

Discussion of the Society of Epicurus' 20 Tenets of 12/21/19

Post by “Elayne” of January 5, 2020 at 11:27 AM

Epicurus was not an empiricist in that he included prolepses in his Canon of how we know what is real. DeWitt talks about this. It's consistent with developmental research showing humans are born with innate pattern recognition but even beyond that to a sort of innate pattern expectation, the same way sea turtles hatch knowing not just to notice but to look for which way to go to the sea.

However, that is different from insisting on impossible things just because they show up in one's imagination, and a reality based philosophy would not accept an interpretation of an innate intuition that has been shown clearly inaccurate. I don't know which way Epicurus would go, if he had access to the physics we have now.

There's a difference in stating Epicurus meant to be idealist or atheist when he was clearly realist, vs giving one's own position about gods. I read Epicurus as a realist, and I am pragmatically speaking an atheist, although I wouldn't categorically say that extremely long lived and blissful ETs are impossible. I'm not sure there is firm agreement on what happens after expansion of the universe, whether it's one and done or recurring, and if it is possible there could be some configuration of matter we have not thought of that could be conscious and survive in either case. It seems unlikely. I don't really spend any time thinking about it unless it comes up here.

Just because O'Keefe says a thing doesn't make true. Idealism is a ridiculous position contradicted by reality. Allowing that into your definition of Epicurean stretches the meaning beyond comprehension. You can do that to any label you want to, of course, but it removes any claim to consistency or coherence.