

# Referring To The Faculty of Prolepsis / Anticipation As Singular or Plural (And Relating This To Images)

Post by "Cassius" of August 12, 2024 at 7:08 AM

Discussion of how Epicurus refers occasionally to "god" but more often to "gods" causes me to think about this:

I presume it is pretty clear that in regard to "images," Epicurus was saying that "images" are constantly streaming away from all objects, some of which impact our minds and cause results through that impact. In other words, images are a constant stimulation to the mind and going on all the time.

However it seems that there is an intersection between "images" and "prolepsis," and that "prolepsis" is also considered to be a contact with reality. I am presuming that images involve one aspect, but not necessarily the only aspect, of prolepsis/anticipation.

I am not sure whether the plural of prolepsis is prolepses, so it will be more clear to ask the question referring to "anticipation(s)":

Is Epicurus saying that we have continuous "anticipations" of the gods going on essentially all the time, or is or was a single "anticipation" of the gods innate in us at birth or some early moment all that was needed to spur on the "believe that a god is blessed and imperishable" conclusion?

I'm trying to be more clear on the correct wording of describing what Epicurus was saying in English, keeping in mind that I think most of us agree that we do not consider prolepsis / anticipation to be an "opinion" or "conclusion" but rather some kind of "input" to an eventual conclusion.

And I am presuming that the data content of "images" is essentially in the "arrangements" of the atoms of the images, retaining the "shapes" of the objects from which they came, and it is our receipt of these invisible-to-the-eye arrangements/shapes that is being received by the mind and reported for further processing, just as the eyes are reporting "visible-to-the-eye" shapes and colors and brightnesses but not an opinion as to "what" is being seen.

So in referring to divinity or to justice, was Epicurus saying (1) that the anticipations involved are constantly being received, but are judged to be always consistent with blessedness and imperishability, or (2) that somehow a limited number of anticipations have been received in the past from which a single opinion of blessedness and imperishability has been reached in the mind?

Probably not a hugely important question but it would relate to the general interpretation of anticipation as a faculty. I presume that the answer is (1) and that in general we should be referring to conclusions about the gods or justice or anything else to be formed from *anticipations in the plural* rather than in the *singular*.

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### **Post by “Bryan” of August 12, 2024 at 5:44 PM**

As you said, images ("films") are always flowing off of other objects and contacting our body. Our body is able to perceive these films differently in different parts of the body (the nose will smell, the eye will see, the brain will visualize).

It seems to me that repeated contact with these images/films produces an automatic expectation (basic stereotype) of objects and object-interactions that we can access in our mind by focusing on them -- and these stereotypes are the basis of our thought and speech.

Epicurus says (38a) "Seeing [for ourselves] the primary thought for each word, and in no way needing proof, is necessary - if We are to have [something] to which we will refer what is investigated, uncertain, or judged."