

Anti-Natalism: The Opposite of Epicureanism

Post by “Cassius” of August 21, 2025 at 3:31 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Not directly relevant to the natalist question, but at least Epicurus was genuinely concerned with the continued well-being of Metrodorus' children, enough to specifically address their care in his will.

Yes and I would take that further and combine it with the observations that have been made by Dr Boeri and Aioz (in [Theory and Practice in Epicurean Political Philosophy](#)) and by others in other contexts, that the Epicureans were far from being totally unconcerned about the welfare of society as they are caricatured by Plutarch and others.

I think it's likely that Rolfe has not been around long enough for our podcast or discussions about that book, but the book argues that Epicurus certainly understood that the happiness of himself and his friends is directly related to the welfare of society, and no society can perpetuate itself for very long without attention to who is going to replace it.

The idea that we are concerned for ourselves alone only until we are ready to exit the stage makes no sense given the emphasis on friendship and rational understanding of cause and effect, nor would it have made as much sense for the Epicureans to be concerned about future generations as Diogenes of Oinoanda explicitly stated himself to be and is implicit in the writing of Lucretius and others.

If the Epicureans had made a practice of criticizing the having and rearing of children as more trouble than it is worth, we would have had much more documentation of that in the arguments of their enemies than we do. If I recall Cicero hardly mentions this specific allegation at all, and much of the rest of the argument is an attack alleging that humans have no bonds of affection for each other, which is a misreading of Epicurus' position on how society arises through nature rather than through divine guidance.

We don't have to have had children ourselves to be very glad for and supportive of those who do.