

Episode Sixty - Dreams and the Mind's Use of Images

Post by "Cassius" of March 3, 2021 at 4:22 PM

Here is side by side comparison of the commentary of Bailey (white, left) vs Munro (colored, right) on this same section. Compare how Bailey categorizes the entire discussion in terms of "thought" while Munro does not mention the words "thought" or any variation of "thinking," but deals with the subject as if it is just another variation of sensation, not something different in kind.

I also added underlines in Bailey which emphasize where Bailey is presuming his conclusion in his description. In passages marked 2 and 3 I also question the presumption that it is necessary for sensation and thought BOTH to be "set in action" and "stirred" by emotions from outside. Yes as to sensations, but why does the action of the mind have to be in reaction to something OUTSIDE. I see no reason whatsoever in the rest of Epicurus to think that the mind cannot generate its own actions, and I would presume as devoted as Epicurus was to "agency" that the mind DOES initiate its own thoughts, in addition to responding to things that it perceives, just as we in this thread are both initiating our own comments and responding to the comments of each other.

Bailey is insisting that in all cases the the receipt of images in the mind and the receipt of vision by the eyes are linked together in result, and I certainly see the passage that he is referring to it, but by no means does it follow (in my view) that this process is going on in *everything* that our minds think.

(e) *Thought*. 722–822.

From sensation Lucr. proceeds naturally to thought and concludes in the main that like vision it is produced by 'idols' which enter the mind. This conclusion goes back to the Atomists. Just as 'mind is the same as soul',¹ the same, that is, in atomic structure (see iii. 136 ff.), so the processes by which sensation and thought are set in action are the same, and in a material world this must be by means of contact with the object or with an emanation from it. So for Democritus 'thought is sensation, that is to say change',² or, as it is put more explicitly, 'sensations and thoughts are alterations of the body'.³ It is obvious that the mind does not come into direct contact with objects, and it must therefore be stirred by emanations, and these emanations the Atomists decided were the 'idols' which caused vision, which enter the mind through 'the pores in the body' (*corporis . . . per rara* 730).⁴ So close was this identification of thought and sensation that Epicurus in his treatment of the 'idols' constantly couples them together: 'it is when something enters us from external objects that we not only see but think of their shapes';⁵ 'models, similar in colour and shape, leave the objects and enter according to their respective size either into our sight or into our mind';⁶ 'every image which we obtain by an act of apprehension on the part of the mind or of the sense-organs . . . this image is the shape of the solid object'.⁷ And again in a passage where he introduces the images seen in sleep 'the similarity between the things which exist, which we call real, and the images received as a likeness of things and produced either in sleep or through some other acts of apprehension on the part of the mind or the other instruments of judgement, could never be, unless there were some effluences of this nature actually brought into contact with our senses'.⁸ Cicero⁹ in recounting the

ὡς καὶ ἰδέσθαι ἀποτύχουσι τὰ αἰσθητὰ.

722—748: the mind too receives its impressions from images flying about on all hands, which however are much finer than those by which we see: images are of different kinds, some formed spontaneously in the air, some coming from things or formed from a union of several; and thus we see centaurs and the like, though such never existed, from the chance union for instance of the image of a man and horse; the extreme fineness of such images makes them readily unite, and the wondrous agility of the mind itself at once receives them.—Lucr. in this and the following sections battles manfully and ingeniously with the prodigious difficulties under which the epicurean theories on this question labour. Cicero's philosophical writings are full of clever argument and banter directed against them, sometimes successful, but often captious and unfair. 724 *rer. sim.*: Plut. de plac. phil. iv 8 Λεύκιππος, Δημόκρι-

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τος, τὴν αἰσθῆσιν καὶ τὴν νόησιν γίνεσθαι εἰδώλων ἔξωθεν προσιόντων: Cic. ad fam. xv 16 thus jests with the new epicurean convert Cassius, *fit enim nescio qui, ut quasi eorum adesse videre, cum scribo aliquid ad te; neque id kat' εἰδώλων φαντασίας, ut dicent tui amici novi qui putant etiam διανοητικὰς φαντασίας spectris Catianis excitari. nam, te ne fugiat, Catius Insuper epicureus, qui nuper est mortuus, quae ille Gargettius et iam ante Democritus εἰδῶλα, hic spectra nominat.* 726 *Tenia* emphatic from its position: see n. to 63. 727 *brattea*: 'videndum est ne barbaram consuetudinem sequantur qui scribunt *bractea*, ut *mactea* *blacta*. *Actus*. *Actis*. *actumimus*. *aretya*. *furctus*. *muleta*. quae ante quadrip-