

Making Epicurean Canonics Understandable

Post by "Elayne" of October 31, 2020 at 9:37 AM

Cassius, is there any study of which types of convictions have been most overturned by DNA evidence? That would help me know whether I think courts are wise to use circumstantial evidence and how much leads to higher accuracy. Considering the stakes -- a person's life or freedom-- I hope we are relying on some measure of accuracy better than "we've always done it this way and it sounds like it would be right."

In medicine, we don't have a category "circumstantial evidence", but it sounds like it would apply to times when it looks like an infectious agent is the cause of a disease but Koch's postulates haven't been fully satisfied. It sounds like it would basically be uncertainty about a causal relationship. IMO that is not the same as a total lack of evidence. A total lack of sense evidence would be guessing the shapes of elementary particles in the time of Epicurus. There wasn't "circumstantial" evidence. Analogy is not evidence.

In medicine, situations of incomplete or indirect evidence can be acted on but not placed in a category of definite conclusions. They would be in the suspense account pending direct evidence, because we know those conclusions are more likely to need modifying later. There should not be a rush to decide, but we can still take action.

I think of an eyewitness account of an event as a situation of incomplete sense data-- the scene wasn't run multiple times, looked at up close and repeatedly. Often only a portion of the events are witnessed. It would be like a case study-- a lower degree of reliability. But it's still better than asking someone who didn't see any of it to draw a picture of a robber based on their imagination. The data lawyers call circumstantial is still sense data-- it's not an imaginary or indirect weapon, for instance, or an imaginary or indirect body. It's not someone having a dream that their neighbor is a witch and calling for a trial-- there are sense observations, even if incomplete.