

How To Place Epicurus In Relation To "Nominalism"?

Post by "Cassius" of June 12, 2021 at 6:42 PM

But hold your place on that thought because I think it has important implications. It's probably not entirely irrelevant to the main topic also.

Speaking of the main topic, any thoughts on the extent to which it is proper to label Epicurus a nominalist? Just as with accidents vs events I think there are subtleties he would both agree and disagree with.

I think the first hesitation anyone ought to have in thinking the answer is clear is that Epicurus usually finds a way to take a position that is foreign to us today to the point that we have to go looking for what it might be.

Part of what was on my mind about this is the saying in the letter to Menoeceus about all good and evil comes to us from sensation. The level of sensation I'd what really matters to us in life, and although it is not the same question, I do think Epicurus would oppose reductionism or any hint that "nothing matters to us because everything is just matter and void."

Like I say it's not the same question, but I think Epicurus would think it very important to have a theory that connects the senses and knowledge - including a theory of abstractions.

(Note: I was about to attribute the reference above to PD2, but in quoting it I see interestingly that that phrase is not there.)