

Lucretius On The Development of Language

Post by "Cassius" of October 23, 2019 at 8:04 PM

Thank you Joshua you are doing a better job of focusing on the question than I am. You are right to highlight this from the letter to Herodotus:

[Quote from Cassius](#)

For this purpose it is essential that the first mental image associated with each word should be regarded, and that there should be no need of explanation, if we are really to have a standard to which to refer a problem of investigation or reflection or a mental inference.

Is this "first mental image associated with each word purely internal to each person? And where does this first mental image come from? Is this a reference to a picture we store in our mind (such as 'leaf') after many observations? Is the picture an "abstraction"? If so, does this have anything to do with "anticipations"?

And what is referenced by "there should be no need of explanation"? Is that a reference to somehow the thing is in our mind without experience of it previously, or that, once it is there, the thing is so clear to us that it needs no further analysis or examples in order to be clear?

I tend to interpret all this as meaning "let's be as clear as possible in our use of words as we discuss things with other people" which seems basic common sense. An easy example in when in Rome, speak Italian. And there are all sorts of other ways to be precise. But is that all it is saying, or does this have anything to do with "anticipations"?