

Episode 166 - The Lucretius Today Podcast Interviews Dr. David Glidden on "Epicurean Prolepsis"

Post by "Cassius" of March 24, 2023 at 4:14 AM

[Onenski](#) thanks for the comment and I full agree that Nature is nonpurposive. I tend to use the "gave" in the sense of Epicurus's statement of being thankful to Nature in a more poetic than literal sense. The quote I refer to is

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GRATITUDE TO NATURE

The duty of gratitude to Nature is on record in these words: "Gratitude is due to blessed Nature because she has made life's necessities easy of acquisition and those things that are difficult of acquisition unnecessary."¹¹⁷ The true basis of the debt to Nature, however, is to be found in her function as a teacher. She is not to Epicurus, as she was to Aristotle, merely the creative force in the universe. She was also the aggregate of animate experience and especially of human experience.

It is Nature that reveals the Canon of truth and bestows upon man the means of contact between his soul and the material world, Sensations, Anticipations, Feelings. The true end of living as she reveals it is "the end of Nature." True justice is "the justice of Nature." The true attitude toward the desires consists in recognizing "the limits of Nature." The true attitude toward riches and poverty demands knowledge of "the wealth of Nature." She is the ethical teacher: "Nature teaches us to think the gifts of Fortune as of minor value and to know that when we are fortunate we are unfortunate."¹¹⁸ In the language of Lucretius she is so eager for men to know the truth that she "barks" it aloud,¹¹⁹ like a faithful dog that is keen to give warning. In a magnificent passage toward the end of the third book the poet steps aside and yields the pulpit to her so that in her own person she may lash self-pitying old men for their ingratitude.¹²⁰ If we take Nature in this Epicurean sense as a benevolent teacher, then gratitude is an imperative of Nature. It is owed to her by man and she in turn enjoins it upon man.

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cessary."