

# Paul Thyry (Baron D'Holbach / Mirabaud) - French / German Sympathizer With Some Epicurean Ideas

Post by "Cassius" of December 20, 2023 at 5:41 PM

Let me add to the conversation that through all my years of reading Epicurus I have never failed to see how difficult this issue is for those who really want to explore its logical complexities.

At the same time, I've become more and more comfortable taking the position that I am not especially overwrought about the people who want to explore all its logical complexities. 😊

It seems to me that Epicurus was focused on developing a "real-world" frame of reference that can help most every normal person live a better life. From that point of view, there are definitely things that are within our control, while some other things are clearly not. There's a common sense line that doesn't take an advanced degree to figure out.

While we haven't developed the analogy too far yet, that seems to be also what Epicurus was doing with his "canon of truth." What is "real" in life to us is what are feelings and five senses tell us is real (and of course I'll include prolepsis in that as soon as we can be clear what it is). Now of course that kind of point of view is going to leave intellectuals aghast at the logical implications, but that's what matters to the normal person in life, and frankly the elaborate intellectual theories are of little or no use to normal people in unraveling those realities.

I've been thinking about some more general posts on this subject as we end the year but this is a good place to make the same point.

Speaking only for myself here (but that colors the way I work on and write about Epicurus) I think Epicurus' main focus was on helping regular people of normal intelligence be confident of a reasonable framework that addresses the major "big picture" questions of life and therefore helps them live most happily. Chasing down ever rabbit trail toward total logical completeness was not a major aspect of his project, and in fact the further you chase those issues down the more clear it becomes that it's actually damaging to look at and live life that way.

The two biggest practical starting point positions that outweigh all other considerations by far is (1) there's no gods or ideal forms to tell you what to do or punish you for doing wrong, and (2) when you're dead your dead forever and there will be no future life of reward or punishment or rebirth or anything else. You get one shot at living life, and you want to live it as happily as you can. That's what Epicurus helps us do.