

Epicurus And Pleasure As The Awareness Of Smooth Motion

Post by "Cassius" of May 10, 2023 at 9:18 AM

I have been meaning to post this for a while, but the recent thread on the nature of the gods ([link here](#)) causes me to post this now, but separately, so as not to derail that thread.

It seems to me as we've previously discussed a few times, but not at length, that it is entirely possible (and maybe probable or definite, I just haven't examined the sources on this recently) that Epicurus agreed with the Cyreniac position that pleasure is intimately related to (constitutes?) the concept of "smooth motion."

I think it would be erroneous to think of things in terms of "the first instance in the universe" giving rise to all that came afterward. We have to get used to thinking in terms of the universe having no beginning, and that the same things that are capable of happening now have been happening for an eternity with there never having been a "first of its kind" experience - at least on a fundamental level. (Has there been more than one Epicurus? Maybe not, but surely there have been many "like" Epicurus.)

I am linking smooth motion to the gods and pleasure because it seems we have to think of some kind of atomic processes which have always existed and always will exist which lead to the coming together and eventual dissolution of worlds, animals, and people, etc. But as to the gods, we don't have fix on whether the process that constitutes godhood would have been thought to have a beginning for an individual god (one of innumerable gods) or whether their atomic structure has been together eternally and either stays together eternally as a necessity, or whether the individual gods find a way to regenerate and keep their atomic flows together (an issue Nate has been talking about).

But just for purposes of putting a lot of things on the table to try to integrate them, I think it is worth entertaining that:

1 - "Smooth motion" is a fundamental concept that the Epicureans and Cyreniacs and probably others associated with pleasure;

2 - The smooth movement of atoms in a particular area of space is probably related to the other emergent qualities of life;

3 - To the extent that Pleasure is a phenomena that spurs on other activity to perpetuate itself, pleasure and smooth motion are intimately related in Epicurean physics;

4 - That Epicurus' view of pleasure as constituting the healthy functioning of an organism in its natural ways, without roughness or disturbance or things that hinder its "smooth" functioning,

is informed by this linkage of smooth motion to pleasure.

5 - That as we develop a better of understanding of Epicurus' train of thought as to pleasure and the conclusions that flow from it, we would do well to think in terms of analogies to "smooth motion."

6 - That as to the gods and their nature, they also are elaborate functions that result from "smooth motion," but in their case the motion remains smooth either by some physical necessity, or because they have mastered the art of regenerating and keeping the motions smooth themselves.

7 - That also in relation to the gods there is a multi-track approach going on: A - From a physics perspective, you add together (1) eternal universe, (2) boundless universe, (3) isonomia, and (4) the principle that nature never creates only a single thing of a kind, and you pretty clearly have a deduction that the universe is filled with many beings who have perfected smooth motion and sustain it perpetually. But you also have track B - It makes sense to extrapolate from our own experience what factors in live make it the most pleasant, so we extrapolate from our own experience things like language and breathing and talking with friends, and we attribute those experiences in a similar but "perfected" way to he gods.

What I am saying in point 7 is that the speculation about the gods is both physics based and logic-based but the Epicureans did not see any conflict in those approaches, but viewed them as complementary, at least to some extent because ultimately the Epicureans viewed pleasure as an emergent quality of "smooth motion" no matter what the level of complexity involved.

Edit: Is it in fact "smooth motion" or "smooth atoms" or some combination?