

Prolepsis of the gods

Post by "Cassius" of June 27, 2025 at 6:02 AM

Rolf to drop back to Don's comment in [post 28](#) and his earlier comment about pleasures that you "get out of the way from," I've thought of another example of a type of pleasure that I think is applicable:

In addition to Epicurus saying that he [found his own peace chiefly in the study of nature](#), which I would say clearly includes the philosophical debates about nature which we are discussing, there is another very good example in the opening of Book 2 of Lucretius:

Quote from Munro Version

2-01

It is sweet, when on the great sea the winds trouble its waters, to behold from land another's deep distress; not that it is a pleasure and delight that any should be afflicted, but because it is sweet to see from what evils you are yourself exempt. It is sweet also to look upon the mighty struggles of war arrayed along the plains without sharing yourself in the danger. But nothing is more welcome than to hold the lofty and serene positions well fortified by the learning of the wise, from which you may look down upon others and see them wandering all abroad and going astray in their search for the path of life, see the contest among them of intellect, the rivalry of birth, the striving night and day with surpassing effort to struggle up to the summit of power and be masters of the world.

O wretched are the thoughts of men! How blind their souls! In what dark roads they grope their way, in what distress is this life spent, short as it is! Don't you see Nature requires no more than the body free from pain, that she may enjoy the mind easy and cheerful, removed from care and fear?

I would equate understanding the implication and the solution to radical skepticism in general, of which the Meno Paradox is part, to a good example of a part of what Lucretius is referring to as causing the wandering and going astray in the path of life. I say this from the point of view that you can't be confident that Nature does in fact no more than pleasure over pain, and you can't be removed from care and fear, if you don't think it is possible to be confident that these things are true, and that supernatural control and eternal punishment are false.

Now again - not everyone is bothered by the claims of philosophical skepticism or sees the immediate relevance to them. If they are not so bothered, then more power to them, but we

likely would not have Epicurean philosophy to talk about in the first place if Epicurus and Metrodorus and Hermarchus and Lucretius and Diogenes of Oinoanda and Philodemus had *not* been bothered by them.