

PD24 - Commentary and Translation of PD 24

Post by "Cassius" of September 3, 2020 at 11:27 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

Are the epibolē and prolepses two facets of the same faculty? I believe we've discussed elsewhere on the forum the innate nature of the prolepses. The phrase phantastikē epibolē occurs in DL X.50 and 51

I would say almost certainly yes, they are two facets or descriptions of the same faculty. I agree with your comment that this listing of three almost certainly is intended to be a listing of the three legs of the canon. That is why I think there's so much work to do in understanding exactly what "an anticipation" really is. I think an anticipation/prolepsis/mental presentation/mental picture canNOT be a "concept" as we understand the term in logical reasoning, for example as with the concept of "capitalism" or the concept of "socialism" or whatever. Something that is "defined" in terms of "words" necessarily entails opinions about what to include, and therefore cannot be "canonical" or constitute a "mental picture" which is canonical.

But on the other hand a certain number of mental images probably constitutes at least part of the input that is eventually used to form a "concept." So what I am thinking is that these are parallel: the faculty of anticipations must be something like "sight." Sight is a faculty whereby the eyes assemble and process light. The anticipations would be parallel in that the "faculty of anticipations" assembles and processes mental pictures without thinking about them. But no single mental picture is a "concept" any more than a single photon or processing of light is a "sight." Cameras produce images but don't "think" about them. Our brains/minds presumably assemble all these things (input from eyes, ears, feelings, anticipations, etc) through pre-rational processes, and that "pre-rationality" is the essence of what I would think Epicurus would insist is required for a faculty to be described as canonical. If opinion is involved in producing something, then the result cannot be "trusted" or given the same level of authority as any of the three canonical faculties. If we do elevate a concept formed by reasoning to canonical status, then we have a feedback loop, and we have erased the distinction between the canonical faculties and opinions.

Error comes in opinion and the assembling and uses of opinions (the rational process). Whatever anticipations are, I firmly think that Epicurus saw them as "pre-rational," and that would fit a faculty that "automatically" assembles individual mental pictures just like the eyes and the ears assemble light and sounds without "thinking" about them.