

How To Place Epicurus In Relation To "Nominalism"?

Post by "Cassius" of May 2, 2024 at 9:10 AM

This is the Sedley commentary I am wanting to relate to reductionism, commenting that Epicurus rejects "reductionist atomism," in favor of the common sense perspective: **"that there are truths at the microscopic level of elementary particles, and further very different truths at the phenomenal level; that the former must be capable of explaining the latter, but that neither level of description has a monopoly of truth."**

To me, cats are given the name "cats" by the mind, and the "name" is totally arbitrary, but it is not the mind that makes a cat a four-legged furry creature that chases mice. It's the combinations of atoms and void playing into the genetics that makes a "cat" what we think of as a "cat," and that's different from saying that every cat is a totally unique specimen. There are "commonalities" and those commonalities are not just in our minds.

Now maybe "nominalism" as a term was never meant to imply that the mind creates reality in full, but that would be the trend of thought to which "radical nominalism" might lead, just as radical reductionism leads toward the view of saying that "nothing really exists except atoms and void" which would not be a correct statement of Epicurus' view (even though it might be a correct statement of Democritus' view).

But in the end I think that it ought to be made clear that even if you consider Epicurus a "sort of nominalist" that he would have rejected too radical an interpretation of that view.

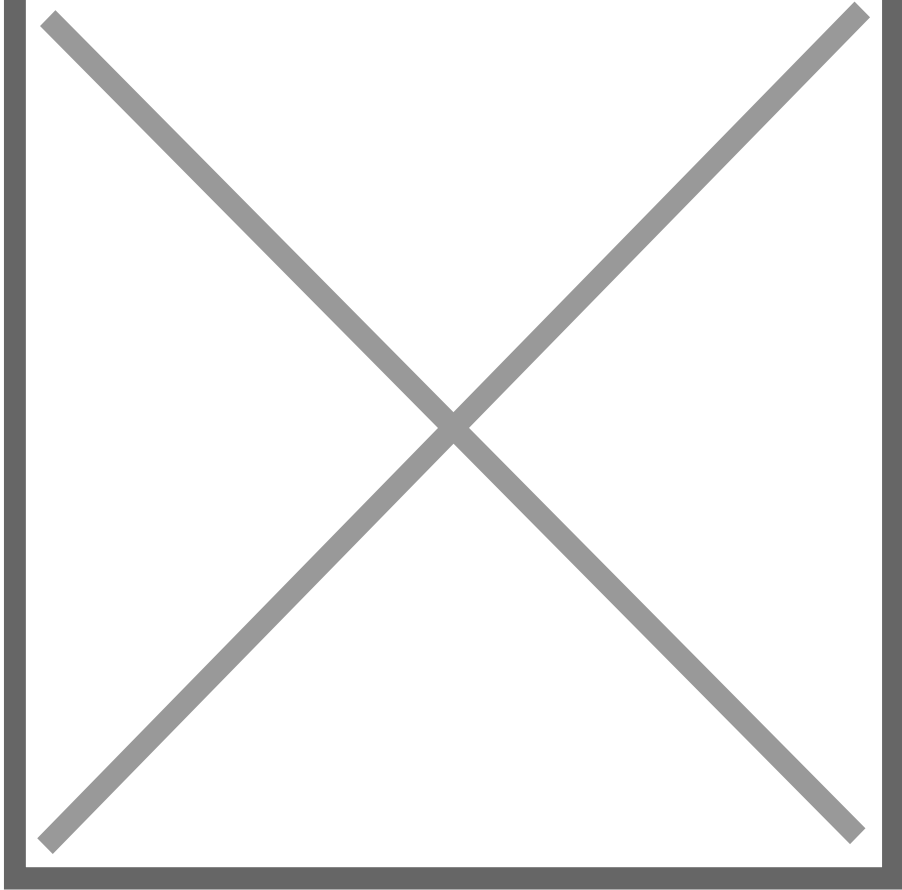


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