

Circumstantial (Indirect) and Direct Evidence / Dogmatism vs Skepticism

Post by "Cassius" of March 7, 2026 at 5:40 PM

Dave I would say that you are discussing the topic of the "conflict" between "science" and "philosophy."

Each of us has to decide what we think for ourselves, but from a philosophic perspective philosophy does not yield to anyone or anything to dictate to it how to approach truth.

Religion asserts that a god can be omniscient and know everything. Epicurus rejects the possibility of such an entity so the issue of knowing everything about everything is not on the table.

What is on the table is how we as individuals are going to live and what we individually take to be proven or not proven / certain or not certain.

[Quote from DaveT](#)

Indeed Epicurus believed in gods with no evidence of their existence. Correct?

I would say that Epicurus would emphatically deny this so I would say this is incorrect. Circumstantial evidence is evidence, and Epicurus held that the circumstances of an infinite and eternal universe, with life throughout it, and with life at varying stages of success (isonomia) all strongly support the conclusion that gods who are deathless and live in a "blessed" way.

[Quote from DaveT](#)

And to follow up on this point, Epicurean theory about atoms was more a hypothesis, than a theory since he had no direct evidence of the truth of his statements, much of which parenthetically he learned from Democritus. True or false?

Whether one calls it hypothesis or theory or knowledge or whatever, Epicurus held that the circumstantial evidence supports the conclusion that indivisible particles exist and are the explanation for the regularity we see. On certain points he followed Democritus but on major issues (swerve / determinism / skepticism) he departed from Democritus.

[Quote from DaveT](#)

And that opinion only give a high degree of confidence rather than an absolute certainty.

Certainly it is the skeptical position to set up "absolute certainty" as a knowingly impossible target and thereby argue that nothing can be known for sure through the senses, and thereby assert that only through something equivalent to "ideal forms" can be held to be true. Religions assert that, and whenever someone (particular scientists" or anyone else) they are doing the same thing.

The bottom line is that Epicurus was an opponent of radical skepticism as self-contradictory and self-refuting no matter what label is placed on it. It is totally illogical to assert with certainty that nothing can be known with certainty. Therefore you need another standard of truth, and that's what Epicurus finds in the sensations, anticipations, and feelings.