

# What "Live Unknown" means to me (Lathe Biosas)

Post by "Pacatus" of October 22, 2023 at 7:13 PM

In my perusal of past threads, I came on this post by [Cassius](#) - which I reproduce in full:

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Here's my answer: By no means did the classical Epicureans take the position that we should "never" be involved in politics. Look at the example of Cassius Longinus, and there are others as well.

The caution I always make is that people are individuals and have different programming for pleasure and pain, and by no means do everyone take pleasure and pain in the same things.

Given that difference, I do not think it is possible to take a \*Philosophic\* position that one view of pleasure or pain is \*philosophically\* approved by nature for everyone. That is also in my view the clear meaning of the last ten of so, [principal doctrines](#) as to justice, which are all about pointing out that there is no "absolute" justice.

I think Epicurean philosophy is hugely helpful in deciding how to evaluate politics and how to take political positions, but I also think that just like in the Roman Civil War it is possible for Epicureans to be on opposite sides of many important issues, so we should be careful not to overstep our bounds and say that Epicurus would endorse only one set of political positions. The clear (to me) import of the doctrines on Justice tells us to expect that people are going to take different positions about how they want to live, so applications of Epicurean philosophy to politics needs to take that into account.

So in my view too the prohibition here on discussing politics is no so much because there are not Epicurean implications, but because here, and at this stage of trying to organize people to discuss and promote the basics of Epicurean philosophy, we really don't want to be drawn into day-to-day disputes that would demoralize and divide and weaken us before we even get started.

No doubt in the future such divisions will occur, as you can already see them on other websites and commentators, some of which are overtly "leftist" and some of which are not (and quite the opposite in fact). But for now, and for here, we want to focus as a group on learning the basics before we go off as individuals pursuing our individual views of pleasure and pain, much as we would, if we were at a convention, divide up into groups to go to restaurants of various types.

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While I agree with this wonderful post completely, I will add just this caveat:

Under the rubric of “the agreement to neither harm nor be harmed” as the root of Epicurean natural justice, I do not think that one can assent to ideologies or political movements (or parties) that embrace causing harm as a means of securing their own social/political power, without violating Epicurean philosophy on that score. And I think that Epicureanism stands on stronger ground ethically all around than idealist philosophies such as the Stoics or Kantians (or religious/theological “divine command” theories).

LATE EDIT: I should have said "expansion" perhaps, instead of "caveat" given this clear statement by [Cassius](#) : "I think Epicurean philosophy is hugely helpful in deciding how to evaluate politics and how to take political positions."