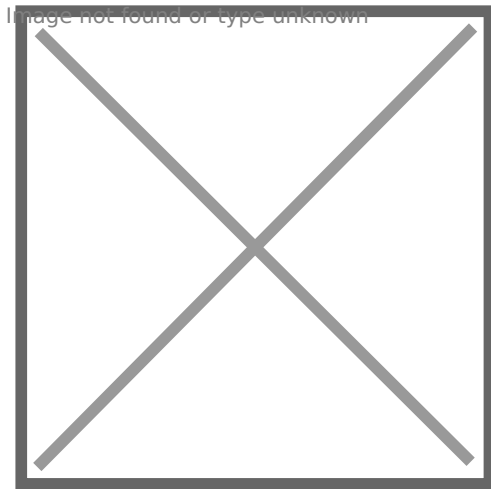


# Epicureanism and Scientism: What are the main differences?

Post by "Cassius" of July 25, 2024 at 8:18 AM

Thanks to a tip I see that there is an article by Professor Clerk Shaw available for public download at the link below which addresses some of these issues (the Epicurean concern for truth, and the importance of physics to the study of ethics) in a way I find very persuasive. I highly recommend this for those interested in the topic. This article is recent (2020) and (as I recall at the moment) new to me, so I appreciate the tip!

## [Epicurean Philosophy and Its Parts](#)



[History for Shaw, Clerk \(2020\)](#)

philarchive.org

The article contains this cite to Philodemus, with which i also was not familiar:

"This is confirmed by Philodemus, who says that all three parts contribute to choices and avoidances (De Elect. XIII): Above all, he [Epicurus] establishes the principles of philosophy, by which alone it is possible to act rightly. And it is clear that he also establishes the congenital ends, which yield the most conspicuous evidence and by which the calculations concerning choices and avoidances are performed. Besides, one must unfailingly draw the ethical arguments regarding both choices and avoidances entirely from the study of nature in order that they should be complete — if nothing else, the principle that nothing is produced without a cause and that ... does not change."

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3975-epicureanism-and-scientism-what-are-the-main-differences/?postID=31598#post31598>

And a good reminder to cite in Lucretius:

The diagnostic and therapeutic significance of this distinction is shown by Lucretius' case of a man who fails to understand that the cause of his trouble is internal, not external (III.1053 – 1075). Under the misapprehension that his surroundings bother him, he travels restlessly between city and country. The real cause, though, is his fear of death; if he knew that, he would instead devote himself to studying the nature of things — i.e., to physics. So, knowledge of causes, and particularly the distinction between internal and external causes, can alter our choices and avoidances: it can lead us to abandon travel for philosophy. This hypothesis also helps to explain the claims in SV 45 and De Fin. I.63 – 64 that the study of nature improves character. Character is primarily a matter of one's evaluative beliefs, and such beliefs are among the main causes of living well or badly. Physics is thus relevant to living well in part because it draws distinctions among causes and enables us to alter those causes — among them, our evaluative beliefs. So, physics contributes to character development, making us moderate and self-sufficient."