

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

Post by "Cassius" of October 25, 2024 at 8:24 AM

[Quote from Julia](#)

What gives you your certainty that this was not the case?

I may misunderstand your question (as to what "this" refers to), but my point of view is that while gosh knows a consensus of scholars over hundreds if not thousands of years can be wrong about major things, in this case there are few if any others who have held that Lucretius was anything but sincere in his admiration for Epicurus and his intent to convey Epicurus' philosophy faithfully. I am not aware of any significant writer who has ever taken any other position.

Further, in this case it's not just a matter of agreeing or disagreeing with what Lucretius is saying. Most scholars don't agree with Lucretius, but here the issue is not agreeing or disagreeing with doctrine, but interpreting Lucretius' "tone." Yes Lucretius uses a satirical tone in criticizing the opponents of Epicurus, but he's never disrespectful of Epicurean views.

It's almost always possible to argue many sides of the same question, so I am preferring a charitable interpretation of THM's argument. Yes Lucretius uses satire, but the purpose of the book is not to conform to a literary genre of satire, but to convey Epicurean philosophy using the poetic form.

Maybe THM ends up that way in his book, but if his book goes in the same direction as certain comments in the video, I doubt I will spend the time to read the book. No doubt it contains some good nuggets of information, but if the ultimate point is that "Lucretius was not sincere in his attempt to teach Epicurean philosophy faithfully" then I think THM picked an insurmountable mountain to try to climb.