

# Brett's (belial1975) Epicurean Outline

Post by “brett” of January 17, 2018 at 10:34 AM

Okie dokie. Here goes.

1. Nature / Physics
    1. There is no supernatural realm/entity that governs the universe
    2. Matter and void are the basic building blocks of reality
    3. Natural laws guide physical processes
    4. Basic state of the physical world is change and transformation - nothing is static materially
  2. Knowledge /Truth
    1. The senses are reliable witnesses
    2. Reason helps us determine what philosophical principles are valid (i.e. especially in deducing next principles from axioms)
    3. Especially with respect to knowledge of the physical world, we are constantly revising 'knowledge' in response to new facts and data through the scientific method
  3. Ethics / How to live
    1. Pleasure is the goal of life
    2. What is pleasurable for one is not for another - pleasure is relative to a large extent
    3. Some actions, on average, tend to create pain (unfaithfulness to friends/loved ones, theft) for most folks while some tend to create pleasure (deep friendship)
    4. "Live and let live" - the good society is the one that allows people to express and pursue their own pleasures and only limits the former when it interferes with that selfsame pursuit of others
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Post by “Cassius” of January 17, 2018 at 11:43 AM

Excellent example for what we are trying to do here - thanks Brett!

Here are initial comments:

**Especially with respect to knowledge of the physical world, we are constantly revising 'knowledge' in response to new facts and data through the scientific method**  
<<< This is a subject where Philodemus "On Methods of Inference" has important things to say.

The edition I have linked in the [library here](#) has a LOT of good commentary in the appendix by [DeLacy \(this is the direct link\)](#) where he unwinds what Philodemus was saying the Epicureans thought on the issue of: how do we take past experience and infer conclusions about things where we have no experience / how far can we go?

**"Live and let live" - the good society is the one that allows people to express and pursue their own pleasures and only limits the former when it interferes with that selfsame pursuit of others** - DeWitt says this and I largely agree, but I wonder if there are not limits to this conclusion. If the central focus is always pleasure, may there not be times when the structure of the society has to adjust so as to achieve pleasure under circumstances that limit freedom (such as the Romans appointing a temporary dictator to preserve the society.) All the questions about organization of society are very interesting.

Lots more to say in later posts!

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### **Post by "brett" of January 17, 2018 at 1:54 PM**

thanks Cassius. I'll do some reading of the link above and see if I should tweak my axioms.

A very fun exercise.

Brett

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### **Post by "Cassius" of January 17, 2018 at 2:34 PM**

I think we'll find that most peoples' outlines are not nearly as on-point as yours, so will require lots more comment. Working out a procedure for making suggestions is fun too. I would hope others as they come by this in the future will add lots more comments, and as you think of better ways to outline you'll post updates. Should be helpful to everyone.

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### **Post by "brett" of January 17, 2018 at 3:50 PM**

1. Nature / Physics
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    2. Atoms and void are the basic building blocks of reality
    3. Natural laws guide physical processes
    4. Basic state of the physical world is change and transformation - nothing is static materially
  2. Knowledge /Truth
    1. The senses are reliable witnesses
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    3. Especially with respect to knowledge of the physical world, we are constantly revising 'knowledge' in response to new facts and data through the scientific method
  3. Ethics / How to live
    1. Pleasure is the only/ultimate goal of life
    2. What is pleasurable for one is not for another - pleasure is relative to a large extent
    3. Some actions, on average, tend to create pain (unfaithfulness to friends/loved ones, theft) for most folks while some tend to create pleasure (deep friendship)
    4. "Live and let live" - the good society is the one that allows people to express and pursue their own pleasures and only limits the former when it interferes with that selfsame pursuit of others or by doing so will increase the likelihood of greater pleasure than the pain of restriction freedom
    5. Death is not to be feared - for when we die we are no longer subject to sensation, anticipations or feelings
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### 3. Ethics / How to live

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5. Death is not to be feared - for when we die we are no longer subject to sensation, anticipations or feelings
6. Actions should always be decided by the result of the decision with respect to pain/pleasure. However, some actions which result in pain are worthy of choice when the long-term result is pleasure (i.e. exercising SUCKS but the short term pain can result in longer term bodily pleasure via better health)
7. Friendship is a beautiful way to secure advantage for both sides of the equation and there is no shame in gaining benefit from friendship so long as the benefit is mutual