

Episode Fifty-One - The Workings of Images

Post by “Elayne” of January 6, 2021 at 2:17 PM

On the recombination aspect-- the original texts, or at least their translations, seem to me to describe images recombining *_prior_* to entering the brain and then the mind interprets that. So the image of a centaur would be formed in the air prior to entering the body, and then the mind would form concepts about the image. Epicurus is treating images differently from concepts. I don't see him proposing that the brain actively recombines images, a different process from forming concepts.

This is *_very_* different from anything currently supported by evidence-- it's different from saying that our imagination builds on memories. He's giving a specific description of a physical process, a concrete description. We can make it metaphorical to try and make it fit, but that feels iffy from a science perspective.

Pre-formed images coming through the air vs images generated in the imagination based on memory-- these two processes lead to very different conclusions about reality. If images are pre-formed, they would have a reality external to our brains even if our conclusions about the images varied. In fact, we should be able, given technology, to locate and characterize them. We would make plans and decisions under the assumption that there was some real material pre-formed image coming to our brains from the outside.

I think understanding that he was describing a proposed concrete process starting outside the brain is critical and will be even more important when it comes to images of gods.

The highest level view is that our imaginations are not visions supernaturally implanted by gods. But beyond that, the details deviate in key ways from evidence.