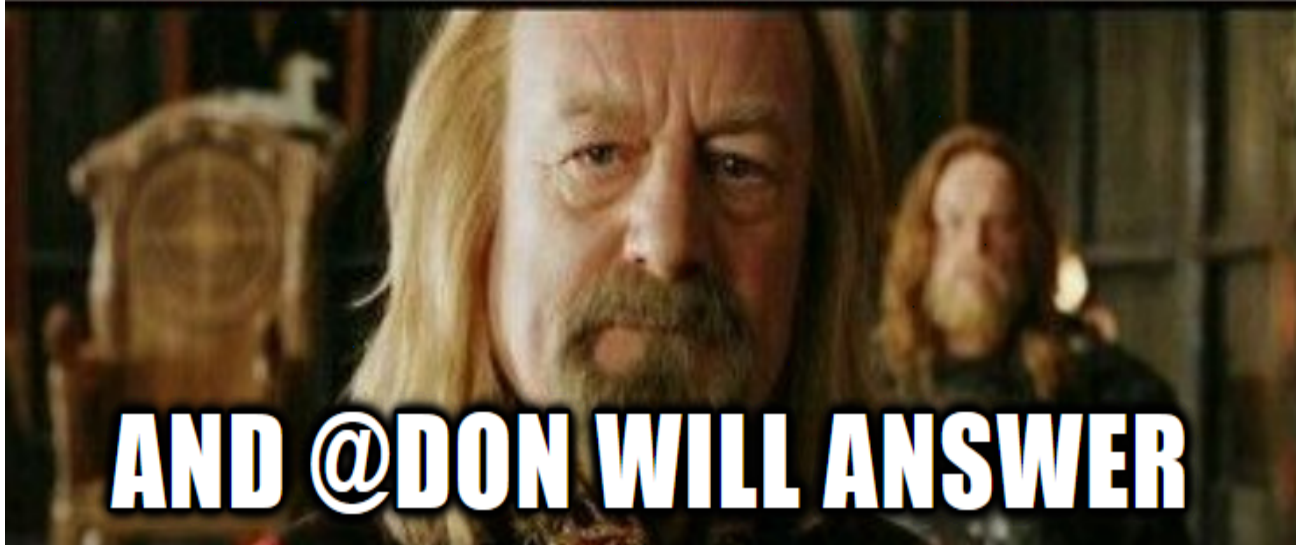


Relationship between AI/LLMs and prolepsis

Post by "Don" of June 15, 2026 at 11:34 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

To supplement my brilliant humor, I am hoping that some of our "idealists" like Don will weigh in on the objection Tau Phi is raising to what Titus has suggested.



This may not turn out exactly as you thought it might...

I have the utmost respect for [TauPhi](#) 's perspective and insightful comments in this thread and through the forum. Some of my responses below may be a little provocative, but they're not meant to be combative... and I sincerely hope they don't come across like that. My thinking on

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4709-relationship-between-ai-llms-and-prolepsis/?postID=40285#post40285>

this topic of the gods has evolved a little over time, but we've been over this innumerable times on the forum, for example, [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#)...to name a few.

[Quote from TauPhi](#)

, [Epicurean gods](#) are completely removed from human existence. Their existence couldn't be more alien to us even if we tried.

I certainly agree with that. Even Diogenes Laertius says "Two sorts of happiness can be conceived, the one the highest possible, such as the gods enjoy, which cannot be augmented, the other admitting addition and subtraction of pleasures." As *mortal* beings, we will never ever - can never - achieve the happiness of the gods precisely because our existences are so different. So, what use do they serve for Epicurus? They didn't create the universe, they don't bestow blessings, they don't rain down curses, they don't respond to prayer or worship. Why does Epicurus consistently site a proper understanding of the gods as paramount to his philosophy AND vehemently deny that his philosophy is an atheistic philosophy? I wrestle with this idea and do NOT have a completely satisfactory response.

[Quote from TauPhi](#)

Ultimate excellence does not exist. It's nothing more but a turn into idealism. Epicurean philosophy is a turn away from idealism so the claim that this imagined ideal can be a guide towards happy life is a contradiction to the goal of the philosophy.

Ultimate excellence does not exist *for humans in the universe*. Plus I fully agree that Epicurus rejected *Platonic idealism*, some Ideal Realm removed from our plane of existence from which emanates the essences of material things. Horse-ness resides in that Realm, we see only pale reflections of that Horse-ness in the animals we see.

But I don't think that necessarily negates the possibility of imagining what it might be like to have a happiness that was complete, unceasing, and could neither diminish nor increased. No human is ever going to achieve that, but humans can extrapolate and image what this state of being permanently blissfully incorruptible might be like. So, I think there are Ideals (upper case) and ideals (lower case).

The bigger issue for me is talking about "gods" "living" in the "intermundia". The intermundia is a *utopia* in its literal sense: it is No-Place. There would be by definition no worlds in the intermundia upon which a "god" could plant their anthropomorphic feet. BY DEFINITION, the intermundia or metakosmos is between world-systems/kosmoi. I don't remember Epicurus talking about the intermundia. I find it hard to believe Epicurus would advocate for giant humans with quasi-blood floating in a no-place without a world to inhabit. That almost sounds like the Ideal Realm of Plato and I would think he would reject that entirely.

[Quote from TauPhi](#)

Imperishable and blessed beings are as much human superstitions as any other ultimately powerful friends used as pillars for religions. ... You're just switching one type of imaginary friends to another.

That brings up an interesting take for me. Epicurus didn't posit the "gods" as being imaginary friends. We can NEVER be friends with the gods. We can never ask the gods for help. We must never expect them to be mad at us. They don't know or care about us. That to me is one of the stickiest of wickets with Epicurean theology. If the gods don't care, don't have power over the universe or us, why bother with them at all?? Why does Epicurus place SO much importance on "getting it right"?

To me, ultimately, Epicurus primary concern is getting us to have a visceral gut-level unshakeable knowledge that (1) The universe was not constructed by the gods, (2) The gods have NO hand in governing the universe, (3) We have NOTHING to fear from the gods... in fact, less than nothing because "they" are not even aware of us.

So why attend the festivals, make sacrifices, and be concerned about piety toward the gods? Because it seems Epicurus did all these things. To me, one possible answer is that it gave him pleasure. He enjoyed the music, the dances, and taking part in the communal life of the city. He felt pleasure taking part in the Panathenaic procession to the Acropolis and gazing on the statue of Athena in the dimly lit Parthenon and feeling awe wash over him. I've felt this in religious settings (setting foot inside [Saint-Chappelle in Paris](#) was awe-inspiring, and I'm no longer Christian... although I also felt this even stronger when viewing Yosemite Valley from Tunnel View) If doing this somehow made it easier to think about the idea (not ideal) of being able to somehow experience total happiness that couldn't be augmented or diminished, of "bringing before his eyes" the idea of a completely blessed and incorruptible state of being, maybe that was enough. I've heard (Sedley I think) that maybe each of us constructs our own idea of "god." I'm basically thinking out loud here, so take it with a grain of salt.

[Quote from TauPhi](#)

I only try to show the dangers of such perspectives

THAT is a valuable contribution!

[Quote from TauPhi](#)

I do differ in some areas but I also love Epicurean philosophy. It has benefited my life enormously and it still does. Even if I don't accept the philosophy in its entirety, I agree with most of it. It may look sometimes that I'm picking a fight but I really, really don't. I don't argue because I want to become the Internet troll of the month. I hope exchanging ideas is beneficial to all parties involved. And the truth is, I agree a lot with you Cassius as well. It's just we usually don't discuss things we agree upon.

Amen (to use the religious term... still looking for a good Epicurean alternative).

I think I'm an atheist or at least agnostic nowadays. Epicurus tenets that gods don't bother with us makes me feel atheism is at least compatible with Epicurean philosophy even though Epicurus may differ. Epicurus isn't here to speak for himself, and we don't have enough texts to really understand his position. I can enjoy some hymns (I like Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing) and Christmas. But I see no need for the gods other than as historical curiosities... and some great stories!

The unifying factor with the ancients as to why I can still consider myself Epicurean is the first line of the Tetracharmakos: Nothing to fear from the divine.

I have some thoughts on the initial topic of this thread. 😊 More on that later.... but it's late and I'm tired.