

Short Video on Nietzsche vs Plato On "True World Theory" Which May or May Not Reflect Epicurus' Views

Post by "Cassius" of December 7, 2022 at 8:04 PM

Due to a recent post by [ResponsiblyFree](#) I was looking recently at a podcast that came to my attention through him and [Martin](#), and I came across the video podcast linked below. As usual I want us to stay as far away as possible from divisive modern politics, but I think the key issue of this video is the "True World" aspect in which Nietzsche charges Plato and Christianity with a negative view of human life which leads ultimately to nihilism. I am hoping we can focus on that and stay safely away from some of the specific modern applications that would likely to be "too hot to handle" without igniting modern partisanship. I labeled the thread topic "May or May Not" but I would say myself that most of the core points here being attributed to Nietzsche probably reflect what I think Epicurus would say as well about both Plato and Christianity. With that as the core issue, rather than trying to pass judgment on the whole confusing scope of Nietzsche himself, I would be interested in any comments:

[Nietzsche and Nihilism - A Warning to the West](#)

In 1888, the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche wrote: "What I relate is the history of the next two centuries. I describe what is coming, what can no longer come..."

academyofideas.com

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=169p5S3fXPE&embeds_euri=https%3A%2F%2Facademyofideas.com%2F

We might also want to comment on whether this format for a philosophical presentation makes sense for us to employ for Epicurus.

Another caveat is that I know nothing about who "Julian Young" is so I want to explicitly distance myself from implying that I know anything about him or what he stands for.

Post by "Cassius" of December 7, 2022 at 8:20 PM

I am going to tag [Elli](#) on this thread as I know she is interested in this topic.

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2774-short-video-on-nietzsche-vs-plato-on-true-world-theory-which-may-or-may-not-refl/>

Post by “Kalosyni” of December 9, 2022 at 10:30 AM

I read both the transcript (which is linked above the video) and also watched the video. I find that the pictures are interesting but also distracting for absorption all of the ideas presented, so recommend reading the above linked transcript.

First of all, I feel like I do not understand Plato very well. And found this:

PLATO

The Divided Line

Physical World of Senses

Invisible World of Reason

Becoming:
Opinion

Being:
Intellect

conjecture
(shadows)

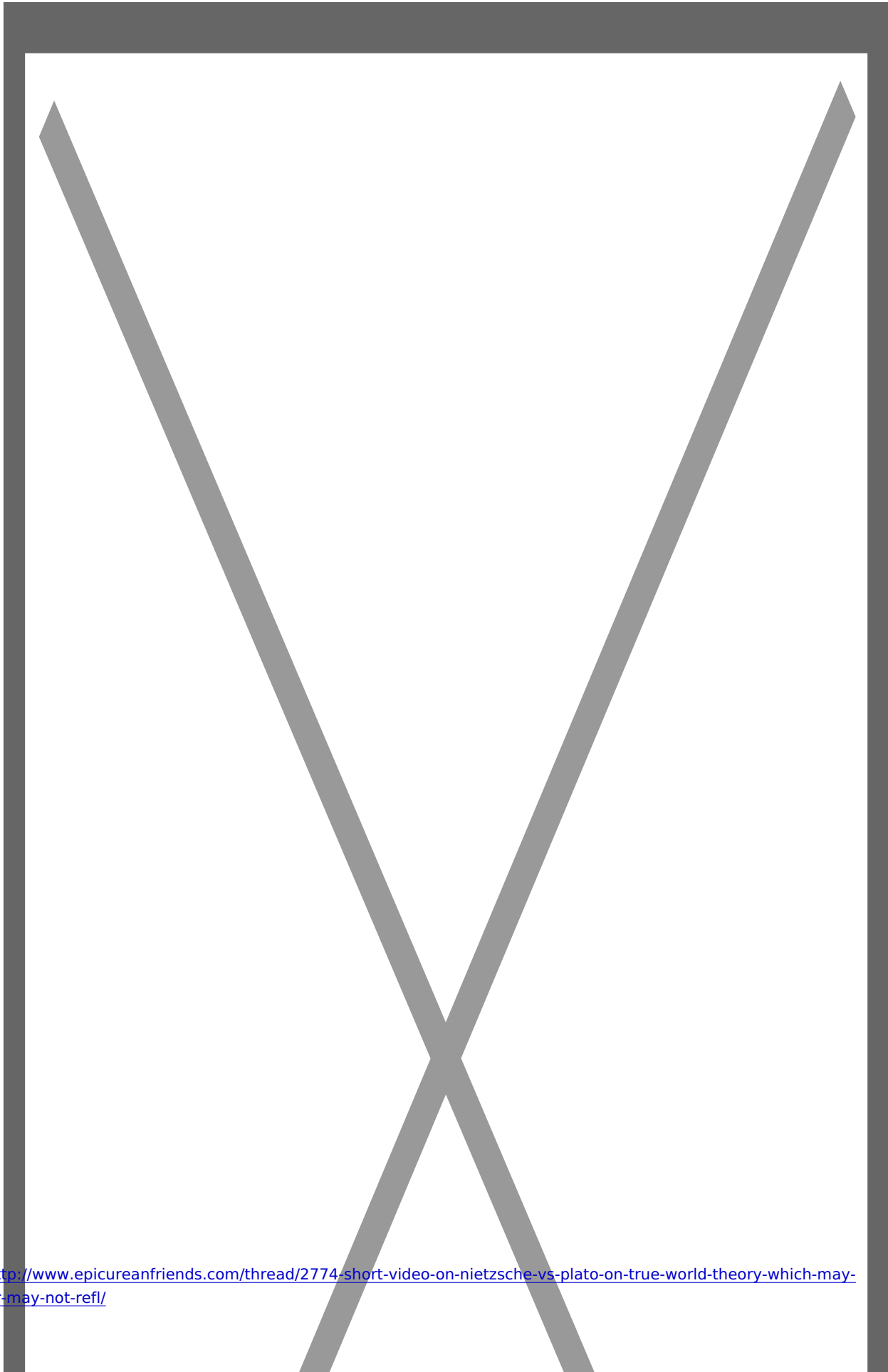
belief
(physical objects)

understanding
(mathematics)

knowledge/science
(ideal forms)



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<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2774-short-video-on-nietzsche-vs-plato-on-true-world-theory-which-may-or-may-not-refl/>

[A Non-Philosopher's Guide to Plato](#)

A primer on Socrates, Plato, and ways their ideas manifest in contemporary art.

blogs.getty.edu

So further questions regarding Plato's ideal forms -- is there something in the human brain or the human psyche which "processes" information in such a way as to bring about abstractions and the longing for a "true world" ("true world" is Nietzsche's idea and which I think should really be called a "future perfect world")?

What causes humans to distrust the "messiness" of sensations and opinions, and the impermanent nature of experience, and instead want to create a static, nailed-down understanding of permanent objects -- is this a kind of grasping for safety or a longing for the "garden of eden" before the complexities of civilization?

And perhaps, in our own search for the "Epicurean Garden" are we seeking some ideal, perfect peace and safety?

Post by "Cassius" of December 9, 2022 at 11:14 AM

I don't know who the other philosophers referenced in the article are. Their quotes sound correct to me, but it's hard to say. However I think the ones from Nietzsche are worth adding in here to the thread both for the content and for the sense of intensity that I see as similar to Lucretius:

"...the concept "the true world" insinuates that this world is untruthful, deceptive, dishonest, inauthentic, inessential—and consequently also not a world adapted to our needs.

Nietzsche, The Will to Power

"General insight: it is the instinct of life-weariness...which has created the "other world"...to imagine another, more valuable world is an expression of hatred for the world that makes one suffer...Does man not eternally create a fictitious world for himself because he wants a better world than reality?"

Nietzsche, The Will to Power

"The development of pessimism into nihilism.... - The repudiated world versus an artificially built 'true, valuable' one. Finally: one discovers how the true world is fabricated solely from psychological needs: and now all one has left is the 'repudiated world', and one adds this

supreme disappointment to the reasons why it deserves to be repudiated. At this point nihilism is reached:...one grants the reality of becoming as the only reality... — but cannot endure this world...”

Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*

“I beseech you, my brothers, remain faithful to the earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes! Poison-mixers are they, whether they know it or not. Despisers of life are they, decaying and poisoned themselves, of whom the earth is weary: so let them go.”

Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Post by “Kalosyni” of December 9, 2022 at 11:32 AM

Quote from the transcript:

Quote

While all these shadows of god possess flocks of disciples, today the true world theory of choice for the masses is what the 20th century psychologist Michael Mahoney called the myth of arrival. Those who subscribe to this myth believe that one day they will reach a turning point in life; all their frustrations and problems will disappear, and they will finally be happy. In other words, they believe that in the future they will enter their own personal utopia, or true world, or as Mahoney writes:

Quote

“Embedded in the myth of arrival...is the message that...there will come a day when our struggles and suffering will be finished. Depression, anxiety, anger, and all manner of “ill being” will finally end. We will wake up one morning and clearly recognize that we have “arrived”: We will have gotten ourselves and our lives “together” in a way that can never be undone. We will be healthy and happy. We’ll be in the job, the home, and the relationship that we have always wanted, financially comfortable and fundamentally at peace with ourselves.”

Michael Mahoney, Constructive Psychotherapy

What is presented in the above excerpt brings up thoughts for understanding the goal for Epicureans (as it is understood sometimes differently for each person):

Epicurean Goal could be expressed as one (or more) of the following:

- 1) pleasure
- 2) pleasure built upon ataraxia
- 3) happiness/well-being

And it is important to realize we can't ever reach perfect peace of mind or perfect happiness -- this world we live in has uncertainties and things which we can't control -- so life will be filled with a mix of both good and bad emotions which arise depending on the situation. So it would in fact be unreasonable to strive for perfect tranquility. The best we can do is to make smart choices and avoidances while also pursuing the things in life which bring pleasure.

Post by "Cassius" of December 9, 2022 at 12:02 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

So it would in fact be unreasonable to strive for perfect tranquility

Maybe it is not unreasonable to strive for it in terms of using it as a guide and setting it as an image of the goal, but it surely unreasonable to expect to achieve it or to believe that it is in fact something we are going to reach and stay there. It seems perfectly clear that we change and have new experiences til the moment we die - which is essentially what PD2 says- so we are never going to reach a resting point and stay there.

Post by "Kalosyni" of December 10, 2022 at 8:41 AM

It comes to me this morning that I find Nietzsche to be a bit beyond what I find enjoyable right now (seems somewhat "dark" or pessimistic to me).

I prefer not to open up a door to eclecticism (by mixing in modern philosophers with Epicurean ideas) and which I would hope to avoid. (Though it could be a spring-board into bringing up new questions).

And also thinking that I actually do like the "myth of arrival" in this very life (that there could be some benefit to it) -- and so thinking about the Epicurean idea of "living like the gods" in this

very life -- do we have a thread on that?

Post by "Cassius" of December 10, 2022 at 9:04 AM

1 - He definitely has a "dark" side. On the other hand, darkness does exist and we have to come to terms with it in order to really be in touch with reality. What doesn't kill us makes us stronger, I think someone once said 😊

2 - We definitely want to avoid too much eclecticism here. Discussion of Nietzsche or anyone else needs to be centered on "Do these arguments assist in understanding or presentation of Epicurean philosophy?"

3 - We need a thread on living like the gods - while at the same time acknowledging that unless we perfect the ability to regenerate and maintain our own atomic structure we're not going to achieve it ourselves 😊 At some point a thread on the science of life extension would be appropriate too!

Post by "Cassius" of December 10, 2022 at 9:15 AM

Someone coming across this thread would probably also be interested in:

Thread

[Collection of Nietzsche Quotes Relevant To Epicurean Philosophy](#)

The collection at NewEpicurean.com is [here](#).

[I will work on expanding the list at the EpicureanFriends Wiki here.](#)

To carry forward the point of the significance of Nietzsche just a little, here i think is the root of N's problem with Epicurus, in Antichrist Section 30:

"The instinctive hatred of reality: the consequence of an extreme susceptibility to pain and irritation—so great that merely to be "touched" becomes unendurable, for every sensation is

too profound.

The...



Cassius

March 21, 2019 at 8:57 AM

Post by “Cassius” of December 13, 2022 at 9:51 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

And also thinking that I actually do like the "myth of arrival" in this very life (that there could be some benefit to it) -- and so thinking about the Epicurean idea of "living like the gods" in this very life -- do we have a thread on that?

I have another comment on this as to "arrival." I see the concept of "arrival" in general as perfectly valid. "XXXXX has arrived at a better understanding of Epicurus" makes perfect sense.

But in the connection we are talking about here, the issue Nietzsche raises reminds me of one of what I think is the prime dangers of loose discussion of "absence of pain." Maybe I am the only one who ever interpreted the modern discussions that way, but I have the strong impression that some people are talking as if -- if they squeeze every drop of pain out of their lives through ascetic living - they somehow pass through a doorway into another world - a nirvana - into the "true world" - in which they experience something entirely different and higher than what we mortals understand to be mental and physical pleasure.

To the extent that people are using "ataraxia" and "absence of pain" as "destinations" at which they can "arrive" and thereby achieve some kind of salvation-like higher state that frees them from the body and lets them commune with something higher ("pure reason contemplating absolute truth" as Joshua has mentioned), I think that view is a huge mistake and misapplication of what Epicurus was teaching.