

# Epicurean substitute for prayer

**Post by "Cassius" of September 6, 2020 at 4:16 PM**

Wagner struggles with the issues of pleasure and pain in his Tannhauseur, and he makes the hero waiver back and forth, but some of the excerpts when he is praising pleasure and great poetry, especially when combined with his music. In this 30 minute clip I capture some of the most important of the pleasure/pain discussion. I've cued this to a short song outburst that is one of the best:

After the post I have cued, the second scene in this clip is also excellent. In the song contest, the hero sings in praise of what is at least a loosely Epicurean view of love/pleasure against what is very specifically a stoic/platonic view of love/pleasure. That begins at the point where two platonic lover sings a short statement, rebuked strongly by the hero, who is at this point pretty much channeling Epicurus, at 14:38. In both cases you'll hear a little bit of crosstalk that is less than inspiring, but if you give it just a few minutes in both scenes you will see exactly what I am talking about. In these excerpts, especially the singing contest, it appears to me that Wagner is showing that he knows **\*\*exactly\*\*** what the issues are between Epicurean and non-Epicurean views of pleasure. He seemingly takes the side of the Platonic/religionists in the end, but I think I have read, and I think myself, that his argument in favor of the Epicurean side is much more convincing. And if you wade through the whole of the play, the religionists don't come off so great either, and "god" seems to bless the hero despite his supposedly unpardonable flirtations with Venus.

<https://youtu.be/-RV60cW4IbM?t=554>