

Another flawed video about Epicureanism

Post by “Charles” of November 7, 2019 at 10:24 PM

I just found this video released yesterday that talks about the principles of Epicurus. Its another one of those unfamiliar content producers trying to explain his philosophy to equally uninformed people.

However, I think it does a better job than most, but is still not without flaw. He does mention the "static" and "moving" pleasure misconception as being something that Epicurus defined, albeit he barely goes into it and its mentioned for only a few seconds and never again. He also places heavy emphasis on the three types of desires, which while I do think they are valid, he went a little too in-depth on them while not mentioning anything like the Hedonic Calculus, which I think is more reliable as a concept.

Despite its immediate flaws, he doesn't present the idea that happiness is simply the absence of pain, although he was a little soft on the concept of indulging in pleasure. There was even a bit where he included the fear of death and god, and included the problem of evil that is "attributed" to Epicurus. Still, its perhaps one of the better videos out there, I might browse through the comments later and provide a counter-argument against the concept of the two types of pleasures.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plETGDgMdtg>

Post by “Cassius” of November 8, 2019 at 2:23 AM

Charles:

Thank you for posting this. I agree with you that this one is better than most. It is, alas, as you say, infected with the standard problems, but to a slightly lesser extent than others. I suppose this is to be expected based on this clip about the author of the video:

What am I then?

First and foremost I'm a lover of wisdom. I have been studying Stoicism, Buddhism and Taoism for many years now. My interest in 'the meaning of life' led to me obtaining a bachelor's degree in *Social Studies* and a master's degree in *Religious & Ritual Studies*.

I also made these preliminary notes:

- The general error here is that his focus on this version of Natural and Necessary, plus this version of Static/Moving, makes Epicurus sound like an ascetic, which he was not.

4:30 -- says Epicurus was celibate!!? Absolutely no evidence of that !

The video says happy life = absence of anxiety and suffering -- which is the same old problem.

8:00 - References the Epicurus "riddle" -- Includes a section about god being omnipotent, but does not explain that is not how the Greeks viewed gods, so this would not have been an argument Epicurus would have made himself.

9:40 Comes right out and alleges that Epicurus taught "Rational philosophy of pleasure that is strikingly ascetic!" Yes, the Stoic view all right. Compounds the misrepresentation by saying this over a picture of the cherub figure (rather than Epicurus himself) from the "School of Athens" fresco.

9:56 Alleges that Epicurus lived on water bread and olives most of the time. how ridiculous! I suppose that's why Epicurus needed a household staffed amply with slaves, to be sure he got served his "bread and water" on time every day.

It is sad to say that even with these and other issues we could list, that you are right Charles -- in relative terms this is one of the "better" videos.

I could not recommend this to someone who doesn't have access to the full picture of Epicurus, but it's good to have this for comparison towards the time when someone with video skills puts together a better version.