

Lucretius On The Development of Language

Post by "Todd" of October 25, 2019 at 11:27 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

And so maybe the entire passage by Epicurus is not referring to language or communication but is referring to having confidence in our own thought processes?

IMO, the importance of the "first mental image" is in a rhetorical or polemical context.

I think the point was to be wary of people who insist on definitions for words that we all understand intuitively. The Platonists and Aristotelians being the likely suspects.

Two examples come to mind:

First, that Epicurus refused to define pleasure, to avoid being led into an argument where someone would twist the words of his definition to mean something entirely different from what we all understand by pleasure.

Second, an anecdote from Diogenes Laertius, where some philosopher has defined "man" as a featherless biped. Later, someone shows up with a plucked chicken and says, "Behold, a man!" (I'm paraphrasing, but that's the gist of it.)