

Episode Four - Recap of Opening Sections of Book One

Post by "Cassius" of January 30, 2020 at 9:16 AM

As we prepare for episode four we need to remember the comments made by Elayne after listening to Episode three, starting with this post: [Episode Three - The Lucretius Today Podcast](#) Let's continue the discussion here, but leave those posts in place since they do refer to Episode Three:

Quote

I admit to issues with my auditory attention span. I have major trouble not taking off with a thought from the discussion and then I miss bits of it. When I'm actually participating it's not an issue, but I've always had this problem with podcasts.

I say this because you may have discussed what I had planned to contribute re Iphianassa and maybe I zoned out. I didn't hear it, either way.

My point if I had been able to be on the call was to remind people to ask how they recognize what was done to Iphianassa was terrible. It's presented as an assumption that religion led to this dreadful thing, but there's no discussion in that part of the poem about how we recognize it as awful.

I think this is a critical place to bring the whole philosophy into interpretation. We don't say "oh, that's terrible" because of any set absolute definition of terrible.

We say it bc as humans with typical empathy, the story causes us pain even to imagine killing a daughter, and even more so because we know it was for naught.

The action fails the immediate, intuitive sense of right and wrong because it is painful to us. Then it fails the hedonic calculus because there's no beneficial effect from the imaginary gods.

It would be incomplete of me not to say there could have been social benefit, social pleasure, to Agamemnon for putting his people's lives before his daughter's. Same for Abraham. But that social pleasure depends on an illusion. Clearly, removing the false belief in supernatural gods would result in the greatest pleasure for Agamemnon, Abraham, and all in similar situations.

Even today, we have parents disowning and abandoning teens who fall away from religious teaching. There are homeless gay teens kicked out because of religion.

Without supernatural religion, there would be more total pleasure for those parents. They could have social pleasure from their community support and family pleasure with their kids. Nobody getting sacrificed. Definitely, the kids are getting more pleasure in that non religious scenario-- it's clear what Iphianassa would prefer! I've always wondered if Jacob ever went hiking with his dad again ☐, or turned his back. I sure wouldn't have.

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Cassius:

Yes - and that reminds me too that we should compare this with the story of Torquatus' ancestor, who had his son executed for disobeying orders in a war, and how that compares / differs from the Iphanessa story