

Episode Thirty-Nine - The Mind And Spirit Are Not Supernatural But Parts of A Man Just Like The Head and Foot

Post by "Cassius" of October 10, 2020 at 5:06 AM

No doubt it is true that not all of us have to study Plato, and it is even more certain that in fact most of us will not do so. The trick is going to be finding "trusted Epicurean Friends who know Phaedo" and at the moment I am aware only of Norman DeWitt who even attempts to draw attention to these issues by explaining how Epicurus' arguments fit together as responses to Plato.

There is a lot to think about here. For me personally it is one thing to use the word "idealism" to describe Plato's position, but when I actually read the translation and come face to face as it were with his argument I am being shocked at what "idealism" actually means. Calling it a "word game" does not seem to me to begin to evoke the full significance of the manipulation that is going on. Plato is literally basing everything in his worldview on defining words in a certain way, and then interpolating conclusions based solely on his definitions, explicitly throwing out the senses as any check or restraint on his procedure, and using his dialogue format as a form of cheerleading to imply that his conclusions are obvious and the only conclusions possible. "Yes Plato you're absolutely right! Nothing could be more clear!"

Geesh - give me a break!

But the bottom line is that most of us are not going to read Phaedo and [Philebus](#) and other key works of Plato. So we have to figure out how to substitute for that.

In many respects it seems clear that Epicurus was writing to Platonists or at least to people who were familiar with Platonism. We who are neither are at great risk of not being able to understand what is being argued for that reason.