

Not all research is scientific, or involves critical thinking.

Post by “Mathitis Kipouros” of July 29, 2021 at 12:05 AM

This can be clarifying of the concept that reason alone is not sufficient to know the truth, and I'm guessing you'll enjoy it:

<https://youtu.be/f23eWOquFQ0>

Post by “Cassius” of July 29, 2021 at 8:16 AM

Thank you! You guessed correctly! And as you would expect the reference to Plato in regard to the multiverse at about the six minute mark is especially welcome. This video is an excellent introduction to some of the issues relevant to the comment here:

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/index.php?thread/2118-foundations-002-this-man-could-not-be-discouraged-by-stories-of-gods/&postID=12989#post12989>

I have never heard of that person and look forward to reading more about her (Sabine Hossenfelder)

Post by “Cassius” of July 29, 2021 at 8:49 AM

Also: This video has zoomed to the topic of my mental list of "best videos" that discusses the limits of speculation in physics. I'm going to spread this video around and it would be great if over time we could compile a list of "[Best Videos Discussing Epicurus' Attitude Toward Speculation In Science](#)" or something like that.

Post by “Cassius” of July 29, 2021 at 9:27 AM

My text I am going to use to circulate this around:

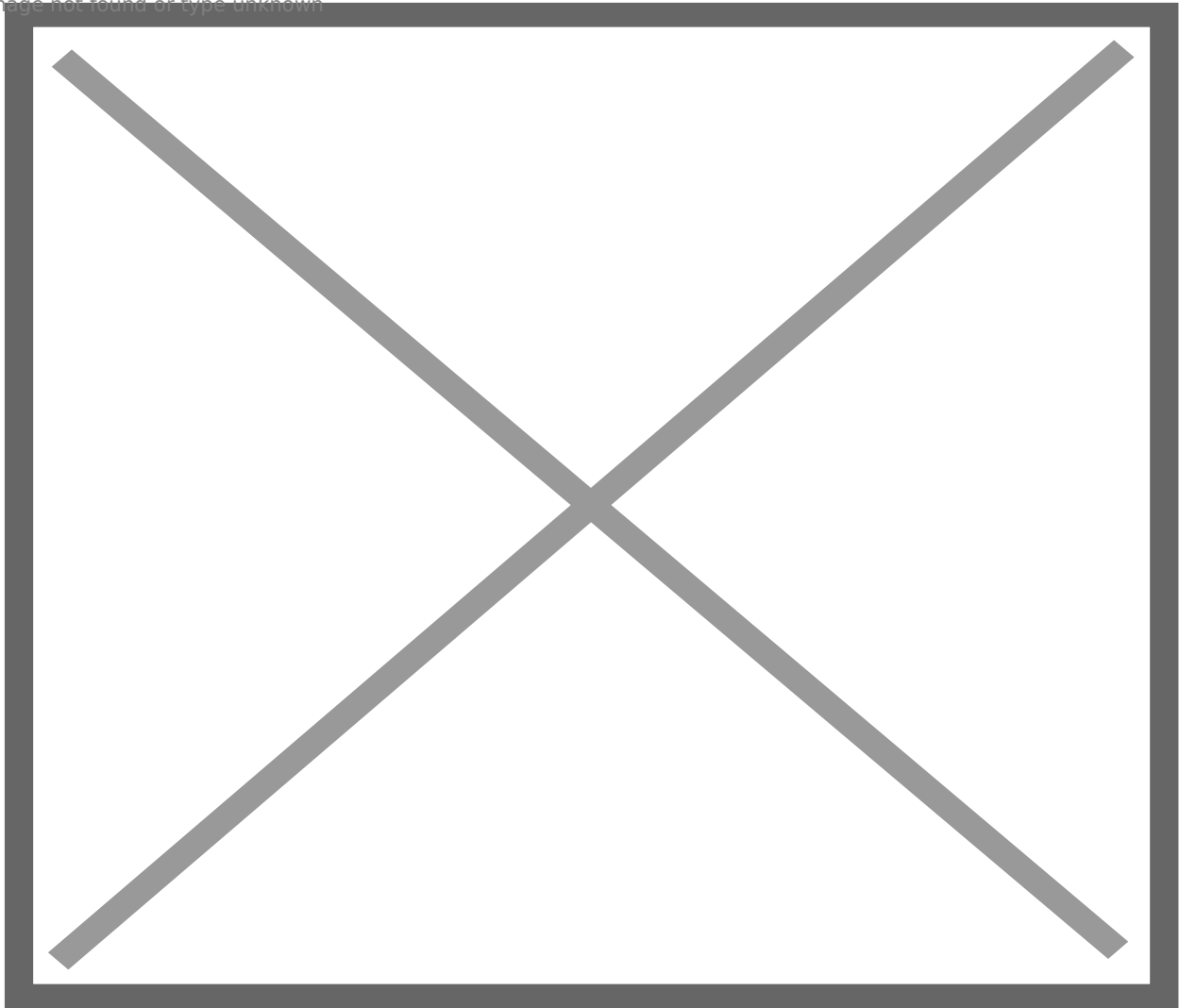
Epicurus regularly warned against the hazards of skepticism, including viewpoints which allege that confidence in knowledge is impossible. Skepticism comes in too many different forms to list here, but ranging from the very simple "Nothing can be known" (an issue dealt with in Lucretius Book 5) to "Anything Is Possible" to the pseudo-scientific "We don't have any evidence now, but we might in the future." I would submit that it is far more important to understand these issues than it is to understand Epicurus' views on pleasure, because Epicurus could have never had confidence in his conclusions on ethics if he did not have a position on what it means to have confidence in anything. These views of Epicurus formed the basis of his "Canon of Truth," which is evidence-based rather than logic-based, and every student of Epicurus needs to think closely about Doctrines 22-25 and why abstract logic is not the central aspect of his method.

This can be a complex subject to discuss, but from time to time we come across videos that are not explicitly Epicurean but which help explain the issues, involved. Thanks to a reader (Camotero) at EpicureanFriends this video by physicist Sabine Hossenfelder came to my attention today and I think it's well worth ten minutes. Please be sure at least to catch the part around the six minute mark where she labels the "Multiverse" theory as "nonscientific" and attributes the problem to the fact that "many physicists are Platonists... they believe that their math is real."

This is a very helpful video for orienting new students of Epicurus to his perspective on many aspects of science: Here's the youtube link:

Post by "Don" of July 30, 2021 at 9:30 PM

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[Electrons Don't Think - Facts So Romantic - Nautilus](#)

If a philosopher starts speaking about elementary particles, run. Pinterest recently discovered panpsychism. That's the idea that

nautil.us

I'm posting this not so much for Hossenfelder's essay against panpsychism (although I believe I can understand her negative impression of that), but for one of the comments (do a "Find in page" for swerve) bringing up Lucretius and the swerve as an example of ancient panpsychism. Correct me if I'm wrong, but Epicurus/Lucretius never said the atom "decided" to swerve, did they? I was always under the impression that it was a random, undetermined event. That randomness was what injected variety into a deterministic universe.

Although I understand where she's coming from I believe, this quote from her gave me pause vis a vis us:

Quote

Summary: If a philosopher starts speaking about elementary particles, run.

Post by “Cassius” of July 30, 2021 at 9:35 PM

Oh my! Good catch Don, we need to look into this. You are certainly correct -- there is no hint or anything I have ever seen anyone refer to as to another text which indicates that the particles "decide" anything. and of course there are repeated references as to how living things com from non-living particles, and something that is not alive presumably by definition doesn't decide anything!

Post by “Cassius” of July 30, 2021 at 10:18 PM

Hmmmm I just read that full article and that last sentence which you quoted ("Summary: If a philosopher starts speaking about elementary particles, run.") seems almost a non sequitur to the rest of the article. Apparently she means the reader to understand that a philosopher would be talking about elemental particles only because they (the philosophers) were talking about the particles having thoughts? If so that surely does not apply to Epicurus and one begins to wonder just how much reading into Epicurus she has done - is it possible that the answer is "not much"?

Post by “Don” of July 30, 2021 at 10:55 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

If so that surely does not apply to Epicurus and one begins to wonder just how much reading into Epicurus she has done - is it possible that the answer is "not much"?

That would be my guess. I get the impression (albeit cursory and superficial) that a lot of physicists and "hard scientists" don't "bother" with philosophy, current or Ancient, and see it as superfluous at best or simply unnecessary and a distraction from important things.

Example (emphasis added):

Quote

Now, look, I know that physicists have a reputation of being narrow-minded. But the reason we have this reputation is that we tried the crazy shit long ago and just found it doesn't work. You call it "narrow-minded," we call it "science." We have moved on.

I realize she's talking specifically about panpsychism here, but I get the impression that this is applicable to a lot of topics.

Post by "Godfrey" of July 31, 2021 at 12:36 AM

I just happened to have this paper on the subject, but it's been quite some time since I read it and so I have no comments. Except to say that from scanning the first page it looks like there's lots to criticize!

Post by "Don" of July 31, 2021 at 12:56 AM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

from scanning the first page it looks like there's lots to criticize!

LOL! THAT seems to be an understatement! 😂😂😂😂 Wow!

Post by "Cassius" of July 31, 2021 at 7:14 AM

Quote

according to Epicurus, our free will cannot be an emergent property and must belong to the atoms themselves. The physical and ethical consequences of the swerve are,

according to these accounts, discrete. The will to depart slightly from downward fall through the void has no apparent ethical goal, and free will, although present at the atomic level, is not manifest in all compounds.

WHAT??????

Cannot be an emergent property????

Free will is present at the atomic level?????

No!

Post by “Cassius” of August 5, 2021 at 11:26 AM

The following note was posted today to the thread for this video on the facebook page. I thought it was particularly good and wanted to record it and my response:

[Poster PB:](#)

Every time I deal with criticism of Epicurean philosophy it's always by people who misrepresent Epicurus' position saying things such as "I know he wasn't a glutton but pleasure is unlimited and modern studies have shown people simply don't limit their desires."

It's almost as if they don't understand his core position on pleasure, it has a natural limit, or the whole point of philosophy which is to train ourselves methodically, if we weren't already prudent, to live the good life. Epicurus was all about limits and boundaries, we bind ourselves to nature in order to relieve unnecessary suffering about the unknown.

Eclectics will never be secure and at peace. They've chosen and avoided according to their own constitution like the crowd does at a buffet with no method other than their own immediate gratification. And they have the nerve to call Epicurus a pig.

Cassius:

"We bind ourselves to nature in order to relieve unnecessary suffering about the unknown" I think that's a particularly good turn of phrase there. It's not to religion that we bind ourselves but to Nature, and we ultimately follow nature where nature leads, not to where *we* think through "virtue" that we "ought" to go.

The Stoics talk a good line about nature, but then (as Nietzsche accuses them) they turn around and dictate to Nature what they think Nature should do. Epicurus consistently follows nature all the way through and does not presume to overrule Nature's leadership.