

Episode 166 - The Lucretius Today Podcast Interviews Dr. David Glidden on "Epicurean Prolepsis"

Post by "Godfrey" of March 23, 2023 at 11:53 AM

Dr. Glidden used, as I recall, two useful phrases to describe prolepsis: pattern recognition and prediction engine. Don brought up the example of the mind interpreting a stick in the forest as a snake, which illustrates the function well as I understand it. If the interpretation of a stick as a snake is a prolepsis, then it illustrates that 1) the mind's prediction is "non-cognitive," "pre-cognitive," "non-conscious," and 2) this prediction is then evaluated consciously. The conscious evaluation in the case of the stick involves gathering more data: after jumping back reflexively, looking again at the stick/snake to discover that it's a stick. This further illustrates Dr. Glidden's point that prolepseis, unlike sensations, aren't always "true" as well as his thesis that Epicurus anticipated modern neuroscience in thinking about prolepseis.

Logic becomes involved when the prolepsis involves language and to evaluate conscious thinking, but is of no use in understanding reality without input from the sensations. Prolepseis act directly on input from the sensations and stimulate the feelings. Logic may act indirectly on input from the sensations or can ignore any input. It also attempts to ignore the feelings. The idealists consider this a strength, but in reality it's a fatal flaw. Without utilizing material input, and without listening to the "gut" reactions of the feelings, logic is divorced from reality. Isn't "divorced from reality" generally considered "useless"?