

Are anticipations internalized rules about the way the world works?

Post by "Cassius" of May 3, 2020 at 7:18 AM

[Quote from Pompadour](#)

Also, from the perspective of any individual, don't the results of that faculty become the basis for each person's truth?

Yes, I think you are right, with the caveat that we have to remember that just like the things we see can be distorted by distance, or fog, or many other things, presumably the things that any other faculty report to us can also be distorted. Presumably that would be why Epicurus reports in the letter to Menoeceus that the views of some people about the gods are not "true" anticipations (true in the sense of accurate).

That is why I like DeWitt's analogy about the faculties being tools of precision (like a measuring stick) rather than the thing being measured. The measuring stick can be applied to innumerable different particular things, without at birth ever containing any content unique to that thing being measured, just as the eyes at birth contain the mechanism of sight without ever having been exposed to anything that will be seen during life.

So as DeWitt says it is important to always keep in mind whether you are talking about tools of precision (straight edge, level) or the stones with which you build the wall. The wall and the stones are the results, but are not themselves the tools of precision (the standard).

And therefore as you say I think Epicurus would be very interested in studying the brain and its cognitive processes so that we can understand them and account for possibilities of error. I see proof of that in chapter four of Lucretius, where much time is devoted to "images" and how they can be distorted (illusions) without those distortions ultimately undermining our confidence in the senses (because we can account for those distortions and correct them by proper use of those same senses).