

PD24 - Commentary and Translation of PD 24

Post by “Bryan” of December 9, 2023 at 12:43 PM

I agree that *epibole tes dianoias* (mental focus) and *prolepseis* (anticipations/stereotypes) are two facets of the same faculty. I also agree every sensation (the criteria of reality) is prerational.

All ideas that are based in reality must necessarily be based upon images.

If the idea is not based in reality -- not based on images -- then it is not a prolepsis but a hypolepsis (post conception, afterthought, supposition) [DL 10.124].

Πάσα φανταστική ἐπιβολή is something like “the entire graphic perception” “the full pictorial focus” “the complete visual attention.”

I think the use of φανταστική (‘graphic’) here is only further explaining the process of mental focus; the whole phrase is therefore equivalent to ἡ ἐπιβολή τῆς διανοίας (‘the focus of the mind’), which Lucretius translates as *animī iniectus* ‘a casting of mental energy’ or ‘a throwing out of the attention’ [DRN 2.740].

Instead of using the modern analogy of ‘focusing’ the mind (as though the mind were something like a camera), Ἐπίκουρος and Lucretius use the analogy of ‘throwing’ or ‘casting’ the mind (as though the mind were something like a net). The paraphrases *animī iniectus* and ἡ ἐπιβολή τῆς διανοίας therefore are equivalent to our modern use of ‘attention.’

Basically, we need to distinguish between sensations and ideas. Sensations are true per se, but ideas are only true if they accurately reflect our repeated sensations. If we accept any idea as true per se, without demanding any evidence, we have undermined our sensations which are the only foundation we have to accurately understand our environment.