

Welcome Bartleby!

Post by “Cassius” of November 29, 2020 at 1:09 PM

Hello and welcome to the forum [Bartleby](#) ! (Note- I am setting this up as a normal welcome, but I see you have already posted a substantive thread, and some will probably choose to comment there: [Is Romantic Love a Vainglory](#))

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. ["Epicurus and His Philosophy"](#) by Norman DeWitt

2. ["A Few Days In Athens"](#) by Frances Wright
3. ["The Biography of Epicurus by Diogenes Laertius."](#) This includes the surviving letters of Epicurus, including those to [Herodotus](#), [Pythocles](#), and [Menoceus](#).
4. ["On The Nature of Things"](#) - by Lucretius (a poetic abridgement of Epicurus' "On Nature")
5. ["Epicurus on Pleasure"](#) - By Boris [Nikolsky](#)
6. The chapters on Epicurus in [Gosling and Taylor's "The Greeks On Pleasure."](#)
7. [Cicero's "On Ends" - Torquatus Section](#)
8. [Cicero's "On The Nature of the Gods" - Velleius Section](#)
9. The Inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda - [Martin Ferguson Smith translation](#)
10. ["A Few Days In Athens" - Frances Wright](#)
11. Lucian Core Texts on Epicurus: (1) [Alexander the Oracle-Monger](#), (2) [Hermotimus](#)
12. [Philodemus "On Methods of Inference"](#) (De Lacy version, including his appendix on relationship of Epicurean canon to Aristotle and other Greeks)

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 "Bartleby" of November 29, 2020 at 3:11 PM

Thank you Amicus,

I found this site while trying to answer a specific question, but I have long meant to deepen my knowledge of Epicurus.

I know little more than what was learned in a class on ancient Greek philosophy taken long ago.

I like most all the philosophers from that class, with Heraclitus, Parmenides, Socrates, Plato, and Epicurus being perhaps my favorites.

I'll try to read some of the suggested texts in the next couple weeks.

Best,

BW

Post by "Cassius" of November 29, 2020 at 3:35 PM

Good to hear from you Bartleby. If you read through the site at all you will see that head and shoulders above all others I recommend the DeWitt book. There are many disputes as to how to interpret Epicurus, and I won't suggest to you that there is any way you can know that you should accept the viewpoints you'll read here on this forum over those you will read most other places - the only judge of that can be your yourself. But many of us have found that the DeWitt approach summarizes in one place a clear alternative to the conventional analysis of Epicurus, and it is the best place to begin to check out that viewpoint.

I summarize these recommendations in the sidebar on the front page which I will paste here in case you're on a smartphone and don't see the sidebar. In this comment i suggest starting with a couple of articles, but in any order these sources will present you the alternative analysis:

Quote

Don't Be A "Stoic In Disguise!"

Many people who come here have been influenced by the alleged importance of a distinction between "kinetic" and "katastematic" pleasure. This argument is unsound, probably not of Epicurean origin at all, and can be very damaging to a proper understanding of Epicurus. To research this issue, start with [Boris Nikolsky's "Epicurus on Pleasure,"](#) which argues that the katastematic issue was not introduced by Epicurus and reflects a later Stoic-influenced viewpoint. Next, read the chapters on Epicurus in

[Gosling and Taylor's "The Greeks on Pleasure,"](#) from which [Nikolsky](#) got the inspiration for his article. The whole section on Epicurus is good, but be sure to read their Chapter 19 "Katastematic and Kinetic Pleasure." Add to that the Wentham article ["Cicero's Interpretation of Katastematic Pleasure,"](#) which highlights how emphasis on katastematic pleasure contradicts other core aspects of Epicurean philosophy.

Those shorter articles should then take you back to the best general book on Epicurus, [Norman DeWitt's "Epicurus and His Philosophy."](#) DeWitt provides a sweeping overview of Epicurus which hardly mentions the katastematic - kinetic distinction except to point out how - even if one considers the categories relevant - Epicurean philosophy embraces **both types**. If you don't read anything else at this website, check out the articles listed above, and you'll see how important this issue is to a proper understanding of Epicurean philosophy. And if you are brand new to the study of Epicurus, be sure to start your study with DeWitt's "**Epicurus and His Philosophy.**"

Post by "Cassius" of November 29, 2020 at 3:50 PM

Also Bartleby, in regard to this, did you find us by Googling or some other method? It's always good to know how people find us - thanks.

[Quote from Bartleby](#)

I found this site while trying to answer a specific question, but I have long meant to deepen my knowledge of Epicurus.

Post by "Martin" of December 2, 2020 at 8:35 AM

Welcome Bartleby!