

Episode 163 - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 17 - Chapter 8 - Sensations, Anticipations, And Feelings 04

Post by "Cassius" of February 21, 2023 at 4:05 PM

This is particularly good too:

Quote

From the examples we do have in Epicurus it seems that prolepsis is concerned with the character of a thing or a state of affairs — what it is to be just, as opposed to what the instantiations of justice are, what the character of the gods is, as opposed to who the gods are. Given Epicurean epistemic realism, these claims on the character of some thing or state must be seen as claims on the world, so that prolepsis, like aisthesis for a realist, is ambiguous between the psychological act of apprehension and the content discerned, some feature of the world. In the case of prolepsis what is discerned should be some abiding character in things, as opposed to some temporary appearance. Not surprisingly. Epicurean atomism suggests the need for these two different kinds of information. Since all that exists are simply atoms moving in the void, on any occasion what one perceives is, as it were, a time slice of a continuous process ----so the apple looks green now. It is also the case that certain atomic configurations are relatively abiding in any particular cosmos. And so in our world water has a particular atomic arrangement and iron another. Information about the one, the state of current appearances, is not the same as information about the other, the relatively abiding state of nature.

The history of Plato's Forms and Aristotle's natural kinds should have made Epicurus more sensitive to this issue than Democritus would have been, and in any case this sensitivity to the abiding structures in nature is certainly obvious from the *De Rerum Natura*. There is clearly a need for information about these abiding structures in natural philosophy and this need can be satisfied in part by Epicurean inference and confirmation.

But it also appears that we can recognize the abiding character in perceived things and states. We recognize justice to be what serves social interest, the gods to be blessed and immortal. Such recognitions are part of the evidence, not part of our inferences. And prolepsis, it seems, constitutes such recognitions.