

Two Types?

Post by "Cassius" of January 10, 2020 at 12:09 AM

OK here's my view on the issue, and it turns on this passage from what you wrote: "*acceptable positions for Epicureans to hold.*"

No one really gets to say what an Epicurean is, because Epicurus is dead, and there was no official transmission of authority from him to today. All we can do is say what we think and choose our own personal associations.

Hiram has set up his Society of Epicurus as a specific group. Until recently he has never had a specific list of statements as to what viewpoints the group should promote. It's his group and it's entirely appropriate for him to list whatever viewpoints he wants to pursue, so our discussion here should in no way be interpreted as trying to fight with Hiram or limit his freedom of action. He can adopt whatever views he likes, and people can decide whether they wish to participate based on their own personal preferences.

The same goes for here at Epicureanfriends.com. We're not a membership organization in the same sense as a "Society," but in launching the website those of us who are moderators need to make decisions as to what limits should be imposed on the discussions. The "Not Neo" list is exactly that - it's an attempt to define what views we want to see promoted here, and what views we're not comfortable with and prefer to see promoted elsewhere.

Hiram seeks to cast a wider tent, this group is erecting a narrower tent, one that is focused more on viewpoints that the moderators here believe to be more accurate to Epicurus. In many cases (not all) that regularly means that the views here are those that derive from Norman DeWitt's viewpoint, while Hiram's tent is more oriented toward the academic mainstream.

As far as I am concerned there's no personal hard feelings between the two camps, and everyone can choose what they wish and have my best wishes. But here at Epicureanfriends I / we are going to draw a line at some point so that our position is not numerically overwhelmed as it is in Academia, and so the people who believe that they can profit from this approach can associate with each other in productive peace.

So the Society of Epicurus can decide that there are three acceptable positions on gods, or 30, but that has no bearing on what those of us who are moderators at Epicureanfriends.com will decide is appropriate for promotion here. Discussion is one thing; promotion is something else, and Hiram is taking the Society of Epicurus in the direction of promoting certain viewpoints that are not consistent with the DeWitt model of Epicurus, which is the model that's going to be the guiding force behind this website, as explained in the terms of use and other postings about the purpose of the website.

No hard feelings are involved in any of these decisions; everyone has to decide what views they are comfortable in promoting. In the end, neither the School of Epicurus, this website, or the Society of Epicurus (as far as I can tell) is a democracy, nor should we wish to be. The Epicurean goal is Pleasure / Happiness, not any variation of politics such as democracy, and so I don't think we at Epicureanfriends.com should be in the business of deciding what views are acceptable for "an Epicurean" to hold. We're only in the business of deciding what is acceptable for this website to promote.