

The Art of Frugal Hedonism

Post by "Cassius" of February 16, 2023 at 4:24 PM

I would stress that many of these back and forths are to me hypotheticals. I can easily imagine a presentation on Epicurus that would be entirely appropriate and go like this:

1. Epicurus was a hedonist in that he believed pleasure to be the greatest good BUT he did not always seek every choice that might produce pleasure.
2. Epicurus held that tranquility is a great pleasure BUT not that tranquility is the goal toward which all else aims.
3. Epicurus taught that pain was "evil" BUT he did not teach that pain should always be avoided.
4. Epicurus was an atheist BUT not the kind you think - he believed that gods do exist.
5. Epicurus believed that gods exist BUT not the kind of gods you think.
6. Epicurus was an empiricist of a sort BUT many of his most important conclusions were based on deductive reasoning about things he never personally experienced himself.
7. Epicurus held many positions that will strike you as Utilitarian BUT he did not believe in "the greatest good for the greatest number."
8. Epicurus was highly skeptical of claims of authority BUT he took strong positions himself about things that he believed to be provably true.
9. Epicurus was in many ways a frugalist BUT not always and it's important to know the exceptions.
10. Epicurus believed in virtue BUT not that it is an end in itself.
11. Epicurus held that "[all sensations are true](#)" BUT not that every sensation is accurate to all the facts.
12. Epicurus held that [death is nothing to us](#) BUT not that the manner and time of death is not significant.
13. Epicurus held that friendship is tremendously important for our happiness BUT Epicurus was not an "altruist" as that word is generally understood.

And I bet we could go on and on and on, and in the right circumstances, this is a probably a good way to introduce the topics. But is it the only way? Certainly not. Is it the best way? Well, in some circumstances yes, but it isn't the way (for example) that Epicurus himself or Lucretius or Diogenes of Oinoanda organized their presentations, and in a better world (?) we shouldn't have to and won't have to do that either.