

Crespo (Hiram) - "Tending the Epicurean Garden"

Post by "Hiram" of May 18, 2015 at 11:45 AM

[Tending the Epicurean Garden](#) is available from amazon and can also be purchased directly from [Humanist Press](#) which, by the way, also made available WH Mallock's [Lucretius on Life and Death](#) available as a free companion to it.

Book Reviews

By [Michael Fontaine](#), a Cornell University classicist, written for [The Humanist](#), a publication of the [American Humanist Association](#)

By [David Tamayo](#), of [Hispanic American Freethinkers](#)

By [Rick Heller](#), written for [secularbuddhism.org](#)

By [Alan Furth \(en español\)](#) for the Las Indias blog

[NewEpicurean.com](#) review by Cassius Amicus

[Balance Pleasure and Structure?](#), from the Brian Beholds blog

Reviewer Feedback

In Tending the Epicurean Garden Crespo has given all of us a way to think about how we live—our choices, abilities, appetites, freedoms, and responsibilities. He distills the relevant scholarship on Epicureanism in a succinct and unassuming way.

Michael Fontaine, for [The Humanist](#)

Hiram Crespo has done a masterful job in describing the teachings of Epicurus and making them relevant to modern life ... "Tending the Epicurean Garden" is a breath of fresh air if, like me, you have tried to read the dull prose of some professional philosophers.

Robert and Martha Hanrott, of the [Epicurus blog](#)

This is one of the few absolutely pro-Epicurean books to have been written in the last several hundred years ... One can read this book without any knowledge at all of the history or doctrine of Epicurus, because the author provides a good measure of both history and teachings in the course of the book ... Hopefully there will be more to come from the same author.

Cassius Amicus, of [newepicurean.com](#)

This brilliant book may certainly be the first of its kind. There are many academic introductions to Ancient Philosophy out there, just as there are countless self-help books often drawing on

various spiritual of esoteric traditions. Crespo's book is a bit of both ... A highly educational and enjoyable read!

Sasha Euler, ethics professor

The more I understand Epicurus the more affinity I feel. This is rare. This guy was sticking it to the superstitious and flipping off the pretentious philosophers consumed with metaphysical nonsense. He sounds like the Christopher Hitchens of the ancient world! Don't fear God! Don't fear death! Trust your senses for that is how most knowledge is acquired. Have a few good friends. Concern yourself with what you can control. Find ways to minimize emotional and physical suffering and maximize pleasure with the checks and balances of natural consequences. What's not to love? Hiram Crespo, I loved your book! Deeply provocative!

Eric Sherman, reader

Hiram Crespo's book "Tending the Epicurean Garden" is a concise and wholesome presentation of Epicurean philosophy, which I very much enjoyed reading ... The basics of Epicurean philosophy is presented in a simple, user-friendly, narrative way but at the same time, when needed, it is corroborated by current scientific findings and it is paralleled correspondingly with other similar concepts from various schools of thought and cultures of Europe, Asia, the Americas and Africa.

Christos Yapijakis, member of the Athens Garden

The book presents complex material, clearly written ... Secular Buddhists can clearly benefit from allowing another stream of ancient wisdom to flow into this emerging project of seeking abiding tranquility and the end of suffering.

Rick Heller, co-founder of the Humanist Mindfulness Group and contributor to secularbuddhism.org

El libro es una resumida pero muy completa introducción a los principios básicos y la práctica del epicureísmo. Pero también brinda una interesante interpretación de las enseñanzas de Epicuro desde el punto de vista de la psicología positiva, la neurociencia y otras disciplinas científicas que hoy en día corroboran gran parte del legado del maestro.

Alan Furth, [Las Indias](#) blogger

Post by "Cassius" of January 6, 2022 at 2:58 PM

It was called to my attention today that we don't have much here in terms of reviews of Hiram's book. We really ought to add more commentary in this thread, since a lot of people come into contact with it.

I have a lot I could say about this book but let me be brief for the moment. Hiram put a lot of work into this and into his other work, and there's a lot to be gained from reading it. However it is important to keep in mind what this book is not:

1. It is not a full and complete introduction to Epicurean philosophy. For that, I strongly recommend DeWitt's "Epicurus and His Philosophy."
2. It is not a detailed commentary on some particular aspect of Epicurean philosophy. For that, you will want to consult one of the many academic articles you can find searching JSTOR or Academia.com.
3. It is not a "compare and contrast" book that explores in detail the differences and similarities between Epicurus and competing philosophies and doctrines. Hiram covers a number of traditions that he feels to be compatible with Epicurean philosophy, and he makes recommendations on how someone might want to consider pursuing them. But it's not a deep discussion of the merits or demerits of other approaches and whether they are ultimately logically consistent with Epicurus.

Hiram's book is in my view much more of a "self-help" book that people who are somewhat familiar with a variety of other traditions besides Epicurus may find helpful in their own pursuit of techniques to improve their lives. When read in that way I think Hiram's book is helpful. I have a copy myself and don't mind including it on reading lists for people who are interested in this approach.

But I do want to caution people against thinking that Hiram is giving, or even attempting to give, an exhaustive analysis of the details of Epicurean philosophy and how it compares with competing Greek or non-Greek philosophies. If you approach it looking for that information you may end up being confused about the issues that Hiram chooses to emphasize as against what you read in Lucretius, or in Epicurus' own letters, or in Diogenes Laertius or the other ancient sources.

People who come across this thread are encouraged to post their own thoughts about "Tending the Epicurean Garden" as that will likely be of great use to those who read it. And especially - if you have questions or concerns while reading it - please don't hesitate to post here in this thread and we'll deal with them as they occur to you.

How do my current thoughts compare to what I wrote on another venue seven years ago? I think you'll see some of the same points in an earlier form, but I am more cautious about recommending it today:

Quote

[Cassius Amicus](#) [Jul 17, 2014](#) [Cassius Amicus](#)

This is an excellent book focused on how you can apply ancient Epicurean principles to live a happier life in the modern world. Hiram Crespo is the founder of the Society of

Epicurus, and this is his first book, explaining his suggestions for living according to the principles of Epicureanism. This is not an academic treatise or a primer on basic Epicurean doctrines, but a practical guide written for general audiences. The book explains Epicurean views in context with similar views from numerous other traditions, and shows how techniques from a variety of sources can be combined to assist in living more pleasurably. The book is well written and well organized, providing essentially a "self-help" approach with lots of specific advice. This is one of the few absolutely pro-Epicurean books to have been written in the last several hundred years. As far as I know, one has to go back to Frances Wright's "A Few Days In Athens" for another book which comes out swinging in its unreserved advocacy of Epicureanism as a lifestyle and as a philosophy. One can read this book without any knowledge at all of the history or doctrine of Epicurus, because the author provides a good measure of both history and teachings in the course of the book. However the reader who is new to Epicureanism would profit from consulting websites such as <http://www.epicurus.info/>, <http://www.epicurus.net/>, and of course Crespo's own <http://www.societyofepicurus.com/> for more background on the specifics of Epicurean ideas. It appears that Crespo's work as an advocate for Epicurean ideas is just getting started, so hopefully there will be more to come from the same author. ([less](#))

Post by "smoothiekiwi" of January 6, 2022 at 4:22 PM

I think that for the most part, I agree with [Cassius](#). It was a good book to read, and it showed to me a few new concepts- nevertheless, I can't say that I found it a „must-read“. It's good, but it's not extraordinary. And yes, I would also place it into the category of self-help. That isn't some form of judgement- I don't want to say that it's good or bad-, its simply a classification without judging if its good and bad.