

Does the philosophy change you?

Post by “Little Rocker” of June 13, 2023 at 10:47 AM

[Quote from EricR](#)

So I thought I recalled a quote from Epicurus that addressed this. Something about one's experience of life is not being improved by a philosophy, rendering it useless.

Were you perhaps thinking of this: 'Vain is the word of a philosopher by which no human suffering is cured. For just as medicine is of no use if it fails to banish the diseases of the body, so philosophy is of no use if it fails to banish the sufferings of the mind' (Usener fr. 222)

I was admittedly somewhat surprised to discover that I was in fact changed by studying Epicurus as a way of living rather than an academic exercise. Sometimes it was just that I finally discovered a justification for views I already had pre-reflectively (e.g., that greed leads to unhappiness). Sometimes it was that I actually altered how I interacted with others (privileging activities that would provide me with memories over unmemorable activities, at least when I had a choice). And I made peace with the fact that I thought life should be pleasant, which was actually a difficult transition because of my upbringing. Those are only a few examples of changes in my outlook and behavior, but they are perhaps the most notable ones.