

Tim O'Keefe's "Epicurean Guide To Christmas" (An Article And Responses)

Post by "Cassius" of December 30, 2021 at 8:13 AM

Yes Matt has pretty much stated exactly what I am thinking, especially as to the issue of Nihilism. The only real elaboration I would add is that yes it is true that other than for perhaps Islam, as an overt religious movement, the overtly religious movements seem to be spent. There are very few crusading Presbyterians or Anglicans trying to take over governments and mandate that people follow their sects.

But (this goes back to the issue of whether "Humanism" is itself a religion) there are secular forms of absolutism that don't claim a supernatural basis, but which still claim a sort of Platonic / Stoic right to absolutism through "reason."

I don't want to divert us off into evaluation or criticism of the "Humanist" movement, because the definition of Humanism is so fluid and no one has the authority to state its definition with finality. The point would be broader and more simple -- that any claim of any nature by any group that there is only one way for everyone at all places and all times to live needs to be viewed very skeptically.

I would ask of each and every movement: Are they really pursuing a viewpoint compatible with Epicurus' identification of "pleasure" as the goal, or have they just substituted their own absolute view of "the good" and decided to mandate their own view of "Good without god" (which is an actual Humanist slogan)?

In the simplest terms I think Epicurus stands for the position that there is no "good" other than pleasure, and no "bad" other than pain" --- all good and bad derive from pleasure and pain, and whenever we take our eyes off the ultimate goal, we misidentify the means as the end.