

Welcome ACCORD!

Post by “Cassius” of May 20, 2019 at 10:57 AM

Welcome [accord](#) ! When you get a chance please introduce yourself and tell us a little about your background in Epicurus.

Post by “accord” of May 20, 2019 at 11:07 AM

Thank you.

I look forward to participating in this site.

Post by “accord” of May 20, 2019 at 11:09 AM

I have included material in my profile. Here it is:

In 2016 I completed a PhD examining the influence of Jeremy Bentham and his followers on the development of Australian institutions and constitutions between 1830 and 1860.

I am interested in the influence of Epicurean ideas on the development of the West.

We are shifting into an age where Epicurean happiness has more relevance than systems in which virtue is primary. It can easily be demonstrated that happiness has been a key theme in political development at least since the 1700s - one need only look at the American Declaration of Independence and Jefferson's interest in Epicurean philosophy. Later, the British colonies of Canada, New Zealand, and Australia were heavily influenced by Bentham and his followers, with their ideas of political formation being grounded in the happiness principle.

Of course, a second stream of Epicurean influence is on the development of science, with Epicurus's atomic theory and his preference for evidence of the senses.

Post by “accord” of May 20, 2019 at 11:21 AM

By the way, in reference to your Ambient page ([Epicurean Music - Ambient](#)), I have been a huge fan of Brian Eno and his four ambient records since their release. Of course he also has other albums that would suitably quality, such as Apollo.

Eno is my number two favourite composer after Bach!

Post by “Cassius” of May 20, 2019 at 11:22 AM

Great to have you Accord! I look forward to your participation and encourage you to start threads on any topics that interest you.

If you are not familiar with Frances Wright's "A Few Days In Athens," you will see that she dedicated the book to Jeremy Bentham, and that is probably one of the connections between Epicurus and Utilitarian thought to which you refer.

<http://www.AFewDaysInAthens.com>

Post by “accord” of May 20, 2019 at 11:27 AM

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Post by “Cassius” of May 20, 2019 at 11:29 AM

If you know of good Youtube links to those, please post them in that thread, and to your favorite Bach as well. - thanks!

Post by “accord” of May 20, 2019 at 11:49 AM

Yes, I have read Wright. And yes, that is one connection.

For example, from *The Collected Works of Jeremy Bentham*, Clarendon Press, *Principles of Legislation*, 1996

p lxxv.: 'At numerous points in *Utilitarianism* Mill employed the language and concepts of Bentham's theory of action. But he also sought to link utilitarianism with a larger philosophical tradition which included Epicurus, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. He seems to have adopted the idea that happiness and utility were equivalent terms for a *summum bonum* in ethics, and one which was rooted in ancient thought. This idea and the account of virtue developed in association with it gave an Aristotelian tone to his discussion of the principle of utility, and perhaps may be responsible for some of the difficulties involved in its exposition.'

See Geraint Williams, 'J. S. Mill's Happiness: Utility or Eudaimonia? or "The dandelions always win"', *Fourth ISUS Conference Proceedings*, pp. 454-68. See also Geoffrey Scarre, 'Epicurus as a Forerunner of Utilitarianism', *Utilitas*, vi (1994), 219-31.

Mill was one of the key movers and shakers in the development of the colonies, per previous post.

But Bentham and his followers were also operating out of a tradition that had grown up with reference to Lucretius. One of Bentham's followers, Molesworth, was an expert on Hobbes, and Hobbes was influenced by Gassendi, etc.

Darrin McMahon's 'History of Happiness' is useful in tracing the lines of development of thought, though, as I recall, I don't think he has much to say about Bentham and Mill.

Post by “accord” of May 20, 2019 at 11:52 AM

No problem about links to music. Not tonight, but soon enough.

Post by “Cassius” of May 20, 2019 at 12:33 PM

I agree with the comment that Bentham's ethics are influenced by Aristotle and the others, probably at least as much as by Epicurus, so from my point of view that limits the usefulness of Benthamite reasoning in Epicurean philosophy. But discussing how and why that is the case would be very interesting and beneficial. We already have some discussions in that direction previously with [Daniel Van Orman](#)

Post by “Martin” of May 20, 2019 at 4:35 PM

Welcome accord!

Post by “accord” of May 21, 2019 at 9:14 PM

'We already have some discussions in that direction previously with [Daniel Van Orman](#)'
Great. I look forward to becoming acquainted with these ideas.

I am not one to squeeze anyone into a box, or find connections that are not there, so I really look forward to exchanging ideas.

My starting position is that the 18th century onwards has been an era during which happiness has been an important concept for political formation, and that Epicurus was an important foundation stone for that. I think of Bentham not as an ethicist, but am more interested in his legal and constitutional work.

At the moment I am busy with other things, but in around three months' time I will become more active here.

Post by “accord” of May 21, 2019 at 9:15 PM

Thank you for the welcome, Martin. I really look forward to becoming a part of this community of interest.