

Welcome Novem!

Post by “Novem” of November 3, 2023 at 9:39 PM

Hello, Cassius et al.,

Thank you for allowing me to register and join this community. I first became interested in Epicureanism this year as I was looking for a classical philosophy to help me understand and figure out how to deal with daily life better and enhance and integrate my current philosophical views, after some rough patches in graduate school and my early professional life. I became a utilitarian as an undergrad by studying economics and learning about animal welfare through Peter Singer. I just became a more committed vegetarian after moving to a whole new place in my city with a roommate who is also vegetarian. This also led me to explore philosophy more, such as the mind-body problem and free will. I read more about utilitarianism on Substack and read more about Mill, Bentham, Singer, and other utilitarians' ideas and works. Then I began looking at the ancient philosophies that dealt with consequentialism, and I discovered Epicureanism on Wikipedia and also looked for pop-philosophy books to familiarize myself, such as Emily Austin's book "Living for Pleasure" which I enjoyed a lot. I also bought Catherine Wilson's 2019 book which I am currently reading and I recently bought John Sellars' "The Pocket Epicurean" to get more historical background and explanations of key Epicurean teachings for the modern world. Now I am interested in looking at the original texts of historical Epicureans and joining online communities such as here to build that community of like-minded individuals. Perhaps this starting point is too distant from classical Epicureanism or I am coming from a "Neo-Epicurean" standpoint somewhat by reading the pop-philosophy books first. I'm curious as to collective opinion on these modern Epicurean books. I did see that the Lucretius podcast did do an interview with Emily Austin that I will listen to.

I was drawn to Epicureanism by its contrast with Stoicism, which I am also not too familiar with but I know it has become rather popular as a therapeutic philosophy--my mother began to read the modern Stoics at the same time I became interested in Epicureanism--but I also started seeing some first-level naive commonalities with Stoicism, like with embracing and understanding the inevitability of death, or the control of desires and emotion. I also like how very close Epicureanism's scientific theories and conjectures are to modern atomic physics and evolutionary theory, and its overall materialism. Its approach to religion is also not what I expected--I thought it would lean into deism or pantheism with its idea of disinterested gods or an indifferent universe that we are all a part of with the constant reorganization of atoms at life and death, but the gods are real (made of matter) and are the embodiments of Epicurean ideals who live far away from the conglomerations of matter, not hurt or pleased from human vice or virtue, and religion makes us think otherwise.

I am interested in learning more about classical Epicureanism, and I hope to develop a deep understanding of this philosophy and apply it to daily modern life. Thank you for this

opportunity. Please let me know if you have any questions.