

With Images And The Mind As A Supersensory Mechanism, Was Epicurus Suggesting A Form of "ESP"?

Post by "Cassius" of December 15, 2018 at 9:14 AM

More relevant texts:

Cicero mocked Cassius and the entire subject of images in this and other places, but his mentioning of them points up their significance and is evidence they deserve our attention:

"I expect you must be just a little ashamed of yourself now that this is the third letter that has caught you before you have sent me a single leaf or even a line. But I am not pressing you, for I shall look forward to, or rather insist upon, a longer letter. As for myself, if I always had somebody to trust with them, I should send you as many as three an hour. For it somehow happens, that whenever I write anything to you, you seem to be at my very elbow; and that, not by way of visions of images, as your new friends term them, who believe that even mental visions are conjured up by what Catus calls spectres (for let me remind you that Catus the Insubrian, an Epicurean, who died lately, gives the name of spectres to what the famous Gargettian [Epicurus], and long before that Democritus, called images).

But, even supposing that the eye can be struck by these spectres because they run up against it quite of their own accord, how the mind can be so struck is more than I can see. It will be your duty to explain to me, when you arrive here safe and sound, whether the spectre of you is at my command to come up as soon as the whim has taken me to think about you - and not only about you, who always occupy my inmost heart, but suppose I begin thinking about the Isle of Britain, will the image of that wing its way to my consciousness?"

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