

The Dangers of Misdirected Increase of Knowledge

Post by "Cassius" of October 12, 2020 at 11:45 AM

OK I think all this fits under the category of "waiting" - where Epicurus is very clear, even in the passage quoted by Lucretius, that we do not take positions on things which we cannot get sufficient information. Definitely and absolutely agree with that.

HOWEVER, there are times when we are confronted with situations, such as the claims of Quantum Woo or religion that consciousness, or gods, control the universe, and we can't simply take an "I don't know" attitude towards those claims.

As you probably know, that's the point that Lucretius makes in the part AFTER I quoted:

Quote

1743: And though reason is not able to assign a cause why an object that is really four-square when near, should appear round when seen at a distance; yet, if we cannot explain this difficulty, it is better to give any solution, even a false one, than to deliver up all Certainty out of our power, to break in upon our first principle of belief, and tear up all foundations upon which our life and security depend.

For not only all reason must be overthrown, but life itself must be immediately extinguished, unless you give credit to your senses. These direct you to fly from a precipice and other evils of this sort which are to be avoided, and to pursue what tends to your security. All therefore is nothing more than an empty parade of words that can be offered against the certainty of sense.

Lastly, as in a building, if the principle rule of the artificer be not true, if his line be not exact, or his level bear in to the least to either side, every thing must needs be wrong and crooked, the whole fabric must be ill-shaped, declining, hanging over, leaning and irregular, so that some parts will seem ready to fall and tumble down, because the whole was at first disordered by false principles. So the reason of things must of necessity be wrong and false which is founded upon a false representation of the senses.

So with that as the primary point, let me address:

[Quote from Susan Hill](#)

I feel acutely aware of serious limitations in human senses and perceptions.

Absolutely, and I am acutely aware of those limitations too. On the other hand, limited as they are, the human senses and perceptions are **all we have** on which to (ultimately) base our opinions and our decisions. If we reason based on anything else we are totally arbitrary and lost.

[Quote from Susan Hill](#)

but that we are still missing a huge piece of the puzzle in interpreting why classical physics breaks down at the quantum level

Yes we are missing that huge piece, and on other hugely important questions we are missing the piece about whether we have any form of consciousness after death, and we are missing the piece in which we verify life on other bodies outside earth, etc. Unfortunately we often have to take positions on important questions with limited information, when those questions are directly impacting on our mental or physical wellbeing.

[Quote from Susan Hill](#)

Do we not have to admit to a little agnosticism, therefore?

I probably prefer the term "waiting" 😊