

Major Controversies In Understanding Epicurean Philosophy

Post by “Cassius” of December 11, 2018 at 2:25 AM

Participants here should be aware that there are a significant number of controversies in how to interpret Epicurus. In many cases, academic orthodoxy has reached one conclusion, while writers outside the orthodoxy reach another. The major example of a non-orthodox-position writer is Norman DeWitt, who is rarely cited in modern academic articles because many of his ideas are outside the academic consensus.

The loss of texts, the complexity of the issues, and the fact that Epicurus' philosophical enemies have prevailed for centuries have all contributed to these controversies. As a result they are not easily resolved, and each reader must reach his own conclusion about who is correct. Nevertheless these controversies apply to almost all of the most interesting aspects of the philosophy, so you should be aware from the very beginning that they exist, and be alert to whether the position you are reading is truly unassailable.

I have prepared the chart in [this blog article](#) to summarize these controversies, without attempting to resolve them. Whether you start out with a background in the academic orthodoxy, or whether you start out reading DeWitt from the beginning, it will be of great help to you to know that these controversies exist.

Discussion of this chart can continue in this thread, or, if you prefer, start your own thread in [the sub-forum devoted to this topic](#).