

Welcome Adamsandvoid!

Post by “Cassius” of April 5, 2021 at 6:30 AM

Hello and welcome to the forum [AdamSandvoid](#) ! Very creative user name!

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) [Hermetimus](#)
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 "AdamSandvoid" of April 9, 2021 at 11:40 AM

Hi Cassius and everyone, I have been a "lurker" on this forum for a long time. I've learned a lot from everyone here. So thank you!

I don't know how I first found the forum but I was introduced to Epicureanism through my interest in Stoicism. I had the same reservations about popular Epicureanism -- and Stoicism -- that you raise here and your "not neo-epicurean" document helped me to get a glimpse of what this is all about. Enough to dig in and begin studying.

Over the last few years I've read many of the posts here from all of you; I've read DeWitt and Lucretius; A Few Days In Athens; also Cicero and Diogenes Laertius; also Gosling and Taylor and [Nikolsky](#). And lots more, including modern writings. Of course there is more to study and much to go over again.

Somewhere along the line I became determined to create a simple "starting point" for beginners. I believe I was inspired by a post here, but I can't find it. I've attempted this here: <https://www.epicswerve.com> (I hope posting the link is not poor etiquette, I'm happy to remove it if so). My model is to introduce interested folks to what I believe are initial and essential points, in the hope of engaging them and then providing them with inspiration for ongoing or deeper studies with a newsletter. I didn't find anything like this when I was searching (at least, what I am intending). I'm interested in any feedback.

I hope you are all keeping well.

Post by "Cassius" of April 9, 2021 at 1:14 PM

Good to hear from you Adamsandvoid. And oh no, it's good for you to paste that link. I've looked at it and it is a very impressive start for what you have in mind. Have you already issued past issues of a newsletter? If so, and if you're ok with it, it would be great for you to post links to those here, and then also people can subscribe to get new ones.

Hope you'll ask for feedback here, contribute, or let us know in any way we can help with what you're doing.

Post by "Martin" of April 10, 2021 at 6:16 AM

Welcome AdamSandvoid!

Your page indicates that you interpret Epicurus' philosophy like we do here. That in itself is great because other quite different interpretations abound. Thank you for opening a complementary path for people to find the "right" version of the "right" philosophy!

During first pass reading, I found only one detail to which I have an objection, that is the paragraph with "... Epic Swerve, the moment in our lives when we make a small change that makes all the difference between being bound by fate and exercising our free will" and "Swerve today!" and related statements.

Although other friends here, too, have used the swerve in analogy to small, decisive steps we take within the scope of our free will/agency, this can be misleading. The swerve is entirely random, not directed by any will and no sign of a will.

There is a strong analogy between the swerve and the uncertainty principle. That principle may very well be what enables agency/free will (the alternative is to derive agency from emergent properties, which is less convincing for me). However, the path from the uncertainty principle to agency is not obvious and not yet fully explained, and objections to that path have not yet been refuted.

I take our agency as an empirical fact and the reference of agency to the uncertainty principle only as a tentative idea how to possibly explain agency in an entirely material and mostly deterministic world.

Post by "Cassius" of April 10, 2021 at 7:18 AM

I agree with Martin's comment as bring accurate, yet I certainly see how the swerve is tempting "allegorically" to be employed the way we are discussing. I can easily see doing both - using it allegorically but also quickly explaining that as with much of Epicurean philosophy first impressions are not what they seem to be.

Maybe the intersection is observing how Lucretius does not attempt to explain a mechanism and simply observes that this "must" exist in order to break the iron grip of destiny. And likewise observing that even though he held the swerve to exist, it does not regularly "break through" to observable consequences in our daily world.

There is no doubt but that Epicurus' view of "agency" is an important part if the philosophy and should be emphasized. As with gods and virtue and absence of pain and so much else, there seems to be an art in both making the point and breaking through incorrect preconceptions as quickly as possible.

Post by “AdamSandvoid” of April 10, 2021 at 4:22 PM

Hi Martin and everyone, thank you for the feedback. I especially liked this bit about "objections to that path have not yet been refuted." This is how I like to approach things myself so it's good to have someone else looking over the material.

I define the Epic Swerve (capital E and capital S) as the moment you find epicureanism and begin your study. That is built into the DNA of the url and the site itself. In my own mind it makes sense that the capitalized word means what I intend it to mean but I can easily see -- now that it is pointed out -- that it can be confusing in a way that is unintended. I've updated the page to remove or update the items you mentioned Martin and will keep my eye open for other items.

And Cassius, this is the key for my effort: cultivating the "art in both making the point and breaking through incorrect preconceptions as quickly as possible." Although in a way my ideal reader is actually slightly different -- they don't necessarily have incorrect preconceptions that need to be rectified, they just need to be properly introduced to the material in a way that is engaging and draws them on to deeper study.

Post by “Don” of April 10, 2021 at 7:40 PM

I'm fine with that idea of the technical swerve and the colloquial, metaphorical "Swerve". Any choice or rejection we make is a spot where our lives can "swerve" one way or the other. People can get the metaphorical one easily, then be introduced to the technical jargon later. Just so people are clear that the atom doesn't decide to swerve! 😊

Oh, and just to add, nice work on the site! Seems like a solid intro... And welcome aboard here!

Post by “Cassius” of April 11, 2021 at 10:38 AM

AdamSandVoid, we can post a link to your website over at the facebook and possibly some other locations too if you like. I doubt it will flood you with visitors but I'm not sure - are you still working on it and would prefer to wait before we post about it?

Post by “AdamSandvoid” of April 11, 2021 at 4:51 PM

That would be wonderful. I am always working on it but it is ready for visitors.

Thanks for the warm welcome everyone. :)

Post by “Cassius” of April 13, 2021 at 2:27 PM

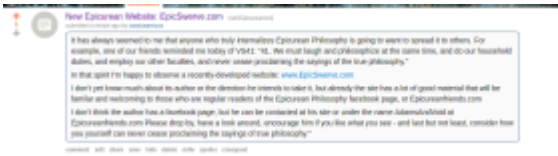
At some point we might want to start a separate thread for the EpicSwerve website, but for now I will just add here what I just [posted on Facebook](#):



And the newepicurean.com blog: <https://newepicurean.com/new-epicurean-...epicswerve-com/>



Reddit: https://www.reddit.com/r/Epicureanism..._epicswervecom/



Twitter: <https://twitter.com/NewEpicurean/status/1382037589167902720>

I wonder if I am missing other obvious places that we could post material like this (?)

Post by “Don” of April 13, 2021 at 2:37 PM

Just FYI: his username is capitalized AdamSandvoid... I'm assuming a pun on Adam Sandler. 😊

Post by “Cassius” of April 13, 2021 at 2:44 PM

Duh if i were halfway in tune with modern culture, or just not so lazy, I would have picked that up. I knew it was a reference to someone, but I wasn't quite sure who it was or whether it would be a "good" association or not, so I took the easy way out 😊

Post by “AdamSandvoid” of April 13, 2021 at 7:14 PM

[Cassius](#), this is really great. Thank you for posting the links to the Web site. I appreciate that. I did get some additional traffic today and some people signed up for the newsletter which is very cool! I think my username is kind of clever either way -- as an Adam Sandler reference, which is how I began, or as AdamsAndVoid. Go with whatever makes you feel better. :)