

Episode 227 - Cicero's OTNOTG - 02 - Velleius Begins His Attack On Traditional Views Of The Gods

Post by “Bryan” of June 9, 2024 at 10:01 PM

Thank you all for this great discussion!

[Quote from Little Rocker](#)

So the chief option would be that it's part of our biological nature/cognitive architecture to categorize the world in a particular way or arrive at a particular conclusion in light of experience.

Yes, I agree. Just as we have an innate ability to see (but we have to actually look and see things to use that ability) -- similarly we have an innate ability to anticipate (but we have to actually anticipate [mentally focus] to use that ability). As Long says, "any explanation of Epicurus as an intuitionist is on quite the wrong track."

We are born with the ability to mentally focus on gods in the same way we are born with the ability to visually focus on dogs. By focusing we get a clear view, and correspondence of clear views shows us the true nature of an object.

[D.L. 10.38b] *And besides we must keep all our investigations in accord with our sensations, and in particular with the immediate apprehensions, whether of the mind or of any one of the instruments of judgment, and likewise in accord with the feelings existing in us, in order that we may have indications whereby we may judge both the problem of sense perception and the unseen.*

[Quote from Little Rocker](#)

I tend to think you can remain happily an empiricist and posit underlying explanations for what you observe all the time, so long as you consider them hypotheses.

The atoms are in a different class because the atoms do not give off images. One of the features of Epicurus' empiricism is that (as Long says) "Judgments about non-evident objects are true if they are consistent with clear sense-impressions."

Thus we have a positive use of the non-contradiction principle: Epicurus does not make the presupposition that atoms exist -- it is the absence of any other conceivable theory for phenomena which justifies the general inference about the existence of atoms.