

# For Gods There Are

Post by "Don" of August 15, 2022 at 4:09 AM

I started reading the article [Godfrey](#) posted, more out of curiosity than anything. I thought a passing similarity between Jungian archetypes and [Epicurean gods](#) would be it, but, as I'm reading, this line jumped out at me:

Quote

we Jungians cannot go on basing our theory of archetypes on scientific assumptions which have been falsified by more recent research if we do not want to run the risk of becoming ridiculous in the scientific world. It is important that we stop arguing that archetypes are transmitted genetically if we want to be taken seriously.

I would amend that first phrase as:

"we Epicureans cannot go on basing our theory of prolepseis on scientific assumptions which have been falsified by more recent research if we do not want to run the risk of becoming ridiculous..."

The use in paper of the word "innate" also seemed to echo the idea of the prolepseis in Cicero and other spots.

Seligman's paper may be interesting to look up for our purposes here.

Quote

Preparedness: Even Seligman (1972), a behavioural psychologist and certainly not a friend of analytical psychology, found a phenomenon which he called 'preparedness': it refers to the interesting fact that humans generally develop anxieties and especially phobias towards animals like snakes or spiders, even though they may never have had any contact with them, but usually not towards animals such as rabbits or cows. He explains this by a biologically based preparedness which has developed throughout evolution and serves the aim of protection against poisonous animals - otherwise it could be possible that one cannot learn from a first contact experience because one does not survive it.

I like the author's first line of the conclusion:

Quote

I must admit that, for now, there are more questions than conclusions...



Now, \*there's\* a direct parallel with the prolepsis of the gods!

Another interesting angle could be the cultural complex paper that the author referenced (Singer & Kimbles 2004) .

Okay, after reading I do see parallels between prolepsis and archetype, but I also think this author's perspective, attitude, and honesty is relevant to our search for understanding the conundrum of prolepsis, especially of the divine. I continue to insist that Epicurus found a correct understanding of the gods to be of vital importance to his philosophy. It is put first in several places, at least the PDs and the letter to Menoikeus plus he devoted sections of On Nature to the topic. He seemed to see it as a necessary thing to "get right" to be able to live a pleasurable life. Now, whether he saw this primacy in the context of his own time ("This is how I make sense of the way we can worship the gods in the culture in which we live...") or as fundamental to his whole system of philosophy ("This is the way we MUST understand the gods if we are to have no fear of them! You must get this right FIRST!") can be argued. I lean toward the latter but not leaning so far as to fall over (to take that metaphor to its end).

So, for further rabbit-holing, I'm looking for:

- Seligman, M. E. & Hager, J. L. (Eds.) (1972). Biological Boundaries of Learning.

Appleton: Century-Crofts

- Singer, T. & Kimbles, S. (2004). 'Emerging theory of cultural complexes'. In Analytical

Psychology: Contemporary Perspectives in Jungian Psychology, eds. J. Cambray & L.

Carter. Hove & New York: Brunner-Routledge.