

Preconceptions and PD24

Post by “Cassius” of December 14, 2021 at 6:43 PM

I am going to see if I can find some pithy excerpts on this. Unfortunately the subject is so complex that it's basically covered throughout his entire chapter 8....

Part of it is here but there is a longer discussion somewhere else that I will find:

EPICURUS AND HIS PHILOSOPHY

example, when Aristotle says, "The sense of sight is not deceived as to color," this is true only of the close view, because colors fade in more distant views.

Sensations, however, usually present themselves in combinations of color, shape, size, smell, and so on. An immediate presentation of such a composite unit is a *phantasia*. All such presentations are true, but they do not rank as criteria in the meaning of the Canon, for the reason that the intelligence has come into play. An act of recognition (*epaisthesis*) has taken place in the mind of the observer, which is secondary to the primary reaction that registered color, shape, size, smell, and so forth.

That Epicurus did not regard these composite sensations as criteria is made clear by a statement of his own: "The fidelity of the recognitions guarantees the truth of the sensations."¹⁹ For example, the animal standing yonder is recognized as a dun-colored ox. This is a secondary reaction. Only the primary perceptions of color, shape, size, and so on constitute a direct contact between man and the physical environment. The truth of these perceptions is confirmed by the fidelity of the recognition.

Again, let it be assumed that the quality of sweetness is registered by sensation. It is not, however, sensation that says, "This is honey"; a secondary reaction in the form of a recognition involving intelligence has taken place. This, in the terminology of Epicurus, is "a fantastic perception of the intelligence." These were not given the rank of criteria by Epicurus for the reason already cited. It is on record, however, that **later Epicureans** did so.²⁰

So far is Epicurus from believing all sensations to be true in the meaning of the Canon that he guards against error in various ways. In the first place, attention must be paid to all sensations, as already mentioned. Next, the sensations of the individual must be checked by those of others: "Consequently attention must be paid to the immediate feelings and to the sensations, in common with others in matters of common concern and individually in matters of private concern and to all clear presentations of every one of the criteria."²¹ This guardedness was imperative, because contemporary skepticism was flourishing.

at the moment at least I am not finding the additional discussion that I think exists somewhere else in EAHP about the comment made by Diogenes Laertius at line 31 (in case that's not clear already, which Bailey translates as "the Epicureans add to these the intuitive apprehensions of the mind" ===

Quote

31] Logic they reject as misleading. For they say it is sufficient for physicists to be guided by what things say of themselves. Thus in *The Canon* Epicurus says that the tests of truth are the sensations and concepts and the feelings; the Epicureans add to these the intuitive apprehensions of the mind. And this he says himself too in the summary addressed to Herodotus and in the [Principal Doctrines](#). For, he says, all sensation is irrational and does not admit of memory; for it is not set in motion by itself, nor when it is set in motion by something else, can it add to it or take from it.