

Episode Sixty-Seven - Did The Gods Wake Up One Day To Create The Universe?

Post by “Don” of April 20, 2021 at 7:52 AM

My understanding of the Epicurean mechanism of memory is that memories are not stored in the mind. Our minds are habituated to respond to certain "images" (I'm going to use the Greek eidola) streaming towards us from all over. Certain eidola engrave themselves deeper from more regular or more importance to us. These engraved "channels" allow us to receive those eidola easier, making it easier to let those eidola back into our minds. We perceive this as memory.

That's not how memory works, but we do not in fact "store" memories in our brain by "filling" them in specific neurons the way most people think we do. I know I thought it was something like that until recently.

When we try to remember something, our brains literally reconstruct and refire the neural pathways that led to our experience of that event. When we "see" something "in our mind's eye", the neurons in our visual cortex literally fire as if we're "seeing" that event. If we can't get a song out of our head, neurons responsible for auditory sensations are recreating that sound. You can't point to a brain region and say "My fourth grade concert is stored here." But if you remember it, your brain reconstructs the event from various portions of them brain. I don't know how the mechanism starts, but that's how memories are relived.

And we know smelling something or hearing something can stir a memory. Hmmm... Maybe Epicurus was on to something 🤔