

# Godfrey's Epicurean Outline

**Post by "Cassius" of December 11, 2018 at 7:29 PM**

Godfrey I think you will eventually find that while anticipations are a fascinating subject, they are not quite so central to understanding the core issues as might appear at first. As I think DeWitt points out, Lucretius goes through his whole poem without much, if any, direct discussion of anticipations. It's possible it's there and we don't really recognize it, but it's pretty clear that he does not devote a great deal of emphasis to it, with the implication that (like "the gods") it was considered either an advanced subject, or something pretty obvious (maybe all animals have "instincts"?) so there was not much need to dwell on it in fundamental texts.

I think you said you were reading DeWitt, right? If you finish that, and then maybe tackle Lucretius before long, I think you will see that there's a pattern of analysis where you start with fundamentals and then make sure everything after that is consistent with the fundamentals.

So in terms of gods, whatever you end up conceiving them to be, they are clearly NOT supernatural or omniscient or all-powerful or anything like that, because nothing exists eternally except matter and void, and everything is made up of that, so if you apply that rigorously you never entertain supernatural concepts at all.

Likewise with anticipations, whatever they are, they are natural faculties that operate similarly to the sense and the feelings of pleasure and pain, so there's clearly some aspect that we're born with, and some aspects that we train and develop over time.

The reason I keep focusing on DeWitt is that if you take the time to read that, you'll get a good view of the overall forest, and then you'll be able to dig deeper into individual trees without losing sight of the big picture.

In years past I kept trying to read various academic books on details which never gave the full picture, and I was never able to put everything into some sort of order until I found DeWitt's presentation.

And at this point even though I have lots of questions about the details of what they thought about gods and anticipations, I really don't worry about it as much as I used to, because I am confident that whatever they thought was a logical extension of the fundamentals that are fairly easy to grasp.