

New Youtube Video - "Epicurus Responding to His Haters" - October 2025

Post by "Cassius" of October 5, 2025 at 3:55 PM

[We've just had this video submitted by a participant at the Facebook group.](#) It was originally produced in French but there's been an English overlay added, and it's very understandable. I've prepared a very negative review of it which I will post next, but as I told the poster, this is something I definitely recommend watching. Any long and professional treatment of Epicurus is good for publicity, and as I wrote in my review even though I find lots to object to, the video is very thought-proving. To say the least, this is NOT the view of Epicurus I advocate, but it certainly does dramatize many of the issues in dispute!

(I should also warn you that the video is kind of weird in incorporating an actual commercial (for Infomaniak, apparently a cloud provider) into the flow of the discussion.

Quote

Hi, friends! I just watched this funny yet very interesting and well-researched video about Epicurus and his philosophy on a really great philosophy channel called "Monsieur Phi" - it is presented as if the host was interviewing Epicurus. It was released type unknown less than a week ago and it already has ~180k views.

The only possible downside is that it is in French. But if your French isn't great, you can follow reading the subtitles, using the automatic translation for the subtitles... or, if totally needed, changing the audio version to an AI-generated english-version (which I wouldn't recommend, since a lot of the nuances and jokes might be lost in translation!)

By the end he touches on the subject of the 2,000 yrs old burnt scrolls on Epicurean philosophy that are being digitally reconstructed:
<https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%...dIHeNqaiggDC3Gg>

Great stuff!

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

Post by "Cassius" of October 5, 2025 at 3:57 PM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4749-new-youtube-video-epicurus-responding-to-his-haters-october-2025/>

[My response to the poster at Facebook.](#)

Samuel --

Thank you very much for referring this video to us! As you say it is very interesting and well researched. I watched it using the AI generated English version, and it's very listenable, although I am sure you are right that much subtlety is lost. I am very glad to see such a long and professionally-made video devoted to Epicurus.

I would recommend that everyone who takes Epicurus seriously watch this video, but be warned, I would *not* say that "the only possible downside

is that it is in French." There are many more downsides which I will touch on here.

The primary downside is what people sometimes express as "Don't confuse me with facts." This video covers a lot of facts - many citations from the texts that are accurate and well documented. But the end result of the total video package will be much more confusion than clarity.

The trouble is that the video paints over the facts of the text with a thick layer of pain that portrays of Epicurus as a loutish half-shaven drunkard. The Epicurus presented here relishes making arguments about pleasure that make no sense to any objective listener. And of course the video makes no effort to explain Epicurus' full position, but instead shows him deteriorating into drunkenness and physical illness to match the intended stereotype: that Epicurus' depraved lifestyle led directly to a painful and tragic end.

This video is shot through and through with the "Buddhist/Stoic" interpretation of Epicurus. The video implies that Epicurus held all desire to be pain, with the result that making the best of life means lowering all your standards to the lowest possible level -- which of course in this cynical view is the only way you can ensure you will never be disappointed. And of course in this Buddhist-lite viewpoint there's nothing worse than pain -- even though Epicurus specifically stated in his letter to Menoeceus that we will regular choose painful actions when those choices lead to more pleasure in the end. That very clear statement is of course omitted from this video, as is all other explanation of how Epicurus did not narrow the definition of pleasure, but widen it.

This video is the popular "joy through simplicity and decadence" viewpoint that even the ancient opponents of Epicurus like Cicero and Plutarch dared not make. Cicero and Plutarch and other ancient opponents did not advance this argument because they knew better. They knew his actual teachings, and they knew that the Epicurus never set as goal the attainment of minimal living or the lowest possible amount of pleasure. Instead, Epicurus emphasized that he "would not know the meaning of 'good'" without the stimulative pleasures of the body and the mind.

Cicero and Plutarch argued instead that Epicurus was contradicting himself, because they knew that Epicurus clearly embraced ****both**** the pleasures of body and of mind. Modern interpreters omit what the ancient world clearly knew, and they rewrite Epicurus as a total ascetic who is best pictured as a sloppy and obnoxious college dropout sitting as if at a toga party overdosing on drugs and alcohol, rather than as an energetic and serious philosopher advocating a revolutionary but positive view of existence.

Rather than turn this comment into an essay of its own, that "vision" issue is the objection I would stress the most. I enjoy humor as much as anyone, and it's wrong to take this video too seriously. But the vast majority of people who don't know the details will assume that the model of an Epicurean today should be the obnoxious toga-party dropout who spouts nonsense that he clearly doesn't really believe himself. Nothing could be further from the truth.

That's not what Epicurus was about, and this video adds to the unfair portrayals of Epicurus throughout history. But Cicero's and Plutarch's attacks against Epicurus boomeranged against them, in that they preserved Epicurus' true sayings even while other opponents were burning them. Likewise, this video does bring together many of Epicurus' actual statements, even if placed in a false context. If you take the time to do the research into how Epicurus's statements were understood in the ancient world, you will see that Epicurus was the opposite of the buffoon portrayed here. The modern Epicurean will do just what the ancient Epicurean did: he or she will take life seriously and make the very best of the time we have.

If you look at this portrayal of Epicurus and say "right on, I dig that," then ironically you ought to be reading Buddhism or Stoicism. There you'll find a truly consistent path to simple and ascetic living, and you won't have to worry about the texts of Epicurus which directly contradict that viewpoint.

On the contrary, I hope many who watch this will see past the superficial perspective of this video. The best course is to look back into the ancient texts themselves. If you then consider the serious and energetic and accomplished lives lived by the leading ancient Epicureans under the influence of these texts, you'll conclude that the model of Epicurus portrayed in this video is nonsense.

But to close, thanks again for posting this Samuel! The best way to understand Epicurus is to confront these issues head-on, and this video is extremely helpful for those who want to do that. Sometimes even when you look at a false picture you're then inspired to search for the truth.

Post by “Kalosyni” of October 6, 2025 at 9:13 AM

The following [Principal Doctrines](#) help to determine what an Epicurean does and doesn't do -- not abstract ideals (such as asceticism or minimalism).

[PD24](#). If you reject any single sensation, and fail to distinguish between the conclusion of opinion, as to the appearance awaiting confirmation, and that which is actually given by the sensation or feeling, or each intuitive apprehension of the mind, you will confound all other sensations, as well, with the same groundless opinion, so that you will reject every standard of judgment. And if among the mental images created by your opinion you affirm both that which awaits confirmation, and that which does not, you will not escape error, since you will have preserved the whole cause of doubt in every judgment between what is right and what is wrong.

(The way to evaluate mere opinions and arrive at what is true, is to observe sensations and feelings).

[PD08](#). No pleasure is a bad thing in itself; but the means which produce some pleasures bring with them disturbances many times greater than the pleasures.

(Something is determined to be "bad" only when the consequences bring much worse sensations of pain).

[PD03](#). The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal of all that is painful. Wherever pleasure is present, as long as it is there, there is neither pain of body, nor of mind, nor of both at once.

(Something is considered genuinely pleasurable when it isn't accompanied by pain).

Post by “Kalosyni” of October 6, 2025 at 10:25 AM

Also:

VS79. The man who is serene causes no disturbance to himself or to another.

Post by “Cassius” of October 17, 2025 at 10:39 AM

Elli's comment on [Facebook](#):


Quote

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4749-new-youtube-video-epicurus-responding-to-his-haters-october-2025/>

Dear epicurean friend Cassius, your comment is invaluable - not merely insightful, but absolutely necessary. The image of Epicurus as a “drunken rogue” is not just a misunderstanding; it is a historical distortion. And no matter how humorous or technically polished the presentation may be, the essence remains: what is being promoted is a caricature that insults the philosophy of the Garden.

This video, however “well-made” it may be, reproduces a Buddhist-Stoic version of Epicurus, stripped of his active stance toward pleasure, pain, and life. Epicurus **#was #not #a #passive #ascetic** who “wants nothing so as not to suffer.” He was a philosopher of choice, evaluation, and presence. His phrase “I would not know the meaning of the good without the stimulating pleasures” is not rhetorical flourish; it is an ontological position. And its omission from the video is not innocent, it is misleading.

So I ask: Who created this video? What is its intended purpose? Why choose to portray Epicurus as ridiculous, weak, and inconsistent? Why omit his clearest statements about pleasure, pain, and active living? Why reproduce a stereotype that even his ancient opponents did not dare to use?

Cicero and Plutarch, despite their disagreements, knew that his thought was coherent, radical, and dangerously compelling. In contrast, today we see “admirers” portraying him as a toga-party dropout spouting nonsense and collapsing from excess. That is not Epicurus. That is an insult.  Image not found or type unknown

And yes, as you said, the solution is not to reject the video outright, but to use it as a prompt to return to the texts, to the real experiences of life and to conscious choices. Because Epicurus was never “simplistic.” He was clear, very clear. And his clarity is not deprivation, it is fullness without fear, leading us - with his philosophy - to genuine pleasure and freedom!