

Cartesian beliefs on sensory perception vs Epicurean knowledge acquired through the senses

Post by “profkesarsarwara” of April 29, 2024 at 9:33 AM

Much against my will I've recently been studying Descartes' views on the reliability of the senses as a tool for acquiring secure knowledge as part of my Philosophy degree. I understand that in Epicurean thought the senses are one of the three secure ways to make sense of nature in that sensory perception is a tool that is given to us by nature itself. What I'd like to consider is whether the possibility of being deceived by the external world is a factor that Epicureans should be concerned by. Gods and evil demons may be grouped with unicorns and trolls for all that I regard them, as this is not the sort of deception of which I am speaking. Indeed scepticism is psychologically impossible and not worth considering in this radical way, but I cannot help but feel nevertheless hesitant to accept that my senses, feelings and anticipations are free from error now. Does Epicurus offer a logical argument that proves this to be the case? I understand that rationalism plays a strong role in Epicureanism, so I would like to learn what actually renders the senses, pleasure and pain, and anticipations truly reliable as a tool to navigate life. Many thanks! 😊