agree that to the extent he is making a serious point, he shows a lot of influence from DeWitt and his points are consistent with a DeWitt view of Epicurus as not being an ascetic at all

Post by “Godfrey” of February 10, 2020 at 12:11 AM

You're right Cassius it does seem tongue in cheek in some parts, but he does make good points. The feeling I get is that he's writing as a "laughing philosopher".

Maybe best read with a glass of wine and a bit of cheese. 🧀

Post by “Godfrey” of February 10, 2020 at 12:34 AM

Here's the author's website; apparently he's a gastronomic researcher who combines his research with sociology and economics:

<https://mealsmatter.net/>