

The Possibility of The "Images" Theory Being Not So Absurd After All

Post by "Cassius" of July 8, 2024 at 9:21 PM

[Quote from TauPhi](#)

If every object constantly emits eidolas, what about objects that are made up with 2 atoms only? Two atoms combined already make an object and according to the theory, that object should start emitting constant flow of eidolas.

I see that as an example of something we see a lot in modern Epicurean writing - a construction of an Epicurean theory that makes no effort to view the theory in a workable way. If you and I can realize that a two-atom body would not be radiating atoms, then Epicurus would certainly have understood that too. I see no improper deference or leap of faith at all in concluding that everyone - including Epicurus - should realize that two-atom bodies (if they deserve the term bodies at all - are not going to be radiating off particles that they don't have. We don't know a lot about what Epicurus thought about images, but one thing we do know is that images are natural and therefore made of atoms just like everything else.

I don't have the specialized background to be able to take positions on particle physics and develop understandable analogies, but the basic point of the atomic theory, of which images are only a part, is that things happen through the movement of particles through void, and not "supernaturally" without that movement. And while I am perfectly happy to talk about waves and quarks and all sorts of other imaginative names, I am not going to defer to any theorists or theories which ultimately do not take into account that "natural vs supernatural" position. Call them waves or quarks or whatever, they are "material" from any reasonable viewpoint, and that makes them consistent with Epicurus' position.

That's the base of image theory, not a hostile construction like Cicero was suggesting, which would make no sense, under the Epicurean viewpoint. As noted in my first post, the theory would *not* be that Kodak-quality images are flying through the air that we need no optical lenses or other means to perceive. The more charitable view is probably not much more than that particles from outside, retaining some degree of "arrangement" that does not require lenses focusing onto optical nerves or ears leading to eardrums, produce stimulus and reaction in the particles making up the human body. There seem to me to be very logical ways that such a construction can be analogized to modern observations in ways that are productive and not any more ridiculous on their face than the atomic theory itself appeared to the anti-Epicureans 2000 years ago.

I realize that not everyone is going to want to pursue this line of thinking, just like everyone is not going to want to entertain discussion of "god." But the purpose of this forum is to provide a place for those who *do* wish to explore such possibilities in a reasonable manner.

As we proceed in this and other topics like the nature of the gods, our goal will be to allow negative commentary without discouraging or stifling those who want to make positive contributions. I know that Tau Phi speaks for a significant group here, but because I have interacted so much with him personally I also feel sure he would not want his post to be interpreted as stifling free discussion of the topic.

We will moderate the thread as we do the forum, encouraging constructive discussion of epicurean theories even where they seem outdated, Unfortunately, others will read this who have no way of knowing that Tau Phi would not want productive conversation to be stifled. Therefore to be clear, everyone who reads this thread in the future should know that we will treat this topic, as we do all Epicurean positions, respectfully and reasonably. We will encourage constructive discussion of all well-documented Epicurean theories even if conventional wisdom tells us that modern orthodoxy would frown at the idea of taking Epicurus seriously.