

The Best Simple Term To Use For "Anticipations" (?)

Post by "Cassius" of December 31, 2018 at 11:29 AM

Cassius:

Elli and Elayne, may I return to this point: Original question:

"Actually I think that last point leads to a very important question. Is it possible / would Epicurus have taught / that any IDEA of any kind can ever be a standard of truth? And when I say "idea" I mean any "word / mental picture"?"

Restated Question: Does it make sense ****within Epicurus' framework**** to equate an "idea" with a "sight" or a "sound" or a "taste" or a "touch" or a "smell" or a "sensation of pleasure" or a "sensation of pain" as a standard of truth?

Elli: Cassius hi ! I think so ! When I smell a specific perfume the idea/thought/remembrance of one of my relatives comes immediately to my mind. And not only her figure, but many facts and many stories and words that she narrated to me, when I was a little child.

This the perfume ! 😊

No automatic alt text available.

Cassius: Ok in that example, the sensation of a smell is calling to your mind a stored idea of this relative of which a smell is a part. The smell itself however is new, in the present - it is reported to you by your nose exactly as it happens to you even if you had never smelled it before. The idea of your relative, however, was assembled in your mind and is dependent on your having met her (presuming it is a her! 😊) in the past. So in your example, the smell sensation served as a direct connection with reality outside your brain. Can we say the same about 'ideas'?

DL: "Every sensation, he says, is devoid of reason and incapable of memory; for neither is it self-caused nor, regarded as having an external cause, can it add anything thereto or take anything therefrom."

Now of course no one is saying that a "sensation" is the same in all respects as an "idea." The question under discussion is "Does an "idea" deserve the same level of credibility as a sensation?"

Also DL again: "Now in The Canon Epicurus affirms that our sensations and preconceptions and our feelings are the standards of truth; the Epicureans generally make perceptions of mental presentations to be also standards. His own statements are also to be found in the Summary addressed to Herodotus and in the [Principal Doctrines](#). And the reality of separate perceptions guarantees the truth of our senses. But seeing and hearing are just as real as

feeling pain. Hence it is from plain facts that we must start when we draw inferences about the unknown. For all our notions are derived from perceptions, either by actual contact or by analogy, or resemblance, or composition, with some slight aid from reasoning.

So where I am going is that your idea of your relative is a "notion" which is derived from past perceptions. The individual perceptions - the sensations - have all the indicia of being criterias of truth, because they are "devoid of reason and incapable of memory." The notion of your relative, however, has been formed in your mind over time and repeated experiences, and your mind has selectively assembled what it considered, in its own opinion, to be significant about your relative. Therefore the notion of your relative in your mind, while a critical part of your thinking process, does not appear to me to hold the same credibility of "truth" as is any individual sensation from your dealings with that relative.

Which is not to say that your notions are not of critical importance - they are the way that we think and live our lives and we decide what is of importance to us. But any particular notion is something that we assembled for ourselves, and is subject to all sorts of dramatic changes over time. I don't think it is a problem to consider a "notion" to be "true" in some senses of the word, but I do see an important distinction between "notions in our minds" and "external facts of reality."

Maybe the entire issue revolves around the definition we are giving to "true."