

# New Youtube Video - "Epicurus Responding to His Haters" - October 2025

Post by "Cassius" of October 5, 2025 at 3:57 PM

[My response to the poster at Facebook.](#)

Samuel --

Thank you very much for referring this video to us! As you say it is very interesting and well researched. I watched it using the AI generated English version, and it's very listenable, although I am sure you are right that much subtlety is lost. I am very glad to see such a long and professionally-made video devoted to Epicurus.

I would recommend that everyone who takes Epicurus seriously watch this video, but be warned, I would \*not\* say that "the only possible downside

is that it is in French." There are many more downsides which I will touch on here.

The primary downside is what people sometimes express as "Don't confuse me with facts." This video covers a lot of facts - many citations from the texts that are accurate and well documented. But the end result of the total video package will be much more confusion than clarity.

The trouble is that the video paints over the facts of the text with a thick layer of pain that portrays of Epicurus as a loutish half-shaven drunkard. The Epicurus presented here relishes making arguments about pleasure that make no sense to any objective listener. And of course the video makes no effort to explain Epicurus' full position, but instead shows him deteriorating into drunkenness and physical illness to match the intended stereotype: that Epicurus' depraved lifestyle led directly to a painful and tragic end.

This video is shot through and through with the "Buddhist/Stoic" interpretation of Epicurus. The video implies that Epicurus held all desire to be pain, with the result that making the best of life means lowering all your standards to the lowest possible level -- which of course in this cynical view is the only way you can ensure you will never be disappointed. And of course in this Buddhist-lite viewpoint there's nothing worse than pain -- even though Epicurus specifically stated in his letter to Menoeceus that we will regular choose painful actions when those choices lead to more pleasure in the end. That very clear statement is of course omitted from this video, as is all other explanation of how Epicurus did not narrow the definition of pleasure, but widen it.

This video is the popular "joy through simplicity and decadence" viewpoint that even the ancient opponents of Epicurus like Cicero and Plutarch dared not make. Cicero and Plutarch and other ancient opponents did not advance this argument because they knew better. They knew his actual teachings, and they knew that the Epicurus never set as goal the attainment of minimal living or the lowest possible amount of pleasure. Instead, Epicurus emphasized that he "would not know the meaning of 'good'" without the stimulative pleasures of the body and the mind.

Cicero and Plutarch argued instead that Epicurus was contradicting himself, because they knew that Epicurus clearly embraced **\*\*both\*\*** the pleasures of body and of mind. Modern interpreters omit what the ancient world clearly knew, and they rewrite Epicurus as a total ascetic who is best pictured as a sloppy and obnoxious college dropout sitting as if at a toga party overdosing on drugs and alcohol, rather than as an energetic and serious philosopher advocating a revolutionary but positive view of existence.

Rather than turn this comment into an essay of its own, that "vision" issue is the objection I would stress the most. I enjoy humor as much as anyone, and it's wrong to take this video too seriously. But the vast majority of people who don't know the details will assume that the model of an Epicurean today should be the obnoxious toga-party dropout who spouts nonsense that he clearly doesn't really believe himself. Nothing could be further from the truth.

That's not what Epicurus was about, and this video adds to the unfair portrayals of Epicurus throughout history. But Cicero's and Plutarch's attacks against Epicurus boomeranged against them, in that they preserved Epicurus' true sayings even while other opponents were burning them. Likewise, this video does bring together many of Epicurus' actual statements, even if placed in a false context. If you take the time to do the research into how Epicurus's statements were understood in the ancient world, you will see that Epicurus was the opposite of the buffoon portrayed here. The modern Epicurean will do just what the ancient Epicurean did: he or she will take life seriously and make the very best of the time we have.

If you look at this portrayal of Epicurus and say "right on, I dig that," then ironically you ought to be reading Buddhism or Stoicism. There you'll find a truly consistent path to simple and ascetic living, and you won't have to worry about the texts of Epicurus which directly contradict that viewpoint.

On the contrary, I hope many who watch this will see past the superficial perspective of this video. The best course is to look back into the ancient texts themselves. If you then consider the serious and energetic and accomplished lives lived by the leading ancient Epicureans under the influence of these texts, you'll conclude that the model of Epicurus portrayed in this video is nonsense.

But to close, thanks again for posting this Samuel! The best way to understand Epicurus is to confront these issues head-on, and this video is extremely helpful for those who want to do that. Sometimes even when you look at a false picture you're then inspired to search for the truth.