

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

Post by "Cassius" of March 3, 2021 at 4:29 PM

...and more than once tells of their sinking on the mind.
Lucr. follows his master's lead, but spends regrettably little time on the main theory of thought and goes off into side-issues, such as the thought of images of compound creatures like centaurs (732-43), the seeing of 'images' in dreams (757-76), and the more fundamental question how we are able to think of things at will (777-817). He makes some important additions to Epicurus' statements, such as that the 'idols' of thought are 'more subtle' (*magis . . . tenuia* 728) than those of sight, and that the mind can be moved by a single 'idol' and does not, like sight, require a series to produce an image (746-8). These and other points in his exposition of the theory raise difficulties, which will best be dealt with in their respective sections.

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Why, Mr Bailey, are you so certain that Lucretius / Epicurus chose to "go off into side issues" rather than "the main theory of thought?" Maybe it is you, Mr. Bailey, who misunderstands what the main issue is, and that that main issue is not "thought" at all, but the issues which Lucretius chooses to discuss?

Following what I always think should be one of the most important rules of construction, maybe we should give Lucretius the benefit of the doubt and presume that he knows a little more about Epicurus than we do, and that if Lucretius chooses to say something and go off in a particular direction, that he has good reason for it?