

Welcome JLR / Lee!

Post by “Cassius” of December 26, 2019 at 3:20 PM

Welcome [Lee](#) ! And thanks for joining us! When you get a chance, please tell us about yourself and your background in Epicurean philosophy.

It would be particularly helpful if you could tell us (1) how you found this forum, and (2) how much background reading you have done in Epicurus. As an aid in the latter, we have prepared the following list of core reading.

We look forward to talking with you!

----- Epicurean Works I Have Read -----

1 The Biography of Epicurus By Diogenes Laertius (Chapter 10). This includes all Epicurus' letters and the Authorized Doctrines. Supplement with the Vatican list of Sayings.

2 "Epicurus And His Philosophy" - Norman DeWitt

3 "On The Nature of Things"- Lucretius

4 Cicero's "On Ends" - Torquatus Section

5 Cicero's "On The Nature of the Gods" - Velleius Section

6 The Inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda - Martin Ferguson Smith translation

7 "A Few Days In Athens" - Frances Wright

8 Lucian Core Texts on Epicurus: (1) Alexander the Oracle-Monger, (2) Hermetimus (3) Others?

9 Plato's [Philebus](#)

10 Philodemus "On Methods of Inference" (De Lacy version, including his appendix on relationship of Epicurean canon to Aristotle and other Greeks)

11 "The Greeks on Pleasure" -Gosling & Taylor Sections on Epicurus, especially on katastematic and kinetic pleasure.

Post by “Lee” of December 26, 2019 at 5:26 PM

Hello Cassius and thank you for welcoming me to the community. I found the forum originally by searching online and also secondarily through <http://societyofepicurus.com/> and Hiram Crespo.

I am a graduate of the Great Books curriculum of Thomas Aquinas College in California which I attended after earning a completely unrelated degree at the U. Of Missouri, Columbia back in 1992. I was an atheist until studying philosophy and have considered myself a theist for the last 25 years.

I am a long time student of the Western philosophical tradition with an emphasis on Aristotle's Ethics and the concept of Eudaemonia. I become particularly interested in ethics after reading Mortimer Adler's The Time of Our Lives. I wrote a simple yet comprehensive ethics book that was completed in 2015 called Understanding Happiness, How to think about living well. I took this book out of print and plan to begin a new project to release a second addition that is better written with the help of a competent editor.

After completing the book, I was faced with some challenges in life that created anxiety and anguish. To help cope with negative thoughts, I became acquainted with eastern meditation and consequently wanted to learn more about exposure of Greek philosophy to Indian thought that was transferred during Alexander the Great's invasion of India. Knowing the pluralism of the Greeks, I was sure that the pursuit of tranquility was something they had examined and that had been under-emphasized in my studies because of a focus on Plato and Aristotle. I consequently became acquainted with the concept of ataraxia and set out to learn which Greeks had focused on this idea.

The study of ataraxia lead me to Epicurus. I was astonished to realize I had overlooked this great thinker by relegating him to the category of base hedonism. I had thought he was one who was content to be the pig satisfied rather than Socrates dissatisfied. Once I learned of his measured pursuit of pleasure and focus on ataraxia, I was hooked!

I still have some hesitation to abandon ideas such as the eudaemonia as a measure of the best life. However, I think I have the greatest overall affinity for Epicurean thought. I agree with him that the purpose of studying philosophy is to banish fear and superstition and to acquire ataraxia to live in peace and pleasure.

I look forward to you and other members of the group sharing insights on this point.

Thanks for your suggested readings. I clearly have some work to do. Thus far, I have read:

- Lucretius, On the Nature of Things

-The Biography of Epicurus By Diogenes Laertius (Chapter 10). This includes all Epicurus' letters and the Authorized Doctrines. Supplement with the Vatican list of Sayings.

- **Epicureanism** by *William Wallace*

Best Regards,

JLR

Post by “Cassius” of December 26, 2019 at 7:04 PM

Welcome JLR and thank you for the detailed background info! You are welcome to hang out and read and participate at whatever pace you like. If you are not already aware of it you will soon see that I am a big advocate of Norman Dewitt's "Epicurus and His Philosophy" as a very different "take" on Epicurean philosophy.

At this point rather than dive into any of the details of what you wrote I would urge you to take up Dewitt's book as soon as / if you have the opportunity, because I believe you will quickly see why and how his take is different -- how it will embrace some or even much of what you wrote, but from a fairly significantly different perspective.

There are also a couple of scholarly articles that I think you will find bolster DeWitt's take: especially [the sections on Epicurus in Gosling & Taylor's "The Greeks on Pleasure,"](#) and the [Boris Nikolsky article "Epicurus on Pleasure."](#)

I hope you'll have a long and productive stay with us, but even if something comes up and you get deflected away, I think if you pick up the DeWitt book and compare it to what you already know about Epicurus you will gain a lot that you might not have come across if you hadn't made your way here.

Post by “Martin” of December 27, 2019 at 9:23 AM

Welcome JLR!

Post by "Lee" of December 28, 2019 at 4:04 PM

Thank you for the suggestions Cassius. I will acquire and read Norman Dewitt's "Epicurus and His Philosophy" and I have already downloaded Gosling and Taylor's "The Greeks on Pleasure" to begin reading today.

I much appreciate your assistance and friendly welcome from you and Martin.

Post by "Lee" of December 28, 2019 at 4:39 PM

Cassius and Martin,

I am a neophyte with use of a forum and may have already committed a faux pas by posting a question to Cassius on his timeline. Please feel free to correct me on proper use of the forum and I will spend some time looking for guidelines in the forum section to become a competent user.

Post by "Cassius" of December 28, 2019 at 7:35 PM

JLR -- you have not committed a faux pas by posting on my timeline, but the timeline feature of the forum is not particularly well integrated into the main forum part, and may not show up using the search function.

It is generally best to post in the "General Discussion" forum, unless you are aware of a specific subforum that is directly on point. But posting in the General Discussion forum is always safe because I can easily move threads to a more appropriate place if needed.

The "timeline" feature is generally best used for posting things about yourself that don't really fit into another subject.

Post by “Lee” of December 30, 2019 at 10:01 AM

I have read the first chapter of Dewitt’s book and have the complete copy on order. I am enjoying it very much and appreciate your guidance.

I found it interesting (and reassuring) that Dewitt saw overlap between The Nicomachean Ethics and Epicurean teachings. I have studied Aristotle a good amount and think he got many things correct even if he overstated the role of politics and underemphasized the importance of pleasure and tranquility.

Post by “Cassius” of January 22, 2020 at 6:18 AM

JLR I just saw your comments about changing your user name - i have changed it for you to Lee. i hope this does not cause you any issues in signing in. if it does please email me - Cassius@epicureanfriends.com

Post by “Lee” of January 22, 2020 at 1:03 PM

Still signed in...but now as Lee. Thanks Cassius!