

Epicureanism and Scientism: What are the main differences?

Post by “Martin” of July 22, 2024 at 1:04 PM

After first reading of Cassius' comment, I agree with him but have the following to add:

Epicurus' philosophy is not Scientism because in Scientism, the scientific method is the only method to produce meaningful/"true"/reliable knowledge of the world.

Whereas the formation of preconceptions from sensations may be interpreted as a precursor of science, the feelings as another leg of the Epicurean canon go much further than the narrow scope of science.

Adherents of Scientism do use science as their only tool and usually do that properly and usually not as a rhetorical tool. They differ from people with other worldviews in that they do not accept other sources of knowledge.

Underpinning arguments 'scientifically' with research and statistics is the proper way to conduct debates on topics which are inherently within the scope of science. Trying that for aspects which are out of the scope of science is sometimes called Scientism, too, but the people who apply science out of its scope are usually not scientists because scientists usually know the limits of their profession.

Epicureans use scientific knowledge to get rid of beliefs in supernatural gods and the afterlife and other superstitions, and to make prudent decisions on which options for goals are feasible and which actions are effective but within that scope of wise choices, they use pleasure and not science to set their goals and decide on actions. Most of the ethics of Epicurus is based on pleasure as the goal. E.g., the Epicurean emphasis on friendship comes from pleasure as the goal and not from science.

To answer whether an adherent of Scientism lacks the right telos and overall understanding of human existence, we would need to pick specific people and answer the question for each individual.