

Catherine Wilson interviewed by Michael Shermer

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[Quote from Elayne](#)

Hiram, this is the major pitfall of proof-texting Epicurus.

Elayne I think it is very clear from the context what you are talking about, but it might help the discussion if you could elaborate on the term "proof-texting" because it seems clear that you have a specific aspect in mind, and the method we use to evaluate the texts is so important. We have a chicken and egg problem that the best way to avoid following some fragment down a rabbit hole is to compare it against what we know about the philosophy in total, but the problem is that there is so much wide divergence that there is no agreement on what the philosophy as a whole means. That's why I find it useful to refer back to DeWitt's book and his summarizes, because in my experience his high-level analysis seems the best way to unite all the varying threads and fragments. (And of course that's why I think reference to DeWitt is so conspicuously absent and even frowned upon by modern academics -- they know that his high-level analysis makes their own views of Epicurus seem ridiculous, in many cases, by comparison.