

PD 25 meaning? by Woolf (2004)

Post by "Cassius" of May 11, 2026 at 11:04 AM

I see this discussion as extremely helpful as well on the question of how best to convey Epicurean philosophy to others.

Here's another example of a similar issue, this from the blurb on "Martin the Epicurean" at Amazon:



I would draw attention to the last phrase of the last sentence. I don't mean to be criticizing anyone in particular here, and I haven't traced back to see if that is a quotation from the book itself or an addition by an Amazon or other book representative. I see the blurb is written as if it were not written by MFS himself.

But regardless of who wrote it, when I see that I can't help but think that 95% of people are going to take that as meaning either one of two things -- (1) Pleasure doesn't include sex drugs and rock-n-roll, it ONLY includes "absence of pain in the body and absence of trouble in the mind" or (2) Sex drugs and rock-n-roll may be pleasures, but the ULTIMATE pleasures are "absence of pain in the body and absence of trouble in the mind."

I am here of course using "sex drugs and rock-n-roll" as a stand-in for all of the normal and ordinary active pleasures of body and mind, specifically including "joy and delight."

And I don't think it's true, or helpful to imply even if it sounds good to some people, that either (1) or (2) are what Epicurus taught.

Edit: I'm also not entirely comfortable with the statement that Epicurus "regarded scientific knowledge as *subservient* to the moral end." Not as much of a problem there as in the explanation of pleasure, but I'd be concerned about confusion there as well. Epicurus didn't start out complaining that his teachers didn't tell him how to live happily, he started out questioning their scientific rigor as to chaos.