

Episode 259 - Nothing Comes From Nothing

Post by “Pacatus” of December 23, 2024 at 2:47 PM

Having read, as best I could 🙄, through the essay shared by [Don](#) in post #10 (which brought back vague but painful memories from my student days 😭), I offer the following only as an aside:

I always have a niggling unease at even the hint that anyone would reject, or even delimit, modern science (e.g. physics), either the empirical or the theoretical, based on adherence to any philosophical system – just as I do when people reject science based on religious beliefs. [Stressing that I don’t think that’s what anyone here is about.]

That is not to deny the relevance of “philosophy of science” – e.g. Popper’s contribution of the principle of falsification. Nor is it to deny the validity of investigating what Epicurus and Epicureans thought – e.g. re physics, mathematics, logic* – based on the knowledge base available.

With that said, I surely can’t think it would be “un-Epicurean” to estimate the circumference of a circle using π . 😊 (Sedley, however, based on the quote in the essay, would seem to think so ... 🤔)

[However, I do tend to agree with those economists of the post-Keynesian schools – e.g. Steve Keen – who reject the traditional marginal analysis (based on differential calculus) in favor of more empirical discrete analysis.]

* I have stated my opinion before on what appears to be a lack of clear distinction between deductive logic and inductive logic on the part of the ancients. Thus, the Stoics seem to have thought that deductive logic can yield empirical “truth” rather than just propositional coherence (e.g. *modus ponens*). Epicurus was, it seems to me, better on that score: rejecting the notion that (deductive) logic could yield empirical truth, whilst also rejecting the skeptical notion (whether Academic or Pyrrhonian) that real knowledge is thereby impossible.