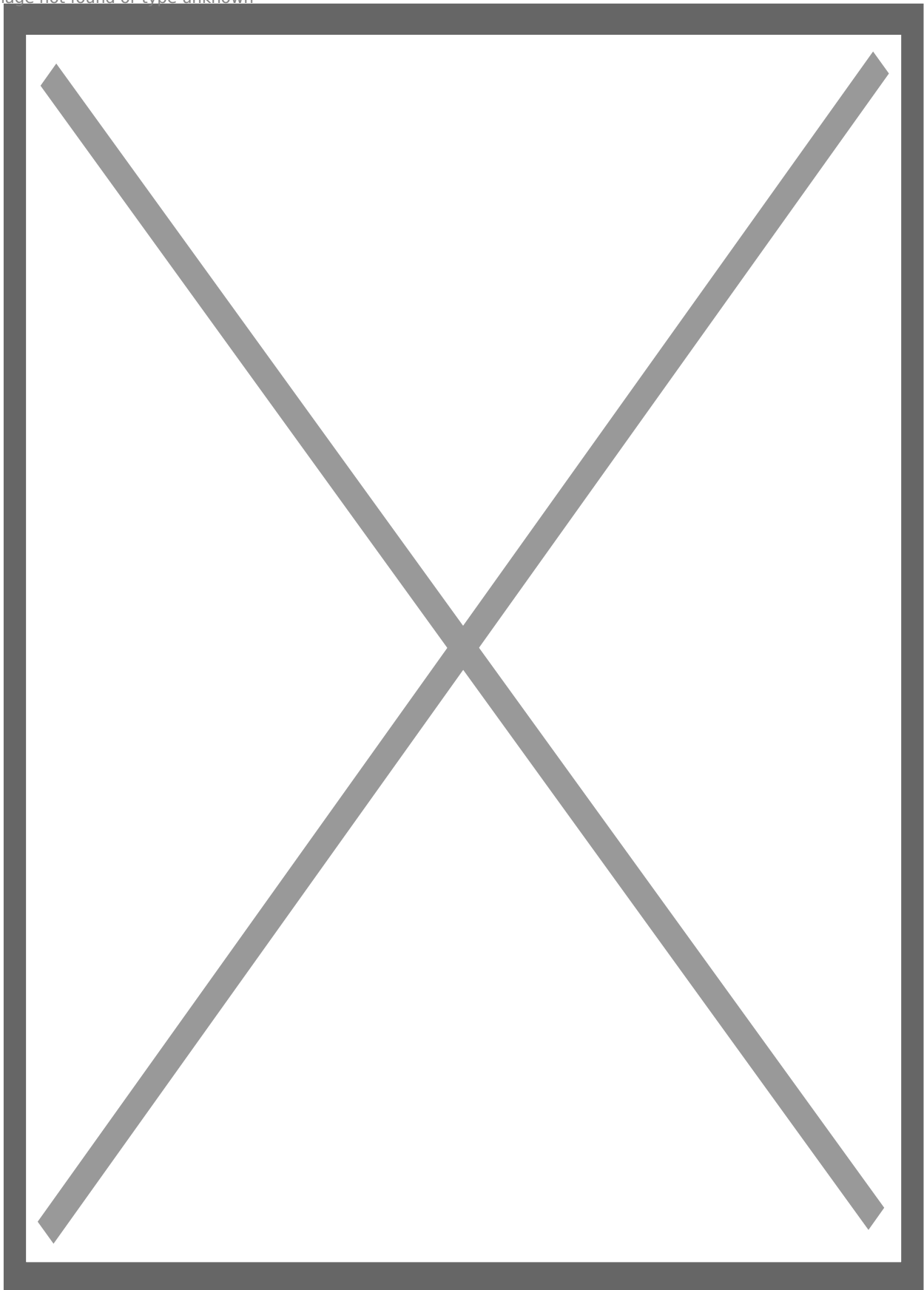


# **Episode 161 - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 15 - Chapter 8 - Sensations, Anticipations, And Feelings 02 (Sensations and Not An Empiricist)**

**Post by "Cassius" of February 12, 2023 at 6:48 PM**

It will be a couple of days before this is ready for release, but one point worth noting on what is discussed in our look at Sensations and "Epicurus not an Empiricist" comes from the Wikipedia entry on Empiricism:

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[Empiricism - Wikipedia](#)

en.wikipedia.org

That page features discussion of Bacon, Locke, and Hume.....



#### Quote

Empiricism in the [philosophy of science](#) emphasizes evidence, especially as discovered in [experiments](#). It is a fundamental part of the [scientific method](#) that all hypotheses and theories must be tested against observations of the natural world rather than resting solely on [a priori](#) reasoning, [intuition](#), or [revelation](#).

Empiricism, often used by [natural scientists](#), says that "knowledge is based on experience" and that "knowledge is tentative and probabilistic, subject to continued revision and [falsification](#)".<sup>[5]</sup> Empirical research, including experiments and validated measurement tools, guides the scientific method.

#### Etymology[[edit](#)]

The English term *empirical* derives from the [Ancient Greek](#) word ἐμπειρία, *empeiria*, which is cognate with and translates to the Latin *experientia*, from which the words *experience* and *experiment* are derived.<sup>[6]</sup>

But this sentence especially catches my eye:

#### Quote

Philosophical empiricists hold no knowledge to be properly inferred or deduced unless it is derived from one's sense-based experience.<sup>[7]</sup> This view is commonly contrasted with [rationalism](#), which states that knowledge may be derived from [reason](#) independently of the senses. For example, [John Locke](#) held that some knowledge (e.g. knowledge of God's existence) could be arrived at through [intuition](#) and reasoning alone. Similarly [Robert Boyle](#), a prominent advocate of the experimental method, held that we have innate ideas.<sup>[8][9]</sup> The main continental [rationalists](#) ([Descartes](#), [Spinoza](#), and [Leibniz](#)) were also advocates of the empirical "scientific method".<sup>[10][11]</sup>

A large part of the importance of the issue we are discussing this week is that Epicurus is definitely willing to use deductive reasoning to make conclusions about issues that he has not experienced directly - notable examples being the condition of life after death, or the age of the universe, or the size of the universe --- none of which Epicurus himself personally was able to test through his own sensory experience.

I wonder if the development of this school through Lock and others did not find its way through Bentham and his friends to France Wright, which would explain what I think are her deviations from Epicurus in "A Few Days In Athens" to stress that "observation is everything" and theories are often damaging. I recall in reading her work outside of "A Few Days In Athens" that this position seems to have been especially important to her, and at least in part explains her lack of interest in many of the "physics" issues which interested the ancient Epicureans.

I would tentatively have to say than an "excess of empiricism" was damaging to Frances Wright's confidence in Epicurean philosophy, that in turn probably illustrates why this seemingly boring issue many important ramifications that justify our taking the time to slog through it.