

Was De Rerum Natura intended as satire? A lecture by THM Gellar-Goad.

Post by "Cassius" of October 24, 2024 at 8:15 PM

Ok I've watched the full video. Here's my commentary:

The main thrust of the video with which I can completely agree seems to be that "satire" is used in Lucretius. Clearly Lucretius does "make fun" of opposing schools in a number of passages in the book.

However the title of the book "Laughing Atoms, Laughing Matters" and several comments in the video indicate that THM is making an argument that the entire poem should be taken less than seriously, and that it's more of a literary "satire" in the mode of Horace or similar, where it's maybe a side point to "make the world a better place" but the main point is more something like that of displaying the writer's literary talents.

Obviously I don't agree with that last point, but I can't tell how deeply the book goes into specifically arguing that Lucretius was in fact not a devoted Epicurean attempting to teach Epicurean philosophy, and that instead he was merely a poet following his muse to create a work of art.

If you're the kind of person who finds that kind of literary argument interesting, then you'll probably find the video interesting. If you're not, then you won't. 😊

I do want to state that I was pleased to see that THM did include reference to his article on the size of the sun, and what he said was I thought "spot on" with his article: To say, as Epicurus' opponents did, that Epicurus thought the actual size of the sun was no greater than a "foot" or a basketball is absurd. Epicurus is quoted as saying that the sun is "the size that it appears to be" and this can easily be argued to be consistent with Epicurus always calling attention to the senses, and that the senses have to be used and processed properly, much as we have to process what a tower looks like up close to understand why it looks different at a distance.

I'll find a link to that article and link it here, with my recommendations that it's well worth reading.

Thread

["Lucretius on the Size of the Sun", by T.H.M. Gellar-Goad](#)

[epicureanfriends.com/wcf/attachment/2792/](https://www.epicureanfriends.com/wcf/attachment/2792/)

[epicureanfriends.com/wcf/attachment/2793/](https://www.epicureanfriends.com/wcf/attachment/2793/)

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4106-was-de-rerum-natura-intended-as-satire-a-lecture-by-thm-gellar-goad/?postID=32697#post32697>

[epicureanfriends.com/wcf/attachment/2794/](https://www.epicureanfriends.com/wcf/attachment/2794/)

I've just received this collection of essays, published in February, with an excellent paper concerning the size of the sun by one T.H.M. Gellar-Goad.

I may attempt an outline; in the meantime, here's a good bit toward the end;

[...]

aporia; doubt, or a difficulty in resolving the available data into established truth.

The author is thoroughly familiar with Epicurean...



Joshua

June 9, 2022 at 6:04 PM

Thanks Julia for pointing out this video, as I had not seen it.