

What Are The Best Epicurean Alternatives to These Common Phrases?

Post by "Cassius" of July 9, 2019 at 7:50 AM

As a help in clarifying key issues, I remember that DeWitt talks about how Epicurus used the rhetorical technique of contrasting false opinion vs true opinions. For example, I am convinced that one of the worst "false opinions" that we are up against in differentiating Epicurus from common viewpoints is "the greatest good for the greatest number" as a method for evaluating pleasure.

The final PDs make clear that our goal is not the pleasure of everyone, or the world in general, but of ourselves and our friends. For those who are unfriendly, or our enemies, we separate ourselves from them, and we know from other doctrines that this would include by any means necessary.

PD6. In order to obtain protection from other men, any means for attaining this end is a natural good.

PD39. The man who best knows how to meet external threats makes into one family all the creatures he can; and those he can not, he at any rate does not treat as aliens; and where he finds even this impossible, he avoids all dealings, and, so far as is advantageous, excludes them from his life.

PD40. Those who possess the power to defend themselves against threats by their neighbors, being thus in possession of the surest guarantee of security, live the most pleasant life with one another; and their enjoyment of the fullest intimacy is such that if one of them dies prematurely, the others do not lament his death as though it called for pity.

So is there a phrase or summary that serves as a good contrast for that, in forms such as: (1) In evaluating pleasure, not "the greatest good for the greatest number" but _____ or (2) "____X_____," not "the greatest good for the greatest number."

I'd like to explore expanding this discussion to consider a whole series of opposing viewpoints, such as in this following list:

1. Not "the greatest good for the greatest number," but _____
2. Not "humanism" but _____
3. Not "hard determinism" but _____

4. Not "hedonism" but _____

5. Not "absence of pain" as a full statement of the goal of life, but _____

6. Not "living unknown" as best way to organize one's life, but "_____" (shorter version of this text following text: "makes into one family all the creatures he can; and those he can not, he at any rate does not treat as aliens; and where he finds even this impossible, he avoids all dealings, and, so far as is advantageous, excludes them from his life. Those who possess the power to defend themselves against threats by their neighbors, being thus in possession of the surest guarantee of security, live the most pleasant life with one another")

7. Not "creation" but "materialism" ????

8. Not "faith" but "knowledge based on our natural faculties" (needs major rewording)

9. Not "individualism" or "collectivism" but _____

10. Not "egoism" or "altruism" but _____

11. Not "idealism" but _____

12. Not "atheism" but _____

If you have suggestions, please make them in the comments below. If particular items gets lots of comments, we can split off that discussion into a separate threads.

Note: To hopefully make this easier to follow, I will keep the original list unchanged above for reference, but as time goes by, make interim edits in the list below:

1. Not "the greatest good for the greatest number," but _____

2. Not "humanism" but _____

3. Not "hard determinism" but _____

4. Not "hedonism" but _____

5. Not "absence of pain" as a full statement of the goal of life, but _____

6. Not "living unknown" as best way to organize one's life, but "_____" (shorter version of this text following text: "makes into one family all the creatures he can; and those he can not, he at any rate does not treat as aliens; and where he finds even this impossible, he avoids all dealings, and, so far as is advantageous, excludes them from his life. Those who possess the power to defend themselves against threats by their neighbors, being thus in possession of the surest guarantee of security, live the most pleasant life with one another")

7. Not "creation" but "materialism" ????

8. Not "faith" but "knowledge based on our natural faculties" (needs major rewording)
9. Not "individualism" or "collectivism" but _____
10. Not "egoism" or "altruism" but _____
11. Not "idealism" but _____
12. Not "atheism" but _____