

Eric's personal outline

Post by "Cassius" of September 17, 2024 at 11:00 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

This gave me some difficulty in the past, so I want to see if I can finally get it. Can we say that the senses are the mechanics of how the mind collects "data"? Then just like a microscope may have a scratch on the lense, the eye could have a defect which slightly alters the incoming data?

Yes. The microscope does not "tell" the doctor or scientist what he is looking at - the microscope simply collects and magnifies light and passes it on to the eyepiece. It's up to the observer to make an accurate assessment of what he sees.

If a lense has a scratch, then the light transmitted to the eyepiece is affected to greater or lesser degree by the scratch. But that doesn't affect the "truthfulness" of the microscope, because at no time is the microscope "telling" anyone anything.

We're separating the "collection of data" from the "assessment of data." The collection isn't "true" or "false" - the collection function simply is what it is.

That's why it is possible to say that the senses always report "accurately" or "truthfully" -- they are not injecting their own "opinion" about what they are displaying. They aren't reaching any conclusions at all. The observer has to account for any scratches on a lens the same way you account for the lens being out of focus, or not having enough light to see what you're looking at.

It's "opinions" that are right or wrong or accurate or inaccurate.

So it's essential, if you're going to make any sense of Epicurean canonic at all, to "get the point" that tools like the eyes or ears are never "accurate" or "inaccurate" in the way that they report. They report what they report, and it's the *interpretation* of the data in the mind that is accurate or inaccurate.

"Accurate" or "inaccurate" applies to saying that the tower at a distance is round or square. When someone says "all senses are true" or "[all sensations are true](#)," they aren't talking about the conclusion about whether the tower is square or round. They are saying that the senses report "truly" in the sense of "honestly without any added opinion of their own."