

# Epicureanism as the spiritual essence or 'religion' of an entire community

Post by “Don” of October 21, 2023 at 7:49 AM

[Jo.](#) raises good points and some interesting ideas.

One important thing to remember is that Epicurus wasn't opposed to education in the broad sense. He often uses words like study or meditate on and the like. The word he uses for what he opposed was παιδεία (paideia), as in:

Quote

Fragment 117: μακαρίζω σε, ὦ Ἄπελλῃ, ὅτι καθαρὸς πάσης παιδείας ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν ὤρμησας.

I pronounce you blessed, O Apelles! You rush to the study of wisdom pure of all indoctrination (enculturation).

Fragment 163: παιδείαν δὲ πᾶσαν, μακάριε, φεῦγε τὰκάτιον ἀράμενος.

Flee from all indoctrination (enculturation), O blessed one, and hoist the sail of your own little boat.

(My literal translations)

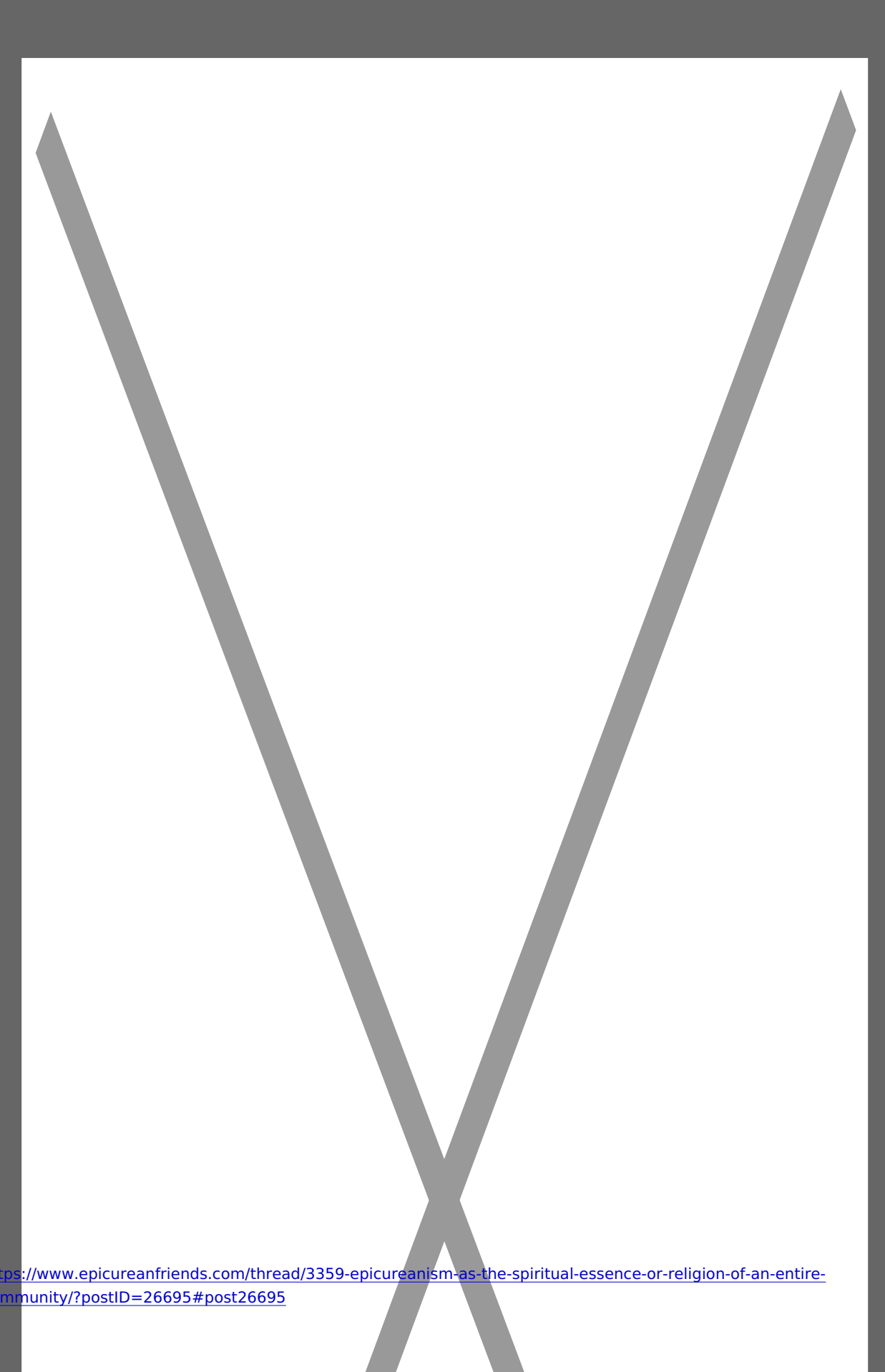
VS45. The study of what is natural produces not braggarts nor windbags nor those who show off the culture that most people fight about, but those who are fearless and self-reliant and who value their own good qualities rather than the good things that have come to them from external circumstances.

οὐ κομποῦς οὐδὲ φωνῆς ἐργαστικούς οὐδὲ τὴν περιμάχητον παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς παιδείαν ἐνδεικνυμένους φυσιολογία παρασκευάζει, ἀλλὰ σοβαροὺς καὶ αὐτάρκεις καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀγαθοῖς, οὐκ ἐπὶ τοῖς τῶν πραγμάτων μέγα φρονοῦντες.

(Saint-Andre translation)

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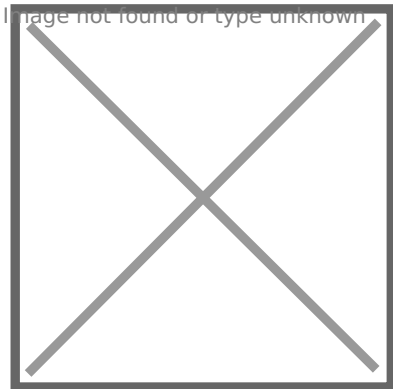
<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3359-epicureanism-as-the-spiritual-essence-or-religion-of-an-entire-community/?postID=26695#post26695>

[Paideia - Wikipedia](#)

en.wikipedia.org

Quote from Wikipedia

Paideia was meant to instill aristocratic virtues in the young citizen men who were trained in this way. An ideal man within the polis would be well-rounded, refined in intellect, morals, and physicality, so training of both the body and mind was important. Both practical, subject-based schooling as well as a focus upon the socialization of individuals within the aristocratic order of the polis were a part of this training.



["Paul and Paideia: Greco-Roman education as a background to Paul's conflict in Corinth." Ancient History Research Seminar, Macquarie University, Sydney, September 2011.](#)

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Paideia then, was a process of transformation, both academically and socially. Teresa Morgan suggests that ‘in the ancient world educational theory regularly occurred in the context of political theory... the function of education was to produce people suited to bring about or maintain whatever political organisation the author proposed for a particular state’ (Morgan 1998a: 246-247).

Thus paideia was a process that incorporated a variety of physical, theoretical and practical exercises that were intended to develop the entire character of the future ruler, with all of these subjects being studied simultaneously with literature; in other words, paideia was not so much ‘education’ as it was ‘enculturation.’

PS. ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν ὄρμησας (epi philosophian ōrmēsas) from Fr.117: I *\*really\** like the connotation of this phrase! Philosophy is obvious, so however you want to translate that. ὄρμησας conveys a sense of rushing headlong toward something. I get the image in my head of a young kid in a foot race, running with everything they have, toward the goal. Keep that in mind when you read rush or, worse, hasten in some translations. So, maybe: I call you blessed, Apelles! You rush headlong with all you have toward the study of wisdom, free and clear of all cultural indoctrination.