

# Theories of Time - University of Oregon Webpage

Post by "Cassius" of December 26, 2024 at 10:53 AM

You know when I combine in my mind the assertions that motion is an illusion, that time is an illusion, that everything our senses show us is nothing more than the illusions caused by shadows flickering on the wall of Plato's cave, it's hard to shake the feeling that this is the real heart of Epicurean philosophy.

Yes you end up with some conclusions about pleasure and pain after you apply your conclusions to those issues, but you'd never reach the same opinions if you didn't start with the confidence that the world your senses allow you to perceive is real, and not an illusion.

I'm not sure most people today who read Epicurus have any inkling of this.

They jump right to the pleasure analysis as if none of the rest makes any difference, when the truth is that the pleasure analysis makes no sense at all without the initial grounding that pleasure and pain and the rest of the canonical faculties are the true measure of what's real and what's not real.

Many people in the last 100 years are awake to the idea that the supernatural religions push this fraudulent idea (that what the senses reveal is not real) because the religions are pushing supernatural gods who are completely unverifiable by the senses in this world. That's easy enough to understand, though even that I don't think they take fully to heart.

But very few people who read Epicurus are awake to how the "secular" philosophers (other than Epicurus) are doing much the same thing. In my view, the motivation of the secular class in pushing "skepticism" is ultimately "power." "Power" is the motivation of the religious class too, even though I grant to many of the religious class that they are sincere. But I think a good argument can be made that the secular skeptical philosophers are more to be condemned as "liars" than are the religionists (the accusation included in David Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion that "...*the Sceptics are not a sect of philosophers: They are only a sect of liars.*") So I can see why Epicurus would have concluded that giving in to physics-based determinism is even worse than giving in to supernatural religion.

If you don't have confidence in the senses (the canonical faculties) you don't have anything at all. And that's the place to start in understanding pleasure and everything else.