

# Catherine Wilson's List of Wrongs (From How To Be An Epicurean)

Post by "Cassius" of September 8, 2024 at 8:51 AM

Bryan --

I have the epub version and I am not sure what exactly is on page 121. Is it this paragraph, or can you give another marker so it will be possible to see what you're referring to?

I am presuming that this is part of it, but maybe not all (?)

I haven't revisited her book in several years but i think what you are saying is what I recall - that while there are some good aspects to the book, especially as to negative commentary on Stoicism, she writes in terms of "right" and "wrong" without making clear that pleasure and pain are subjective and impossible to distill down to universal rules that apply to all times, places, and people.

Even when she reaches conclusions that most of us would agree with, such as superficially in the list quoted below, her manner of presenting them as if they are "absolutely" right or wrong undermines the more basic point that the world is not "absolute" and actions always have to be evaluated circumstantially.

## Quote

The Epicurean will be moral as well as prudent. Morality directs us to try to minimise harm to others, even when inflicting such harm has clear prudential advantages for the perpetrator. It is wrong to engineer sex by force, or by offering a quid pro quo to someone who finds you unattractive, as the subsequent experience is bound to be exceedingly unpleasant for them. It is wrong to raise false expectations of permanence in another to obtain sex for a short run. It is wrong to try to control another person's behaviour while enjoying a secret freedom oneself. It is wrong to turn a spouse into a wage slave or a domestic servant.