

Episode 259 - Nothing Comes From Nothing

Post by "Cassius" of December 23, 2024 at 3:28 PM

I am sure at some point that someone is going to make some insightful observations after reading that article.

That someone is unlikely to be me.

What I will say is that my gut tells me that people who go down the rabbit hole too far in mathematical theory are never going to accept that no matter how internally consistent their systems might be, Epicurus was going to reject any aspect of it that did not yield practical benefit, or that seemed to contradict the trustworthiness of the senses. I suspect that he was or would have been more than happy to accept any practical benefits that mathematical calculations produced, but to the extent those calculations couldn't be linked to practical benefit, he just wasn't interested in spending his time that way. Nor would he have recommended anyone else do so, unless they experienced pleasure in the chase of the calculations. I understand that's possible - mathematical puzzles can be fun. But I really get the sense that criticism of Epicurus' position is based more on wanting to make him look "anti-knowledge," or the result of the critic feeling hurt for having his or her pet interest disparaged. Just like the rest of the criticism that Epicurus was "anti-science" or "anti-knowledge," those criticisms to me seem vastly overblown.

EDIT - I do however think that it would be very helpful to pin down some of the comments in the article about exactly where Epicurus' first objection to the system started. The article points to one or more initial axioms that Epicurus rejected, and it would probably help to identify what those were. Identifying the initial dealbreaker would be good to keep in memory, while any additional objections would probably be superfluous because once the foundation was rejected the rest would go out the window too. Was it the "indivisibility" assertion or something else? I kind of suspect something else about the presumptions behind the initial setup leading to indivisibility.