

# Recent Article on "All Perceptions Are True"

Post by "Cassius" of May 19, 2021 at 9:12 AM

I haven't had time to read this (by Philip Hardie et al.) but since it appears relatively new (2020, and in fact still in draft) I am putting a link here for reference

<https://www.academia.edu/40698907/Lucre...card=view-paper>

Forthcoming in: Philip Hardie, Valentina Proserpi, Diego Zaccà (eds.), *Lucretius: Poet and Philosopher: Background and Fortunes of the De Rerum Natura*, deGruyter, Leiden 2020

Lucretius and the Epicurean View That "All Perceptions are True"

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Abstract:  
The well-known and controversial thesis that all perceptions are true is endorsed by all Epicureans. At least three general interpretations of it have been provided by commentators and interpreters, based on respective meanings assigned to the predicate 'true' ('propositional', 'existential', 'veridical' meaning) as well as on the alleged object/contents: perceptions are thought to be of (veridical/propositional) stimuli or environmental objects (veridical stimuli). Starting from this premise, this paper will address the more general issues involved in the Epicurean theory of visual perception (theory of *eidola/aenolacra*) and interpret the epistemological meaning of the 'controversial thesis' in the light of Lucretius' treatment of vision, illusion and dreaming in DRN IV. It will first see that Lucretius has a very sophisticated view on perceptual epistemology?

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Post by "Eikadistes" of May 19, 2021 at 11:05 AM

The abstract begins with a **completely FALSE** statement: "*The well-known and controversial thesis that <<all perceptions are true>> is endorsed by all Epicureans.*"

This point is **HEAVILY** contradicted throughout DeWitt's *Epicurus and His Philosophy*:

## Quote

"The fallacy consists in classifying Epicurus as an empiricist in the modern sense; he never declared sensation to be the source of knowledge; much less did he declare all sensations to be trustworthy." (7)

"The fallacy that Epicurus declared all sensations to be true and hence trustworthy still flourished." (24)

"When modern scholars seize upon the saying '[all sensations are true](#),' which appears nowhere in the extant writing of Epicurus, and stretch it to mean that all sensations are

reliable or trustworthy or 'that the senses cannot be deceived,' they are confusing the concept of truth with the concept of value" [...] To assume that Epicurus was unaware of these plain truths, as one must if belief in the infallibility of sensation is impute to him, is absurd. It is because he was aware that the value of sensations, apart from their truth, varied all the way from totality to zero, that he exhorted beginners 'under all circumstances to watch the sensations and especially the immediate perceptions whether of the intellect or any of the criteria whatsoever. Obviously, so far from thinking the sensations infallible, he was keenly aware of the possibility of error and drew sharp attention to the super values of immediate sensations" (139)

"This makes it plain once more that not [all sensations are true](#) but the validity of some must be checked by the evidence of others." (150)

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### **Post by “Cassius” of May 19, 2021 at 11:39 AM**

All I read was the abstract but it didn't sound promising. Instead of the common sense easy to understand illustration that "true" means "honest" or "without opinion" combined with DeWitt's comparison to witnesses in court, the abstract seems to want to launch off into typical academic obscurity by referencing terms like "propositional, existential, and factive" meanings of the word true.

Epicurean philosophy is simple and direct enough to be understood by children, and this part of the doctrine is no exception. Spending too much time on articles like this may provide some benefit to "us" who are really into the details, but it is just a shame that people can't be up front and direct rather than hiding important observations in the weeds.