

PD24 - Alternate Translations

Post by "Cassius" of September 7, 2021 at 5:47 PM

Note how Sedley and Long treat 24 (thanks Nate):

24. "(1) If you are going to reject any sensation absolutely, and not distinguish opinions reliant on evidence yet awaited from what is already present through sensation, through feelings, and through **every focusing of thought into an impression**, you will confound all your other sensations with empty opinion and consequently reject the criterion in its entirety. (2) And if you are going to treat as established both all the evidence yet awaited in your conjectural conceptions, and that which has failed to <earn> attestation, you will not exclude falsehood, so that you will have removed all debate and all discrimination between correct and incorrect." (87)

I think they are properly too conservative to use "concepts" there, although it looks to me like they would be happy to do so.

Now if Epicurus were wanting to be a total subjectivist and say "things are to be judged as true in part according to the concepts I have formed of them" he might win an award for self-assertiveness or for starting a semi-modern school of subjectivity, but I don't think that was his intention at all.

I think he was setting up a standard of truth for the very exact purpose of always having a method to go back to, based on data provided through natural senses, by which to check the continued validity of concepts previously or currently formed.

If he had said " I include in my list of the standards of truth the opinions I have already formed," then he'd be doing exactly what he warned against (confounding your other opinions with empty opinion."

Of course I realize that a premise of my argument is that a concept is always an opinion, and that there is no way to objectively define any concept as "true for all times, places, people, etc." That's probably the direction this debate has to go to be decided. Is there any way to validate a concept as something that we should consider to be a criterion of truth for all people, all times, all places? Yes we take the position that some "facts" are established (such as no supernatural gods, no life after death, etc.) Do THOSE concepts we accept as "universally true" become part of the "criterion of truth"?

I can see someone arguing that position, but I am not at all sure that Epicurus was going in that direction. If he WAS going in that direction, then IMHO he was strictly limiting the number of positions that are "absolutely true" to those forcefully supported by his philosophy. And I don't think you can get from "one of three natural faculties" to "a list of the core positions of Epicurean Philosophy."