

Prolepsis / Anticipations As Epicurus' Answer to the MENO Problem

Post by "Don" of November 1, 2024 at 10:56 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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.

Hmmm... I don't know about this: "not 'wrong' at all"? Maybe in broad outline, as in physical processes were at work in the eidola theory, it was not wrong. I don't think calling eidola theory "incomplete" is even the way to express it. It's not like we've added to more details about the eidola and how they're produced. I would contend that we ignore details at our peril. The sound waves and chemical compounds and photons and particles and so on that lead to sensation are not eidola. Our minds are not impacted by subtle eidola, engraving channels in the subtle atoms of our psychē.

I give credit to Epicurus for positing a step on the way to our incomplete but fuller understanding.

I give credit to Epicurus for staying firm on physical material processes of sensation.

I agree on all that and its importance in the evolution of understanding how things work.

So, if you're saying that the "high-level summary of the details" is that "sensation and consciousness is the result of knowable physical processes" then, okay, that's not wrong. But as to whether I'm going to think of my thoughts as the result of eidola impacting my psychē or whether they're electrical neural activity with input from other internal and external stimuli, I'm taking the latter.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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.

I see that as so broad though that I ask "Could that just as easily correspond to [Plato's flashlight/emission model of vision?](#)"

[Quote from Cassius](#)

my reasoning here is based on the premise that we are looking to build Epicureans who can live happily

Agreed, but Epicurus also said "Hence, since such a course is of service to all who take up natural science, I, who *devote to the subject my continuous energy and reap the calm enjoyment of a life like this*, have prepared for you just such an epitome and manual of the doctrines as a whole." So, it seems to me he felt the broad outline was important to keep in mind at all times, but investigating how the world worked with "continuous energy" gives one the confidence to have "calm enjoyment of life."

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

I don't think that one has to go to some supernatural/mystical "woo" to recognize that there are hard questions of consciousness - which is probably worth a thread of its own. For example: intentionality.

Just to be clear: I don't think answering the "how" consciousness is easy. It's a "hard problem." But I understand Chalmers as saying there's something "more" in addition to neurons and the brain and body to account for it. That's what I meant by woo. I come down on the late Daniel Dennett side (mostly) when it comes to looking for nonphysical mechanisms (ie, there's not any/it's all physical/material stuff). I fully admit I could be wrong about Chalmers, but that's the direction I saw him heading in in what I've seen or read.