

Discussion of the Society of Epicurus' 20 Tenets of 12/21/19

Post by "Cassius" of December 30, 2019 at 1:40 PM

[Quote from Hiram](#)

I still can't wrap my head around your categorization of "idealist" after six years of work in positing what Onfray calls "a counter-history of philosophy from the perspective of the friends of Epicurus and the enemies of Plato". Maybe you have considered my willingness at some point or another to consider other people's views as my agreeing with them? I just don't see what you're even talking about

I think one way of stating what I see as "idealism" is a pattern of leaping from what we as individuals find pleasurable to a wider position on social/political issues. This pattern is clear in the work of Catherine Wilson (and she admits it, I think) and certainly in the work of Robert Hanrott, but it is also inherent Hiram in many of the things I see you writing in the 20 tenets threads. For example you are taking the last ten doctrines on "justice" and extrapolating that a certain set of conclusions on social issues should be "the Epicurean position." Catherine Wilson does that repeatedly, and while I may agree with her (or you) on many of the positions you choose to take, it seems absolutely clear to me that you violate the spirit of what Epicurus was saying, in proclaiming "no absolute justice" and "no matter how depraved we think the person is...." if it ends in pleasure for that person then we have no reason to complain with that person's choices. This is very clear from you "mutual benefit" conclusion, in translating "not to harm or be harmed," which is a restraint of action rather than a command of action, and turning it into a categorical imperative that we seemingly have a duty to "benefit" each other -- and implicitly not only each other, but *everyone.*

I am no libertarian myself and I am not looking for libertarianism in Epicurus' work, nor am I looking for justification to argue that *any* particular set of policy conclusions should apply to everyone. But it is absolutely clear to me that if someone continuously asserts that one or a list of policy choices should be adopted by everyone, then they have failed to accept the basic underlying premise that the feeling of pleasure, which all of us experience *individually* is the guide, rather than an idealized version that they think applies to everyone.

That is the problem with "Humanism" and I do not see you even acknowledging the issue, much less taking the non-absolute position that Epicurus's doctrines would plainly call for.