

Epicurean Warnings Against Misrepresentation (Intentional or Negligent) In Philosophy

Post by “Cassius” of January 14, 2024 at 8:37 AM

Here's a list that I wanted to make for a podcast episode. If anyone can suggest more similar warnings from one of the authoritative Epicureans, please add to the list. I feel like there is something specific that could be included as to Socrates, but I don't have that at hand.

Epicurus, Letter to Menoecus:

[131] When we say, then, that pleasure is the end and aim, we do not mean the pleasures of the prodigal or the pleasures of sensuality, as we are understood to do by some through ignorance, prejudice, or wilful misrepresentation.

Lucretius, Book One:

[635] Wherefore those who have thought that fire is the substance of things, and that the whole sum is composed of fire alone, are seen to fall very far from true reasoning. Heraclitus is their leader who first enters the fray, of bright fame for his dark sayings, yet rather among the empty-headed than among the Greeks of weight, who seek after the truth. For fools laud and love all things more which they can descry hidden beneath twisted sayings, and they set up for true what can tickle the ear with a pretty sound and is tricked out with a smart ring.

Torquatus, On Ends, Book One:

XIII. Those who place the Chief Good in virtue alone are beguiled by the glamour of a name, and do not understand the true demands of nature. If they will consent to listen to Epicurus, they will be delivered from the grossest error. Your school dilates on the transcendent beauty of the virtues; but were they not productive of pleasure, who would deem them either praiseworthy or desirable?

Post by “Don” of January 14, 2024 at 11:01 AM

So ... Are you looking for Epicureans expounding ways in which they are misrepresented or misunderstood... Or are you looking for citations of Epicureans are saying others (the hoi polloi) are misunderstanding the "correct" view as expounded by the Epicureans?

I was a little confused by the examples.

Post by “Cassius” of January 14, 2024 at 11:16 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Are you looking for Epicureans expounding ways in which they are misrepresented or misunderstood...

The other one I meant to include was Lucretius early in book one complaining about the misrepresentations of the priests about life after death. So what I am really focusing on is that the Epicureans included identified specific references to people who they not only thought were wrong, but who they thought were affirmatively trying to mislead. And I think their criticism of Socrates probably fits in that same category.