

A Challenge To Epicurean Thinking Grounded in Epistemology and Physics

Post by "Cassius" of March 15, 2022 at 5:44 PM

[Quote from Nate](#)

With respect, I am proposing that these questions are incoherent. We're chasing ghosts.

The part of this conversation that I want to emphasize is that even though I think this ("chasing ghosts") is true in at least a figurative sense, I think these "ghosts" are very real in the sense that they inhabit (or "possess") probably 90% or more of the people in the world.

Of course a forum like this has multiple reasons for existence, and from at least one perspective we are talking to people who are highly educated and sympathetic with Epicurus' positions, so we can use shorthand to remind each other of particular traps or lines of thought that are dead ends.

But I think if we stop there (as we often do) we're missing one of the greatest hurdles in front of us, which - if we could get over it - would really open a new world of "[Philosophy for the Millions](#)" (DeWitt's term).

The "millions" out there are trapped every day by fallacies of reasoning which we ought to be able to do more to address. I am all in favor of us continuing to strain out ever bit of meaning we can about the "pleasure" discussions, and I'll continue to engage in that as always in the past.

But I just want to emphasize that the issues being discussed in this thread need to be addressed in a similar way -- we need more materials dedicated to explaining from the ground up (and yes to younger people too) how these questions arise and how they can be met and defeated.

There's a very unattractive "logic game" side of this that is distasteful to deal with, but all of us want more "Epicurean Friends" in our daily local lives, and I think this "thinking" issue poses as much of an obstacle to that as anything regarding pleasure vs virtue.

So what I would say is that yes the arguments that Eric is suggesting are probably defective in a number of ways, but we need to be able to point to a well-developed explanation that addresses from the ground up how the different varieties of incorrect assumptions arise, and have to be defeated.

And that's a project we've hardly - if at all - begun.

We can and should address the individual questions like Eric is raising, but we've got to integrate them into a broader presentation so we can not only say "that's incorrect reasoning" but point to a clear explanation as to how that is so.

This is gonna take a lot of effort and won't be accomplished quickly but it has to be done.