

Welcome Jon M!

Post by “Cassius” of May 19, 2020 at 6:57 AM

Hello and welcome to the forum [Jon M](#) !

This is the place for students of Epicurus to coordinate their studies and work together to promote the philosophy of Epicurus. Please remember that all posting here is subject to our [Community Standards / Rules of the Forum](#) our [Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean](#) and our [Posting Policy statements](#) and [associated posts](#).

Please understand that the leaders of this forum are well aware that many fans of Epicurus may have sincerely-held views of what Epicurus taught that are incompatible with the purposes and standards of this forum. This forum is dedicated exclusively to the study and support of people who are committed to classical Epicurean views. As a result, this forum is not for people who seek to mix and match some Epicurean views with positions that are inherently inconsistent with the core teachings of Epicurus.

All of us who are here have arrived at our respect for Epicurus after long journeys through other philosophies, and we do not demand of others what we were not able to do ourselves. Epicurean philosophy is very different from other viewpoints, and it takes time to understand how deep those differences really are. That's why we have membership levels here at the forum which allow for new participants to discuss and develop their own learning, but it's also why we have standards that will lead in some cases to arguments being limited, and even participants being removed, when the purposes of the community require it. Epicurean philosophy is not inherently democratic, or committed to unlimited free speech, or devoted to any other form of organization other than the pursuit by our community of happy living through the principles of Epicurean philosophy.

One way you can be most assured of your time here being productive is to tell us a little about yourself and personal your background in reading Epicurean texts. It would also be helpful if you could tell us how you found this forum, and any particular areas of interest that you have which would help us make sure that your questions and thoughts are addressed.

In that regard we have found over the years that there are a number of key texts and references which most all serious students of Epicurus will want to read and evaluate for themselves. Those include the following.

1. The Biography of Epicurus By Diogenes Laertius (Chapter 10). This includes all Epicurus' letters and the Authorized Doctrines. Supplement with the Vatican list of Sayings.
2. **"Epicurus And His Philosophy" - Norman DeWitt**

3. "On The Nature of Things"- Lucretius
4. Cicero's "On Ends" - Torquatus Section
5. Cicero's "On The Nature of the Gods" - Velleius Section
6. The Inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda - Martin Ferguson Smith translation
7. A Few Days In Athens" - Frances Wright
8. Lucian Core Texts on Epicurus: (1) Alexander the Oracle-Monger, (2) Hermetimus
9. Plato's [Philebus](#)
10. Philodemus "On Methods of Inference" (De Lacy version, including his appendix on relationship of Epicurean canon to Aristotle and other Greeks)
11. "The Greeks on Pleasure" -Gosling & Taylor Sections on Epicurus, especially on katastematic and kinetic pleasure.

It is by no means essential or required that you have read these texts before participating in the forum, but your understanding of Epicurus will be much enhanced the more of these you have read.

And time has also indicated to us that if you can find the time to read one book which will best explain [classical Epicurean philosophy](#), as opposed to most modern "eclectic" interpretations of Epicurus, that book is Norman DeWitt's ***Epicurus And His Philosophy***.

Welcome to the forum!

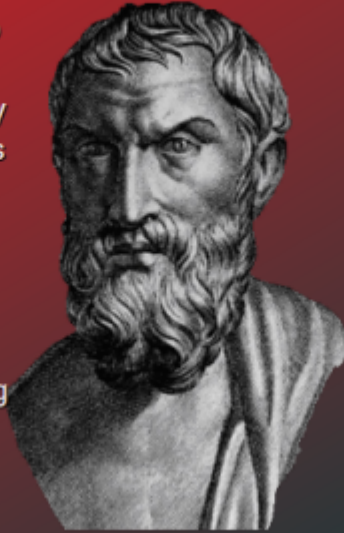
Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean

1. Not "flourishing," "human potential," "self-actualization," or "meaningfulness," but happiness grounded in the feeling of pleasure.
2. Not "absence of pain" as a full statement of the goal of life, but "the Feelings are two, pleasure and pain" and "Pleasure is the beginning and the end of a happy life."
3. Not virtue for the sake of virtue, but virtue as instrumental for the attainment of pleasure.
4. Not "the greatest good for the greatest number," but "Every desire must be confronted with this question: What will happen to me if the object of my desire is accomplished and what if it is not?"
5. Not "humanism," "transhumanism," "individualism," "collectivism," "egoism," "altruism," "social progress," "Marxism," "democracy," "tyranny," or any "one size fits all" political ideal of any kind, but social structure based on friendship which "is formed and maintained by means of a community of life among those who have reached the fullness of pleasure."
6. Not "hard determinism," but "some things happen from necessity, some from chance, and others through our own choice."
7. Not "supernaturalism," but "materialism."
8. Not "supernatural gods," or "life after death," but confidence in a fully material universe and "for those men for whom wisdom is possible, and who do seek it, such men may truly live as gods."
9. Not only "short term hedonism," but "it is to continuous pleasures that I invite you."
10. Not "rationalism," but "all reason is dependent upon sensations."
11. Not fearful of death nor careless of losing life, but valuing life for the opportunity of pleasure it brings.

Our Posting Policy At EpicureanFriends.com:

"No Partisan Politics," "No Supernatural Religion," and "No Absolute Virtue"

This forum is dedicated to promoting the philosophy of Epicurus, and not to any partisan political positions whether "left," "right," or "center." The task of rediscovering Epicurean philosophy requires that such discussions be held elsewhere. Posts violating this rule are subject to removal.



Epicurean philosophy firmly rejects the viewpoint that there are any supernatural forces or absolute virtues or Platonic ideals of any kind. Argument which is based on supernatural claims, or "absolute" virtues or ideals of any kind, are in violation of this rule and subject to removal.

Post by "Jon M" of May 19, 2020 at 1:43 PM

Thanks for your welcome. I am not sure how this Forum works exactly, but I have just commented on Elayne's *On Pain, Pleasure, and Happiness* as my initial post and introducing myself. Will that post show up in this Forum? Feel free to move that post to the most suitable place.

Thanks

-- Jon M

ADMIN NOTE: Jon's detailed comment on Elayne's post is at the following link: [Discussion of Article: "On Pleasure, Pain and Happiness"](#)

For continued welcoming of Jon in general, please post below! 😊

Post by "Cassius" of May 19, 2020 at 2:16 PM

Thank you Jon, for your post and your supportive comments. Welcome and we look forward to many discussions about Epicurus. Your post in comment on Elayne's article is now here here: [Discussion of Article: "On Pleasure, Pain and Happiness"](#)

Also, [Jon M](#) , may I ask, did you find this article here at the forum, or on Epicurusmagazine.com? It would help our "advertising" efforts to know how you found this.

Post by “Jon M” of May 19, 2020 at 5:01 PM

I found the article here, on Epicurean Friends. I linked to it from the New Epicurean site. I did not know you had a third site Epicurus Magazine.

I am sure the three sites have different functions (do you have any more?), but I find it a bit confusing, having to flick from one to the other. I am sure I will find my way around in time.

Thanks for all you do - great site (or sites, all three of them). As I said in my main post, it is wonderful to have such high-quality writing and insightful ideas about Epicurus all in one place (or in three places!)

-- Jon

Post by “Cassius” of May 19, 2020 at 5:45 PM

Jon - Newepicurean was my original blog I have used since 2010. When I set that up I knew that the Dewitt direction I was taking would not be popular in Academia, and more than that I knew I wanted to clearly separate from the Stoic synthesizers.

After about five years I realized I was pretty clear about the ultimate issues and I knew I wanted to build more "community" so I set up Epicureanfriend.com for that purpose. I continued to use NewEpicurean at times but devoted most of my time here.

As far as Epicurusmagazine.com goes, that is a recent startup for the sole purpose if highlighting our best articles so people don't have to search too hore to find the starting points.

In terms of monitoring them, I will make sure that everything of significance starts here at Epicureanfriends, so if you check in here regularly you will catch everything.

All of this stems from the perspective that it is best to make the positions very clear on the deeper and more "divisive" as quickly and clearly as possible so that people can decide whether to invest more time in Epicurus, or consider him just another rosebud to pick from a smörgåsbord, which seems too often to be the general approach. 😊

Post by "Martin" of May 20, 2020 at 1:32 AM

Welcome Jon!

Post by "Jon M" of May 20, 2020 at 1:21 PM

Thanks Cassius for your explanation. Thanks Martin for the welcome, and thanks Don for liking my post on Elayne's article.

-- Jon

Post by "Cassius" of May 25, 2020 at 4:34 PM

Jon I really appreciate your contributions to the forum so far. I think I read that you found the forum through NewEpicurean.com but could you let me know how you found that website? Googling Epicurus? In the past many of us have come together through Facebook but i am convinced that is declining and was never an optimum source so I always want to be alert to how to find quality posters like yourself.

Post by "Jon M" of May 26, 2020 at 7:24 PM

Hi Cassius

Thanks for your kind words.

I click around a lot, and I have forgotten what exactly I was researching, but I found your site through a Google search, as you say.

I had just finished Catherine Wilson's latest book *How To Be An Epicurean: The Ancient Art Of Living Well* and from memory I was researching one of her many claims which seemed to me dodgy (I have forgotten precisely what).

I didn't like the book particularly. It was her own interpretation, which is fair enough - it was her book! But she was applying what she thought Epicurus and Lucretius were saying to a large number of modern-day situations which did not interest me. In many ways it was a general self-help book with mainly her ideas and Epicurus playing a supporting role.

I use social media very little, and Facebook not at all.

-- Jon

Post by “Cassius” of May 26, 2020 at 7:38 PM

Sounds like you are a perfect fit for our forum! Glad to have you!

The kind of scary thing to me about the Catherine Wilson book is that while I agree with everything you wrote, I think she still manages to portray Epicurus in a way that comes across better than many other current books. As you say, I think she employs Epicurus for her own goals, and I find those goals in my view much too shortsighted, but I grudgingly give her credit that she sees in a small way how much of a revolution Epicurus represented, a spirit that I don't find in the writers who see Epicurus as basically a Stoic. On that issue - Epicurus' distance from Stoicism - she does a better job than many.

Post by “Jon M” of May 26, 2020 at 7:48 PM

I agree with you. I wasn't suggesting she doesn't know her stuff, she clearly does. I was only saying the book was not for me.

I certainly give her credit. There are many folk who would both like her book and find it helpful. I am just not one of them.

Six months ago there was [an interview](#) with her in Scientific American where she sums up her thinking.

-- Jon