

Philo's Somewhat Epicurean Outline

Post by "Cassius" of May 1, 2019 at 8:04 PM

Philo, you win a gold star for being honest and characterizing your essay as "somewhat" Epicurean. I read through most of it and below is my initial reaction to your major categories. Let me apologize in advance for any tone of harshness you may gather from this, because that is not my intention. My intention is mainly to save you time, us time, and assist the purposes of the group in promoting a community of **Epicurean** correspondents.

Atheism -- Not in conflict with Epicurus as far as it goes, but not strictly Epicurean.

Afterlife Nihilism -- Seems consistent with Epicurus, but the word "nihilism" is loaded with negative connotations.

Ultimate Responsibility Nihilism - Directly in conflict with the spirit of Epicurus' views on moral responsibility.

Moral Nihilism - Perhaps reconcilable with Epicurus as far as it goes, but it does not touch on the role of pleasure and pain.

Thanatophobic Irrationalism - Despite the unnecessarily complicated name, seems consistent with Epicurean views of death.

Negative Hedonism - No mention whatsoever of pleasure and pain and thus not fundamentally Epicurean. Much more stoic and anti-pleasure than anything resembling Epicurus.

You have obviously put a lot of time and effort into producing this outline, and if it works for you then I wish you well. However if you read into the purpose and organizing principles of this website, you will see that it is our goal to take pleasure and pain and Epicurus seriously, and not to convert him into an ascetic lite version of Zeno the Stoic.

Also by no means do I intend to short-circuit any discussion that you or anyone else would like to raise concerning the details of your philosophy, but I want to warn everyone that at least on my first reading, there is very little of Epicurus in this outline, and a great deal of Stoic / Platonic error.

Skimming back again I did a word search for "pleasure" - I find:

(1) Two references to "small pleasures" which implies that pleasures of all kinds are not a good

in and of themselves - a position which is clearly directly contrary to Epicurus;

(2) A statement that "the desire for sensual pleasure is also suspect" which is also directly anti-Epicurean;

And by my "search" function, those are the only three occurrences of the word "pleasure" in your material.

It is my observation from past reading that the absence of minimization of use of the word "pleasure" is one of the most certain signs available that the material is not Epicurean.

Once again, I do apologize for the negative tone of this post, and I do wish you well. But as we proceed to discuss the outline, let's all remember that the goal of this board is to promote Epicurean philosophy, rather than general comparative philosophical debate.

I'd like to think that I and others could convince you to rethink some of these positions. If you're open to that, then you'll certainly see my continued participation in discussing them. If you're committed to them and just want to argue to maintain them, then we'll need to guard against the forum getting too far off track.

With that again I sincerely and unironically welcome you to Epicureanfriends.com -- where we take Epicurus seriously.