

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

Post by "Pacatus" of December 21, 2023 at 6:08 PM

As I've probably noted before, I do not tend to absorb knowledge as well through listening as reading. Others are the opposite. And "concretizing" a verbal discussion into written text can have its own problems. With that said, it would be tragic had I missed this podcast (and a couple of others that I've listened to so far) because of my own limitations in that regard.

With that said: (1) I was reminded - especially by Dr. Glidden's remarks on the fact that our prolepseis can be mistaken, coupled with their place in the canon - of the distinction by the Pyrrhonians between "criteria for truth" (which they found suspect - at least with regard to certain knowledge about "nonevident matters") and "criteria for agency." That latter may be uncertain, but can be the best evidence we have to make choices and act upon. It strikes me that, based on Dr. Glidden's analysis, the prolepseis might fall into that second category.

And (2) the question of "cognitive" versus "noncognitive" is something that I've encountered in moral theory. Moral cognitivism is (at the base level I can comprehend) the idea that we can derive proper moral views via thinking and reason (as well as some sort of cognitive validation of articulated rule-based moral creeds). Moral noncognitivism is the idea that we first react emotively - for example visceral repugnance in the face of cruelty to a child. We may try to articulate cognitive reasons for that response (perhaps so that we might convince others), but it is that response itself that drives the very process.

I tend toward moral noncognitivism (again, at the base level I understand it), but it strikes me that prolepsis might explain why so many of those noncognitive (or precognitive) reactions seem to be observed across diverse cultures generally - and why people who have opposite reactions (e.g. enjoying such acts of cruelty) tend to get diagnosed as "pathological."

Just, really, thinking "out loud" ...

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Note: I take "cognitive" here to mean generally what is given as the first definition in Merriam-Webster: "1: of, relating to, being, or involving conscious intellectual activity (such as thinking, reasoning, or remembering)."