

Prolepsis / Anticipations As Epicurus' Answer to the MENO Problem

Post by "Cassius" of November 1, 2024 at 7:46 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

BUT we also need to understand why it was wrong, how it was wrong,

Along the lines of the Asimov quote that Pacatus listed, I would not admit that Epicurus was "wrong" at all. Incomplete as to details, yes, but that does not make the overall theory "wrong." We don't need the details nearly as often as we need the overall outline. When necessary we will correct the outline, but, again per the Asimov quote, it is not the latest formulation of the details that is all that matters. The higher level outline, so long as it can be interpreted as a high-level summary of the details, is the place we normally live our lives.

In philosophy it's going to be the conceptual framework, the broader outline, that matters, not the details of implementation. I would leave the details to those who want to follow the day to day revisions of the science, and I would teach people the overall correctness of the logical basis and the factual outlines (the nature worlds through particles and material means) of Epicurus's approach. The final details of implementation will *always* be revised, and in the meantime we have to have a firm conceptual framework to live our lives. The conceptual framework of particles striking our senses, and then the body processing them in natural logical ways toward conclusions we can be confident about, is the key.

But again, my reasoning her is based on the premise that we are looking to build Epicureans who can live happily, not the latest particle physicists or neurosurgeons. If and when they think they have found something supernatural, then we would need to take special notice of that (and refute them), but as to the day to day advancement of their individual techniques those aren't really relevant to most human beings. I don't mean to be overly presumptuous in saying this and of course some people will want to devote themselves to being physicists and neurosurgeons, but they will confront the problem Polyaenus ran into -- and they will want to reflect on whether they are pursuing science for the sake of science alone, and in doing so, failing to live the best life that would be possible to them if they would listen to philosophy.

Quote

I had fallen victim to the fallacy of the 'growing edge;' the belief that only the very frontier of scientific advance counted;

The main problem posed by the Meno question is a logical one, and so I would say that it has to be met on logical grounds.