

Epicurean Views of "Teleology"

Post by "Cassius" of March 14, 2025 at 8:17 AM

I suppose one possibility would be the part in Lucretius where he talks about "Calling upon Neptune / Ceres if you like but don't be superstitious" (I'm remembering Humphries) Let me get that, but it probably goes to 2 and 3 and isn't exactly that nature is nonpurposive.

Note: it's from Book 2 and actually closer than I remembered (Humphries)

Let a man
Call upon Neptune, if he likes, say Ceres
When he means corn or wheat, miscall his wine
By an apostrophe to Father Bacchus,
Let him keep on repeating that our globe
Is the gods' mother - but let him, all this while,
Be careful, really, not to let religion
Infect, pollute, corrupt him. Earth indeed
Is quite insentient, has always been,
And as possessor of all particles
Sends many forth in many ways to light,
No consciousness about it.

Book 2 at 644 Bailey

[644] Yet all this, albeit well and nobly set forth and told, is nevertheless far removed from true reasoning. For it must needs be that all the nature of the gods enjoys life everlasting in perfect peace, sundered and separated far away from our world. For free from all grief, free from danger, mighty in its own resources, never lacking aught of us, it is not won by virtuous service nor touched by wrath. Verily, the earth is without feeling throughout all time, and 'tis because it has possession of the first-beginnings of many things, that it brings forth many in many ways into the light of the sun. Herein, if any one is resolved to call the sea Neptune and corn Ceres, and likes rather to misuse the title of Bacchus than to utter the true name of the vine-juice, let us grant that he may proclaim that the world is the Mother of the gods, if only in very truth he forbear to stain his own mind with shameful religious awe.