

A Canonics Project - Drawing A Diagram To Illustrate Key Aspects of Epicurean Canonics / Epistemology

Post by "Cassius" of January 13, 2023 at 8:11 PM

This thread comes to mind because Joshua recently took a stab at a diagram of Epicurean epistemology that he prepared on Draw.io. The picture below is just an excerpt to liven up this post, but the full current product [is available here](#):



Joshua obviously put a lot of work into this, but it's a huge project, and a lot of the benefit will come from annotating what the branches and boxes are intended to illustrate.

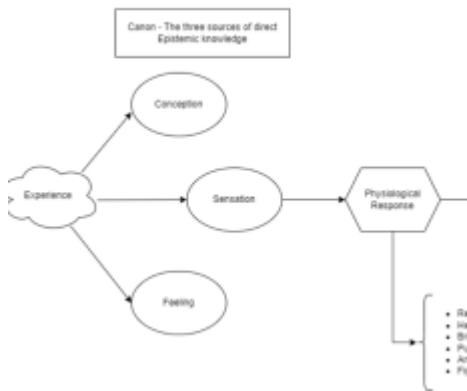
I am going to pin this thread to the Canonics section, and I will try to work on a variation myself. There should be a variety of technologies that would help us, so don't feel obligated to stick with Draw.io . I think there are probably free and collaborative "mind map" alternatives that would do the job as well, so we are very open to proposals on how this might be accomplished.

I haven't had time to study Joshua's first draft, but I feel sure that a large part of the difficulty is going to be to try to somehow illustrate "core" aspects of what Epicurus was suggesting, which would apply to most every question to be considered by the mind, while also separately showing that there are "non-core" circumstantial inputs that need to be shown in order to see the big picture. I am not at all sure what format makes best sense to use to show that. A tree, starting with roots and growing up to a trunk with branches? Or is it best to use sort of a time line view as Joshua has done, or some other format entirely?

Such a diagram would always end up being very conceptual, but might well help us think about the issues that are involved.

It also strikes me that what we are talking about is not entirely different from Artificial Intelligence models, and there are very likely all sorts of new web technologies being developed to assist with that. Maybe some kind of Epicurean Canonical AI-bot is also something to consider.

All suggestion are welcome!



Post by “Joshua” of January 15, 2023 at 3:00 AM

Just in case it helps, my next plan with the diagram was to take off from "I want to explain this fact" and take that through a Pythoclean treatment of single vs multiple causes, postponing judgment until further information comes to hand, etc. The 'feelings' bubble would pretty quickly branch off into two parts, one interlacing with the "sensations" pathway to inform epistemology and one branching off into a treatment of pleasures (kinetic and katastematic), pains (short if intense, etc), and the limits of each, before coming down to the "desire module", where natural, necessary, etc couple with epistemic outputs to inform decision making. Prolepsis would present considerable difficulties, as I still don't grasp it very well. The result would be like a dense interweaving hedge more than a tree.

Post by “Bryan” of March 15, 2025 at 6:10 PM

As we have seen, most of the books of Epíkouros' On Nature are about physics, which makes sense. Book 25, however, is about ethics, and book 28 is about epistemology. Therefore, in preparation for book 28, I have looked at the canon again. I have added some symbols for the main pieces of the canonic engine. It's a work in progress and probably does have some errors.

[∇]	τὰ Διημαρτημένα	Misinterpretations <i>can result from</i>
[Δ+]	τὸ Προσδοξαζόμενον	The Addition Of Judgement <i>while</i>
{Δ}	Ἐξαιτιολογῶν	Fully Reasoning Into The Causes
[Δ•]	ἡ Ἐπιβλητική Δόξα	Objective Judgment <i>is used for</i>
[θ]	τὸ Θεωρούμενον	What Is Observed <i>including</i>
	τὸ Παρόν	What Is Present
	τὸ Ὁρατόν	What Is Seen
	τὸ Δῆλον	What Is Clear
	τὸ Λαμβανόμενον	What Is Comprehended <i>and therefore is</i>
[θ]	τὸ Μὴ Προσμένον	What Is Not Pending [direct observation]

[Δ◊]	ἡ Θεωρητικὴ Δόξα	Speculative Judgement <i>is used for</i>
[O]	τὸ Μὴ Θεωρούμενον	What Is Not Observed <i>including</i>
	τὸ Μὴ Παρόν	What Is Not Present
	τὸ Ἄόρατον	What Is Unseen
	τὸ Ἰαδηλόν	What Is Unclear
	τὸ Μὴ Λαμβανόμενον	What Is Not Comprehended <i>and therefore</i>
{Mo}	τὸ Ἐπιμαρτυρηθησόμενον	What Is To Be Attested <i>which is</i>
[O]	τὸ Προσμένον	What Is Pending [direct observation]

[α]	τὸ Ἀληθές	<i>for</i> What Is True <i>are all</i>
[A]	αἱ Αἰσθήσεις	Sensations
[Π]	τὰ Πάθη	<i>including</i> Experiences <i>(i.e., feelings)</i>
[•Λ]	αἱ Προλήψεις	<i>and</i> Anticipations <i>(what is mentally perceived before active consideration)</i>
[B']	ἡ Ἐπιβολή	<i>and</i> Attention <i>to</i>
[E]	ἡ Ἐνάργεια	Perceivable Reality <i>including</i>
[B'δ]	ἡ Ἐπιβολή τῆς Διανοίας	Attention To Mental Perception

		<i>is</i>
(-α)	Οὐκ Ἀληθές	Not True
		<i>if</i>
{-M}	Μὴ Ἐπιμαρτυρηθῆ	It Is Not Attested
		<i>or</i>
{W}	Ἀντιμαρτυρηθῆ	It Is Contested
		<i>by</i>
[A]	ἡ Αἴσθησις	<i>sensation</i>
[Δ]	ἡ Δόξα	A Judgement
		<i>is</i>
(α)	Ἀληθές	True
		<i>if</i>
{M}	Ἐπιμαρτυρηθῆ	It Is Attested
		<i>or</i>
{-W}	Μὴ Ἀντιμαρτυρηθῆ	It Is Not Contested
		<i>by</i>
[A]	ἡ Αἴσθησις	<i>sensation</i>

ATTESTATION		CONTESTATION	
<p>(M) έπιμαρτυρούμενον attested</p> <p><i>being attested by sensation is sufficient to establish the truth of a judgment as long as there continues to be no contestation</i></p>	<p>∨ or</p>	<p>(-W) μη αντιμαρτυρούμενον not contested</p> <p><i>not being contested by sensation is sufficient to establish the truth of a judgment as long as there continues to be no contestation</i></p>	<p>⇒</p> <p>(α) TRUE</p>
<p>(-M) μη έπιμαρτυρούμενον not attested</p> <p><i>not being attested by sensation is sufficient to establish the falsity of a judgment as long as there continues to be no attestation</i></p>	<p>∧ and</p>	<p>(W) αντιμαρτυρούμενον contested</p> <p><i>being contested by sensation is sufficient to establish the falsity of a judgment long as there continues to be no attestation</i></p>	<p>⇒</p> <p>(Ο) προσμένον pending <i>(no evidence → unknown)</i></p>
<p>(M) έπιμαρτυρούμενον attested</p>	<p>∧ and</p>	<p>(W) αντιμαρτυρούμενον contested</p> <p><i>being contested by sensation is sufficient to establish the falsity of a judgment long as there continues to be no attestation</i></p>	<p>⇒</p> <p>(Ο) προσμένον pending <i>(conflicting evidence → more observation needed)</i></p>

Post by "TauPhi" of March 16, 2025 at 9:40 PM

These five tables are brilliant, [Bryan](#) . Thank you for preparing them. One suggestion for the third table. Under 'Experiences' I think it would be more precise to go straight into **ἡδονή** - pleasure and **ἀλγηδών** - pain instead of '(i.e., feelings)'. Essentially, these are epicurean **παθη**.

Bryan's tables are pure essence of Epicurean's truth criteria. If someone wishes to investigate them in more descriptive form, I've prepared something for you in the attached pdf file. It's an extract from Sextus Empiricus 'Against the Logicians'. Four passages from books I and II. Definitely worth a read.

And if someone is interested in other ancient philosophers' takes on epistemology, you can easily find 'Against the Logicians' on [archive.org](#).

Post by “TauPhi” of April 25, 2025 at 6:55 PM

Link to a doctoral thesis on Epicurean epistemology by Ana Gavran Miloš from University of Zagreb. I skimmed through the work and it caught my eye as an in-depth analysis. Might be worth a look for anyone interested in more advanced Epicurean study. Table of contents is at the end right after bibliography.

<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/199709901.pdf>