

Eric's personal outline

Post by "Cassius" of September 17, 2024 at 11:07 AM

I think a lot of people miss why this is so important.

The point is that the other philosophers, typified by Plato with his cave, allege that the senses "lie" to you and that they are therefore unreliable sources of information about how to live. If the senses lie, then you need to look for some other faculties that you *can* rely on to replace them.

If you're Plato, you come up with geometry or dialectic or some other way of symbolic "logic." If you're more into straight religion you come up with some kind of prayer or divine revelation. No doubt there are other substitutes as well but (1) rationalism/logic and (2) mysticism are the big ones.

Epicurus rejects both of those and says that we rely on the senses that nature gave us, and we don't have to invent imaginary substitutes. He further points out that in addition to the five senses, there are two other categories of natural faculties (1 - the feelings of pleasure and pain, and 2 - the "prolepsis") which are also natural mechanisms that report "truly" without their own opinions. That's why these three categories are "canonical" - they don't give us any opinions of their own about what to do, but they are natural "straight edges" or "rulers" that we can reliably use to test our own individual contexts. They operate naturally, so when held up to situation after situation they give us reliable data that we can then act upon. No need for divine revelation or circular rationalism.