Report on the 10th Panhellenic Symposium of Epicurean Philosophy, February 8-9, 2020, Cultural Center of Pallini, Athens, Greece (By Christos Yapijakis)

Post by “Cassius” of February 22, 2020 at 10:41 AM

I want to make another comment about the symposium model: I definitely like the "look" of it, and I would like to see something similar in the USA and other countries. The Athens group has done a remarkable job.

But I don't think that we in a group like Epicureanfriends.com should set the holding of seminars to be our primary focus. We ought to think carefully about what seminars accomplish. Are they the most effective method for spreading reliable and useful information about Epicurus to new people, and for forming a tight-knit "movement" of like-minded friends?

I think that modern technology means that traditional academic-style seminars are no longer the most useful method of teaching a philosophy. They definitely have their uses and they serve as a sort of "reward" for selected speakers, but that in itself is not an unadulterated good. As Elli reminds me "<<□□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□,□□□□□□ □□□□ □□

If someone just wants to give a lecture, it isn't necessary any more to have an auditorium - just set up a camera and you can reach many more people. Yes there is "atmosphere" in a gathering and you can talk to each other afterwards, but that doesn't make a "school" or build a body of like-minded people who can be friends with each other and become part of the movement and eventually lecturers themselves.

I think the more important work is to connect ordinary people over the internet (first), then after that in real life, and thereby forming a network to work together on something that Epicurus himself would recognize as Epicurean.

If the goal is a "movement" and "friends" and enjoyment while we do it - which I think that it is - we shouldn't be looking at a seminar system as the ultimate model.

I think our internet productions such as podcasting can provide the lecture equivalent, with the next step being to open up live participation shows to provide the back and forth and the camaraderie. That is at least one way to provide motivation and reward until hopefully we can build to the point where local groups can emerge.

But not local lecture groups, but local participatory "schools" in a wide sense of that term.