

EpicureaPoetica—Episode 2 [Pre-Production]

Post by “Joshua” of August 3, 2020 at 1:48 PM

I'm scripting the next episode for recording tomorrow evening. A major focus of this passage will be Dreams. I'll dig into the source material this evening, but if you have any points you'd like me to touch upon then we can put them here.

As I work through Tennyson's poem I am beginning to think of it as an "inverted epitome", presented in dramatic form. Tennyson seems to try thoroughly to undermine the system of Epicurus, touching on every point—physics, phenomenology, ethics, theology, etc.

Post by “Cassius” of August 3, 2020 at 3:11 PM

Joshua is there any way you can post the text that you expect to cover, as well as a link to the full poem. I am embarrassed to say I have not re-read the full poem and I need to do that. I can't recall what the poem says about dreams and there are lots of implications of that issue. I need to get up to speed as soon as I can with potential issues in response to be sure to cover. [Don](#) and [Godfrey](#) and others - are you familiar with the poem?

Post by “Godfrey” of August 3, 2020 at 3:14 PM

I'm not.

Post by “Joshua” of August 3, 2020 at 3:43 PM

that was mine, my dream, I knew it—

Of and belonging to me, as the dog

With inward yelp and restless forefoot plies 45
His function of the woodland: but the next!
I thought that all the blood by Sylla shed
Came driving rainlike down again on earth,
And where it dash'd the reddening meadow, sprang
No dragon warriors from Cadmean teeth, 50
For these I thought my dream would show to me,
But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,
Hired animalisms, vile as those that made
The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies worse
Than aught they fable of the quiet Gods. 55
And hands they mixt, and yell'd and round me drove
In narrowing circles till I yell'd again
Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and saw—
Was it the first beam of my latest day?

That's probably as far as I'll get. There's a line in the previous section; "perchance/ we do but
recollect the dreams that come/ just ere the waking"

Post by "Joshua" of August 3, 2020 at 4:02 PM

https://livingpoets.dur.ac.uk/w/Alfred_Lord_...retius%E2%80%99

And the full text. Don't feel rushed! I don't mind delays to get things right.

Post by "Cassius" of August 3, 2020 at 4:13 PM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/1647-epicureapoetica-episode-2-pre-production/>

Thanks Joshua!

Post by “Don” of August 3, 2020 at 4:46 PM

The poem was new to me!

Post by “Cassius” of August 3, 2020 at 5:01 PM

I had heard of it in the past, and probably skimmed some of it, but when I saw how anti-Epicurean it was I just moved on 😊 That's why it's great to have division of labor so people can follow their own interests and still contribute to the common storehouse of knowledge. Definitely it is good though to have time to catalog criticism and review the actual or probable Epicurean responses. Not all of us have time for the Socratic method and we shouldn't have to waste years of our lives fending for ourselves through the swamp, so the "Epicurean criticism of Socrates" seems very valid to me. But if we are so situated where we DO have the time and the inclination, it definitely helps deepen understanding to have a command of the arguments from both perspectives -- and then take sides 😊

Post by “Joshua” of August 3, 2020 at 5:35 PM

Quote

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That was probably my first reaction as well. I've always liked Tennyson, though he is by no means my favorite English poet. In some ways I think I read *Lucretius* the same way Tennyson himself read *De Rerum Natura*—in being deeply moved by the power of the poetry, while strongly disagreeing with its ideas.

I saw the Facebook question you shared in the other thread, Cassius, and the answer is yes; I am excited to explore all three writers, and for the next poem I will find something sympathetic to our cause. I have two volumes of Horace on my nightstand, so that will probably be the next selection.

Post by “Joshua” of August 3, 2020 at 7:49 PM

A few relevant passages on dreams;

Lucretius

Book 3, 111-116

Munro Translation;

Quote

Moreover when the limbs are consigned to soft sleep and the burdened body lies diffused without sense, there is yet a something else in us which during that time is moved in many ways and admits into it all the motions of joy and unreal cares of the heart.

Bailey translation;

Quote

Moreover, when the limbs are given up to soft sleep, and the heavy body lies slack and senseless, yet there is something else in us, which at that very time is stirred in many ways, and admits within itself all the motions of joy and baseless cares of heart.

There are several passages throughout Book 4 that deal with dreams and the fleeting images that are supposed to cause them. I don't know if it's worth getting into the weeds there, but in Book 4, 962-972, we are given another insight;

Munro;

Quote

And generally to whatever pursuit a man is closely tied down and strongly attached, on whatever subject we have previously much dwelt, the mind having been put to a more than usual strain in it, during sleep we for the most part fancy that we are engaged in

the same; lawyers think they plead causes and draw up covenants of sale, generals that they fight and engage in battle, sailors that they wage and carry on war with the winds, we think we pursue our task and investigate the nature of things constantly and consign it when discovered to writings in our native tongue.

And of course the Vatican Saying on dreams, translated by Cyril Bailey;

Quote

Dreams have no divine character nor any prophetic force, but they originate from the influx of images.