

Clear But Not Convincing Evidence

Post by "Cassius" of October 14, 2024 at 2:49 PM

In the context of a portion of Lucretius Today Episode 250 I want to start this thread to focus on the possibility that significant parts of the use of Epicurean prolepsis, including discussion of "gods," needs to be evaluated with the understanding that evidence can be "clear" but not "convincing."

For example, in evaluating: "For gods there are, since the knowledge of them is by clear vision." (Bailey) But does "knowledge of them by clear vision" indicate that everything which is alleged by some people to be clear to them is true? Epicurus may say that god being "immortal and blessed [is part of a] common idea of a god is engraved on men's minds," but does that mean that "ideas" in the form of fully-formed conclusions of fact are "engraved upon men's mind?" What about the false ideas of others about gods rewarding their friends and punishing their enemies? Were those false ideas just invented from whole cloth, or is it possible that these false opinions were developed as a result of defective processing of certain *other* prolepses - prolepses which should have been rejected as part of the overall reasoning process?

This is something we discuss in Episode 150 so I want to post this to begin to accumulate discussion of how it is possible that evidence can be considered "clear" and yet not worthy of belief. There are many more that can be found, but the following points come up immediately from a GOOGLE Ai search based primarily on theories of evidence in American law. By no means is this discussion determinative of anything, but I think it's good food for thought:

1. An example of evidence that is clear but not convincing could be a single, isolated eyewitness account of a significant event, especially if the witness has a history of unreliable testimony or if their account lacks substantial supporting details, leaving room for doubt about the accuracy of their observation; even though the witness clearly states what they saw, the lack of corroborating evidence might not be enough to fully convince a decision-maker.

Here are a few more examples:

1. A single, ambiguous text message: If someone is accused of threatening behavior based on a single text that could be interpreted in multiple ways, the text itself might be clear but not convincing enough to prove a threat without further context or supporting evidence.
2. A circumstantial piece of evidence without a direct connection: Finding a suspect's fingerprints at a crime scene could be clear evidence of their presence, but if there's no other evidence linking them to the crime, it might not be convincing enough to prove guilt.
3. Hearsay testimony: Even if a witness clearly states what they heard someone else say, this testimony might be considered clear but not convincing because it is not

directly observed evidence and could be subject to misinterpretation or distortion.

2. Key points to remember:

1. Lack of corroboration: Clear evidence often needs supporting details or other pieces of evidence to be considered convincing.
2. Potential for bias: Even if evidence is clear, it might not be convincing if there is a strong suspicion of bias from the source.
3. Context matters: The same piece of evidence could be considered clear but not convincing depending on the situation and the standard of proof required.