

# **The Ethics of Epicurus and its Relation to Contemporary Doctrines by Jean-Marie Guyau. Edited by Testa and Ansell-Pearson, translated by Testa**

**Post by “Godfrey” of May 2, 2023 at 6:50 PM**

Here are some excerpts from the Editors Introduction, considering utilitarianism. Note that EP is being discussed in the introduction as utilitarian, *not* Utilitarian. Further, in Book 1 it's hardly mentioned: the focus is EP (as it appears to be throughout the book).

*"In a way, one could say that utilitarianism is but a chapter (although an important one) in a broader history of Epicureanism."*

*"Against the traditional reconstruction of Epicureanism as an egoistic and apolitical morality, characterized by a lack of attention to social concerns and a withdrawal from politics, Guyau shows that it was within the Epicurean tradition that important notions of modern political thought were first developed, such as a society founded on mutual agreements and the idea of social progress. To the Stoic tradition of natural law Guyau opposes the Epicurean 'pact of utility', which embodies the natural right of not harming and not being harmed by others. The pact, as Guyau sees it, is a way to come to terms with the tension existing between individual and society, between egoism and altruism."*

*"For Guyau, Epicureanism's distinctive character resides in also considering the future when acting in the present. For the Epicurean, the present must be linked to the future, and both present and future converge in the composition of a 'whole of life'. It is this encounter between present and future in enjoyment that Guyau calls 'utility': utility is pleasure fecundated by the idea of time."*