

Prolepsis and the Epicurean Gods (discussion split from earlier thread started by Titus)

Post by "TauPhi" of June 15, 2026 at 6:52 AM

Here are my personal opinions on all three points. Please mind they are just that - personal opinions. Nothing else but food for thought, if someone is interested in reading them.

[Quote from Titus](#)

1.) As Patrikios said, the Gods symbolise ultimate excellence. They are something to orientate to as personifications of the highest state a being can possibly achieve. They give an idea what the happy life is.

Ultimate excellence does not exist. It's nothing more but a turn into idealism. Epicurean philosophy is a turn away from idealism so the claim that this imagined ideal can be a guide towards happy life is a contradiction to the goal of the philosophy. Even to ancient Epicureans their gods were material beings, not some kind of symbols. On top of that, [Epicurean gods](#) are completely removed from human existence. Their existence couldn't be more alien to us even if we tried. Treating them as symbols of human potential excellence is like taking someone whose only language is English and asking them to translate from Chinese.

[Quote from Titus](#)

2.a) The correct prolepsis of the Gods works as armour to save from wrong assumptions. Usually, these are the human ideas of ultimate power and this ultimate power being obsessed with moral behaviour. All of that is grounded in human projections rather than what ultimate excellence really is.

The prolepsis of the Gods and ultimate excellence are as much wrong assumptions as ultimate power is. They are based on wishful thinking, nothing more. You're trying to fight fire with fire here.

[Quote from Titus](#)

2.b) Human ideas on otherworldly powers are real. Religion is all around and structuring the lives of people. This is something we have to react to and interact with. Personally, I like the idea of imperishable and blessed beings around because this states a direct counterpart to human superstitions. Otherwise, we are in great danger

of becoming overwhelmed by false opinions.

Imperishable and blessed beings are as much human superstitions as any other ultimately powerful friends used as pillars for religions. Again, it looks like you're trying to fight fire with fire. You're just switching one type of imaginary friends to another.