

Episode One Hundred Forty-Eight - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 04 - True Opinions And False Opinions About Epicurus

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This is discussed in both the letter to Herodotus and in Lucretius Chapter One under the topic of properties and qualities of atoms and bodies. Frances Wright comments on the issue at length in [Chapter 15](#) of her book with this as part of her conclusion, which I think is at least partly a good description of Epicurus' position as far as she goes:

"What is in a substance cannot be separate from it. And is not all matter a compound of qualities? Hardness, extension, form, color, motion, rest — take away all these, and where is matter? To conceive of mind independent of matter, is as if we should conceive of color independent of a substance colored: What is form, if not a body of a particular shape? What is thought, if not something which thinks? Destroy the substance, and you destroy its properties; and so equally — destroy the properties, and you destroy the substance. To suppose the possibility of retaining the one, without the other, is an evident absurdity."

"The error of conceiving a quality in the abstract often offended me in the Lyceum," returned the youth, "but I never considered the error as extending to mind and life, any more than to vice and virtue."

"You stopped short with many others," said Leontium. "It is indeed surprising how many acute minds will apply a logical train of reasoning in one case, and invert the process in another exactly similar."