

Relationship between AI/LLMs and prolepsis

Post by “Don” of June 16, 2026 at 7:36 AM

[Quote from Bryan](#)

Let me throw in some quotes as a jumping-off point, I may be misunderstanding.

Thank you!! No, you are not misunderstanding... I just need to "get back to the books" to paraphrase Philodemus. I am woefully out of practice!

What I was saying is that we don't have any extant texts from Epicurus *himself* placing the gods in the intermundia. You've demonstrated we have several secondary sources, including of course Cicero (he was the only one I remembered in my late night missive). However, allow me to be a litte cantankerous this morning ...

[Quote from Bryan](#)

"...that Cosmoi such as this are also infinite in number is able to be thoroughly comprehended, and that such a Cosmos also has the force to be produced both in a cosmos and in the intermundia [μετακοσμίω] - which we say is the separation intervening between cosmoi"

[Epicurus to Pythocles, Lives 10.89a]

I read this as still consistent with my point about there being no cosmoi within the intermundia by definition. There are innumerable "bubbles" of order - cosmoi - in the universe. We live in one of those areas of order. The space *between them* is the intermundia. In Epicurean cosmology, there are cosmoi and there is an intervening space between the cosmoi. A cosmos can be produced *in the intermundia* BUT that simply means there's a new cosmos that came together - setting itself off from the intermundia, a new ordered space that came together from the flow of the atoms through the intermundia which is now separated from other cosmoi. There's now separation - intermundia - between that new cosmos and the other cosmoi around it. It seems to me that the cosmos is to the intermundia as atoms are to the void.

[Quote from Bryan](#)

Saint Hippolytus of Rome (fl.c. 210 CE), "Philosophical Questions" (Refutation of all Heresies) 22.3

I was ignorant of - or had forgotten - Hippolytus. Thanks for the reminder! If Hippolytus is right (writing about 400 years after Epicurus lived), then yes, Epicurus was positing the gods lived in the intermundia... but I still don't see how that works.

[Quote from Hippolytus](#)

the divine surrenders himself to pleasure, and takes his ease in the midst of supreme happiness) - and that neither has he any concerns of business, nor does he devote his attention to them."

I will admit this description to me smacks of what I was taught as a child in church with dead people sitting in heaven playing harps in some ethereal cloud-city. And, yes, I'm being provocative a little. I can't even sincerely comprehend what that would be like, taking my ease in the midst of supreme happiness with no concerns at all. Even imagining a happiness that can neither be diminished or increased boggles my mortal mind. When I think I can grasp it, it wafts away like fog.

[Quote from Bryan](#)

Philodemus' On Piety makes a clear case for this -- the idea is that a process can be eternal -- just as if a waterfall was always fed it would never stop existing, and all waterfalls are impervious to bullets, swords, and other direct damage.

Oh, that's a good explanation. So, it seems Philodemus (and Epicurus) then are emphasizing the existence of their gods as existing as an ever-lasting process of losing and replacing atoms. The waterfall is a good analogy and I had forgotten where that came from. Thanks!

[Quote from Bryan](#)

Worlds are closed systems, so the waterfalls in a world will eventually stop -- but between worlds there is no closed system and the flow of matter is infinite.

(Smacks head with palm) Okay, NOW I think I get it. The gods HAVE to exist in the intermundia to have access to the infinite flow of atoms coursing through the universe. This makes sense then as to how ancient Epicureans could rationalize the *physical* existence of "gods." Unfortunately, this makes me even less likely to think there are beings like this. This is all wrapped up in ancient cosmology, and I do not see the universe actually working this way. This is beginning to make perfect sense given the cosmology and physics of the ancient Epicureans, but modern science is doing a better (not perfect, not complete) job of explaining natural processes which I believe a modern Epicurean would be a fan of - to understand the natural world as accurately as possible without getting bogged down in details. Epicurus' fundamental pivotal importance to me is, at its heart, the firm knowledge that the universe is material, governed by natural laws, not created by supernatural beings, and gods (which are NOT supernatural to him) have no interest in us. I don't need to believe in intermundia, cosmoi, gods, etc. to be an Epicurean living in the 21st century of the common era. It's good to understand what the ancients believed, but I think the foundations - the kernel - of what they taught are why a 2,500 year old philosophy can still be relevant.

[Quote from Bryan](#)

I am being cheeky at this point -- you know the term better than most! The “religious-based” affirmative of choice was:

"ὄχι Δία"



(slaps forehead again) Not cheeky at all! I appreciate the reminder, by Zeus!!

I'm running up against the clock to get ready for work, and I'll have other thoughts but I greatly appreciate the reply [Bryan](#) . Your grasp of the materials and deep knowledge of the subject are an inspiration. Thank you!!