

SOE5 - On Attestations

Post by "Elayne" of December 30, 2019 at 11:47 AM

Hiram, I will argue from reality, since we differ on how and whether Epicurus and others understood reality.

We can only have direct perceptions subjectively, as individuals. Then if we want to communicate our perceptions, we have to use a conceptual method, such as language, or try to _evoke_ those sensations in others, such as through art or by giving a person a cookie from the batch we just enjoyed.

If we use words that are not describing a perceptual reality, our communications become nonsensical and full of contradiction and paradox.

The words can't ever replace the perceptual reality, and thus one can endlessly deconstruct even the word "cookie" if one is determined to do so-- but one can't endlessly deconstruct the cookie itself, and if sugar is deconstructed into indivisible particles, it will have no taste. It's only as sugar molecules that it tastes sweet (yes, I know there are different sugars). So "sweet" and "cookie" describe a real perception but don't replace it.

Those kinds of words, where a person can provide a perceptual example, are different from words which include abstraction not demonstrable in perceptions. Words like "wellbeing" or "flourishing" include idealisms which will not be universally agreed on-- ideas which can't be demonstrated perceptually. Those words require other words to define them, whereas words based on perceptual reality can be shown to others, not just talked about.

I already had observed this, and I had read Wittgenstein, etc, about semantics, so when I read Epicurus' advice on clear communication, I recognized that he had figured this out. That he was saying not to argue about concepts/words that didn't have a direct perceptual reality behind them. That to quibble over the definition of sweet was just perverse, since we can all sit in a circle, pass around a bowl of sugar cubes, and observe on others' faces the same expressions we make when tasting the sugar. If we all then point at the bowl and use the words sugar and sweet, we've agreed on a shorthand to communicate our individual perceptions of the same object.

I was pleased to read those words of his-- it went towards me deciding he was a credible

person.