

XXX.—Epicurus, Περὶ Φαντασίας

NORMAN W. DEWITT

VICTORIA COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

An important essay of Epicurus was entitled *περὶ φαντασίας*. This term denotes a true presentation of a single, existent object, though reduced to scale, as it registers itself upon the vision and mind of a sane, sober, and waking person, and stands in contrast to *φαντάσματα* or *φαντασμοί*, which denote hybrid, distorted, or indistinct presentations. In the phrase *φανταστική ἐπιβολή* the adjective is essential, not otiose, carrying the specific meaning of *φαντασία*. In the system of Epicurus the term *διάνοια* corresponds to the *σοφία* of Archytas, a sublimated faculty of mental vision; both Archytas and Epicurus deliberately shunned the use of *νοῦς*, which had been loaded with objectionable connotations by Anaxagoras and Plato. The word *ἐπιβολή* comes from *ἐπιβάλλω* in the sense of 'fall upon'; it means 'incidence of vision, view' and belonged perhaps to the Asiatic *κοινή*. Both Lucretius and Cicero misunderstood it to mean 'hurling at', as of hurling the mind into space, *animi iactus liber*. In so doing they were misled by the prevailing fancy of a free flight of the mind or the soul through the universe. Some falsely ascribed this notion to Archytas and Epicurus, both of whom assumed, on the contrary, a fixed, imaginary point of view, a lofty *αρχ* or *σκοπιά*.

To the criteria of truth as stated by Epicurus, *αἰσθήσεις*, *προλήψεις*, and *πάθη*, certain later disciples added the *φανταστικαὶ ἐπιβολαὶ τῆς διανοίας*.¹ Although this fact would lead us to ascribe specific meaning and exceptional importance to the above phrase, the conclusion has been reached in recent discussions of the Epicurean theory of cognition that the adjective *φανταστική* is otiose, "because it is impossible to imagine an *ἐπιβολή* which is not *φανταστική*."² I am here venturing to assemble evidence from the text of Epicurus for believing that an *ἐπιβολή* may derive from a *φαντασία*, which is true, or from a *φάντασμα*, which is either false or undependable. In the former case it will be *φανταστική* and quite conceivably included among criteria of truth.

That no slight importance attaches to the term *φαντασία* is

¹ Diogenes Laertius 10.31.

² Cyril Bailey, *Epicurus* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1926), 271.2.

proven by the fact that an essay entitled *περὶ φαντασίας* is cited by Diogenes Laertius in a select list of 41 writings declared to represent the best work of Epicurus.³ In this list the essay follows another entitled *περὶ εἰδώλων*, and in the *Epistle to Herodotus* the term first occurs after the description of the idols, where the discussion turns to errors associated with vision. It is clear, therefore, where the concept belongs in the organization of Epicurean thought.⁴

Epicurus in this passage, *Herodotus* 50, describing the mechanism of true vision, speaks of the stream of idols “delivering the picture (*φαντασίαν*) and preserving the affinity (*συμπάθειαν*) between the picture and object.” If any doubt may here arise that *φαντασία*, as opposed to *φαντάσματα* or *φαντασμοί*, does not denote the true picture, this uncertainty ought to be dispelled by the subsequent statement: “and whatever picture (*φαντασίαν*) we may receive thus instantaneously (*ἐπιβλητικῶς*) through the mind or senses, whether of the shape or attributes, this is the shape of the solid body. . . .”

Another item of direct evidence is found in section 80. Arguing here against astronomers who insist upon single explanations of heavenly phenomena, Epicurus rebukes them for “admitting the dependability of vision from distances.” The Greek runs: *τὴν ἐκ τῶν διαστημάτων φαντασίαν παραδιδόντων*, which some editors emend, and all, as I believe, mistranslate. Usener’s clever emendation, *παριδόντων* ‘overlooking’, permits Hicks to translate: “overlooking the fact that the objects are only seen at a distance.” This is tolerable as a paraphrase but if we assign to *φαντασία* the meaning it bears in 50, there is no need of emendation: “admitting true vision from distances.” It is not an error of ‘overlooking’ but a deliberate assumption on the part of the astronomers that leads Epicurus to despise them. In the *Pythocles* heavenly phenomena, being too remote for clear vision, are styled *φαντάσματα*. Even the

³ Diog. L.10.28.

⁴ I fail to identify any equivalent of *φαντασία* in Lucr. 4; it would be expected before 379, where he passes from true vision to seeming errors.

rainbow is a *φάντασμα* and three explanations of its form are offered. Contrast with this the image of an ox at twenty paces, which presents a *φαντασία* admitting of but one interpretation. It is well to note that earthly phenomena in the *Pythocles* are called *ἐναργήματα* as contrasted with remote and undependable heavenly phenomena, *φαντάσματα*.⁵

In the *Herodotus* 51 visual errors are under discussion. Of these two kinds are recognized: (1) the visions of sleep or other hallucinations, significantly styled *φαντασμοί*; (2) errors of waking vision, when some reaction (*κίνησις*) occurs within the observer, "associated with the *φανταστική ἐπιβολή* but with a difference." Error may or may not be involved. Here it is obvious that *φανταστική ἐπιβολή* denotes the true picture as registered on the vision and the mind, like *φαντασία* of the preceding section. Both are opposed to error and to *φαντασμοί* precisely as *ἐναργήματα* are opposed to *φαντάσματα* in the *Pythocles*.

There is a difference, of course, between *φαντασία* and *φανταστική ἐπιβολή*. It is this, that the former denotes a true presentation of an existing object while the latter denotes the registration of the same upon the vision or the mind. False presentations also register themselves; they are *ἀληθείς*, 'real', but they are not 'true' as a *φαντασία* is real and true. They are *ἐπιβολαί* but not *φανταστικάί*. The oft-repeated statement that Epicurus declares all visions to be true is unwarranted.⁶ The visions of the delirious or the insane, he would say, are 'real' but not necessarily 'true.' The word *ἀληθής* is ambiguous, as also is the Latin *verus*.

It is possible to define *φαντασία* with still greater precision. It denotes the image formed at the center of vision by the

⁵ *Pythocles* 88, 102, 110; 91, 93, 96. Although the two terms are nowhere placed in juxtaposition, it must be noted that *φαντάσματα* are represented as admitting of several explanations while *ἐναργήματα* as the standard of truth must admit of but one each.

⁶ R. D. Hicks, *Stoic and Epicurean* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 215; E. Zeller, *The Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics* (London and New York, Longmans, Green and Co., 1892), 428. The sensations of the insane, the drunken or the dreamer, are real but not necessarily true.

stream of idols, comparable to the picture on the screen projected from movie film. In this case the projector is the material object discharging idols, which create “the visual effect of unity and continuity”, or in the words of the master himself in the *Herodotus* 50, τοῦ ἐνὸς καὶ συνεχοῦς τὴν φαντασίαν. It must be interjected, however, that no such speed is necessary as Epicurus insists upon. Motion pictures are taken at the rate of sixteen frames per second and only a moderately higher rate is employed in projection.

This comparison, it will at once be recognized, has an inverse application because the projection machine enlarges the image while the image denoted as φαντασία is reduced in size. Even in an epitome, the loss of dimension suffered by the idols in their transit from the object to the eye could hardly have been overlooked by Epicurus, as it seems to have been overlooked by Lucretius. In the *Herodotus* 49, he speaks of the streams of idols “invading our eyes or minds κατὰ τὸ ἐναρμόττον μέγεθος.” Bailey takes μέγεθος in the sense of λεπτότης; he annotates: “the grosser images affect the sight, the more subtle pass directly into the mind.” Hicks in the Loeb version seems to concur. It seems much easier to translate “according to the proportionate size”, that is, reduced to scale, like the image of an elephant on the pupil of the eye.

This idea of reduction to scale is explicitly stated in 50: κατὰ τὸ ἐξῆς πύκνωμα ἢ ἐγκατάλειμμα τοῦ εἰδώλου. To speak first of the second of these perplexing phrases, the meaning is made clear by a passage of Sextus Empiricus,⁷ who explains the reduction of images according to Epicurus as being effected by the detrition of the edges of the idols during their transit from the object to the eye. What reaches the eye, therefore, and there registers itself, is a ‘residue’, ἐγκατάλειμμα, of the life-sized idols as they are discharged from the object. About this there can be little argument.

From another point of view this residue of the idols, which

⁷ Sextus Empiricus *Adv. Dogmaticos* 208–9; Hermann Usener, *Epicurea* (Leipzig, Teubner, 1887), frag. 247, p. 180, 24–36.

constitutes the *φαντασία*, is a 'condensation', because, if the detrition of the idols is uniform, the result is τὸ ἐξῆς πύκνωμα, 'the orderly reduction' or, as we might say, reduction to scale. In the *Herodotus* 36, a similar use of πύκνωμα occurs. In 35, Epicurus, employing the terminology of vision, calls his epitome ἡ ἀθρόα ἐπιβολή, 'the composite view', as opposed to 'the large-scale detailed view', τὸ κατὰ μέρος ἀκρίβωμα, which has reference to his monographs on particular topics. Then he concludes: "for the reduced or synoptic view (τὸ πύκνωμα) of the integrated conspectus of the complete system cannot be attained unless one knows how to incorporate in it by means of succinct statements the part that may be worked out in detail."⁸ This is the language of vision, virtually of a map-maker, clearly distinguishing between reduced and enlarged diagrams. The procedure of modern aerial surveys, by which consecutive individual photographs are pieced together, trimmed, and combined to form an integrated map, which is then rephotographed to furnish a small-scale map, affords a precise parallel to the concept Epicurus entertained of the relationship between his special treatises and his epitomes.

It is a minor question whether ἐξῆς is to be read with ἐγκατάλειμμα as well as with πύκνωμα. Editors differ, but since none of them, so far as I can discover, recognizes the principle of the reduction of the image, I believe that all follow false clues. In sense the adverb goes with both terms, because ἐγκατάλειμμα implies, to concoct a phrase on the model of Sextus Empiricus, τὸν ἐξῆς θραυσμὸν τῶν περάτων τοῦ εἰδώλου. The residual image, being the result of uniform detrition, must itself be 'orderly.' Otherwise it would not be a *φαντασία*, being distorted, but a φάντασμα.

⁸ *Herodotus* 36 end: I read ἐν αὐτῷ with the Mss., referring to πύκνωμα 'synoptic view', in preference to Usener's ἐν αὐτῷ, referring to the disciple. In my judgment Usener, Bailey, and R. D. Hicks, *Diogenes Laertius* (London, William Heinemann; New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, in the *Loeb Classical Library*, 1931) all fail to understand the relationship of the epitomes to the major works of Epicurus. The meaning of ἐμπεριλαβεῖν is 'incorporate into, embody in', not 'embrace'; each detail, as mastered, is to be incorporated into the general system.

To these three attributes of the *φαντασία*, namely, unity, freedom from distortion, and orderly reduction, must be added *συμπάθεια*. Of the stream of idols the text says, 50: *καὶ τὴν συμπάθειαν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὑποκειμένου σφζόντων*. The key to the meaning seems to lie in the association of vision with touch. If in the darkness a cube or a sphere is taken in the hand, these shapes are recognized by touch. Since they are also recognized by vision, the stream of idols must possess the capacity to stimulate the eyes and the mind in the same way.⁹ The *πάθος*, reaction or response, as modern psychology terms it, is similar in the two instances. Therefore the object and the *φαντασία* may be described as *συμπαθεῖς*. I would translate: "preserving the affinity with the original object." This topic would bear more detailed treatment than is needed here, because a doctrine of 'sympathy' seems to be an assumption of Epicurus and was possibly stated explicitly in some treatise lost to us. It may even have been a legacy from earlier physical speculations.¹⁰

It happens that the term *συμπάθεια* is also found in 48, at the end, joined with *ἐνάργεια*. This confirms a statement of Sextus Empiricus, in the passage cited above, that Epicurus employed the latter term as a substitute for *φαντασία*. His statement, in turn, lends support to my thesis that *φαντασία* applies only to presentations that register themselves with fidelity, because there is no doubt that *ἐνάργεια* applies only to things distinctly perceived and recognized. The parallel use of *ἐναργήματα* in the *Pythocles*, as opposed to undependable heavenly *φαντάσματα*, has already been mentioned. It may be added, however, that *ἐνάργεια* is a more inclusive term than *φαντασία*, since it applies also to phenomena of hearing and smell.

By way of summary it may then be said that *φαντασία*, as

⁹ *Lucr.*, ed. by Adolphus Brieger (Leipzig, Teubner, 1902), 4.230–6.

¹⁰ Hicks, *op. cit.* (see note 6), 236: the rejection of the Platonic and Empedoclean theories of vision does not preclude an analogous principle of 'sympathy', the subtler atoms of the soul responding to impulses that escape the coarser texture of the physical eye. Cf. *Lucr.* 3.425–32.

opposed to *φάντασμα* and *φαντασμός*, denotes an undistorted picture of a single existent object, preserving its affinity with the original, though reduced to scale, and that *φανταστική ἐπιβολή* denotes the registration of such a picture upon the vision or the mind. It scarcely needs to be added that the observer is assumed to be a sane, sober, and waking person, because the visions of all others are or may be *φαντάσματα* or *φαντασμοί*.¹¹ These hybrid, distorted, and fantastic images also register themselves, of course; they are *ἐπιβολαί* but not *φανταστικάί*. Consequently they are not criteria of truth. Lastly, the inclusion of the *φανταστικάί ἐπιβολαί* among the criteria by later Epicureans, though not illogical, was gratuitous, because the category was amply covered by the broader term *αἰσθήσεις*.

In employing a familiar term with a slightly restricted meaning, as in the case of *πρόληψις*, Epicurus is following his usual practice.¹² The assumption of a distinction between *φαντασία* and *φάντασμα* is shadowed in popular usage and shared by the Stoics.¹³ They employed *φαντασία καταληπτική* in somewhat the same way as Epicurus used *φανταστική ἐπιβολή*.¹⁴ In fact they displayed a penchant for *καταλαμβάνω* and derivatives, which occasions some objection to the translation of *ἐπιβολή* as "act of apprehension" or the like, adopted by Bailey and here and there by Hicks.¹⁵ Epicurus did not think of the mind as prehensile but as impressionable; the data of the senses "fall upon" it and register themselves. Our 'apprehend' and 'comprehend' arise from the equation of *arphrendo* and *comprehendo* with *ἐπιλαμβάνω* and *καταλαμβάνω*. This does

¹¹ *Herod.* 51; *Diog.* L.10.32.

¹² *Herod.* 37; *Diog.* L.10.13; *Cicero N.D.* 1.16.44; for collected reff. to his style see Usener, *op. cit.* (see note 7), pp. 88–90.

¹³ The meaning of derivatives in *-ασμα* or *-ασμός* is frequently pejorative in tendency: *μίασμα*, *μιασμός*, *ὄργιασμός*, *σπάσμα*, *σπασμός*. *Diog.* L.7.50: *διαφέρει δὲ φαντασία καὶ φάντασμα*.

¹⁴ *Diog.* L.7.54.

¹⁵ Bailey, *op. cit.* (see note 2), 259–74, esp. 261.1; Hicks, *op. cit.* (see note 8), *Herod.* 62, 70.

not stem from Epicurus, who employs *καταλαμβάνω* only casually, building nothing upon it.

It remains to cite reasons for discounting the term *ἐπιβολή*, upon which mistaken stress has been laid in recent controversies to the neglect of *φαντασία* and *φανταστική*. The word is not to be explained by etymologizing, because it belongs in a numerous class of compounds of which the etymology is determined by the meaning rather than the meaning by the etymology. It occurs thirteen times in the extant text of Epicurus and only in discussion of physical problems. In four instances it means "view", coinciding with this English word rather precisely, that is, denoting either an act of vision or of the mind.¹⁶ This use is exemplified in Diogenes of Oenoanda, in other Epicurean texts, and abundantly in Byzantine Greek, though not in Attic.¹⁷ In other examples it occurs four times with *διάνοια* and three times with *φανταστική*.¹⁸ The former use, in my opinion, belongs to the Asiatic *κοινή*, while the restricted use is an Epicurean modification exactly as in the case of *πρόληψις* and *φαντασία*.

To clear the way for *ἐπιβολή*, a word must be said about *διάνοια*. Why did Epicurus choose to make a specialty of the use of this word? The answer is to be found in the philosophy of Anaxagoras and Plato. The former had loaded the word *νοῦς* with connotations of which no successor could divest it, and these had been confirmed by Plato, to whom Epicurus was particularly adverse. The doctrine that the physical order of the universe found its cause in an ordering mind was

¹⁶ *Herod.* 35, 36 (*bis*), 83.

¹⁷ The absence of this word from Hermann Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*⁵ (3 vols.; Berlin, Weidmann, 1934-1937) and its frequency in later Greek suggests that its vogue was due to Epicurus. Cf. *Diog. Oen.* 15.1.12 ed. by Johannes William (Leipzig, Teubner, 1907); C. I. Vooys, *Lexicon Philodemum* (J. Muusses, Purmerend, 1934); indices to *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* ed. by Michael Hayduck et al. (23 volumes; Berlin, Reimer, various dates); also Johannes Leisegang, *Index to Philo Iudaeus* (Berlin, De Gruyter, 1926).

¹⁸ With *διάνοια*: *Herod.* 50, 51 (*bis*), *Ratae Sententiae* 24; with *φανταστική*: *Herod.* 38, 51, 62; absolutely, *Herod.* 69, 70. Confined to physics.

antithetical to the somewhat fortuitous operation of the atomic system as Epicurus framed it. Moreover, the notion that mind or soul could function apart from the body or become capable of a free flight through the universe was equally incompatible with his thought.¹⁹ It is not surprising, therefore, that not a single instance of *νοῦς* is to be found in the extant works of Epicurus. Incidentally this fact devalues the suggestion that *ἐπιβολή* is elliptically related to *ἐπιβάλλειν τὸν νοῦν*.²⁰

With respect to *νοῦς*, the position of Archytas of Tarentum was similar. Rejecting this term, as being already pre-empted and spoiled for particular uses, he chose to bestow a special meaning upon the word *σοφία*, conceiving of it as a sublimated faculty of mental vision, capable of penetrating all physical truth and comparable to the sun in heaven looking down upon the universe.²¹ In contrast to the free flight of the soul through the universe he entertained the fancy of an imaginary, fixed point of view, *σκοπιά*, from which his peculiarly conceived Wisdom looked down upon all things.²² The result is a *despectus* or *circumspectus*. This matches rather precisely with "the master view", *ἡ κυριωτάτη ἐπιβολή* of Epicurus.²³ There is no suggestion anywhere of a flight of the soul or mind or of a shifting point of view.

Epicurus, of course, denied his indebtedness to any predecessor, which is to be appraised merely as shrewd propaganda on the part of a leader ambitious to become the founder of a sect. Nevertheless the powers he implicitly assumes for *διάνοια* are very similar to those claimed for *σοφία* by Archytas. It is not astonishing, therefore, that in the account of the Taren-

¹⁹ *Herod.* 63–6.

²⁰ Bailey, *op. cit.* (see note 2), 261.1.

²¹ Iamblichus *Protrepticus*, ed. by H. Pistelli (Leipzig, Teubner, 1888) 4. pp. 16.18–26, 17.1–4, 21.16–24.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 22.22, 23.24.

²³ *Herod.* 36: *ἡ κυριωτάτη ἐπιβολή ἐπὶ τὰ πράγματα*, "the master view over the nature of things." Neither Bailey nor Hicks translates *ἐπὶ*; as the imagery is visual it must mean 'over.'

tine preserved in the work of Iamblichus we discover the best evidence for the meaning of ἐπιβολή. Wisdom, he writes, “makes the round of all existing things without exception, surveys (ἐπισκοπεῖν) the common first bodies of all things, and beholds (θεωρεῖν) all things according to their several kinds, καὶ κατὰ ἀπλουστάτας ἐπιβολάς, ὥσπερ ἡ ὄψις τοῖς ὄρατοῖς ἐπιβάλλει.”²⁴ Now, since ἐπιβάλλει here means “falls upon”, it follows that ἐπιβολή in close context must mean “incidence, onfall”, and we may translate “by the paths of directest incidence.” It is worth while to recall that “incidence” is technical in modern physics in this sense, whether of light or of force.

If something must be added to ἐπιβολή to elucidate the meaning, this would certainly be τῆς ὄψεως,²⁵ but this is no more necessary than the addition of ‘of the eyes’ to English ‘view.’ When the word first meets us in the text of Epicurus it is already charged with a composite force, just as it continued to be in Byzantine Greek. The innovation of Epicurus consisted in the addition of τῆς διανοίας, when once his choice had settled upon this colorless term to denote the faculty of mental vision in preference to the flighty and volatile νοῦς of his predecessors. The genitive τῆς διανοίας is best understood as subjective, as if we said “glance of the mind, flash of insight.” The mind or the intellect is the active agent, not a projectile or the object of the action as in the *animi iactus liber* of Lucretius, to be discussed presently. These mental actions take place at atomic speed, this fact being connoted when Epicurus employs the phrase “quick as thought.”²⁶

The explanation of Lucretian misunderstandings calls for a brief detour among his contemporaries. The study of Archytas enjoyed a certain vogue in Rome during the later years of the Republic. For example, the author of the *Ciris* in his prologue twice employs the word *sophia*, transliterated and not translated, to denote the mistress of physical science

²⁴ Iamb., *op. cit.* (see note 21), 4, p. 22.1–5.

²⁵ I have sought without success to find examples of ἐπιβάλλειν τὴν ὄψιν.

²⁶ *Herod.* 48, 61, 83.

as in the system of the Tarentine.²⁷ This is extolled as a fifth study, supplementary to a quadrivium, which can only mean Pythagorean arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. Moreover, the Archytan fixed point of view, *σκοπιά*, is distinctly referred to as an *arx*:

si me iam *summa* Sapientia pangeret *arce*,
 (quattuor antiquis heredibus est data consors)
 unde hominum errores longe lateque per orbem
despicere atque humilis possem contemnere curas. . . .²⁸

Here we have, manifestly, a contamination of the Archytan physical *despectus* with the ethical *despectus* of Lucretius 2.7–10:

sed nil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere
 edita doctrina sapientum templa serena,
despicere unde queas alios passimque videre
 errare atque viam palantis quaerere vitae.

To render this contamination yet more complex the author of the *Ciris* represents himself as established in an Epicurean garden, *Cecropius hortulus*, and dreams of fabricating a *peplus*, upon which shall be depicted the *rerum natura*,²⁹ and this in spite of the fact that his *despectus* was ethical and not physical.

A like confusion has victimized even a modern scholar. The late Roger William Jones, in an extremely useful article, has traced the myth or fancy of the free flight of the mind through the universe from Pindar onward to Christian writers.³⁰ Archytas, however, he overlooks or ignores, and he falsely describes Epicurus as sharing in the fancy. "These ideas", he states, "were current in the (Epicurean) school from the earliest period. Metrodorus, the associate of Epicurus writes: *μέμνησο, Μενέστρατε, διότι θνητὸς φύς καὶ λαβῶν βίον ὠρισμένον*,

²⁷ See notes 21 and 22; *Ciris* 4.40. Whatever the authorship, the date of composition is allowed by the best editors to be republican.

²⁸ *Ciris* 14–7.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 3, 21, 30, 36–41.

³⁰ "Posidonius and the Flight of the Mind through the Universe," *Class. Phil.* xxi (1926), 97–113.

ἀναβὰς τῇ ψυχῇ ἕως τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ τὴν ἀπειρίαν τῶν πραγμάτων κατεῖδες καὶ τὰ ἐσόμενα πρὸ τ' ἔοντα."³¹ Three words in the above, ἀναβὰς τῇ ψυχῇ, are sufficient to damn this quotation as inaccurate, because Epicurus is determined to confine the soul to the body, even to the degree of stubbornness.³² Moreover, the true text of Metrodorus was extant when Jones wrote, having been found in the *Vatican Collection* in 1888: μέμνησο ὅτι θνητὸς ὢν τῇ φύσει καὶ λαβὼν χρόνον ὠρισμένον ἀνέβας τοῖς περι φύσεως διαλογισμοῖς ἐπὶ τὴν ἀπειρίαν καὶ τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ κατεῖδες

τά τ' ἔοντα τὰ τ' ἐσόμενα πρὸ τ' ἔοντα.

Clement of Alexandria was misquoting. The true text shows that the ascent was made τοῖς περι φύσεως διαλογισμοῖς. This is borne out by the language of Epicurus himself: the unseen is discernible only by reason, λόγῳ, or by a process of ratiocination, διαλογισμῶ. The general principle holds good, ὁρᾶν τὰ ὄρατά, θεωρεῖν τὰ ἀόρατα, and the latter denotes the vision of the mind.³³ The world of atoms and void is known only by reason. Even the gods and their attributes come to our knowledge by a process of thought: *imaginibus similitudine et transitione perceptis*, i.e. 'by analogy and transfer.'³⁴ For example, how do we know that the gods are anthropomorphic? Because there is an analogy between the most perfect of beings, man, and the absolutely perfect, god. Human beings are the most beautiful of earthly creatures. Therefore the gods must be anthropomorphic. This step of reasoning is *transitio, μετάβασις*, from the seen to the unseen.³⁵ It is significant that Jones finds nothing to quote from Epicurus himself, misquotes Metrodorus, and has nothing left except a brace of passages from the prejudiced Plutarch and Bishop

³¹ *Ibid.*, 111-3.

³² *Herod.* 63-6; *Lucr.* 3.548-633.

³³ Atoms, void, and the gods are known only by reason, i.e., by analogy and transfer: *Herod.* 59; cf. 47 and 62; frag. 49 Bailey, 212 Usener; *Rat. Sent.* 1, scholium.

³⁴ Cicero *N.D.* 1.19.49.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 1.18.47-8. Cf. H. Diels, *Philodemus über die Götter* (Berlin, Reimer, 1917), 1.33(12.7).

Dionysius, who were even less concerned than Cicero to understand Epicurus rightly.

This contamination is general. Horace *Odes* 1.28.4–6:

nec quicquam tibi prodest
aërias temptasse domos animoque rotundum
percurrisse polum morituro.

It is manifest here that the poet has substituted the free flight of the mind for the fixed point of view, *σκοπιά*, of Archytas, which was correctly termed an *arx* in the *Ciris*. Cicero exhibits the same confusion: *si immensam et interminatam in omnis partis magnitudinem regionum videretis, in quam se iniciens animus et intendens ita late longeque peregrinatur. . .*³⁶ The last word betrays him, *peregrinatur*; he has erroneously intruded the idea of the free flight of the soul. It is this error, I think, that accounts in part at least for his rendering of *ἐπιβολή τῆς διανοίας* as *se iniciens animus*. He thinks of Epicurus as ‘discharging his mind like an arrow (*intendens*) or, as we should say, like a rocket’, for a flight through the heavens. Even for this use of *ἐπιβάλλω* I find no parallel in Attic Greek. As for the Asiatic use, ‘incidence of vision, view’, this was probably unknown to him, as it was to Lucretius.

This is not astonishing. Romans who made the mistake of associating *πτῶσις αἰτιατική* with *αἰτιάομαι*, ‘accuse’, and rendered it *casus accusativus*, instead of connecting it with *αἰτία*, ‘cause, objective’, may well have misunderstood the Asiatic word *ἐπιβολή*, ‘incidence of vision, view.’ It is quite possible that Cicero followed Lucretius in using *se iniciens*. The model was offered in Lucretius 2.739–40:

in quae corpora si nullus tibi forte videtur
posse *animi iniectus fieri*, procul avius erras.

That Lucretius, like Cicero, misconceived Epicurus as “hurling his mind into space” is manifest from *animi iactus liber* of 2.1044–7:

³⁶ Cicero *N.D.* 1.20.54.

quaerit enim rationem animus, cum summa loci sit
 infinita foris haec extra moenia mundi,
 quid sit ibi porro quo prospicere usque velit mens
 atque *animi iactus liber* quo *pervolet* ipse.

The words *quo pervolet ipse* betray him; he has intruded into his interpretation of Epicurus the prevalent fancy of the free flight of the mind through the universe. Even if we consented to associate ἐπιβολή with the phrase ἐπιβάλλειν τὸν νοῦν, this does not mean “hurl the mind at” but “apply the mind to.”

If additional evidence of misinterpretation and contamination is timely, this may be found in the well known passage, 1.72-4:

ergo vivida vis animi pervicit, et extra
processit longe flammantia moenia mundi
 atque omne immensum *peragravit* mente animoque.

Lucretius was primarily a poet, of course, and the flight of the soul is especially alluring to poets, but he is still to be charged with misapprehending the difference between this and a *despectus* from an imaginary fixed point of view, as expressly set forth by Archytas and adumbrated by Epicurus, in contrast to the concept of the human soul in the *Phaedrus* 246-7, for example, furnished with a chariot and winged steeds. Incidentally, Diogenes Laertius may not have been so far astray in classifying Epicurus with the Italian school of philosophy.³⁷ His theory of cognition is built in part upon a transfer of the peculiar Archytan σοφία, disguised as διάνοια, to Democritean physics.³⁸

³⁷ 1.15.

³⁸ The editor kindly calls my attention to Lucr. 2.740 and 3.245, where editors note that Epicurus seems to think of thought as functioning in two ways: (1) as stimulated by the *simulacra* or (2) by self-determined actions of atoms. I interpret ἐπιβολή τῆς διανοίας as being a phase, but not the only phase, of the latter, closely approximating to intuition (*intueor*) and very suggestive of Spinoza's *scientia intuitiva* for the reason that it penetrates to the unseen.