

What is the soul?

Post by "Cassius" of July 18, 2021 at 5:47 AM

Yes I would say that the description in Lucretius Godfrey refers to is the basic material.

If I had to summarize my understanding I would also refer to the "properties of the particles" and "qualities" / "events" of the bodies that are formed from the particles. Probably a large part of what most people are looking for is a discussion of how life arises from non-life, and that issue revolves around the "emerging" aspect of how bodies have qualities that are not inherent in the particles and void of which they are composed.

It also seems that "soul" and "spirit" are used almost interchangeably.

I note in the original post the reference to "all living things" having a soul, and I am not sure about that. Plants? I am thinking that Epicurus would not necessarily equate a soul/spirit to life, and that you might we'll be able to have life without having a soul - that soul / spirit might be why we call some but not all living things "animals".

Also, following the point made in Long's "Chance and Natural Law in Epicureanism" I think it is important to keep in mind that "the swerve" does not exhibit itself to our view except in certain situations (free will of animals primarily). If they indeed thought that way, that would explain the emphasis on the soul being extremely fine / light / fast moving - characteristics in which the swerve might best "break through" to allow free will.