

Episode One Hundred Forty-Seven - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 03 - True Opinions And False Opinions About Epicurus

Post by "Cassius" of November 3, 2022 at 9:24 AM

Welcome to Episode One Hundred Forty-Seven of Lucretius Today. This is a podcast dedicated to the poet Lucretius, who wrote "On The Nature of Things," the only complete presentation of Epicurean philosophy left to us from the ancient world.

Each week we'll walk you through the ancient Epicurean texts, and we'll discuss how Epicurean philosophy can apply to you today. If you find the Epicurean worldview attractive, we invite you to join us in the study of Epicurus at EpicureanFriends.com, where you will find a discussion thread for each of our podcast episodes and many other topics.

We're now in the process of a series of podcasts intended to provide a general overview of Epicurean philosophy based on the organizational structure employed by Norman DeWitt in his book "Epicurus and His Philosophy."

This week we discuss a series of Points and Counterpoints which Norman DeWitt describes as "True Opinions / False Opinions" about Epicurus:

- **True Opinions - False Opinions**

- Epicurus' Place In Greek Philosophy:
 - True: Epicurus came immediately after Plato (idealism; absolutism) and Pyrrho (the skeptic). Platonism and Skepticism were among Epicurus' chief abominations.
 - False: Epicurus taught in response to Stoicism. (False because Epicurean philosophy was fully developed before Zeno began teaching Stoicism.)
- Epicurus' Attitude Toward Learning:
 - True: Epicurus was well educated and a trained thinker.
 - False: Epicurus was an ignoramus and an enemy of all culture.
- Epicurus' Goal For Himself And His Work:
 - True: Epicurus was not only a philosopher but a moral reformer rebelling against his teachers.
 - False: Epicurus was nothing more than a copycat who was ungrateful to his teachers.
- Epicurus' Place in Greek Scientific Thought:
 - True: Epicurus was returning to the Ionian tradition of thought which had been interrupted by Socrates and Plato. Epicurus was an Anti-Platonist and a penetrating critic of Platonism.

- False: Epicurean scientific thought simply copied Democritus.
- Epicurus' Role As a Systematizer:
 - True: As with Herbert Spencer or Auguste Comte, Epicurus was attempting a synthesis and critique of all prior philosophical thought.
 - False: Epicurus was a sloppy and unorganized thinker whose system-building is not worth attention.
- Epicurus' Dogmatism:
 - True: Epicurus' strength was that he promulgated a dogmatic philosophy, actuated by a passion for inquiry to find certainty, and a detestation of skepticism, which he imputed even to Plato.
 - False: Epicurus' demerit was that he promulgated a dogmatic philosophy, because he renounced inquiry.
- Epicurus' View of Truth:
 - True: Epicurus exalted Nature as the norm of truth, revolting against Plato, who had preached "reason" as the norm and considered "Reason" to have a divine existence of its own. Epicurus studied and taught the nature and use of sensations, and the role in determining that which we consider to be true.
 - False: Epicurus was an empiricist in the modern sense, declaring sensation to be the only source of knowledge and all sensations to be "true."
- Epicurus' Method For Determining Truth:
 - True: Epicurus taught reasoning chiefly by deduction. For example, atoms cannot be observed directly; their existence and properties must be determined by deduction, and the principles thereby deduced serve as standards for assessing truth. In this Epicurus was adopting the procedures of Euclid and parting company with both Plato and the Ionian scientists.
 - False: Epicurus was a strict empiricist and taught reasoning mainly by induction.

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