

# **Epicurean Freedom. Enslavement by culture. The mob.**

**Post by "Cassius" of April 19, 2018 at 9:00 PM**

Ok now I finished it. I suspect most everyone here (everyone who reads this) probably considers themselves a nonconformist. (I know I do!) But I don't think that the theory expressed in the video from Becker (which seems to be a call to "personal heroism" or "uniqueness" is really Epicurean. In fact the video even warns that non-conformity for the sake of non-conformity is circular and doesn't make sense. So the video to me clearly has this Platonic/Stoic sense that there is some "ideal" form of human character that we should all strive to attain.

But I don't think Epicurus describes life that way - certainly not that there is an absolute form of ideal - even of "uniqueness" to which we should (ironically, which is the position of the video) conform.

Instead we are born with a faculty of pleasure and pain that applies in all our mental and physical activities, and is partly genetic, partly conditioned, partly arising from our experience (and maybe other factors) but which all adds up to a sum in which we have our own perspective on what will make us happy (give us the most pleasure and least pain).

And since there are no absolutes, ideals, or supernatural gods to tell us what is "right" for us, we have to decide as best we can what to pursue, and we have to understand that others will act the same way.

These videos are definitely NOT a waste of time - they focus the question in a way that makes the issue sharp I think! This is definitely a major issue for all of us -- how do we define and apply what we learn from Epicurus? Do we really have to be "unique" in order to live the most pleasurable life? What is the life best lived? All those questions we struggle with all the time.

And as this thread continues in the future, someone will no doubt want to suggest that the story of Socrates and his forced suicide is directly relevant to this. As we know the Epicureans were not too fond of Socrates. I doubt that many of them would have endorsed his death the way it happened, but I can see them asking whether indeed there was not some justification for what happened to him. Do those who see their greatest pleasure in being unique really have the "right" to expect those who disagree with them to "put up with" their crusading non-conformity?